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A study of core special education competencies needed for public school building administrators

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A STUDY OF CORE SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS

A Dissertation

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by

JoAnne Yarbrough Carver

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Approved June, 1992

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Michelle and James, without whose personal sacrifices I would not have succeeded in this venture, to my loving parents who early in life instilled in me the importance of pursuing an education, and to my family and friends who have provided me with encouragement and support throughout this endeavor.

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A final thanks is extended to God, my family, and friends for helping me to realize one of my dreams.

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A STUDY OF CORE SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS

ABSTRACT

As manager and instructional leader of the school, the principal is responsible for the well-being of all programs, including the provision of general and special education services for children and youth with disabilities. However, the intricacies of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, P.L. 101-476, coupled with the complexity of the building administrator's role in contemporary educational settings, result in a need to assist principals in keeping abreast of key information regarding special education. A core set of special education competencies, based on clearly defined areas and identified by the principal and other key stakeholders responsible for preservice and inservice training is needed.

The present study was conducted to investigate core special education competencies needed by public school principals in Virginia for the effective administration of special education programs in their buildings. The study was also designed to determine how elementary, middle/junior high, high school building administrators, special education administrators, and university professors in Virginia differ in their perceptions of the importance of these competencies. The final purpose of the study was to

determine the degree to which building administrators perceive their level of knowledge relative to the core special education competencies identified.

The study involved responses from surveys received from 308 principals, special education administrators, and university professors (i.e., 74% of the 414 randomly sampled individuals from these groups). In response to the research question regarding which core special education competencies are needed by principals, a set of seven major competencies, accompanied by 24 sub-competency statements were generated. Five of the seven major competencies surveyed were deemed very important for building administrators by the groups surveyed. The remaining two competencies were deemed somewhat important by the groups. No statistical differences were found to exist between building administrators regarding either their perceived level of importance or their level of knowledge relative to the seven major competencies. The principals as a group considered their level of knowledge relative to the competencies to be moderately low. Recommendations are made for future research.

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Chapter I

The Problem

Introduction

Overview. Nearly two decades have elapsed since the passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975 (EHA, P.L. 94-142). The EHA mandated that all school age handicapped youth in the United States were entitled to a free and appropriate education (Federal Register, 1977). Viewed by many as the "Bill of Rights for the Handicapped," the law further mandated that by September 1, 1980, individuals with handicaps between the ages of 3 and 21 years old (unless the preschool age conflicts with existing state law and policy) be educated at public expense, in accordance with his or her own unique educational needs (Federal Register, 1977).

The EHA was designed to assure all handicapped children the availability of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE); provide state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) with assistance in providing such education; and, to assure protection of the rights of handicapped youth and their parents (Federal Register, 1977). As noted by Geren (1979) the "power" supporting the law rests in three areas of enabling authority that include the following: (1) the notion that the law is a federal one that must be obeyed;

(2) the mandates of P.L. 94-142 closely parallel those noted in Section 504, Subpart D of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112, the amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act); and, (3) the financial impact on SEAs and LEAs necessitates their compliance with the law in order to ensure receipt of federal funds.

Turnbull (1986) noted that because the EHA provides for federal funds to be allocated to those state and local education agencies that agree to comply with its conditions and regulations, the Act may be described as a "federal grant program with conditional attachments" (p.19). Hence, the law with its legal complexities and implications, has made a profound fiscal, legal, and philosophical impact on the provision of educational services for handicapped individuals in America.

1990 EHA Amendments. The EHA of 1975 was recently amended by the United States Congress. On October 30, 1990, President George Bush signed into law The Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1990 (P.L. 101-476). The amendments reauthorized discretionary grant programs under the Act and renamed the EHA as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Among the several revisions made, of particular significance is the fact that the law changed all references for the term "handicapped children" to "children with

disabilities" in the IDEA and in other major legislation affecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. The new law added autism and traumatic brain injury to the list of disabilities that may qualify students for special education. In addition, the law placed new emphasis on meeting the needs of minorities with disabilities, improving personnel recruitment and retention, and advancing early intervention services. The IDEA also mandated that schools assist students with disabilities in planning for their exit from the system and authorized funding of a one-time grant program geared towards the improvement of transition services (EHLR, 1990; IDEA, 1990; NASDSE, 1990).

The IDEA outlines detailed policies and procedures for state and local education agencies to follow. In turn, each SEA and LEA must develop regulations and guidelines based on federal policy to ensure the provision of appropriate services for youth with disabilities. State and local education agencies must continue to accept responsibility for the identification, evaluation, placement, provision, implementation, and management of educational and related services for youth with disabilities in the most appropriate, least restrictive environment (Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Handicapped Children and Youth in Virginia, 1990).

Special education service delivery and program management. Prior to the advent of the EHA in 1975, children with disabilities derived their public school educational training in accordance with guidelines established at the discretion of state and local education agencies. Educational provisions at the local level were varied in scope, content, and availability, often excluding "handicapped" youth as individuals and as a class (Turnbull, 1986).

Implementation of special programs ranged from no mandated training efforts to many. Provision of services typically reflected the needs evidenced by students residing in a particular community. In effect, management, provision, and implementation of special education programs remained dependent primarily upon the wealth, resources, and resourcefulness of each LEA--usually without SEA sanctions when determined to be in noncompliance with established regulations.

The EHA stipulated that decisions regarding the eligibility, determination, and provision of services to handicapped children be implemented at the local level by multidisciplinary teams of educators and related services personnel in accordance with specified standards (Federal Register, 1977). In turn, each SEA and LEA must provide appropriate services as needed (Regulations Governing

Special Education Programs for Handicapped Children and Youth in Virginia, 1990).

In accordance with Virginia SEA guidelines, a local special education administrator may appoint a designee to facilitate the day to day operation and implementation of services within a school. Historically, appointment of a designee has resulted in the use of personnel such as school psychologists, special education teachers, related services personnel, or other professionals considered to be knowledgeable of children with disabilities. In more recent years, building level administrators, particularly principals or assistant principals, have been assigned this task.

Designated principals must ensure the provision of appropriate individualized education programs for youth with disabilities in a manner consistent with procedural safeguards, in the least restrictive environment possible (Bonds & Lindsey, 1982; McInerney & Swenson, 1988; Nevin, 1979). Moreover, the complexity and comprehensiveness of the provision of these and other services for students within a school necessitate that administrators possess a clear understanding of the IDEA, including its managerial and curricular implications.

Consequently, general education administrators assigned the task of managing special education programs in a public

school setting must simultaneously maintain and increase their professional competencies in the areas of general and special education. Also, the multiple responsibilities routinely assumed by principals (Brennan & Brennan, 1988; Davis, 1980; Stronge, 1988; Stronge & McVeain, 1986), as well as the principals' need to readjust the amount of time allotted for various duties as a result of the requirements of the IDEA-- formerly the EHA of 1975 (Bonds & Lindsey, 1982; Raske, 1979), frequently preclude consistent mastery of comprehensive special education competencies.

Statement of the Problem

The intricacies of the IDEA, coupled with the complexity of the building administrator's role in contemporary educational settings, result in a need to assist principals in keeping abreast of key information regarding special education. A core set of special education competencies based on clearly defined areas should be established and implemented in order to satisfy this need. The principal, along with other key stakeholders responsible for preservice and inservice training, should identify significant competencies to be addressed.

This study was conducted in three phases: (a) Phase I - Identification of Special Education Core Competencies; (b) Phase II - Comparison of Inter- and Intra-group Ratings

Regarding Perceived Levels of Importance of Special Education Core Competencies; and, (c) Phase III - Comparison of Principals' Intra-group Ratings Regarding Perceived Level of Knowledge of Special Education Core Competencies.

Research Question for Phase I - Identification of Special Education Core Competencies. Phase I addressed the following research question:

I.1 What are the core competencies needed by principals for the administration of special education programs at the building level?

Research Hypotheses for Phase II - Comparison of Inter- and Intra-group Ratings Regarding Perceived Levels of Importance of Special Education Core Competencies. Phase II addressed the following major hypotheses:

II.1 There are significant differences among building administrators, special education directors, and university professors in their perceptions of building administrators' core competency needs in special education.

II.2 There are significant differences among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia regarding their perceived core competency needs in special education.

Research Hypothesis for Phase III - Comparison of Principals' Intra-group Ratings Regarding Perceived Level of Knowledge of Special Education Core Competencies. Phase III addressed the following major hypothesis:

III.1 There are significant differences among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia in their perceptions of their level of knowledge relative to special education core competency needs.

Operational Definitions

The following are definitions of key terms utilized in this study. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather, is representative of language frequently used in relation to the field of special education.

Building Administrator - As used in this study, the term refers to the professional employed full-time as either a principal or assistant principal responsible for administering an elementary, middle, or secondary school in Virginia.

Children with Disabilities - As amended in the IDEA (1990), "The term means children--(A) with mental retardation, hearing impairments including deafness, speech or language impairments, visual impairments, including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health

impairments, or specific learning disabilities, and (B) who by reason thereof need special education and related services" (P.L. 101-476 [IDEA], Section 101 (a)(1)(A),(B), p. 1103).

Competencies - The term in this study refers to the level and type of knowledge needed by building administrators regarding special education services necessary for the effective management and administration of educational services for children and youth with disabilities in a public school setting.

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EHA) - P.L. 94-142, as the law is also known, mandated that all states provide a free and appropriate education for handicapped children and youth between the ages of three and 21 by September 1, 1980 (Federal Register, 1977).

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - The term refers to special education and related services which adhere to the following criteria: (a) are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; (b) meet standards of the Board of Education, (c) include preschool, elementary school, middle school, or secondary school, and/or vocational education; and, (d) are provided in conformity with an individualized education program. FAPE is a statutory term which requires special education and related services to be provided in accordance

with an individualized education program (Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Handicapped Children and Youth in Virginia, 1990, p.11).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA)-P.L.101-476 - The Act is the amended version of the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975. "This special education law puts new emphasis on meeting the needs of minorities with disabilities, improving personnel recruitment and retention, and advancing early intervention services" (Education of the Handicapped, 1991).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - The term, as amended in the IDEA (1990), refers to, "a written statement for each child with disabilities developed in any meeting by a representative of the LEA who shall be qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, the teacher, the parents or guardian of such child, and, whenever appropriate, such child, which statement shall include (a) a statement of the present levels of educational performance of such child, (b) a statement of annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives, (c) a statement of the specific educational services to be provided to such child, and the extent to which such child will be able to participate in regular educational programs, (d) a statement of the needed

transition services for students beginning no later than age 16 and annually thereafter (and when determined appropriate for the individual, beginning at age 14 or younger), including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting, (e) the projected date for initiation and anticipated duration of such services, and (f) appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether instructional objectives are being achieved" (P.L. 101-476 [IDEA], Section 101 (c)(1)(2), p.1104).

Local Education Agency (LEA) - The term means, "the local school division or other public agencies responsible for providing educational services to children and youth with disabilities" (Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children and Youth with Disabilities in Virginia, 1990, p.14).

Parent - The term means a parent, a guardian, a person acting as a parent of a child, or a surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with Reg. 300.514 of the EHA (subsequently amended as the IDEA). The term does not include the state if the child is a ward of the state (P.L. 94-142 [EHA], Reg. 300.10]).

Related Services - As amended in the IDEA (1990), the term refers to "transportation and such developmental,

corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with disabilities in benefitting from special education, and includes speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation including therapeutic recreation and social work services, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services including rehabilitation counseling, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. The term also includes school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training" (P.L. 101-476 [IDEA], (c)(1)(2), p.1103).

Special Education - The term as amended in the IDEA (1990) refers to "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child; instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, in other settings, and instruction in physical education" (P.L. 101-476 [IDEA], Section 101(b)(A)(B), p.1103). The term also includes "speech pathology, or any other related service, if the service consists of specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities, and is considered 'special education' rather than a 'related service' under state standards. The term also includes vocational education if it consists of

specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with disabilities" (P.L.94-142 [EHA], Reg. 300.14).

Special Education Administrator - The term refers to local education administrators who have overall responsibility for administering special education programs within a school district. Since districts may designate various titles for this position, the term includes such titles as assistant superintendent, director, supervisor, coordinator, or specialist whose primary assignment in such position is administrative responsibility for special education and related services.

Stakeholder - Patton (1986) defined stakeholders as, "people who have a 'stake' or vested interest in evaluation findings. They are decision makers and information users who have questions about a program" (p.43). For purposes of this study, the term will be used to refer to building administrators, special education directors, and university professors who have a "vested interest" in identifying core special education competencies for principals responsible for managing special education programs in the public schools.

State Education Agency (SEA) - The term means "state agencies or the State Departments of Education, Health, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse

Services, Correction, Rehabilitative Services, Social Services, Correctional Education, and the Visually Handicapped" (Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children and Youth with Disabilities in Virginia, 1990, p.28).

University Professor - For purposes of this study, the term refers to general and special education professors associated with graduate schools of educational administration in selected approved colleges and universities in Virginia.

Significance of the Study

During the past decade, renewed emphasis has been focused on the need for effective public school principals. As manager and instructional leader of the school, the principal is responsible for the well-being of all programs, including the provision of general and special education services for handicapped children and youth (Bonds & Lindsey, 1982; Harris, 1987; Nevin, 1979). However, the preservice and inservice training of principals in key competency areas related to special education administration and curriculum have been frequently found to be insufficient (Counterpoint, 1991; Words + Numbers Research, 1990) to permit building administrators to accomplish this task in an efficient, confident manner.

Since special education represents only one facet of a building administrator's entire repertoire of responsibilities, identification, selection, and acquisition of the most relevant core special education competencies become critical factors in the administrative process. A review of past and current literature in this area revealed that no uniform list of core special education competencies for general education administrators in the public schools, based on input from certain key stakeholders (i.e., building and special education administrators and university professors) has been developed.

Results of feedback from principal training programs conducted in Ohio, Connecticut, and North Carolina (Counterpoint, 1991; Words + Numbers Research, 1990) indicate that principals who receive consistent, meaningful training in specified areas of special education curriculum and management tend to promote the integration of children and youth with disabilities more fully into the mainstream setting. In an effort to identify essential competencies necessary for the effective administration of building-based special education programs, this study sought to identify core competencies necessary for building administrators relative to special education, and to investigate the importance of those competencies as perceived by elementary, middle/junior high, and high school public school

principals, special education directors, and university professors in Virginia. The study also sought to determine the principals' perceived level of knowledge relative to each competency.

Limitations of the Study

The following constraints limit interpretation of the results of this study:

1. This study was limited to perceptions of full-time building administrators in select elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools in Virginia.
2. This study was limited to perceptions of special education administrators in select public schools in Virginia.
3. This study was limited to perceptions of university professors in select schools of education in Virginia, including professors of general and special education administration.
4. Although each university offering educational administration programs in Virginia was surveyed, the study was limited to a sampling of professors of special education and general administration.

Major Assumptions

The following comprise the major underlying assumptions contained in the study:

1. The administration of special education programs and services has become increasingly a function of the building level administrator. Thus, the principal is charged with assuming a more responsible role in this area.

2. The establishment of special education core competencies for the principal is necessary for the effective, efficient attainment of knowledge in this area.

3. Key stakeholders such as building and special education administrators, as well as university professors have a vested interest in core competency development in special education.

4. Principals, special education administrators, and university professors must act as change agents in the process of developing and implementing special education core competencies.

5. The principal is the recognized manager and instructional leader of the school. Thus, the role of the principal in this capacity is likely to increase, due in part, to trends toward site based management and reduction in central office administrative staff.

6. Special education, its legal and philosophical tenets, have become a permanent part of education today.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The role of the public school building administrator in the management of special education services is multi-faceted and dynamic. As such, several basic theoretical concepts have been defined as relevant to the identification and development of special education core competency needs for this group. The concepts of stakeholder and adult learning theories are discussed as they relate to the research question and hypotheses previously cited. Also, customary responsibilities of the principal, as well as those competencies necessary for the execution of regular and special education tasks, are addressed.

Factors Associated with the Development of Core Competencies

Stakeholder theory. The successful identification and development of core special education competencies for general education building administrators is dependent, in large part, upon the inclusion of key participants, or stakeholders, in the overall process. Personnel such as building administrators, special education directors, and special education and educational administration university

professors who have a vested interest in the management and education of children and youth with disabilities must play an active role in determining such competencies.

The notion of "stakeholders" has been introduced and emphasized by several noted authors in the field of evaluation (Alkin, Daillak & White, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; McLaughlin, 1989; Patton, 1986). Patton (1986) described the term as "people who have a stake--or vested interest in evaluation findings" (p.43). He noted that "for any evaluation there are multiple stakeholders: program funders, staff, administrators, clients and others with a direct, or even indirect, interest in program effectiveness. They are decision makers and information users who have questions about a program" (p.43).

In a discussion of utilization-focused evaluation, Patton indicated that information needed for the success of an evaluation is not left up to the evaluator, but rather, should be determined by the group of intended users as well. He emphasized that stakeholders should share the responsibility for determining needed information in order to make future decisions.

He asserted that "a reasonable starting place in working with stakeholders is to find out how they think about and define evaluation. Rather than unilaterally defining evaluation, the utilization-focused evaluator will

work to discover the perceptions, confusions, expectations, and beliefs about evaluation of those people who will be the primary users of the evaluation" (p.44).

Patton's comments support those espoused by Alkin, Daillak, and White (1979) who asserted that stakeholders should comprehend and agree to initial evaluation proposals. These investigators contend that any intended information users should be involved in procedural decisions that impact upon the final outcome of the evaluation design.

The importance of involving stakeholders in such a process is also reflected in discussions proffered by Guba and Lincoln (1989) regarding the role of stakeholders in the evaluation process. These authors described the term in relation to fourth generation evaluation. Fourth generation evaluation refers to "a form of evaluation in which the claims, concerns, and issues of stakeholders serve as the foundation for determining needed information" (p.50).

Guba and Lincoln presented a strong argument in favor of using information derived from stakeholders based on the premise that each stakeholder in an evaluation is at risk by virtue of the fact that if evaluation results are perceived by them as negative, they may lose their stakes. Stakes may be viewed in terms of elements such as money, power, status, face, or opportunity. The "existence" of a stake, regardless, of its size or form, is ample reason for a

stakeholder group "to expect some form of input into an evaluation that affects it and to exercise some control on behalf of its own interests" (p.51).

Also referencing the evaluation process, McLaughlin (1989) defined stakeholders as "people who have an interest in the program and the outcome of the evaluation" (p.5). He noted that decision makers (e.g., school administrators) and evaluators (i.e., persons with technical expertise in the evaluation process) should all be involved in the evaluation process. McLaughlin emphasized that all stakeholders should be involved "in any phase of the evaluation, including generation of evaluation needs and questions, data gathering, standards setting, formulation of evaluation reports, and finally, determining how to use the results of the evaluation" (p.6).

Similarly, in a study investigating principals' perceptions of the quality of alternative inservice models, Daresh (1988) noted that attention needs to be given to the manner in which building administrators, in their role of inservice participants, should be consistently included in "planning the design and selecting the content of inservice, engaging in two-way communication, and gaining insights and relevant information regarding immediate daily administrative tasks" (p.43). Based on the voluminous amount of research conducted in recent years relative to inservice,

participants in Daresh's study expressed needs that "people want to have a voice in the design and implementation of learning activities" (p.43).

Relevance of stakeholder theory to the development of core special education competencies by building administrators, special education directors, and university professors. Based on the premises of the aforementioned authors, it may be presumed that stakeholders (i.e., building administrators, special education directors, and university professors) should have the opportunity to question and provide input into the identification and development of those core special education competencies needed by principals. The degree to which the competencies developed accurately reflect the needs of the potential users (i.e., the principals) will directly influence the acquisition and demonstration of the competencies by those users.

Since the roles and responsibilities of building administrators are already extensive, demanding, and tend to consume an enormous proportion of the work day, competencies that are unexpected may have low utilization by these individuals. Involving stakeholders during the initial stages of competency determination and development will not only help ensure that competencies will be relevant to the

needs of the intended users, but will most likely result in a high commitment to the findings.

Stakeholder involvement in the design, implementation, and reporting of competencies will serve to increase participants' perceived ownership of the endeavor. Additionally, due to the consistent exchange of information between stakeholders regarding needed competencies, the extent of communication between these groups will be increased.

Adult learning theory. Closely paralleling the tenets of stakeholder theory are certain aspects of adult learning theory (Ausubel, 1978; Brookfield, 1988; Brookfield, 1986; Lovell, 1980). Just as there is no universal theory that defines human learning, or that exclusively differentiates child from adult learning, there is no single theory of adult learning (Brookfield, 1986; Merriam, 1991). Therefore, when examining factors affecting ways in which adults learn, it will be necessary to consider associated concepts or principles that attempt to explain such phenomenon.

Attributes. Merriam (1991) reported that "the best known theory of adult learning is andragogy" (p.249). This theory, presented by Knowles (1980), defined the term as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (p.43).

Knowles outlined the following "model of assumptions" (p.43) underlying the concept of andragogy, which also

represents common attributes of the adult learner: a) along with maturity comes an increase in a person's self-concept--moving from that of a dependent personality towards becoming a self-directed human being; b) an adult accumulates an expanding supply of experience that serves as an abundant resource for learning; c) there is a close relationship between an adult's readiness to learn and the developmental tasks of his or her social role; and, d) as people mature, they become more problem-centered than subject-centered in learning.

In a 1984 publication, Knowles added the assumption that "adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones" (p.12). He was able to extract several implications regarding the design, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities with adults from these assumptions (Merriam, 1991).

Learner characteristics may also be described as they relate to a learner's personal history (Apps, 1991; Mezirow, 1990). "An adult's personal history can affect greatly what and how that individual learns" (Apps, 1991, p.39). Personal history may be perceived as influencing an individual's perceptions, as well as how that individual organizes, maintains, eliminates, and relates new information to "previous information that they perceive as similar" (p.40). Apps posits that "teachers" should consider their own

personal histories, as well as those of the learner, whenever teaching transpires.

In another discussion regarding facilitating adult learning, Brookfield (1986) described this activity as being based on the assumption that both the teacher and the learner share equal roles and that these roles are interchangeable. He noted that facilitators are typically designated as resource persons or helpers. The implication is that the facilitator will "assist" rather than "direct" the learner.

Brookfield (1988) also noted that there are three major paradigms of facilitation: a) the behaviorist, b) the humanistic, and c) the critical--with the humanistic paradigm being the most predominant practice of North American adult and continuing education. This paradigm, derived from the theories espoused by Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, and G. W. Allport, describes facilitation as a "collaborative" effort in which the teachers and the learners collectively determine objectives, methods, and criteria for evaluation. The learner's interests and demands are afforded much validity. The humanistic paradigm holds that the adult learner's educational desires and requests be provided in a manner prescribed by the learner.

In a comparable manner, Lovell (1980) posited that a teacher must first be able to identify as accurately as

possible which information the student is to learn. Before this can be done however, the teacher must consider the knowledge level and the conceptual make-up of the students regarding the information to be taught. The point at which teaching is to begin can be determined at a later time. Lovell suggested that the teacher begin teaching on the periphery of the student's knowledge in order to avoid either boring the student with information previously mastered or presenting information that may be too difficult for the student to learn.

Lovell supported the notions of Ausubel, Novak, and Hanesian (1978) that new learning is meaningful only if it is related to that which is already known by the student. Otherwise, the student must engage in the process of rote learning. Rote learning tends to take longer and information learned in this manner is less likely to be retained for lengthy periods since it is not supported by any previously existing information in the student's memory. Also, many adult learners have a practical reason for learning and usually focus on learning that is pertinent to their immediate needs (Apps, 1991).

Relationship of adult learning theory and stakeholder theory to concerns regarding the building administrator's role. The diverse nature of the building administrator's role in general dictates that he or she be highly cognizant

of the importance of emphasizing and prioritizing daily instructional and managerial tasks. Therefore, when learning needs are defined without input from the intended learner, problems in commitment and ownership of prescribed tasks may arise. Thus, the tasks to be mastered and ultimately performed, must be considered important by the learner. It is of paramount significance that the goals to be attained relate directly to the individual learner. In effect, the end product must be some logical combination of addressing the expressed needs of the learner, addressing any prescribed needs (e.g., deficiencies in competencies), and facilitating further skill development.

The ideas expressed by researchers in the field of adult learning theory support the principles associated with the stakeholder theory in that input from the learner (i.e., the building administrator) is an integral part of the process of successful selection and retention of fundamental information to be acquired. The emphasis in developing core special education competencies upon which building administrators may ultimately rely, should be placed initially on adequately defining those competencies.

Stakeholders must engage in an active investigation that produces information upon which they must reflect. Key questions for consideration such as the following should be posed: What are the competencies to be mastered? Who should

determine these competencies? How will that determination be made?

Involvement from multiple stakeholders will serve to broaden principals' perspectives, as well as to incorporate differences of opinion. Participants will be assured the opportunity to examine competencies and to challenge one another regarding their importance. Implementation of adult learning and stakeholder involvement strategies is a highly participatory process that tends to be peer driven, focused on immediate concerns of the groups, and based on learner experience.

General Roles/Responsibilities of Building Administrators

The advent of P.L. 94-142 (EHA), more recently known as P.L. 101-476 (IDEA), has had a profound impact on the role and functions of the public school building administrator at all levels of management and instruction. Frequently trained to execute educational policies and procedures rationally, principals are now challenged with the tasks of making subjective judgments, taking risks, and questioning the assumptions upon which they have operated. Prior to reviewing those special education competencies needed by building administrators, it would be helpful to understand the evolution of the principalship and its associated functions.

Historical overview of the principalship. Orlosky, McCleary, Shapiro, and Webb (1984) espoused that a traditional view of the principalship represents the position as one that is lacking in history. They noted that even though the principalship was the first public school administrative position to emerge, even today, it holds virtually no legal recognition in statutes.

In contrast to this point of view however, other researchers (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Knezevich, 1975; McCurdy, 1983; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1979) portray the evolution of the principalship in a far more illustrative manner. Wood, Nicholson, and Findley (1979) provided a concise description of the history of the principalship in which they noted that this position was "the first educational administrative position to evolve in the United States" (p.1). The authors indicated that while the secondary schools established in Massachusetts in 1647 did not actually employ managers known as principals, "they did provide a base for public recognition of the need for secondary education and its management" (p.1). Knezevich (1975) noted that "the secondary-school administrator is a direct descendant of the headmasters of the 'Gymnasia' and Latin grammar schools" (p.398).

The position of elementary principal evolved at a slower rate than did that of the high school principal, with

the role being defined as essentially that of "a teacher, a building supervisor, and the general clerical-chore person for a school" (McCleary, Shapiro, & Webb, 1984, p.51). Moreover, the principalship was established at the elementary level as a result of the growth that occurred within urban communities (Knezevich, 1975). Knezevich further commented that "the principalship was created, as the superintendency was later, to cope with complexities that plagued urban school systems" (p.381).

The position of "principal or head teacher" was instituted to relieve lay boards of cumbersome administrative duties such as hiring new teachers and providing books and other instructional materials to the schools. The term "principal teacher" presumably evolved with the advent of the high school during the early 1800's (McCleary, Shapiro & Webb, 1984). Noting that "the high school quickly developed into a public institution and became a direct continuation of the elementary school" (p.51), these authors cited two distinctive American developments as being contributing factors to the assignment of status and the initial non-instructional responsibilities to the high school principal: (1) the public nature of secondary schooling and (2) the creation of a continuous educational ladder.

Likewise, in a synopsis of the history of the principalship, Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) and McCurdy (1983) noted that during the late 1800's and early 1900's, principals were referred to as "principal teachers" or "head teachers" who taught classes along with assuming responsibility for a variety of clerical chores. In the absence of lay school board members, who actually performed most administrative tasks, the "principal teacher" shouldered the administrative role. However, "their primary relationship to other teachers was as senior or head teachers, not as managers" (McCurdy, 1983; p.12).

The position of the principal as a professional manager rather than that of "head teacher" came about as a result of an increase in the national population and the resulting increase in the sizes of schools. When it became obvious that administrative tasks were too cumbersome, school boards relinquished these duties to the building principal, along with the responsibility of supervising teachers and managing curriculum. With the exception of select positions in areas such as small, rural communities, principals no longer were responsible for teaching. McCurdy reported that "by the early 20th century, the job of the principal as school manager and instructional supervisor had been developed as we know it today. Since then that dual role has spread

throughout nearly all schools, rural and urban, large and small" (p.12).

Variance in principals' roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of the principalship have been described in diverse terms by numerous authors (Barth, 1980; Blumberg, 1987; Harris, 1987; Knezevich, 1984; Knezevich, 1975; Nottingham, 1983; Sergiovanni, 1991; Stronge, 1988; Stronge & McVeain, 1986). Prior to the mid-1800's, the responsibilities assumed by these administrators primarily included teaching, disciplining students, as well as the time-consuming tasks of maintaining records and school property. By the early 1900's the role shifted to include the allocation of a considerable amount of time being spent on management tasks (Lane, 1984).

Because of transformations in the design and content of public school educational programs, the principal has been obliged to assume many different roles--including those of chief administrative officer and fiscal representative of a specific school, professional negotiator, counselor for teachers, students, and parents within the school community, instructional leader, staff evaluator, building manager, and community relations expert. However, Orlosky, McCleary, Shapiro, and Webb (1984) maintain that despite the profusion of roles associated with the position, similarities do exist in the roles of principals at all levels relative to their

"general functions and to the processes used to execute those functions" (p.58).

Multiplicity of roles and responsibilities associated with the principalship. An expansion in the variability in principals' roles has also been accompanied by an increase in the actual number of roles and tasks associated with the position (Lane, 1984; Stronge, 1988). Factors such as "urbanization and the reorganization of the public school system converged to revise, enlarge, and multiply the roles of the principal. As the number of roles increased, so also did the number of expectations held for the principalship" (Lane, 1984; p.3). Administrative researchers and theorists view these roles and tasks from a variety of perspectives.

Principal as "global overseer". Barth (1980) described the principal as "ultimately being responsible for everything that happens in school and out" (p.13). Responsibilities include, but are not limited to the ensuing tasks: a) ensuring that staff is physically present on the job and working to their potential; b) ensuring that program standards are kept (i.e., teachers teach the required information and students learn this information); c) attending to parental needs and concerns; d) ensuring that each child is physically safe; and e) ensuring the physical condition of the school facility in general. Barth noted

that over the years the principal's role has evolved to that of "a provider of social services, food services, health care, recreation programs and transportation--with a solid skills education worked in somehow" (p.14).

Employing a potpourri of descriptors to describe the functions of the principalship, Knezevich (1984) indicated that the "functions of the principal are to provide leadership, facilitate change that can enhance school quality, and to manage efficiently and effectively all professional and instructional activities within an attendance center" (p.328). She noted that among the highest priority concerns for the principal are the selection and assignment of instructional personnel, as well as the continuing supervision of instruction and/or monitoring of learning progress.

Curriculum and instructional leadership responsibilities are recognized as being top priorities of the principal as well. Also important on the hierarchy of responsibilities, according to Knezevich, are the principal's ability to work with parents, citizens, and other patrons in general in order to foster improved school, community, and home relationships. Understanding the needs of the learner and fostering faculty motivation are viewed as additional priorities.

Blumberg (1987) reasoned that the "work" of principals may be viewed in a metaphorical context and is dependent on "the perch from which one chooses to view it" (p.41). His list of 63 metaphors obtained from other principals includes the following as job responsibilities for the position. The principal may be viewed as a "fire fighter, detective, super-teacher, toll-taker, quarter-back, Red Cross worker, psychiatrist, distance runner, coach, judge, choreographer, paper chaser, hospital orderly, and professor" (p.42). Blumberg reasoned that although a metaphor is only a figure of speech rather than reality, the above are typical of non-textbook descriptions of the principal's duties.

Blumberg also advanced the notion that "everything a principal does and how well he or she does it is somehow related to the viability, or lack of it, of a school as an educational organization" (p.43). He described these "everythings" that are based on observations and discussions with other principals as being related to these factors:

.keeping things going as peacefully as possible

.dealing with conflict or avoiding it

.healing wounds

.supervising the work of others

.developing the organization

.implementing educational ideas.(p.43)

Principal as instructional leader. The term "instructional leadership" is a relatively new term used in the literature on effective principals (De Bevoise, 1984). The term is defined by De Bevoise as "actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning" (p.14). These actions typically include "determining goals for the school, defining the purpose of schooling, providing resources needed for learning to occur, supervising and evaluating teachers, coordinating staff development programs, and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers" (p.14).

Although the focus of concentration during the 1960's and 1970's when describing the ideal or most effective principal tended to be placed on demographic characteristics such as age, physical appearance, gender, etc., several authors, nonetheless, place strong emphasis on instructional duties when describing the successful building administrator:

Harris (1987) characterized such a principal as one who is responsible for instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic; however, he noted that these principals recognize their first duty as that of responsibility to their students. Harris contended that the principal is responsible for ensuring that all students feel the following:

.that the principal and staff care about them

.that the school belongs to the students

.that students feel comfortable in their school

.that each student is a "somebody"

.that self-control is a vital asset to achieve.

(p.46)

He concluded that the building administrator, in effect, has overall responsibility for creating a "total school environment that is positive for all students and that is conducive to both good discipline and an appropriate education" (p.46).

Nottingham (1983) posited that even though the role of the principal is multifaceted, aside from his role as manager of the school, two major responsibilities surface as priorities. That is, the principal is primarily responsible for curriculum and instruction and for personnel development. Nottingham viewed the influence of the principal on the professional growth of his staff as being crucial to the development of a "creative, self-actualizing staff" (p.5-6). He also views the principal as being responsible for making decisions that affect the daily operations of the school.

In their summary of curricular and demographic trends for the next century, Cetron and Gayle (1990) project major changes in the field of education that will out of

necessity impact heavily on the role of the principal as an instructional leader. The authors surmise that heavy emphasis will be placed on curriculum and instructional areas such as birth to death curriculum and delivery systems, the development of a core curriculum for all students, added emphasis on higher technical literacy in areas such as vocational education and telecommunications technologies.

They predict that the principal will become the primary change agent for the school and will assume immense leadership responsibilities in areas such as shared governance and site-based management. These authors purport that the effective principal, then, will need to develop high-quality skills in these areas. Additionally, principals will need to be able to successfully manage and assume responsibility for the education of minorities (a group soon to become the majority student population within the next decade) and other special interest groups. Issues such as curriculum and methodology will be particularly vulnerable to legal challenges and thus important for the principal to effectively address.

On the other hand, Gersten and Carnine (1981) assert that frequently principals lack adequate training to be instructional leaders or they are inundated with other duties or time consuming tasks. These authors suggest that

instructional responsibilities may be assigned to other staff for implementation. Duties and assignments such as monitoring student and teacher performance, as well as providing inservice training to teachers may be delegated.

Principal as manager. Because of a changing school environment, today's principals have shifted their responsibilities from instruction to that reflecting a management/maintenance orientation (Stronge, 1990). In his examination of the building administrators's role in modern education, Stronge provided an analysis of principals' managerial task commitment to illustrate this notion. Analysis of the data presented revealed that between 1981 and 1986, as a group, elementary and secondary principals spent an average of nearly 55 percent of their time on management tasks alone. The ensuing table depicts these findings.

Analysis of Principals' Managerial Task Commitment as Reported in Selected Studies

Study	Year Reported	Type/Number of Participants	Methodology/ Duration of Study	Average Percent of Time Spent on Management Tasks
Martin & Willower	1981	Secondary Principals/5	Observation/ 5 days	53.9
Willower & Kmetz	1982	Elementary Principals/5	Observation/ 5 days	53.7
Bredeson	1985	Elementary & Secondary Principals/5	Observation/ 10 days	51.7
Stronge & McVeain	1986	Elementary Principals/32	Self-report survey-daily activities log/ 28 days	62.2
		Secondary Principals/11		52.6

Source: Stronge, 1990

Stronge cautioned, however, that "to view instructional leadership as segregated from management is a misconception of the role, and does injustice to the principalship" (p.3).

Conclusions regarding combined roles of public school building administrators. Over the years, essential tasks and roles of building principals have been described by administrative theorists in terms related to four major functions: a) planning - the establishment, development, and implementation of a school's goals and objectives; b) organizing - the pooling of human, monetary, and tangible resources for the practical attainment of goals; c) leading - management of staff; and, d) controlling - the principal's obligation to hold staff accountable (through the evaluation process) for acceptable goal attainment

principal's obligation to hold staff accountable (through the evaluation process) for acceptable goal attainment (Sergiovanni, 1991; Snyder & Johnson, 1985).

Sergiovanni noted that these and similar lists have subsequently been replaced by expressions of functions and tasks that assume the form of competencies and proficiencies. For example, in order to demonstrate competency in instruction, a principal might need to "understand and apply the principles of growth and development," or, "regularly assess the teaching methods and strategies being used at the school to ensure that they are appropriate and varied..." (p.20).

However, as Stronge (1988) has noted, the multiplicity of tasks (e.g., many unrelated tasks performed within the context of a regular school day), coupled with the diversity of functions performed (e.g., clerical tasks, building maintenance, administrative trivia, etc.), has resulted in the majority of the building administrator's time being spent on management tasks rather than instructional leadership activities. By these standards, the principal is still viewed primarily as an administrative generalist by many researchers. Realistically, though, the principal must be both an effective manager as well as a strong instructional leader--whether it be indirectly or directly

accomplished. This will call for redefining the principal's job description.

Essentially, the building administrator is the chief administrative officer and instructional leader of a specific school building. As such, he or she must be held accountable for the smooth operation of all programs and services within the assigned facility. Moreover, except in those instances in which entire schools provide special education services for children and youth with disabilities, principals typically are responsible for managing those special education programs assigned to their buildings (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1990). In sum, the public school building level administrator represents the individual who is ultimately held accountable for all managerial and instructionally related issues in the school.

Competencies Required of Special Education Administrators

The roles and responsibilities of special and general educators have been significantly redefined since the passage of P.L. 94-142 (EHA) and subsequently P.L. 101-476 (IDEA). Competencies relative to the position of special education administrator remain diverse and dynamic in nature (Herbert & Miller, 1985; Mayer, 1982; Nevin, 1979; Prillaman & Richardson, 1985). More often than not, the role of special education administrator is poorly defined (Herbert &

Miller, 1985) and is traditionally prescribed by federal, state, and local mandates, as well as current legal and educational issues.

Mayer (1982) developed a profile in which he described the special education administrator as one who performs a myriad of roles and functions in the areas of program advocacy, compliance monitoring, program planning, program implementation, program operation or maintenance, consulting, working with parents, legislation, and personnel (p.121-123).

In a 1988 study examining perceptions of competencies among special education administrators in Kentucky, Norman sought to define the perceived importance of 67 special education administrative competency statements and the extent to which each competency had been addressed in preservice training. Of the 187 surveys mailed, 123 completed surveys (66%) were returned. Survey results indicated that while all 67 competencies were deemed important by the administrators, those rated most highly were competencies relating to federal and state laws, regulations, and policies.

Similarly, Walker (1988) examined the perceived importance of 63 competencies as rated by a randomly selected group of approximately one-third of the special education administrators in Texas (N= not reported). The

respondents were also asked to rate themselves relative to their perceived competence in performing the tasks. Highest priority tasks were identified in the areas of administrative and support services, professionalism, finance, legal issues, student management, and professional self-management. Respondents identified the areas of finance, curriculum/programming, and technology as those requiring more competence. Based on the data analyzed, Walker noted that the consistency in agreement of tasks with highest priority among national leaders suggests the presence of commonality of tasks among those involved in the administration of special services.

Jones (1984) examined the role of special education administrators as perceived by principals, superintendents, and the special education administrators themselves. Utilizing 40 scientific tasks organized and assigned to the four function areas of planning/programming, administration, coordinating/communicating, and staffing, respondents were asked to determine the degree of importance they placed on each task as being performed by the special educator.

Survey results indicated that special education administrators perceived eight of the 40 tasks as being significantly more important than did the elementary principals. These tasks fell into the categories of administration and coordination/communication functions.

Superintendents perceived five of these same tasks as being significantly more important than the elementary principals. The special education administrators deemed two tasks in the planning/programming function to be significantly more important than did secondary principals.

Special Education Competencies Needed by General Education Building Administrators

The roles and responsibilities of the regular education building administrator are characterized by a multitude of tasks and responsibilities. Moreover, the mandates of P.L. 101-476 (formerly P.L. 94-142) require public school principals to assume increasingly greater responsibilities for the educational programming of children and youth with disabilities under their care (Davis, 1980; IDEA, 1990; Mayer, 1982). As the acknowledged instructional leader of a school, the principal plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of each child's acceptance and potential academic achievements (Davis, 1980; Goodman, 1985).

As building administrator and instructional leader of the school, it is imperative that the principal be knowledgeable of certain core information relative to the management and implementation of educational programs for children and youth with disabilities. However, information contained in the professional literature regarding the

principal's role for special education is sparse (Mayer, 1982; Raske, 1979).

One key study (Raske, 1979) indicated that only a limited amount of educational research had been conducted regarding "awareness of the operation, organization, and administration of special education programs" by building administrators. Raske noted that because of the increased responsibilities assumed by building administrators due to the mandates of P.L. 94-142, the administrator was required to readjust time normally spent completing general education administrative tasks.

Utilizing an exploratory research case study design, the investigator described current special education administrative tasks and the amount of time required to perform each task. Data were collected via a survey questionnaire sent to superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors of general education, and principals in 29 local school districts in Michigan. There was a 95.5% overall return rate for the survey (Note: N=not reported). The study noted that the following special education administrative positions, comprised of 15 specific duties performed in varying degrees, existed:

1. Participating in individual education planning (IEP) meetings
2. Filling out special education forms

3. Reviewing referrals for special education services
4. Supervising and coordinating the annual review, individual education plan, and follow-up system processes
5. Providing special education communications, either in written form or by telephone
6. Attending special education staff meetings outside the local school district
7. Attending special education meetings within the local school district
8. Preparing and monitoring the special budget
9. Observing special education instruction in the entire local school district
10. Interviewing prospective special education personnel for employment purposes
11. Developing the special education curriculum
12. Reviewing special education purchase orders, conference and field trip requests, etc.
13. Arranging special education transportation
14. Evaluating the special education staff
15. Arranging special education inservice programs. (p.646)

Results of the study indicated that the general school administrators spent 14.6% of their time in the performance

of special education administrative tasks while special education directors allocated 100% of their time to the completion of the same special education assignments. Raske concluded that the amount of time designated for fulfilling these duties was the major difference between the role performed by general school administrators responsible for special education programs and that performed by approved special education directors.

Nevin (1979) sought to determine competencies required by general educational administrators to implement special education requirements under P.L. 94-142. Using a collaborative goal analysis model, she generated 47 competency statements in this area. Each statement was rated by superintendents, assistant superintendents, and select principals from each of the 56 school districts in Vermont. Faculty members from the special education and educational administration departments at the University of Vermont also participated. Each competency statement was rated in terms of priority, required proficiency to effectively discharge the competency as required in the respondent's position, and actual proficiency in demonstrating the competency statement.

Survey results indicated that none of the statements was rated as unnecessary. Eight were rated as essential; 33 were rated as desirable; 6 were rated as useful. Those

statements rated as essential related to assuring due process, interpreting federal and state laws, using appropriate leadership styles, showing that records comply with due process and confidentiality requirements, resolving conflicts among program personnel, using evaluation data to make program revisions for exceptional learners, and determining staff functions and qualifications for educational programs for children with disabilities (p.364). In addition to generating a list of prioritized competency statements, training needs of the respondents were also identified.

Similarly, in a study seeking to define competencies needed by general administrators to permit them to effectively plan, supervise, and evaluate special education programs, Jobe (1984) surveyed 102 superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and directors of special education in 18 independent school districts and 16 selected special education cooperatives/joint agreements in Illinois. Using a list of 30 competencies based on those developed by Nevin (1977), respondents were asked to indicate the following: a) the importance of each competency for general administrators, b) the proficiency level required by a principal to adequately perform administrative duties, and c) the extent to which the respondent possessed each competency.

Jobe (1984) noted that the combined responses of all administrators yielded 10 competencies considered to be important. These included the following:

1. assure due process
2. develop least restrictive environments
3. evaluate performance of all personnel and recommend appropriate professional development
4. assess existing needs
5. budget time to develop new programs
6. determine staff functions/qualifications required to conduct special education programming
7. develop child find procedures
8. assist in redesigning programs to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities
9. develop inservice system
10. develop programs for unserved population. (p. 53)

Mayer (1982) viewed the building administrator as one who must serve as educational leader and program advocate, organizer and manager of the school's special education program, as well as organizer and manager of supportive services and administrative trivia. He assigned a variety of functions and tasks to each role. Mayer further noted that regardless of the size of the administrative staff assigned to a school, "the principal sets the tone for the special education program" (p.131). To this extent, the principal

must be reasonably knowledgeable of special education and he/she must be capable of assuming a leadership role in "establishing programs and gaining support from teachers and nonhandicapped students" (p.131).

Hyatt (1987) solicited feedback from 173 principals in the state of Virginia regarding their perceived levels of competency relative to the administration of special education programs, as well as to determine their attitudes towards the use of resources for professional training, and the need for additional preservice and inservice training. Twenty-four areas of confidence were explored, including inquiries in the areas of multidisciplinary team management and functioning, communication with parents, staff, and other professionals regarding the special education process and its related legal, managerial, and curricular issues.

Based on a 69% return rate (N=119), Hyatt found that principals surveyed were most confident in competency areas relating to compliance with division guidelines and time tables, understanding roles of support personnel, maintenance of records and reports, understanding the IEP and other procedural items. The principals, reportedly, felt less confident with areas relating to IEP development, understanding of P.L. 94-142, interpretation of assessment results, determining alternative educational strategies for students found not eligible for special education services,

assessing student programs, and comprehending the congruency between teaching styles of teachers and the specific educational needs of the students.

In a related study, recognizing that the academic training of principals in content areas related to special education is often deficient, the Connecticut State Department of Education applied for and was awarded a three year grant by the federal government for the purpose of training principals in needed areas of special education (Words + Numbers, 1990). In order to effectively execute the project, two major goals were articulated: a) knowledge of the current trends and implications regarding public education of youth with disabilities, and b) application of skills, abilities, and techniques that facilitate effective implementation of such knowledge (p.1).

Seven major competencies were targeted for use by the group and were noted as follows:

1. Demonstrates a basic understanding of relevant issues relative to the administration of P.L. 94-142 and the Connecticut general statutes.
2. Demonstrates awareness of current research and technology in several areas affecting special education.
3. Conducts periodic needs assessments of each component of the special education instructional

program.

4. Effectively coordinates the activities of special education and general education regarding curriculum to ensure the needs of both students and community are met.
5. Establishes an effective system of communication between regular education and special education personnel.
6. Develops appropriate modifications of the general curricular expectations for youth with disabilities.
7. Establishes procedures for the evaluation of school programs and the monitoring of student achievement. (pp.1-3)

Data were collected at the end of the training session from a summative evaluation model. Of the 84 participants, 80 completed assessment tools. Of those participants completing assessment tools, 79 (or 99%) indicated that the competencies were appropriate.

Johnson (1981) noted that principals must possess a good understanding of P.L. 94-142 in order to support its implementation. She described "a good administrator" as one who is able to utilize all available resources to facilitate the needs of the students. Johnson further posited that principals should develop good public relation skills in

order to "allay" parental fears regarding their child's educational needs. She described the present and future principal as one who will need to learn to manage a diversified student population.

Podemski and Marsh (1982) indicated that since principals ultimately have responsibility and are legally accountable for assessment and placement decisions for special needs children, these administrators should understand the appropriate use of tests in the diagnosis of children and youth with disabilities in order to sufficiently monitor the assessment process.

Similarly, Brennan & Brennan (1988) viewed the principal as the person with whom rests the final authority regarding legal and ethical issues relating to the implementation of P.L. 94-142. These authors asserted that the principal may be faced with the task of making difficult decisions that necessitate adherence to the law, as well as adherence to ethical concerns that may benefit students and others concerned with the problem. The principal, therefore should possess skills in mediation and other problem solving techniques. Brennan & Brennan suggested that the principal should be knowledgeable regarding legal and ethical decision-making strategies relative to discipline techniques for youth with disabilities, especially the emotionally disturbed.

In a discussion regarding the significance of the principal's role in helping to shape positive attitudes towards special education, Leibfried (1984) reported that in order to assist staff in becoming aware of the needs of youth with disabilities, the principal must maintain current knowledge of changes in special education policies that affect exceptional students, recognize the need for appropriate inservice, and communicate effectively with teachers, parents, and members of the community. The author viewed the role of the principal as that of a facilitator who encourages staff understanding of special needs of students by providing staff with current information regarding special education legislation, language and concepts.

More recently, two studies (Valesky & Hirth, 1992) and (Weinstein, 1989) have added insight to the body of literature regarding special education knowledge requirements for building administrators. Valesky and Hirth (1992) surveyed special education directors in the United States regarding special education law requirements for school administrators in their respective states. The survey included questions regarding information on endorsements offered, knowledge requirements for special education law, and a general knowledge of special education, as well as how that knowledge was acquired. Conclusions

derived from survey results indicated that "all educational administrators should be special education administrators through training in special education competencies" (p.405).

The research conducted by Weinstein (1989) was based on data gathered from four separate studies of special education programs that were completed in three Northeast districts. Using results from surveys, interviews, program audits, and curriculum mapping, Weinstein concluded that administrators in the three districts studied did not take full responsibility as instructional leaders for their school's special education programs. They were found to be deficient in the following areas: (a) awareness of guidelines for student placement into and exit from special education programs; (b) implementation of quality control mechanisms to ensure program delivery for students; and, (c) alignment of special education and general education programs as qualified by curriculum mapping data and program audits.

The information revealed in the studies cited indicate a need for clearly outlined core special education competencies designed for use in preservice and/or inservice programs for public school building administrators.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature reviewed provides a description of some of the factors associated with the manner in which adults learn, as well as significant factors contributing to their success in learning. Adult learning theory suggests that in order for significant behavior change to occur on the part of a learner, such training must be ongoing and relevant to the needs of the learner. The stakeholder theory supports the notion that each learner has a "stake" or vested interest in the learning process and is potentially "at risk" of losing their stakes if results are negative. Both theories suggest that the learner (i.e., the principal) should play a meaningful role in determining exactly what information is to be learned.

Additionally, researchers agree that the role of the principal is multifaceted and dynamic and that competencies required for management of special education programs are equally diverse. Several themes relating to competency requirements are recurrent throughout the readings and serve as catalysts for research in this area.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter addresses the methods and procedures used to investigate the research question and hypotheses associated with the present study. The following primary areas are included: a) Research Question; b) Null Hypotheses; c) Sample and Accessible Population; d) Instrumentation; e) Data Collection Procedures; and, f) Data Analysis Procedures.

The present study was designed to investigate core competencies necessary for the administration of special education programs by building administrators, as well as to determine how elementary, middle/junior high, high school building administrators, special education administrators, and university professors in Virginia differ in their perceptions of importance of these competencies. The degree to which building administrators perceive their level of knowledge relative to the core special education competencies was also explored. The study addressed three different phases.

Research Question

Phase I: Identification of special education core competencies. Phase I addressed the following research question:

I.1 What are the core competencies needed by principals for the administration of special education programs at the building level?

Null Hypotheses

Phase II: Comparison of inter- and intra-group ratings regarding perceived levels of importance of special education core competencies. Phase II addressed the following major hypotheses:

II.1 There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among building administrators, special education directors, and university professors in Virginia regarding their perceptions of the level of importance of building administrators' core competency needs for special education.

II.2 There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school building administrators in Virginia regarding their perceptions of the level of importance of building administrators' core special education competency needs.

Phase III: Comparison of principals' intra-group ratings regarding perceived level of knowledge of special education core competencies. Phase III addressed the following major hypothesis:

III.1 There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia in their perceptions of their level of knowledge relative to special education core competency needs.

Sample and Accessible Population

The sample populations for this study included elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals, local education agency special education administrators, and professors employed in educational administration and special education programs in universities offering state approved principal preparation programs in Virginia. In order to ensure adequate representation among the groups surveyed, the accessible population for the study included the following.

1. Building administrators from a composite list of 1637 principals noted in the 1991 Virginia School Directory were selected using a table of random numbers. A total sample of 270 (approximately 16%) elementary, middle/junior high, and high school administrators were randomly selected

from the 134 school districts in the state. A total of 90 principals from each level were surveyed. The final selections were examined to ensure that all seven geographical regions in the state were represented. The sampling was subsequently considered to be representative of the public school systems in the state of Virginia.

2. A total of 80 (60%) special education administrators in Virginia were randomly sampled from the same districts as the principals. A current listing of all special education administrators was obtained from the 1991 Virginia School Directory.

3. A total of 64 (60%) university and college professors of educational administration and special education were randomly selected on a stratified basis from the approximately 107 educational administration and special education professors employed in the 11 public and private universities in Virginia with approved principal preparation programs.

Special education professors represented 53% of the total number of professors in the sample population, with an N=34 for the accessible population. Educational administration professors represented 47% of the total number of professors in the sample population, with an N=30 for the accessible population. A current listing of the universities was obtained from the 1991 manual of State-

Approved Principal Preparation Programs compiled by the Virginia Department of Education Division of Compliance Coordination and Teacher Education Service.

Generalizability. Results of the study may be generalized to include all public school principals, special education directors, and special and educational administration college and university professors in Virginia. To a lesser extent, the results may also be generalizable to the overall population of public school principals, special education administrators, and university professors of educational administration and special education throughout the United States.

Instrumentation

A review of related studies yielded no adequately validated survey instrument for use in this study. Therefore, two surveys were developed by the researcher to gather necessary data. Survey questions were generated from several sources. These sources included competencies frequently cited during the investigator's review of the literature regarding special education competencies needed by public school principals, as well as competencies obtained from selected other special education experts.

Two separate questionnaires were developed--one that was completed by special education administrators and university professors and the other that was completed by building administrators. Since a variety of information was desired from the three groups, demographic data were varied among the groups.

1. Questionnaire for Special Education Administrators and University Professors. This questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part I - Demographics and Part II - Competency Rating regarding perceived importance of competencies for building administrators.

2. Questionnaire for Building Administrators. The questionnaire for building administrators consisted of three parts: Part I - Demographics; Part II - Competency Rating regarding perceived importance of items; and, Part III - Competency Rating regarding perceived level of knowledge of items.

Demographic data. Demographic information requested from building administrators included data focusing on each respondent's current work position and setting (e.g., elementary, junior/middle, high), district student enrollment, community classification (e.g., urban, suburban, rural, etc.), number of college credits accumulated in

special education, and total years teaching and administrative experience in general and special education. Demographic information requested from special education directors and university professors included data focusing on the type and number of years in each respondent's current position, university and school district student enrollment, as well as total years teaching and administrative experience in general and special education.

Core competency statements. Core competencies included in Part II (level of importance) of the two questionnaires were identical in design. Part III (level of knowledge) of the questionnaire for building administrators also contained the same competencies as those listed in Part II.

Since it was determined by the researcher that the core competencies selected for inclusion in the questionnaires fit appropriately under the seven major headings cited in the Connecticut Department of Education project (Words + Numbers, 1990), both questionnaires contained these seven headings, along with associated related competency statements. A total of 26 such statements were included in the initial survey. A statement requesting that respondents list any additional competencies they believed to be of importance was also included at the end of the questionnaires.

To produce questionnaires of manageable length, which covered the complete range of competencies outlined and which could be completed with relative ease by respondents, a Likert type scale was provided for each competency statement. Additionally, a cover letter explaining the survey was forwarded to appropriate staff and participants.

Development of Competencies and Questionnaires.

Competencies were developed to address the question and hypotheses noted. The original questionnaires included demographic sections appropriate to the groups, as well as the seven major competencies with 26 related sub-competency statements. The "list additional competencies" statement was also included on the questionnaires.

Initial development. The questionnaires were developed through a series of steps. Initially, a building principal, a state special education administrator, and a special education university professor were asked to complete the appropriate survey and to provide input regarding appropriateness of items, clarity of wording, and expected responses.

Determination of external content validity. Additionally, in order to ensure external content validity of each survey, the revised versions were presented to eight judges for review. The judges were divided into two panels

of four judges each. Each panel included (1) a school district director of special education, (2) a school district supervisor of special education, (3) a principal of a special education center, and (4) a university professor of special education administration. Each judge selected was considered to be an expert in the field of special education administration as determined by his/her position, experience, and area of expertise.

Panel review procedures. Both proposed surveys were forwarded to the first panel for review. Reviewers were asked to determine whether or not each statement represented a competency and to provide any additional competencies deemed appropriate. Inclusion of a competency in the questionnaires was determined by agreement of three of the four judges on each item. Additional competencies suggested by the panel were included also. Finally, panelists were asked to offer any suggestions in language that would improve the questionnaire. Revised competencies were subsequently forwarded to the second panel of judges using the same procedures. Results of the second panel constituted the final survey drafts.

Deliberations by the two panels resulted in the deletion of five and the revision of two of the original sub-competencies. Three other sub-competencies were added. The final questionnaires contained 24 sub-competency

statements categorized under the seven original major competency headings.

Pilot testing. Upon completion of the final survey drafts, additional pilot testing was conducted with (1) a school district special education director, (2) two school district special education supervisors, (3) three building principals (one at each level of instruction), (4) a school psychologist who has extensive work experience with special education student populations, and (5) a special education university professor. Pilot respondents were asked to establish content validity and overall appropriateness of the survey for purposes of this study by indicating, via a yes or no response, whether or not competencies reflected the following: a) content validity; b) were easily understood; and, c) were relatively easy to complete. Pilot respondents were also asked to suggest any changes in language that would improve the questionnaire. The survey instruments were considered to be appropriate for purposes of this study upon indication from the final pilot testing group that questions reflected content validity, were easily understood, and that the survey instruments were relatively easy to complete.

Summary of final questionnaire design. The final questionnaires consisted of demographic sections appropriate to the groups surveyed. Twenty-four sub-competency

statements, categorized under the seven original major competency headings, were included under Part II (level of importance) for all groups surveyed and under Part III (level of knowledge) for the building administrators.

A modified Likert scale with a value ranging from one to five indicated responses of no importance, little importance, somewhat important, very important, and crucial on Part II. A value ranging from one to five to indicate responses of very low, low, moderately low, high, and very high were utilized on Part III. Each section of the survey was preceded by specific directions for completion of the items. The surveys were designed to be as non-threatening as possible, in both wording and content, to participants.

It was felt that information regarding building administrators' perceived level of knowledge of competencies would add significantly to implications for future research and use of the study. Thus, it was anticipated that respondents would view survey results as a potential source for determining future needs in the area of special education for building administrators.

Data Collection Procedures

As previously stated, questionnaires were sent to public school elementary, junior high/middle, and high school building administrators, as well as to local special

education directors, special education and educational administration university professors, respectively, in Virginia. The building and special education administrators were randomly selected from the 134 school districts in the state. University professors were randomly selected from among the 107 professors of educational administration and special education employed in universities and colleges offering state approved principal preparation programs.

Each respondent was mailed the designated questionnaire in March of 1992. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope was provided. A total of 414 surveys were mailed initially. The first mailing yielded a total return of 227 questionnaires. One week following the due date of the survey, follow-up mailings were sent to those who did not respond initially. A period of 14 days was allowed for receipt of follow-up responses. An additional 88 surveys were received during this time period, with a total of 315 persons responding to the survey.

A breakdown of the questionnaire return rate is presented in Table 1. As noted in these results, there is no significant difference in the rate of return surveys among the building administrators as a group. Also, no significant differences in rate of returns was noted among the two groups of university professors or between special education administrators and university professors.

Table 1

Number of Questionnaires Returned

Respondent	N	Returned	Percentage Returned
Building Administrators			
Elementary	90	65	72%
Middle/Junior High	90	63	70%*
High	90	66	73%*
University Professors			
Educational Admin.	30	23	77%*
Special Education	34	28	82%*
Special Education Directors	80	63	79%
Total	414	308	74%

* The number of unusable surveys returned for each group was 4, 1, 1, and 1, respectively. These surveys are not represented in the above tally.

Respondents were assured of confidentiality of responses. Participants in the pilot surveys were not

included in the final survey results. The correspondence to accompany each questionnaire is included in Appendix A. The two questionnaires adapted for use in this study are included in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine measures of central tendency. Percentages, frequency indices, cross tabulations, means, and standard deviations were used to describe variables related to these categories. Mean scores and standard deviations by levels of importance and knowledge were obtained for each major competency category for each of the three groups. Data related to the competencies were analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) computed on the VM/CMS System at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. The SPSSX statistical package was utilized.

The MANOVA command on SPSSX was used since it is more flexible and can analyze any data that the ONEWAY and ANOVA commands can analyze. It can also handle within-subjects factors and multivariate problems. MANOVA performs a global test across all variables for each effect simultaneously (e.g., different but related variables). This is done so that the error rate does not rise.

MANOVA was used to determine whether mean scores among the groups differed significantly from each other regarding levels of importance and knowledge of competencies. To assist in ensuring that significant results were not obtained simply because many variables were analyzed at once, initially, a mean score on each major competency heading was obtained for each group of respondents (i.e., principals, special education administrators, and university professors). This was done by computing a mean score for each group of sub-competencies listed per major competency area (e.g., Competency 1, Understanding of relevant issues...[URI], was represented by obtaining the mean score by group of subcompetencies URI1 to URI6). These final mean scores were used to compute statistics outlined in the study.

Follow-up tests for significant MANOVA interactions (i.e., univariate F-tests) were automatically computed in the SPSSX package, as were multivariate tests of significance. Results from the Wilks Test were used from this grouping. (Note: Interaction means that the effects of one factor varies from level to level of the other).

Since ANOVA only indicates that means of groups are different, the Tukey Test (i.e., WSD - Wholly Significantly Different Test) was used as a follow-up to MANOVA measures. The WSD was used to determine which significant group means

were greater. The WSD is based on pair-wise comparisons. That is, regardless of the number of existing means, the means are compared in pairs. Any difference calculated between paired means that is greater than the critical difference (WSD) indicates that the pairs are significantly different. The Tukey, or WSD, is a special t-test that takes under consideration "that the researcher will find a significant difference between mean scores simply because many comparisons are made on the same data" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 553).

Type I error risk (i.e., rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true), was pre-set at the .05 level of confidence. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will support the notions that are expressed in the research question and hypotheses.

Limitations of Results

Because the results are based on 308 returned questionnaires, the 106 persons who did not respond could have influenced the results, thereby yielding different conclusions. It is important to note that there is no evidence included in Table 1 to sufficiently establish the existence of differences in responses that may have been obtained from those who responded and those who did not.

Ethical Safeguards and Considerations

This research design is ethical in terms of providing results that can be interpreted meaningfully (i.e., empirically). The data has been translated into meaningful statistical units that can be logically interpreted. The research design is ethical in terms of its use of human subjects.

In reporting results, only statistical summaries of responses have been utilized. In no instances has the identity of an individual respondent or school district been divulged or reported. Also, subjects have been afforded the opportunity to receive feedback from survey results. Thus, a summary of these results will be made available to the 35 practicing school administrators and university professors who have requested such. These procedures are in keeping with acceptable research practices as determined by the Human Subjects Review Committee, for the School of Education, The College of William and Mary.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter presents the results of analysis of the research data for the study and is organized as follows: (a) overview of study, (b) demographic information relative to respondents, and (c) findings of the research question and hypotheses. A summary of the findings concludes the chapter.

Overview of Study

The current study sought to investigate core competencies needed by public school principals for the effective administration of special education programs, as well as to examine the perceptions of elementary, middle/junior high, high school building administrators, special education administrators, and university professors in Virginia relative to the importance of these competencies. The degree to which building administrators perceive their level of knowledge relative to the identified core special education competencies was also examined.

Questionnaires

A review of related studies yielded no adequately validated survey instrument for use in this study, thus two separate questionnaires were developed by the researcher--one that was completed by public school building administrators and the other that was completed by special education administrators and university professors. The questionnaires (N=414) were mailed to a random sampling of 270 elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals (16%); 80 special education administrators (60%); and, 64 university and college professors of educational administration and special education (60%) in Virginia.

Return rate. The overall return rate of usable questionnaires for all respondents was 74% (N=308). Of these, building administrators represented 62%, special education administrators represented 21%, and university professors represented 17% of the group.

A total of 90 building administrators at each level (N=270) were included in the sample. Of that number, 194 principals completed and returned surveys, representing an overall return rate of 72% for that group. Of the elementary principals who were mailed questionnaires, returns were received from 65, also representing a return rate of 72%. Sixty-three of the middle/junior high school principals returned survey forms, representing a return rate of 70%.

High school principals returned a total of 66 questionnaires, representing a return rate of 73% for that group.

Sixty-four questionnaires were mailed to college and university professors. Fifty-one usable surveys were returned from that group, resulting in an overall return rate of 80%. Special education professors represented 53% (N=34) of the total number of professors surveyed, with a return rate of 28 questionnaires, or 82%. Educational administration professors represented 47% (N=30) of the total number of professors surveyed, with a return rate of 23 questionnaires, or 77%.

A total of 63 usable questionnaires were returned from the 80 special education administrators surveyed, for an overall return rate of 79%. This homogeneity of responses among the groups surveyed was considered to be acceptable as representative of the target audiences.

Demographics

Building administrators. Of the 194 responding building administrators, 171 were classified as principals and 22 were classified as assistant principals. Respondents from both groups were considered appropriate for purposes of this study. One additional respondent checked both position choices, and while not included in the breakdown of

positions, was included in the remainder of the survey since it could be reasonably assumed that he/she either occupied a combined role or was a member of at least one of the categories required for acceptance of responses. The building administrators were uniformly depicted at all levels of instruction, with approximately one third employed in the elementary, middle/junior, and high school settings, respectively.

Most of the building administrators who responded (62%) reported having spent between zero and four years in their present position, while only 4% reported having spent 20 or more years in their current position. Their combined years of administrative experiences were similar across all instructional levels--ranging from one to 27 years at the elementary level, one to 28 years at the middle/junior high level to one to 29 years at the high school level.

Less than half the respondents in this group reported having worked in an administrative capacity at the elementary or middle/junior high levels, while slightly more than half reported administrative experience at the high school level. Only a few principals reported having had any administrative experience in higher education or in a building based special education program (i.e., <4% and 5%, respectively). Even fewer (2%) reported having held either

special education central office or some other central office administrative position.

Building administrators' total years teaching experience in general education ranged from no experience to more than 30 years of experience across the various levels of instruction, with more than half the respondents reporting between one and five years of experience in the public schools. Only a small percentage (11%) had taught in higher education. Not surprisingly, a vast majority of these same administrators reported having had no teaching experience in special education across all levels of instruction, including preschool and higher education.

School district size for the building administrators ranged from fewer than one thousand to more than 20,000 pupils, while classification of the community setting in which they work ranged from urban to mixed communities. The majority of building administrators responding to the survey are employed in rural communities, followed by those employed in suburban communities. Also, more than one-fourth of these respondents are employed in school districts serving one to five thousand students. Approximately one-fourth of this same group are employed in districts serving 20,000 or more students.

Although almost a fourth of the building administrators reported having accumulated four or more college credits in

special education, more than half the group indicated that they had earned no college credits in this area of study. Descriptive data, based on the various demographic information requested from building administrators, is presented in Tables 2-5.

Table 2

Demographic Data - Building Administrators (General)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Position	Principal	171	88.6
	Asst. Principal	22	11.4
(Missing observations=1)			
Work Setting	Elementary	65	33.5
	Middle/Jr.	63	32.5
	High	66	34.0
District Student Enrollment	Under 1000	40	20.6
	1,000-4,999	54	27.8
	5,000-9,999	28	14.4
	10,000-19,999	23	11.9
	20,000 or more	49	25.3
Classification of Work Community	Urban	35	18.1
	Suburban	58	30.1
	Rural	77	39.9
	Mixed	19	9.8
	Other	4	2.1
(Missing observations=1)			
Years Present Position	0-4	119	61.7
	5-9	34	17.6
	10-14	19	9.8
	15-19	14	7.3
	20 or more	7	3.6
(Missing observations=2)			
College Credits - Special Education	0	97	51.3
	1	9	4.8
	2	7	3.7
	3	32	16.9
	4 or more	44	23.3
(Missing observations=5)			

Table 3

Demographic Data - Building Administrators (Years Administrative Experience)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Elementary			
	0	98	51.3
	1-5	38	19.9
	6-10	22	11.6
	11-15	19	9.9
	16-20	10	5.2
	22-23	2	1.0
	25	1	.5
	27	1	.5
(Missing observations=3)			
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	106	55.5
	1-5	39	20.5
	6-10	21	11.0
	11-15	16	8.3
	18-20	6	3.1
	28	2	1.0
(Missing observations=3)			
High			
	0	89	46.4
	1-5	44	23.0
	6-10	29	15.2
	11-15	16	8.3
	16-17	6	3.1
	19-22	7	3.6
	29	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
Higher Education			
	0	185	96.4
	2-4	7	3.6
(Missing observations=2)			

(table continues)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Central Office (Spec. Ed.)			
	0	188	97.9
	1	2	1.0
	3	1	.5
	5	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
Central Office (Other)			
	0	168	87.5
	1	7	3.6
	3-8	14	7.2
	11-12	2	1.0
	21	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
Special Education (Building Based)			
	0	182	94.8
	1-2	5	2.6
	5	2	1.0
	7-8	3	1.5
(Missing observations=2)			

Table 4

Demographic Data - Building Administrators (Years Teaching Experience - General Education)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Elementary			
	0	124	64.6
	1-5	24	12.5
	6-10	19	9.8
	12-15	11	5.6
	17-18	3	1.5
	20-22	7	3.7
	24-25	2	1.0
	28	1	.5
	30	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	103	53.9
	1-5	46	25.7
	6-10	20	10.4
	11-13	6	3.1
	16-20	8	4.1
	21-25	5	2.5
(Missing observations=3)			
High			
	0	87	45.8
	1-5	38	20.0
	6-10	27	14.2
	11-15	18	9.5
	16-17	4	2.1
	19-22	10	5.3
	24	1	.5
	27-29	3	1.5
	31	1	.5
	34	1	.5
(Missing observations=4)			

(table continues)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Higher Education			
	0	170	88.5
	1-5	14	7.2
	6	1	.5
	10	2	1.0
	12	1	.5
	18	1	.5
	20	2	1.0
	24	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			

Table 5

Demographic Data - Building Administrators (Years Teaching Experience - Special Education)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Preschool	0	190	99.0
	2	1	.5
	14	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
Elementary			
	0	179	93.2
	1-4	8	4.1
	6	2	1.0
	8	1	.5
	14	1	.5
	20	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	185	96.4
	1-4	4	2.0
	10	1	.5
	15	1	.5
	21	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
High			
	0	188	97.9
	3	2	1.0
	6	1	.5
	21	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			
Higher Education			
	0	190	99.0
	1	1	.5
	6	1	.5
(Missing observations=2)			

Special education administrators. Special education administrators responding to the questionnaire prepared for themselves and the university professors represented 55% (N=63) of the total number of respondents in this group. Nearly half of those responding had spent less than one to four years in their present position. Only a few reported having spent 20 or more years in this same position.

A large majority of these administrators (86-90%) reported having had no general education administrative experience at either level of public school instruction. The most frequent number of years of general education administrative experience reported by the remaining respondents in this group, across all instructional levels, was two.

Although the vast majority of special education administrators responding evidenced no administrative experience in either a building based special education program or in any other central office administrative position, most reported having between one and six years of special education central office experience. However, few reported having any university administrative experience.

Less than a third of the special education administrators reported having taught in general education, with most of those indicating from one to five years of experience. Only one special education administrator

reported having taught general education at the higher education level.

However, with the exception of teaching experience at the preschool level, special education administrators indicated that they had taught special education at some level of instruction in the public schools. Additionally, nearly 13% of the respondents reported having taught special education in a higher education setting. Descriptive data based on the various demographic information requested from special education administrators is presented in Tables 6-9.

Table 6

Demographic Data - Special Education Administrators (General)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Position	Special Education Administrator	63	55.3
District Student Enrollment	Under 1000	6	9.5
	1,000-4,999	33	52.4
	5,000-9,999	10	15.9
	10,000-19,999	9	14.3
	20,000 or more	5	7.9
Years Present Position	0-4	31	49.2
	5-9	17	27.0
	10-14	7	11.1
	15-19	3	4.8
	20 or more	5	7.9

Table 7

Demographic Data - Special Education Administrators (Years Administrative Experience)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Elementary			
	0	54	85.7
	1-3	6	9.6
	5	1	1.6
	8	1	1.6
	20	1	1.6
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	58	92.1
	1-2	3	4.8
	8	1	1.6
	17	1	1.6
High			
	0	57	90.5
	2-4	6	9.6
Higher Education			
	0	59	93.7
	1-3	3	4.8
	6	1	1.6

(table continues)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Central Office (Spec. Ed.)			
	0	3	4.8
	1-5	20	31.8
	6-10	24	38.0
	11-15	9	14.3
	16-20	5	8.0
	21-22	2	3.2
Central Office (Other)			
	0	54	85.7
	2-3	2	3.2
	3	1	1.6
	5	1	1.6
	8-10	4	6.4
	12	1	1.6
	14	1	1.6
Special Education (Building Based)			
	0	53	84.1
	1-5	6	9.6
	6	1	1.6
	8	1	1.6
	10	1	1.6
	14	1	1.6

Table 8

Demographic Data - Special Education Administrators (Years Teaching Experience - General Education)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Elementary			
	0	42	73.7
	1-5	12	21.1
	7-8	2	3.6
	11	1	1.8
(Missing observations=6)			
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	45	78.9
	1	2	3.5
	3-4	5	8.8
	6-8	4	7.1
	15	1	1.8
(Missing observations=6)			
High			
	0	43	75.4
	1-5	6	10.7
	7-10	7	12.4
	12	1	1.8
(Missing observations=6)			
Higher Education			
	0	56	98.2
	2	1	1.8
(Missing observations=6)			

Table 9

Demographic Data - Special Education Administrators (Years Teaching Experience - Special Education)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Preschool	0	57	100.0
(Missing observations=6)			
Elementary			
	0	25	43.9
	1-4	13	24.9
	6-7	6	10.5
	9-14	12	21.2
	21	1	1.8
(Missing observations=6)			
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	41	71.9
	2-7	13	23.0
	9-12	3	5.4
(Missing observations=6)			
High			
	0	39	68.4
	1	2	3.5
	3-10	15	26.5
	22	1	1.8
(Missing observations=6)			
Higher Education			
	0	50	87.7
	1-5	6	10.7
	7	1	1.8
(Missing observations=6)			

University professors. University professors constituted approximately 17% of the total number of survey respondents. However, they constituted 45% of respondents

(i.e., educational administration professors - 20% [N=23]; special education professors - 25% [N=28]) to the questionnaire prepared for themselves and special education administrators. While the majority of university professors (>80%) reported having no general education administrative experience at any level of public school instruction, more than half reported having had this experience in higher education. A small percentage of respondents reported having some administrative experience in a special education central office or building based position. However, almost a fourth of the respondents in this group reported having at least one year of administrative experience in other central office positions.

Not surprisingly, more than half the professors responding indicated that they had taught less than one year of general education at the higher education level (N=28, with most employed as professors of special education). Years of teaching experience in this area for the remaining respondents clustered between six and 30 years, with only a small number (N=4) indicating 20 years of experience at this level. With the exception of those at the 20 year level, 2% of the respondents expressed having had teaching experience at each year in the cluster.

Almost a third of the professors responding reported having had some general education teaching experience at at

least one level of instruction in the public schools. Nearly a third of the group reported having taught special education at either the elementary or middle/junior high levels. In contrast, more than half the group had taught special education at the higher education level. Descriptive data, based on the various demographic information obtained from university professors, is presented in Tables 10-13.

Table 10

Demographic Data - University Professors (General)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Position	Educational Admin.	23	20.2
	Special Education	28	24.6
University Student Enrollment	Under 1000	0	00.0
	1,000-4,999	5	9.8
	5,000-9,999	6	11.8
	10,000-19,999	23	45.1
	20,000 or more	17	33.3
Years Present Position	0-4	11	22.0
	5-9	8	16.0
	10-14	7	14.0
	15-19	15	30.0
	20 or more	9	18.0

(Missing observations=1)

Table 11

Demographic Data - University Professors (Years Administrative Experience)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Elementary			
	0	41	80.4
	1-2	6	11.8
	4-6	3	6.0
	8	1	2.0
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	42	82.4
	2	5	9.8
	4	2	3.9
	6	1	2.0
	17	1	2.0
High			
	0	42	82.4
	1-3	7	13.7
	8	2	3.9
Higher Education			
	0	27	52.9
	1-5	11	21.7
	7-10	6	11.8
	13-15	5	9.9
	17	1	2.0
	20	1	2.0
Central Office (Spec. Ed.)			
	0	46	90.2
	2	1	2.0
	6	3	5.9
	10	1	2.0

(table continues)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Central Office (Other)			
	0	39	76.5
	1-2	5	9.8
	5	1	2.0
	7-8	4	7.8
	13	1	2.0
	23	1	2.0
Special Education (Building Based)			
	0	47	92.2
	2	2	3.9
	5	1	2.0
	7	1	2.0

Table 12

Demographic Data - University Professors (Years Teaching Experience - General Education)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Elementary			
	0	37	72.5
	1-4	10	19.6
	6-7	4	7.9
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	33	64.7
	1-4	14	27.4
	7-8	3	5.9
	11	1	2.0

(table continues)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
High			
	0	34	66.7
	1-4	14	27.4
	6	2	3.9
	15	1	2.0
Higher Education			
	0	28	54.9
	.5-1	2	4.0
	6-10	4	8.0
	13-17	4	7.9
	20-26	12	41.6
	30	1	2.0

Table 13

Demographic Data - University Professors (Years Teaching Experience - Special Education)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
Preschool	0	51	100.0
Elementary			
	0	35	68.6
	1-3	14	27.5
	8	1	2.0
	13	1	2.0
Middle/Jr. High			
	0	36	70.6
	1-3	12	23.6
	5	1	2.0
	8	2	3.9

(table continues)

Descriptive area	Descriptive category	No.	Percentage
High			
	0	45	88.2
	2-3	6	11.7
Higher Education			
	0	29	56.9
	2	1	2.0
	7	1	2.0
	9-10	4	7.8
	14-15	4	7.9
	16-20	7	13.8
	22	4	7.8
	33	1	2.0

Findings

The study was organized into three phases: Phase I: Identification of special education core competencies; Phase II: Comparison of inter- and intra-group ratings regarding perceived levels of importance of special education core competencies; and, Phase III: Comparison of principals' intra-group ratings regarding perceived level of knowledge of special education core competencies. The results will be presented by addressing the research question and the three major hypotheses noted under each phase.

Research Question for Phase I - Identification of Special Education Core Competencies.

I.1 What are the core competencies needed by principals for the administration of special education programs at the building level?

Core special education competencies deemed necessary for the effective administration of special education programs by public school principals in Virginia were generated from those competencies frequently cited in the literature, as well as from competencies obtained from selected special education experts. Initially, a list of seven major competencies cited in the Connecticut Department of Education project (Words + Numbers, 1990), accompanied by 26 sub-competencies were submitted to various special education experts, including building principals, for review.

The revised versions were presented for review to two panels consisting of four judges each. The first panel of judges was asked to determine whether or not each statement represented a competency and to provide any additional competencies deemed appropriate. Inclusion of a competency statement was determined by agreement of three of the four judges on each item. Additional competencies suggested by the panel were included also.

Revised competencies were then forwarded to the next panel of judges using the same criteria for acceptance. Results of the second panel constituted the final set of competencies. This final set of competencies consisted of 24 sub-competency statements categorized under the seven original competency headings. However, to simplify discussion, reference will be made to the seven major competency headings during analyses of data. The core competency statements utilized in the study are included in Table 14.

Table 14

Core Special Education Competencies

Description	
Competency 1.	Understanding of relevant issues relative to the administration of P.L. 101-476 (formerly P.L. 94-142) and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children and Youth in Virginia, including:
	1.1 Identification and evaluation of children and youth with disabilities
	1.2 Alternatives to the provision of special education in your individual school
	1.3 Components of Individualized Education Program
	1.4 Concept of Least Restrictive Environment
	1.5 Strategies to enhance communication and to improve attitudes towards mainstreaming
	1.6 Development of recommendations based on individual pupil assessment
Competency 2.	Awareness of current research and technology affecting special education, including:
	2.1 Knowledge of current trends in pre-referral assessment and procedures
	2.2 Knowledge of components and comprehensive programs of developmental guidance and counseling services

(table continues)

Description	
Competency 3.	Identifying special education instructional program strengths and needs based on consideration of special student characteristics, settings, and curricula for:
	3.1 Student learning and outcomes
	3.2 Setting in which the curriculum is expected to be used
	3.3 Relationship of curriculum to other parts of total program
	3.4 Identification of sources of data that document program strengths/needs
Competency 4.	Coordinating special education and general curriculum to ensure the needs of both student and community through:
	4.1 Organized learning experience and activities in the curriculum
	4.2 Strategies for creating a climate of change so that school personnel (including students) will be accepting of individuals with disabilities
	4.3 Implementation of a variety of specific behavior management strategies, including discipline procedures for special education students
	4.4 Methods of supporting local parents of children with disabilities

(table continues)

Description	
Competency 5.	Establishing an effective system of communication between regular and special education personnel, including:
	5.1 Techniques to improve interaction and communication between general and special education
	5.2 Strategies to create a climate of trust among teachers, parents, and students
	5.3 Identification of barriers to successful communication
	5.4 Use of group work processes
Competency 6.	Modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of youth with disabilities, including:
	6.1 The process for determining modifications needed by general and special education students
	6.2 Knowledge of innovative mainstreaming approaches that promote success for all students
Competency 7.	Evaluating school programs, including:
	7.1 Determination of uses and approaches in program evaluation
	7.2 Identification of stages for at least one model of program evaluation

Analyses of data for hypotheses. The data regarding perceived level of importance and level of knowledge were collected by means of a modified Likert scale, with values ranging from one to five indicating responses of no importance, little importance, somewhat important, very

important, and crucial on Part II. Values ranging from one to five indicating responses of very low, low, moderately low, high, and very high were utilized on Part III. All three groups surveyed completed Part II, Level of Importance, while only the building administrators completed Part III, Level of Knowledge. Mean scores and standard deviations by levels of importance and knowledge were obtained for each major competency category for each group as appropriate.

Data related to the competencies were analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). To assist in ensuring that significant results were not obtained simply because many variables were analyzed at once, initially, a mean score on each major competency heading was obtained for each respondent. This was done by computing a mean score for each group of sub-competencies listed per major competency area. The final mean scores were used to compute statistics outlined in the study.

Follow-up tests for significant MANOVA interactions were automatically computed in the SPSS-X statistical package, as were multivariate tests of significance. Results from the Wilks Test were used from this grouping. In order to determine which significant group means were greater, the Tukey Test (i.e., WSD - Wholly Significantly Different Test) was used as a follow-up to MANOVA measures.

Type I error risk was pre-set at the .05 level of confidence.

Research Hypotheses for Phase II - Comparison of Inter- and Intra-group Ratings Regarding Perceived Levels of Importance of Special Education Core Competencies.

II.1 There are significant differences among building administrators, special education directors, and university professors in their perceptions of building administrators' core competency needs in special education.

II.2 There are significant differences among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia regarding their perceived core competency needs in special education.

Research Hypothesis for Phase III - Comparison of Principals' Intra-group Ratings Regarding Perceived Level of Knowledge of Special Education Core Competencies.

III.1. There are significant differences among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia in their perceptions of their level of knowledge relative to special education core competency needs.

Hypothesis II.1. dealt with determining the perceptions of all three groups regarding the level of importance of selected core competencies for building administrators, and in determining whether or not significant differences exist between the groups relative to their perceptions. Hypothesis

II.2. dealt with determining the within-group perceptions of the building administrators regarding the level of importance of their core competency needs. Hypothesis III.1 dealt with determining within-group perceptions of the building administrators regarding the level of knowledge they possess relative to core special education core competencies cited. For purposes of analysis, all hypotheses were converted into the null form. Results of the statistical analysis of each hypothesis follows.

Hypothesis II.1. There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among building administrators, special education directors, and university professors in Virginia regarding their perceptions of the level of importance of building administrators' core competency needs for special education.

Results of MANOVA - level of importance -(all groups). Cell means were computed for each of the competency variables (i.e., major competencies). Results of the Wilks multivariate test of significance on the interaction of variables by group indicate that a significant multivariate difference exists between groups. A follow-up univariate F-test indicates that significant differences exist on pairs of means related to all variables except Competency 3, identifying special education instructional program strengths..., and those related to Competency 7, evaluating

school programs. Table 15 contains the information regarding this analysis.

Table 15

MANOVA
Special Education Core Competencies - Level of Importance
All Groups

Description	Significance of F
Wilks Multivariate Test of Sig.	.000
*Univariate F-tests	
Competency 1	.032
Competency 2	.001
Competency 3	.072
Competency 4	.007
Competency 5	.003
Competency 6	.000
Competency 7	.411

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Results of the Tukey Test on the five significant variables indicate the existence of significantly different pairs of means related to all specified competencies (i.e., Competencies 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6). Moreover, significant differences in pairs of means were found between all groups on Competency 6, modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of youth with disabilities.

Significantly different pairs of means were also found between special education and building administrators on Competency 1, understanding relevant issues relative to administration of federal and state regulations; Competency 4, coordinating special education and general curriculum; and Competency 5, establishing an effective system of communication between regular and special education personnel. Significantly different means were found between special education administrators and university professors, as well as between university professors and building administrators on Competency 2, awareness of current research and technology. Significantly different means were also found between university professors and building administrators on Competency 5.

It should be noted that although none of the significant pairs of means evidenced any practical statistical differences, mean scores for special education administrators were consistently higher than those for both the university professors and the building administrators on all significant competencies. Mean scores for university professors were consistently higher than those for building administrators on all significant competencies except Competencies 2 and 6. The above information supports the research hypothesis noted. Therefore, the null hypothesis

was rejected. Table 16 contains information regarding this analysis.

Table 16

Results of Tukey Test (WSD)

Variable	Group	Difference Between Means	WSD (All Groups)
Competency 1	GRO 1 v. GRO 3	.18	.15
	GRO 1 v. GRO 2	.09	
	GRO 2 v. GRO 3	.09	
Competency 2	GRO 1 v. GRO 3	.18	.21
	GRO 1 v. GRO 2	.46	
	GRO 2 v. GRO 3	-.28	
Competency 4	GRO 1 v. GRO 3	.23	.15
	GRO 1 v. GRO 2	.15	
	GRO 2 v. GRO 3	.08	
Competency 5	GRO 1 v. GRO 3	.23	.18
	GRO 1 v. GRO 2	.03	
	GRO 2 v. GRO 3	.20	
Competency 6	GRO 1 v. GRO 3	.27	.21
	GRO 1 v. GRO 2	.48	
	GRO 2 v. GRO 3	-.22	

GRO 1=Special Education Administrators; GRO 2=University Professors; GRO 3=Building Administrators

q value (.05,3,300)=3.31

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Tables 17-20 list, by prioritized level of importance, the means and standard deviations for core special education competencies per individual and combined groups of respondents. The mean scores are based on a scale of one to five, with five representing crucial need and one representing no importance for inclusion of a core competency.

Table 17

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Importance Special Education Directors

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
Six	4.460	.624
One	4.393	.402
Five	4.369	.440
Four	4.357	.425
Three	4.111	.627
Two	4.000	.582
Seven	3.841	.671

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Table 18

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Importance University Professors

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
Five	4.342	.649
One	4.304	.526
Four	4.209	.628
Six	3.980	.810
Three	3.864	.654
Seven	3.847	.737
Two	3.541	.644

Table 19

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Importance Building Administrators

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	4.218	.474
Six	4.196	.564
Five	4.144	.501
Four	4.129	.476
Three	4.017	.517
Two	3.817	.631
Seven	3.741	.615

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Table 20

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Importance Combined Groups

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	4.268	.473
Five	4.223	.525
Six	4.216	.637
Four	4.189	.500
Three	4.012	.568
Two	3.810	.636
Seven	3.779	.648

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Hypothesis II.2. There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school building administrators in Virginia regarding their perceptions of the level of importance of building administrators' core special education competency needs.

Results of MANOVA - Level of Importance -(building administrators by work setting). Cell means were computed for each of the seven variables (i.e., major competencies). Results of the Wilks multivariate test of significance on the interaction of variables for building administrators by work setting indicate that no significant multivariate

difference ($p<.05$) exists between groups (i.e., the variance between the priorities given each competency by principals in the different settings was negligible). Therefore, there was insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Table 21 contains information regarding this analysis.

Table 21

MANOVA
Special Education Core Competencies - Level of Importance
Building Administrators by Work Setting

Description	Significance of F
Wilks Multivariate Test of Sig.	.717
Univariate F-tests	
Competency 1	.677
Competency 2	.070
Competency 3	.807
Competency 4	.738
Competency 5	.596
Competency 6	.857
Competency 7	.815

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Table 22 contains means and standard deviations for special education core competencies, by level of importance, for building administrators in all three work settings.

Table 22

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Level of Importance Building Administrators by Work Setting

Competency*	WS*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	1	4.246	.413
	2	4.233	.509
	3	4.177	.500
Two	1	3.914	.546
	2	3.869	.577
	3	3.674	.731
Three	1	3.988	.449
	2	4.049	.510
	3	4.015	.588
Four	1	4.116	.423
	2	4.168	.482
	3	4.106	.521
Five	1	4.109	.450
	2	4.197	.515
	3	4.129	.538
Six	1	4.203	.494
	2	4.221	.536
	3	4.167	.652
Seven	1	3.773	.556
	2	3.746	.603
	3	3.705	.685

*WS=Work Setting: 1=Elementary; 2=Middle/Junior High; 3=High

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Tables 23-25 contain means and standard deviations for special education core competencies, prioritized by level of importance, for building administrators in their individual work settings.

Table 23

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Importance Building Administrators - Elementary

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	4.246	.413
Six	4.203	.494
Four	4.116	.423
Five	4.109	.450
Three	3.988	.449
Two	3.914	.546
Seven	3.773	.556

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Table 24

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Importance Building Administrators - Middle/Jr. High

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	4.233	.509
Six	4.221	.536
Five	4.197	.515
Four	4.168	.482
Three	4.049	.510
Two	3.869	.577
Seven	3.746	.603

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Table 25

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Importance Building Administrators - High

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	4.177	.500
Six	4.167	.652
Five	4.129	.538
Four	4.106	.521
Three	4.015	.588
Seven	3.705	.685
Two	3.674	.731

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Hypothesis III.1. There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia in their perceptions of their level of knowledge relative to special education core competency needs.

Results of MANOVA - level of knowledge -(building administrators by work setting). Cell means were computed for each of the seven variables (i.e., major competencies).

Results of the Wilks multivariate test of significance on the interaction of variables for building administrators by work setting indicate that no significant multivariate difference ($p<.05$) exists between groups (i.e., the variance between the level of knowledge perceived by principals in the different settings was negligible). Therefore, there was insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Table 26 contains information regarding this analysis.

Table 26

MANOVA
Special Education Core Competencies - Level of Knowledge
Building Administrators by Work Setting

Description	Significance of F
Wilks Multivariate Test of Sig.	.717
Univariate F-tests	
Competency 1	.545
Competency 2	.283
Competency 3	.677
Competency 4	.904
Competency 5	.943
Competency 6	.848
Competency 7	.876

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

As a group, building administrators from all levels of instruction rated themselves as moderately low (i.e., <4.0) on their level of knowledge on all seven major competency areas. Table 27 contains means and standard deviations for special education core competencies, by level of knowledge, for building administrators in all three work settings.

Table 27

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Level of Knowledge Building Administrators by Work Setting

Competency*	WS*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	1	3.974	.560
	2	4.046	.483
	3	3.942	.573
Two	1	3.562	.658
	2	3.484	.719
	3	3.364	.767
Three	1	3.840	.578
	2	3.750	.629
	3	3.830	.652
Four	1	3.801	.613
	2	3.795	.593
	3	3.841	.683
Five	1	3.895	.693
	2	3.877	.624
	3	3.917	.649
Six	1	3.773	.718
	2	3.746	.722
	3	3.697	.854
Seven	1	3.531	.660
	2	3.525	.686
	3	3.583	.773

*WS=Work Setting: 1=Elementary; 2=Middle/Junior High; 3=High

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Tables 28-30 contain means and standard deviations for special education core competencies, prioritized by level of knowledge, for building administrators in their individual work settings.

Table 28

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Knowledge Building Administrators - Elementary

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	3.974	.560
Five	3.895	.693
Three	3.840	.578
Four	3.801	.613
Six	3.773	.718
Two	3.562	.658
Seven	3.531	.660

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Table 29

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Knowledge Building Administrators - Middle/Jr. High

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	4.046	.483
Five	3.877	.624
Four	3.795	.593
Three	3.750	.629
Six	3.746	.722
Seven	3.525	.686
Two	3.484	.719

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Table 30

Means and Standard Deviations for Special Education Core Competencies - Prioritized by Level of Knowledge Building Administrators - High

Competency*	Mean	Standard Deviation
One	3.942	.573
Five	3.917	.649
Four	3.841	.683
Three	3.830	.652
Six	3.697	.854
Seven	3.583	.773
Two	3.364	.767

*(1=Understanding federal and state administrative issues; 2= Awareness of current special education research and technology; 3= Identifying special education instructional program strengths/needs; 4=Coordinating special and general education curricula; 5=Establishing effective communication between regular and special education personnel; 6= Modifying the general curriculum for special needs youth; 7=Evaluating school programs).

Summary of Findings

In response to the research question regarding which core special education competencies are needed by principals for the administration of special education programs at the building level, a set of seven major competencies, accompanied by 24 sub-competency statements, were generated from those competencies frequently cited in the literature

and by selected experts in the field of special education. The competencies were validated by two panels consisting of four judges each. These competencies were considered representative of core special education competencies deemed necessary for the effective administration of special education programs by public school principals in Virginia and were utilized in the present study.

Additionally, multivariate analysis of variance, with accompanying follow-up tests were performed on the seven major variables for the three hypotheses noted. Significant statistical differences were found on Hypothesis II.1 between the means of the three groups on five of the seven major competencies addressed. Further follow-up tests indicated the existence of significant differences among pairs of groups on each of the five significant competencies identified. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected for Hypothesis II.1. However, no significant statistical differences were indicated for Hypothesis II.2 and Hypothesis III.1. Consequently, these two hypotheses were not rejected.

In summary, as a combined group, special education administrators, university professors, and building administrators indicated that five of the seven major competencies surveyed were very important (i.e., 4.0 on the designated Likert scale) for building administrators

relative to special education and curriculum. The remaining two major competencies were deemed somewhat important (i.e., 3.0) by this group.

When rated by work setting, no statistical significance was found to exist between building administrators regarding their perceived level of importance of the seven major competencies. Also, building administrators evidenced no significant statistical difference in their within-group perception of level of knowledge regarding the competencies. These administrators considered their level of knowledge relative to the competencies to be moderately low.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, Discussion and Implications

This chapter provides a summary and discussion of the major findings of the study. Implications for future research are also provided.

Summary

The continuously evolving role of the public school principal has been examined intensely over the past few decades. However, the role of the building administrator as it relates to management of special education programs has been examined much less frequently. Along with the advent of P.L. 94-142, more recently amended to P.L. 101-476, public school administrators have been charged with the task of providing an appropriate education for all students, including children and youth with disabilities. It is therefore imperative that these administrators possess a clear understanding of the law, its managerial and instructional implications.

However, given the multiplicity and the magnitude of duties and responsibilities assigned to building administrators, it is also essential that they and other key stakeholders be included in the process of deciding exactly

which core competencies are most needed. The importance of involving key participants in the learning process has been emphasized substantially in literature supported by researchers espousing adult learning theory (Brookfield, 1988; Lovell, 1980), as well as those emphasizing stakeholder theory (Daresh, 1988; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1986).

Generally, it is believed that because the roles and responsibilities of building administrators are already extensive, demanding, and tend to consume an enormous proportion of the work day, competencies that have low priority may have low utilization by the administrators. Thus, the tasks to be mastered and ultimately performed, must be considered important by the learner. Also, it is quite reasonable to contend that input from other key stakeholders such as special education administrators and university professors is needed in order to enhance preservice and inservice training needs of the principals.

With the above notions in mind, the present study was conducted to investigate core special education competencies needed by public school principals in Virginia for the effective administration of special education programs in their buildings. The study was also designed to determine how elementary, middle/junior high, high school building administrators, special education administrators, and

university professors in Virginia differ in their perceptions of the importance of these competencies. It was not clear as to which core competencies are considered as essential by this particular group of educators. The final purpose of the study was to determine the degree to which building administrators perceive their level of knowledge relative to the core special education competencies. The study addressed the above in three phases.

The study involved responses from surveys received from 194 principals, 63 special education administrators, and 51 university professors, for a total of 308, or 74%, of the 414 randomly sampled individuals from these groups. School districts represented ranged from those serving less than one thousand pupils to those serving in excess of 20,000 pupils.

The research question and hypotheses (stated in null form) were as follows:

Phase I - Research Question:

I.1 What are the core competencies needed by principals for the administration of special education programs at the building level?

Phase II - Hypotheses:

II.1 There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among building administrators, special education directors, and university professors in Virginia regarding their

perceptions of the level of importance of building administrators' core competency needs for special education.

II.2 There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school building administrators in Virginia regarding their perceptions of the level of importance of building administrators' core special education competency needs.

Phase III - Hypothesis:

There are no significant differences ($p<.05$) among elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia in their perceptions of their level of knowledge relative to special education core competency needs.

The research question was addressed via the development of core special education competencies generated from those frequently cited in the literature and from selected experts in the field. The competencies were reviewed by two panels of four judges each, resulting in a final set of seven major competencies with 24 accompanying sub-competencies.

The three hypotheses were tested utilizing descriptive statistics to determine measures of central tendency. Percentages, frequency indices, cross tabulations, means, and standard deviations were used to describe variables related to these categories. Mean scores and standard deviations by levels of importance and knowledge were

obtained for each major competency category for each of the three groups.

Data related to the competencies were analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) computed on the VM/CMS System at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. The SPSS-X statistical package was utilized. Follow-up tests for significant MANOVA interactions were automatically computed in the SPSS-X package, as were multivariate tests of significance. The Tukey Test (i.e., WSD - Wholly Significantly Different Test) was used as a follow-up to MANOVA measures. The WSD was used to determine which significant group means were greater. Type I error risk was pre-set at the .05 level of confidence.

Hypothesis II.1. was concerned with statistically determining the level of importance of the core special education competencies presented for building administrators as perceived by university professors and building and special education administrators in Virginia. This hypothesis was rejected for all but two of the seven major competencies presented--Competency 3, identifying special education instructional program strengths, and Competency 7, evaluating school programs.

Statistically (though not practically) significant pairs of means were identified on the Tukey Test relative to

the five significant variables. Significantly different pairs of means were found among all groups on Competency 6, modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of youth with disabilities. Significant differences in means were also found between special education and building administrators on Competency 1, understanding relevant issues relative to administration of federal and state regulations; Competency 4, coordinating special education and general curriculum; and Competency 5, establishing an effective system of communication between regular and special education personnel. Significant differences in means were found between special education administrators and university professors, as well as between university professors and building administrators on Competency 2, awareness of current research and technology. Significant means were also found between university professors and building administrators on Competency 5.

In summary, the differences in means for Competencies 1, 4, and 5 were statistically significant for the special education and building administrators. The differences in means for Competency 2 were statistically significant for the special education administrators and university professors, as well as for the university professors and building administrators. The differences in means for Competency 6 were statistically significant for all groups

surveyed. All other pairs of means per significant competencies are considered to be statistically equal. However, because of the negligible size of variance between the pairs of means, none of the differences between competencies were deemed to be practically significant between the groups.

It should also be noted that although none of the significant competencies received less than a 3.0 rating (somewhat important), mean scores for special education administrators were consistently higher than those for both the university professors and the building administrators on all significant competencies. Mean scores for university professors were consistently higher than those for building administrators on all significant competencies except Competency 2 (awareness of current research and technology) and Competency 6 (modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of youth with disabilities). However, only Competencies 1, 4, 5, and 6 received a combined group rating of >4.0 (very important). Competency 2 was rated as >3.0 by the group. Thus, when comparing administrative and educational roles, the groups that are more highly trained in special education (i.e., special education administrators and university professors) appear to place more emphasis (statistically) on the level of importance of the competencies noted.

Summarily, when viewed as a group, building administrators deemed Competencies 1, 6, 5, and 4 as being very important in prioritized order. Special education administrators viewed Competencies 6, 1, 5, 4, and 2 as being very important in prioritized order; and, the university professors viewed Competencies 5, 1, and 4 as being very important in prioritized order. All three groups agree that Competency 1, understanding relevant issues relative to administration of federal and state regulations; Competency 4, coordinating special education and general curriculum; and Competency 5, establishing an effective system of communication between regular and special education personnel are core concepts that should be acquired by building administrators. Both the university professors and the building administrators viewed Competency 2, awareness of current research and technology, as being somewhat important. Consideration should be given to including this area also.

Hypothesis II.2. was concerned with statistically determining the level of importance of the core special education competencies presented for building administrators as perceived by elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia. There was insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis since the variance between the priorities given each competency by the

principals in the different settings was negligible. As a group (by work setting), the principals viewed Competencies 1, 6, 5, and 4 as very important.

Hypothesis III.1. dealt with determining whether or not significant differences exist among the principals as a group regarding their perceived level of knowledge relative to core special education competency needs. No significant multivariate differences ($p<.05$) were found to exist between groups on this measure. Therefore, there was insufficient evidence to reject the null Hypothesis. Building administrators considered their level of knowledge relative to the competencies to be moderately low (<4.0).

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the findings of this study.

1. Five of the seven major core special education competencies presented were viewed by building administrators, special education administrators, and university professors surveyed in Virginia as being significantly important for building administrators.

2. Significant statistical differences were found in the perceptions of building administrators, special education administrators, and university professors surveyed in Virginia regarding their perceived level of importance of

core special education competencies needed by building administrators. Competencies 1, 4, 5, and 6 were viewed by the combined group as being very important, while Competency 2 was viewed as being somewhat important. However, when viewed individually, the groups attached varying levels of priority to these same competencies.

3. Building administrators as a group evidenced no significant differences in their perceptions of the level of importance for the core competencies identified as significant. As a group, they considered competencies 1, 6, 5, and 4 as very important in prioritized order.

4. Building administrators evidenced no significant statistical differences in their perceptions of their own level of knowledge regarding significant core special education competencies. These administrators rated themselves moderately low (3) on essentially all competency areas.

Discussion

The evidence acquired from respondents surveyed, and subsequent statistical analysis associated with this data, supported the conclusions noted above. While there was only one statistically significant hypothesis found in this study, there are further practical points deserving of discussion.

For example, in order to clearly understand the potential diversity of opinions that was anticipated and ultimately received from the respondents, it is important to examine a profile of the three groups. Most of the principals responding (62%) had spent between zero and four years in their present administrative positions; and, while more than half had taught between one and five years in general education in the public schools, the vast majority had no teaching or administrative experience in special education in this setting. In addition, more than half the principals had earned no college credits in special education.

On the other hand, almost a third of the special education administrators reported having taught general education in the public schools, and had taught some level of special education in this setting as well. Also, most of the special education administrators responding reported having between one and six years of special education central office experience, with nearly half indicating that they had spent between one and four years in their present position. The majority of the special education administrators surveyed evidenced no general education administrative experience, however.

Similarly, more than 80% of the responding university professors indicated that they had had no general education

administrative experience as principals in the public schools, but almost a fourth of the group had worked in a central office administrative position. Many of the professors had taught either general or special education in the public schools, with more than half having taught special education at the college or university level. It appears then from this profile, that the special education administrators and university professors surveyed possess some degree of knowledge regarding general education in addition to that of their primary areas of professional concentration.

In contrast, the responding building administrators appear to have little or no professional experience related to special education. In sum, even though special education administrators and university professors responding to this survey appear to share more commonalities in their professional experiences than do the building administrators and themselves, the educational and professional experiences exhibited by all respondents represent three group profiles that are uniquely reflective of their respective areas of primary concentration.

Of interest also is the fact that even though building administrators indicated that they possess a moderately low level of knowledge of the special education competencies outlined, in fact, the reality of the situation is that

their self-ratings may actually be much lower than those reported and should be viewed with caution. This notion is supported through the research of several investigators. Wohlers and London (1989), for example, examined relationships between the perceived difficulty of making ratings and the agreement among different sources of ratings, including self-rating sources. Upon examining 30 managerial characteristic items they found that self-ratings are more highly correlated with the average of co-worker ratings than with any one co-worker rating. They also found that average co-worker ratings tended to follow the same pattern as self-ratings across patterns examined. Along this same vein, Harris and Schaubroeck (1988), suggested that information obtained from self-ratings frequently show lack of agreement between self-ratings and those provided by other sources. To this end, self-ratings from the principals may be viewed as somewhat unreliable. Moreover, given their overall educational training, their seemingly relatively limited exposure to special education, and the tendency of individuals to generally rate themselves higher on surveys, one may assume that the principals, as a group, probably rated themselves higher on their level of knowledge of special education core competencies.

Implications

The sample of this study is rigorously randomized such that the results obtained may be considered sufficient and representative of the population of building administrators, special education administrators, and university professors surveyed. The results of the study indicate that preservice and inservice training for the principals should include information included in the five significant core competency areas. In the least, those areas rated with a mean of 4.0 or more should be considered for inclusion in this training. The mean of 4.0 was selected since it reflected a high area of consideration by members of all three groups.

Moreover to identify training needs, it is very important to observe the discrepancy between actual level of knowledge and the priority levels set for each competency. Since it is likely that principals as a group possess low to moderately low skills in each of the significant competency areas, it would be logical to address the competencies identified. Additionally, state level inservice needs for principals may be identified by examining these same competencies.

Based on the above information, the following implications for further research are suggested:

1. To examine the extent that these competencies could impact on preservice and inservice training, a more detailed

examination and analysis of building administrators' level of knowledge would be needed. This would provide a more accurate assessment of competency skills actually needed by this group.

2. It may be useful also to compare the relationship between building administrators and their level of knowledge to the degree of services provided to children and youth with disabilities housed in their particular buildings.

3. A more extensive study could be conducted that includes examination of core special education competency needs of building administrators in other states.

4. It would also be useful to examine more carefully the nature of the preservice program from which building administrators graduated. Information from this venture could be compared to that obtained in the current study and could be used to determine preservice needs for institutions of higher education.

In conclusion, it is believed that this study will provide special education administrators, university professors, building administrators, and members of state education agencies with useful information regarding special education core competency needs of public school principals in Virginia.

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APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE ACCOMPANYING QUESTIONNAIRE

March 2, 1992

Dear Educator:

You are part of a carefully selected sample of individuals to be consulted in a study regarding the identification of core special education competencies needed for elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in Virginia. As a result of recent revisions in state and federal guidelines, significant changes involving the relationship between general and special education have occurred. It is the purpose of this survey to address this issue by doing the following:

1. Compiling a listing, based on university professors', building and special education administrators' perceptions of core special education competencies needed for principals assigned management of special education programs.
2. Comparing intergroup perceptions of identified competencies.
3. Prioritizing competencies based on building administrators' perceived level of knowledge relative to each competency.

Your response is important as it will add to a data base and the results shared with decision makers who will be determining future trends in preservice and inservice training for building administrators. Currently, it is not clear how the perceptions of the three groups to be surveyed compare.

The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and should be returned to me in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope by **March 12, 1992.** The survey itself contains no identifying marks and both you and your school district will remain anonymous in the reporting of data. The return envelope is coded in order to assist in follow-up of non-respondents. A summary of survey results will be provided at your request.

If you have questions regarding the survey, you may contact me at (804) 547-9231 (Home) / (804) 395-2337 (Office), or my advisor, Dr. James H. Stronge, at (804) 221-2339 (Office). Please accept my sincere thanks in advance for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

JoAnne Y. Carver
Doctoral Candidate
James H. Stronge, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

March 19, 1992

Dear Educator:

Several days ago I wrote to you requesting your assistance in completing a questionnaire designed to gather information which will be used in my doctoral dissertation. In order to analyze the results of the study satisfactorily, it is very important that a sufficient number of questionnaires be returned. If you have already returned the questionnaire to me, please disregard this request. If not, for your convenience, I am enclosing another questionnaire with an accompanying stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The enclosed questionnaire is designed to provide insight into which core special education competencies are needed by building principals, as well as the principals' perceived level of knowledge relative to each competency. This study should benefit school principals specifically, and special education directors, university professors and students of administration generally. Your response is important as it will add to a data base and the results shared with decision makers who will be determining future trends in preservice and inservice training for building administrators. Currently, it is not clear how the perceptions of the three groups to be surveyed compare. The questionnaire contains no identifying marks and both you and your school district will remain anonymous in the reporting of data. If you are a principal who does not assume direct responsibility for a special education program, please pass the questionnaire on to the appropriate administrator in your school.

Please know that I truly respect the time demands upon your position and would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete and return the questionnaire. If you would like a summary of these findings, please indicate by noting your name and address on the enclosed card which may be returned along with the questionnaire. Again, thank you for assisting me with this project.

Sincerely,

JoAnne Y. Carver
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES

Special Education Core Competency Checklist
(To be Completed by Building Administrators)

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this checklist is to ascertain your personal judgment regarding the importance of the following competencies for you as a building administrator relative to special education administration and curriculum.

Part I: Demographics - Please fill in the information requested below.

1. Position: ___Principal ___Assistant Principal

2. Work Setting: ___Elementary ___Middle/Jr. High ___Senior High

3. Student Enrollment of Your District: ___under 1000 ___1000-4,999 ___5000-5,999

   ___10,000-19,999 ___20,000 or more

4. Classification of the Community in which you work:

   ___Urban ___Suburban ___Rural ___Mixed ___Other (Specify:_____)

5. Number of Years in Present Position: ___0-4 ___5-9 ___10-14 ___15-19 ___20 or more

6. Years Administrative Experience at each level: ___Elem. ___Middle/Jr. High ___High

   ___Higher Education ___Central Office (Spec. Ed.) ___Central Office (Other) ___Spec. Ed. (Bldg. Based)

7. Total Years Teaching Experience at each level:

   Gen. Ed.: ___Elem. ___Middle/Jr. High ___High ___Higher Ed.

   Spec. Ed.: ___Preschool ___Elem. ___Middle/Jr. High ___High ___Higher Ed.

8. Number of College Credits in Special Education:

   ___0 ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 or more

PART II: Rating of Competency Importance - Please rate each statement regarding your perception of the importance of the competencies noted for you as a building administrator by circling one of the following:

NI - Of No Importance LI - Little Importance SI - Somewhat Important VI - Very Important CR - Crucial

1. Understanding of relevant issues relative to the administration of P.L. 101-476 (formerly P.L. 94-142) and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs For Children and Youth in Virginia including:

1.1 Identification and evaluation of children and youth with disabilities	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.2 Alternatives to the provision of special education in your individual school	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.3 Components of Individualized Education Program	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.4 Concept of Least Restrictive Environment	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.5 Strategies to enhance communication and to improve attitudes towards mainstreaming	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.6 Development of recommendations based on results of individual pupil assessment	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

2. Awareness of current research and technology affecting special education including:

2.1 Knowledge of current trends in pre-referral assessment and procedures	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
2.2 Knowledge of components and comprehensive programs of developmental guidance and counseling services	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

NI - Of No Importance LI - Little Importance SI - Somewhat Important VI - Very Important CR - Crucial

3. Identifying special education instructional program strengths and needs based on consideration of special student characteristics, settings, and curricula for:

3.1 Student learning and outcomes	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
3.2 Setting in which the curriculum is expected to be used	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
3.3 Relationship of curriculum to other parts of total program	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
3.4 Identification of sources of data that document program strengths/needs	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

4. Coordinating special education and general curriculum to ensure the needs of both student and community through:

4.1 Organized learning experience and activities in the curriculum	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
4.2 Strategies for creating a climate of change so that school personnel (including students) will be accepting of individuals with disabilities	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
4.3 Implementation of a variety of specific behavior management strategies, including discipline procedures for special education students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
4.4 Methods of supporting local parents of children with disabilities	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

NI - Of No Importance LI - Little Importance SI - Somewhat Important VI - Very Important CR - Crucial

5. Establishing an effective system of communication between regular and special education personnel including:					
5.1 Techniques to improve interaction and communication between general and special education	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
5.2 Strategies to create a climate of trust among teachers, parents, and students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
5.3 Identification of barriers to successful communication	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
5.4 Use of group work processes	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
6. Modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of youth with disabilities including:					
6.1 The process for determining modifications needed by general and special education students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
6.2 Knowledge of innovative mainstreaming approaches that promote success for all students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
7. Evaluating school programs including:					
7.1 Determination of uses and approaches in program evaluation	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
7.2 Identification of stages for at least one model of program evaluation	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

8. Other (List any additional competencies you believe should be added in this section).

PART III: The purpose of this checklist is to ascertain your personal judgment regarding your level of knowledge relative to special education administration and curriculum. This rating reflects the degree of knowledge you believe you currently possess in each area. Please rate each statement in the right hand column by circling one of the following:

VL - Very Low L - Low ML - Moderately Low H - High VH - Very High

1. Understanding of relevant issues relative to the administration of P.L. 101-476 (formerly P.L. 94-142) and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs For Children and Youth in Virginia including:

1.1 Identification and evaluation of children and youth with disabilities	VL	L	ML	H	VH
1.2 Alternatives to the provision of special education in your individual school	VL	L	ML	H	VH
1.3 Components of Individualized Education Program	VL	L	ML	H	VH
1.4 Concept of Least Restrictive Environment	VL	L	ML	H	VH
1.5 Strategies to enhance communication and to improve attitudes towards mainstreaming	VL	L	ML	H	VH
1.6 Development of recommendations based on results of individual pupil assessment	VL	L	ML	H	VH

2. Awareness of current research and technology affecting special education including:

2.1 Knowledge of current trends in pre-referral assessment and procedures	VL	L	ML	H	VH
2.2 Knowledge of components and comprehensive programs of developmental guidance and counseling services	VL	L	ML	H	VH

VL - Very Low L - Low ML - Moderately Low H - High VH - Very High

3. Identifying special education instructional program strengths and needs based on consideration of special student characteristics, settings, and curricula for:					
3.1 Student learning and outcomes	VL	L	ML	H	VH
3.2 Setting in which the curriculum is expected to be used	VL	L	ML	H	VH
3.3 Relationship of curriculum to other parts of total program	VL	L	ML	H	VH
3.4 Identification of sources of data that document program strengths/needs	VL	L	ML	H	VH
4. Coordinating special education and general curriculum to ensure the needs of both student and community through:					
4.1 Organized learning experiences and activities in the curriculum	VL	L	ML	H	VH
4.2 Strategies for creating a climate of change so that school personnel (including students) will be accepting of individuals with disabilities	VL	L	ML	H	VH
4.3 Implementation of a variety of specific behavior management strategies, including discipline procedures for special education students	VL	L	ML	H	VH
4.4 Methods of supporting local parents of children with disabilities	VL	L	ML	H	VH

VL - Very Low L - Low ML - Moderately Low H - High VH - Very High

5. Establishing an effective system of communication between regular and special education personnel including:

5.1 Techniques to improve interaction and communication between general and special education	VL	L	ML	H	VH
5.2 Strategies to create a climate of trust among teachers, parents, and students	VL	L	ML	H	VH
5.3 Identification of barriers to successful communication	VL	L	ML	H	VH
5.4 Use of group work processes	VL	L	ML	H	VH

6. Modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of youth with disabilities including:

6.1 The process for determining modifications needed by general and special education students	VL	L	ML	H	VH
6.2 Knowledge of innovative mainstreaming approaches that promote success for all students	VL	L	ML	H	VH

7. Evaluating school programs including:

7.1 Determination of uses and approaches in program evaluation	VL	L	ML	H	VH
7.2 Identification of stages for at least one model of program evaluation	VL	L	ML	H	VH

8. Other (List any additional competencies you believe should be added in this section).

Thank you for your input!

Be sure to return your completed survey by March 12, 1992 in the stamped self-addressed envelope provided. If you wish to receive a copy of the results of this study, please enter your name and mailing address on the enclosed card and return it to me as soon as possible.

Special Education Core Competency Checklist
(To be Completed by Special Education Administrators and University Professors)

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this checklist is to ascertain your personal judgment regarding **the importance** of the following competencies for building administrators relative to special education administration and curriculum.

PART I: Demographics - Please fill in the information requested below.

1. Position: ___Special Education Administrator ___Professor, Educational Administration

   ___Professor, Special Education

2. Student Enrollment of Your District or University: ___under 1000 ___1000-4,999

   ___5000-9,999 ___10,000-19,999 ___20,000 or more

3. Total Years Teaching Experience at each level:

   Gen. Ed.: ___Elem. ___Middle/Jr. High ___High ___Higher Ed.

   Spec. Ed.: ___Preschool ___Elem. ___Middle/Jr. High ___High ___Higher Ed.

4. Years Administrative Experience at each level: ___Elem. ___Middle/Jr. High ___High

   ___Higher Education ___Central Office (Spec. Ed.) ___Central Office (Other) ___Spec. Ed. (Bldg. Based)

5. Number of Years in Present Position: ____0-4 ____5-9 ____10-14 ____15-19 ____20 or more

Thank you for your input!

Be sure to return your completed survey by March 12, 1992 in the stamped self-addressed envelope provided. If you wish to receive a copy of the results of this study, please enter your name and mailing address on the enclosed card and return it to me as soon as possible.

PART II: Rating of Competency Importance - Please rate each statement regarding your perception of the importance of the competencies noted for building administrators by circling one of the following:

NI - Of No Importance LI - Little Importance SI - Somewhat Important VI - Very Important CR - Crucial

1. Understanding of relevant issues relative to the administration of P.L. 101-476 (formerly P.L. 94-142) and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs For Children and Youth in Virginia including:

1.1 Identification and evaluation of children and youth with disabilities	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.2 Alternatives to the provision of special education in your individual school	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.3 Components of Individualized Education Program	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.4 Concept of Least Restrictive Environment	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.5 Strategies to enhance communication and to improve attitudes towards mainstreaming	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
1.6 Development of recommendations based on results of individual pupil assessment	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

2. Awareness of current research and technology affecting special education including:

2.1 Knowledge of current trends in pre-referral assessment and procedures	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
2.2 Knowledge of components and comprehensive programs of developmental guidance and counseling service	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

NI - Of No Importance LI - Little Importance SI - Somewhat Important VI - Very Important CR -Crucial

3. Identifying special education instructional program strengths and needs based on consideration of special student characteristics, settings, and curricula for:

3.1 Student learning and outcomes	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
3.2 Setting in which the curriculum is expected to be used	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
3.3 Relationship of curriculum to other parts of total program	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
3.4 Identification of sources of data that document program strengths/needs	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

4. Coordinating special education and general curriculum to ensure the needs of both student and community through:

4.1 Organized learning experience and activities in the curriculum	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
4.2 Strategies for creating a climate of change so that school personnel (including students) will be accepting of individuals with disabilities	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
4.3 Implementation of a variety of specific behavior management strategies, including discipline procedures for special education students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
4.4 Methods of supporting local parents of children with disabilities	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

NI - Of No Importance LI - Little Importance SI - Somewhat Important VI - Very Important CR - Crucial

5. Establishing an effective system of communication between regular and special education personnel including:

5.1 Techniques to improve interaction and communication between general and special education	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
5.2 Strategies to create a climate of trust among teachers, parents, and students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
5.3 Identification of barriers to successful communication	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
5.4 Use of group work processes	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

6. Modifying the general curriculum to meet the needs of youth with disabilities including:

6.1 The process for determining modifications needed by general and special education students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
6.2 Knowledge of innovative mainstreaming approaches that promote success for all students	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

7. Evaluating school programs including:

7.1 Determination of uses and approaches in program evaluation	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR
7.2 Identification of stages for at least one model of program evaluation	NI	LI	SI	VI	CR

8. Other (List any additional competencies you believe should be added in this section).

VITA

JoAnne Yarbrough Carver

Birthdate: April 15, 1949

Birthplace: Norfolk, Virginia

Education:

1984-88	The College of William and Mary Williamsburg, Virginia Educational Specialist
1973-74	Adelphi University Garden City, New York Master of Science
1967-71	Norfolk State University Norfolk, Virginia Bachelor of Arts

Professional Experience:

1991-	Instructor, Special Education Longwood College Farmville, Virginia
1984-91	Instructional Specialist Special Education Virginia Beach City Public Schools Virginia Beach, Virginia
1978-84	Program Assistant, Special Education Virginia Beach City Public Schools Virginia Beach, Virginia
1974-78	Speech/Language Pathologist Virginia Beach City Public Schools Virginia Beach, Virginia
1971-73	Teacher, Special Education Isle of Wight County, Virginia