

## CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

My interest has been in the field of education since I was a fourth grade student in elementary school. When I entered college I was concerned about the challenges that special education students had in being able to perform with their peers based on new measures of accountability. During my first year as a special education teacher I was responsible for teaching three students with learning disabilities and four students with emotional disturbance. On an average the students were able to read on a second to third grade reading level, yet they were in a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class. After my first year of teaching the pilot test of the Virginia Standards of Learning took place to help teachers and students become familiar with the test, while also offering a gauge to show what students had learned. I was nervous and afraid because I knew in my mind that “my students” were not ready for what the state was attempting to assess.

In my previous position as an assistant principal I served as the building coordinator to help administer the Standards of Learning test. During the school year I met with special and general education teachers to determine their students’ level of preparedness for the upcoming test for that particular year. Each year the teachers at my school expressed concerns that many of their students with learning disabilities and special needs were not ready for the required test. Not only did this effect my middle school students, it also had effects on students at the high school level. Teachers felt they could not teach as they normally would, and their curriculum would be dictated by the state. The use of exit exams to determine whether a student earns a high school diploma has lifelong consequences and can directly affect an individuals participation in postsecondary education programs, employment, and future jobs (MacMillan, Balow, Widaman & Hemsley, 1990; Manset & Washburn, 2002). As an administrator and advocate for children, I feel that administrators must take a major role in raising and addressing

the tough questions that may affect students' educational opportunities, retention or promotion, and graduation from high school. With these concerns in mind, I focused this study on determining the perceptions of other administrators about high stakes testing and students with learning disabilities.

This chapter is organized in the following categories: A brief overview of assessment and high stakes testing, students with disabilities, policy driven assessment, statewide testing programs in Virginia, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, overview of methodology, limitations, definition of terms, significance of the study and organization of the document.

### Overview of Assessment and High Stakes Testing

Use of large-scale, statewide assessments has increased substantially over the last two decades instigated by the press for increased educational accountability (Langfield, Thurlow & Scott, 1997). The major focus has been to make public schools accountable for the education of all students, including students with disabilities (Langfield, Thurlow & Scott, 1997). This issue has become increasingly more serious since President Bush signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 [widely known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act] (Amrein & Berliner, 2002b). This act has been driven by politicians from both parties and citizens that believe that it is important to attach consequences to educational reform to ensure academic improvement.

Beginning in the 2003-2004 academic school year, Virginia schools began administering high school graduation exams that students are required to pass in order to receive a diploma (Virginia Department of Education, 2006). Like many other states, Virginia is requiring students

to prove that they have mastered basic skills required for receipt of a high school diploma by passing a minimum competency exam.

In the 1980's new kinds of assessments were linked with these new educational purposes as they swept across the nation (Airasian & Madaus, 1983). Many descriptors have been associated with these programs including, "policy-driven assessment, minimum-competency based testing, high stakes testing, competency based assessment, and measurement-driven instruction" (Airasian, 1983, p. 23). These types of assessment have come to be used to make a variety of high stakes decisions to determine if students should receive a high school diploma, be promoted to the next grade level, be assigned remedial or special education classes, or be allowed to enter school.

Tests such as those that determine mastery of academic standards required for graduation are known as high stakes tests. The term high stakes implies that gains or losses can be derived from test performance (Airasian & Madaus, 1983; Cochran-Smith, 2000). Tests that are part of graduation requirements can be thought of as high stakes because the outcome of an individual's performance may mean the gain or loss of a high school diploma. Much of the support for high stakes testing is a result of a political push for accountability and measurement of standards in education. During the 1990's many states developed specific standards for skills that they wanted students to accomplish, as well as instruments to measure if these standards were being met (Amerin & Berliner, 2002b; Cochran-Smith, 2000). Much of the opposition to high stakes testing is not the opposition to high standards, but how those standards are measured. Many experts feel that using a single test score as a decision basis is unacceptable because standardized tests can be limited in what they test and the results can be too easily misinterpreted (e.g., Langfield, Thurlow & Scott, 1997; Miller, 2001).

## Students with Disabilities

Special education students are challenged by high stakes testing (Thompson & Thurlow, 2001). By definition, these students have difficulty mastering basic standards mandated by the state and federal governments; consequently, they have difficulty passing high stakes tests that are designed for general education students [Individuals with Disability Education Act, (IDEA) 1997]. Many of these students have disabilities that impede their ability to perform well on standardized tests (e.g., concentration issues and erratic eye movements) (Donlevy, 2000). Moreover, many have deficient skills in one or more academic areas suggesting they may have difficulty on achievement-based assessments measures. As a result of their poor performance, these students may face negative consequences (Corbett & Wilson, 1991; Langenfield, Thurlow & Scott, 1997). For example, school personnel may use test performance to make academic proficiency judgments of students that affect decisions related to their eligibility for various school programs or placements. Additionally, scores may be used to determine graduation or grade promotion. These factors underscore the importance of determining the best means by which students with disabilities participate in assessment programs (Langenfield, Thurlow & Scott, 1997).

The requirements of the 1997 revisions to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandate that students with disabilities be included in statewide assessments. This measure has increased inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classes with their peers. The problem with this requirement is that many students with disabilities may have difficulty passing high stakes tests because the tests measure their disability rather than their mastery of basic skills (Airasian, 1993; Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Students with learning disabilities do not read in the same manner as other students (Airasian, 1993; Donlevy, 2000).

For instance a student with a reading disability struggles with reading the test, not answering the questions.

IDEA's solution to making the tests valid and fair to students with disabilities is to include federally mandated accommodations for testing in a child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (IDEA, 1997). Test accommodations are changes in test procedures or test materials that enable students with disabilities to participate in assessments in a way that allows their abilities rather than their disabilities to be assessed (Thurlow, Ysseldyke & Silverstein, 1993). These students tend to require support to perform to the best of their ability on large-scale assessments (Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 1998). Providing accommodations increases the participation of students with disabilities in assessments.

Appropriate accommodations can have a great impact on the validity of the test score of a student with disabilities (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Further, it is crucial that teachers become knowledgeable about which accommodation is most appropriate for each situation, which accommodations are allowable, and how to implement the best accommodation. When teachers are not knowledgeable about testing accommodations, it is unlikely that appropriate accommodations will be made for student with disabilities. Therefore, test scores may be invalid, causing students with disabilities to suffer unfair consequences (Siskind, 1993). As such, it is necessary to ensure that teachers know about testing accommodations in order to make sure that they can to make decisions that will provide the student with the most appropriate opportunity to participate in state mandated tests.

The IDEA approach to ensure that all students with disabilities are served in an inclusive environment comes with major concerns. Some of those concerns include a) the pressure that is placed on students with disabilities in regards to high stakes exams, b) how the value of test

results for administrative decisions if students with disabilities are excluded, c) the extent to which special education programs will be held accountable for results of student exams, and d) how test will influence graduation status.

The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) recognizes the importance of state and district-wide assessments (2004). The assessments are key to improving academic standards and for documenting accountability within the public school system. It is important that students with learning disabilities be provided the opportunity to access, participate and demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

#### Policy Driven Assessment

The recommendation for high standards and standardized testing is a common theme in our history's effort to improve public schools (Kohn, 2000). The catalyst for high stakes testing and accountability is often associated with the 1983 declaration of "A Nation at Risk" (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000). This document written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), detailed the crisis of this country, and placed the blame on the public school system:

"...the educational foundation of our society is presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and people" (p.1).

This same recommendation came from the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1984, "We recommend that schools, colleges and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards and high expectation for academic performance and student conduct" (p.3). "Among the many recommendations set forth by the commission is the implementation of standardized tests of

achievement which would be given at main transitional points from one level of schooling to another and from high school to work, or college” (p.3)

Out of these attacks on public education emerged a call for accountability on the part of K-12 schools through high stakes testing (Bush, 2001). Bush called for states to select their own tests, with the federal government assisting in the cost of administering them. Bush also stated, “Without testing...reform is a journey without a compass. Without testing, teachers and administrators cannot adjust their methods to meet high goals; without testing, standards are little more than scraps of paper. Without testing, true competition is impossible; without testing, parents are left in the dark” (p.1).

#### Statewide Testing Programs in Virginia

Prior to the use of the SOL assessment system, Virginia had several other high stakes testing programs that were used in recent years: Iowa Test of Basic skills (ITBS), Literacy Passport Test (LPT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT-I), and National Assessment of Educational Progress [Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) 2005]. Many of Virginia’s school divisions have participated in the positive progress of the state as measured by achievement of the SOL tests. There are, however, some divisions in which there has been little improvement. There are also divisions in which there have been actual declines since 1998 (VDOE, 2005). Before NCLB was enacted diplomas were awarded based on academics, attendance and behavior rather than the mastery of a specific skill (Jacob, 2001). NCLB is known to be the first educational policy set that has linkage between graduation rates and passing minimum competency tests (Dorn, 2003; Jacob, 2001).

Virginia developed a four-step education reform program to be implemented over several years, to address both student achievement and system accountability (VDOE, 2006). This

statewide program is called the Standards of Learning (SOL). Step 1 defines what teachers need to teach and what students are expected to learn. Standard of Learning objectives and goals were developed from this process. The standards describe the Commonwealths expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12. Step 2 was designed to ensure that local school personnel focus on academic standards. The state developed curriculum frameworks for the areas being tested which includes scope and sequence. This aides in developing lesson plans for teachers and is designed to help align their classroom instruction with the standards. Step 3 was designed to ensure that all local education personnel understand what is expected of them to ensure that students master the standards that are set forth by the state. A state curriculum framework and test blueprints were formed as a result of this program. The curriculum framework defines the content knowledge, skills and understandings that are measured by the Standards of Learning test. The test blueprints serve as a guide to teachers, parents, and students, in that they show Standards of Learning covered by a test, and general information about how the questions are constructed. Finally, Step 4 requires the results and accreditation levels to be made public annually. The Virginia School Report Card provides information for public use on student achievement, accreditation, safety and attendance for the state and individual schools (VDOE, 2006). This program has been characterized by few rewards or sanctions, used primarily to describe student achievement to educators, policymakers and the public on the status of individual schools, school divisions and state performance. Recently, it has been used for grade promotion, remediation and the linkages to high school graduation. Scores are also made public through various forms of media (VDOE, 2006).



## Statement of the Problem

The continuous adoption of standardized achievement tests as an instrument to reform public schools and improve the quality of education for all students has gained widespread support (Dorn, 2003; Linn, 2000; Manset & Washburn, 2002). Test based accountability is the foundation of Congress' "No Child Left Behind Act", which was adopted and signed by President George Bush in January 2002 (Harris, 2003). "Test based accountability systems embody the belief that public education can be improved through a simple strategy. Test all students, reward or sanction schools and districts based on scores" (Harris, 2003, p. 3). Those opponents of high stakes testing are raising important issues such as the testing narrowing the curriculum and increasing the dropout rate (Amrein & Berliner, 2002a; Heubert & Hauser, 1999; Langenfeld, Thurlow & Scott, 1997). Supporters of high stakes testing on the other hand are proclaiming that tests are increasing the performance and closing the achievement gap between minority, economically disadvantaged, and middle class white students (Linn, 2000; Smith & Fey, 2000). However, "states and school districts are using tests in making high stakes decisions with important consequences for individual students" (Heubert & Hauser, 1999, p. 5). These tests were implemented to set clear and challenging standards for all students (Heubert & Hauser, 1999).

According to supporters of testing, exit examinations are intended to affect student achievement in two ways. First, this requirement will motivate students to study. The product will be improvement in student achievement and school performance. Secondly, high stakes testing may have the effect of improving student achievement through avenues external to the student, such as alignment of the curriculum, pedagogy and teacher results (Miller, 2001). With many decisions made by policymakers, little is known about the perceptions of educators whose

professional lives are impacted by mandated graduation examinations. The expertise of these individuals is essential to the instruction, content, and curricular validity of the test. If the Virginia state legislators and governor support a graduation examination, and if they want school officials and teachers to carry through mandates, then they need to consider the research by experts who have found that educators' values, beliefs, and opinions are critical their decision (Allington, McGill-Franzen & Schick, 1997).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of Virginia Special Education Directors, High School Principals, and High School Lead Teachers, regarding the graduation requirements impact on educational experiences and outcomes for students with learning disabilities. Additionally, the study sought to identify what changes Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in meeting those requirements.

### Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

- 1) How do Virginia administrators perceive the graduation requirements impact educational experiences and outcomes for students with learning disabilities?
- 2) What changes do Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in meeting these requirements?

### Overview of Methodology

Survey research was the methodology used in this investigation. Specifically, this study elicited administrators' perceptions of the impact of Virginia's minimum competency test, the Standards of Learning (SOL), on the educational experiences and outcomes of students with learning disabilities (LD). The survey participants included three groups of educators: (a)

Directors of Special Education; (b) High School Principals; and (c) High School Lead Teachers in Virginia public high schools.

This study was an adaptation of a study conducted in Indiana State public schools (Manset & Washburn, 2002). The instrument used was adapted to look at the current and future impact of requiring the passing of graduation qualifying exams in the state of Virginia, also known as Standards of Learning (SOL).

#### Limitations

This study has several limitations. 1) The results of this study were limited only to the perceptions of public school secondary administrators in the state of Virginia gathered through anonymous surveys. 2) The results of this study represent the perspectives of only Directors of Special Education, High School Principals, and High School Lead Teachers. 3) The survey is also considered a limitation because it is used one moment in time. 4) The perceptions of this group may vary from the non-respondent high school administrators, from others within the state, and from other states. Further, the researcher did not survey elementary and middle school administrators; therefore, the results may not be representative of administrators at these lower levels.

#### Definition of Terms

Listed below are the specific definitions for these terms as they apply to this particular study.

**High stakes testing-** tests used in making decisions about which students will be promoted or retained in a grade and which will receive high school diploma (Airasian, 1993; Madaus & Cochran-Smith, 2000).

**Learning Disabilities (LD)** - a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations (IDEA, 1997).

**Graduation Qualifying Examinations (GQE)**-test mandated, developed, sponsored, administered, scored, and interpreted by government uniformly across local districts. Students must obtain a predetermined score on this examination before the state will award them a high school diploma (Manset & Washburn, 2002).

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)**-a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting in accordance with §§300.341-300 (IDEA, 1997).

**Lead Teacher**-a specialist at the school building level who oversees the administration of special education teachers and students (Church, E., personal communication April 9, 2005).

#### Significance of the Study

The values and beliefs of administration in regards to high stakes examinations for high school graduation of students with learning disabilities must be understood and elicited in order to understand the potential impact of this practice (Manset & Washburn, 2002). As such, this study is built on previous research (Manset & Washburn, 2002) by examining the opinions of Directors of Special Education, High School Principals, and Lead Teachers of Virginia. This study contributes to the knowledge base that will help to guide Virginia public policy.

Additionally, results will enhance the understandings of educators' concerns for the potential impact of state mandated graduation examinations on students, teachers, instruction and schools' public image.

## Organization of the Document

This document contains five chapters, a reference list, and appendixes. Chapter I includes the introduction, background of the problem, purpose of the study, research question, overview of the methodology, limitations of the study, definition of terms, significance of the study and an overview of the dissertation.

Chapter II consists of a review of literature pertaining to state mandated high school graduation testing. It also cites literature on students with special needs and standardized tests.

Chapter III includes the methodology used to conduct the study and analyze data.

Chapter IV includes the data analysis and descriptive statistics.

Chapter V contains summary of the findings, conclusions, and will discuss implications for future research.

## CHAPTER 2-REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Overview

The literature review is organized into the following five categories: overview, historical background of high stakes testing, legal guidelines for testing students with disabilities, Virginia's minimum competency test and administrators' perceptions of high stakes testing. The goal of this literature search is to set the context for the present investigation and to determine what, if any, studies have been conducted on administrators' attitudes toward high stakes testing. Of specific interest are extant studies conducted on administrators' attitudes toward minimum competency test in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The literature review began by accessing the ERIC database using keywords "high stakes testing" and "learning disabilities." The search revealed several studies on high stakes testing and the factors that influence administrators' decision making; however, the search reveal few studies that focused on administrators' perspectives of mandatory qualifying exams in relations to students with disabilities. Studies that were analyzed focused on the effects of high stakes testing and accountability measures that have been used and how they effect administrators' decisions.

The studies revealed intended and unintended effects of high stakes testing and its effects on students with learning disabilities. A number of studies reviewed focused on accountability measures used to improve achievement of students at the state and national level. Studies such as the study done by Manset and Washburn (2002), which suggest that the increased use of high stakes testing present both challenges and opportunities for education of students with learning disabilities. The common thread in all the studies revealed that high stakes testing of students have been around for many years and will continue to be used to improve instruction and set

standards (Amrein & Berliner, 2002a; Corbett & Wilson, 1991; Manset & Washburn, 2002). Examination of the literature did not reveal specific insight into administrators' perceptions toward the high stakes testing and accountability measures in Virginia. However, review of literature did provide emergent themes and a framework for more extensive research that serve as the outline for this chapter and basis of my study.

Thus, the review of the literature discusses the current issues and concerns of high stakes testing of students with disabilities including: historical background of high stakes testing, legal guidelines for testing students with disabilities, Virginia high stakes testing, educators' perceptions of high stakes testing, and administrators' perceptions of high stakes testing. The literature dealing with high stakes testing is admittedly broad and includes issues of testing non-disabled students because many issues are relevant to all students.

#### Historical Background of High-Stakes Testing

The U.S. Congress approved a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001 and renamed it the "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLB) (P.L. 107-110, H.R.1) (Stetcher, Hamilton & Gonzalez, 2003). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first enacted by President Lyndon Johnson to provide state and local efforts to provide all children with quality education (Stetcher, Hamilton & Gonzalez, 2003). A major change between the first enactment of ESEA and NCLB is the emphasis on accountability.

NCLB test-based accountability was implemented because advocates of the reform movement argued that, in the past, educators had never been held responsible for students' learning (Stetcher, Hamilton & Gonzalez, 2003). Instead, they felt that teachers and administrators are paid based on their level of experience and their educational backgrounds. There have been many ways to look at the concept of accountability but the most common

approach is rewards or punishing schools and staff based on student scores (Stetcher, Hamilton & Gonzalez, 2003). The rewards have been merit pay, recognition for student and school scores, and the punishments include school sanctions and notification of schools not achieving the cut off score set by the state. According to Stetcher, Hamilton and Gonzalez, most accountability systems, including NCLB, share three common features:

- Goals and explicit statements of desired students' performance and established shared expectations for all parties.
- An objective system for measuring attainment of goals provides a basis for judging success.
- Financial and administrative incentives used to motivate administrators, teachers, and students to maximize effort and effectiveness.

Over the last several years, school districts throughout the United States have been involved in education reform. A major focus of this reform has been to make public schools accountable for the education for all students, including students with learning disabilities. This includes setting high academic standards, raising graduation requirements, and creating high stakes assessments that may affect grade promotion, graduation, scholarship eligibility, and the accreditation of individual schools [National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, (NJCLD) 2004].

#### Legal Guidelines for Testing Students with Disabilities

Through federal legislation and other court decisions, legal guidelines for high stakes tests and high school graduation examinations came into existence during the 1970's. During the 1980's legal issues pertaining to high school graduation testing were clarified by the Debra P. v. Turlington (1983) decision of the Fifth Circuit Court. At that time, Florida required that students



pass a minimum competency test in order to receive a high school diploma. The students who failed the graduation test in 1977, 1978, and 1979 claimed that the test: (a) was racially biased due to past segregation, violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the Equal Opportunity Act; (b) denied due process because of the inadequate notice and inadequate preparation time given for this new mandate; (c) was being used to resegregate; and (d) resulted in black/white disparities in pass rates.

Five legal principles emerged from this court case. Florida's interest in establishing a high school graduation examination and furthering local accountability was found to be constitutional. With the graduation examination, students have a vested interest because there was an expectation that they would receive a high school diploma if they completed all of the course requirements. They would also be stigmatized by receiving a certificate of completion rather than a high school diploma. Two, advanced notices of the examination had to be made mandatory. The court ruled that the 13-month advance notice given in Florida inadequate. The courts decided that at least 24 months between notice and implementation to be sufficient. Three, remedial courses were also required by the courts. Four, objectives had to be clear and the students had to know what objectives were being taught. Finally, the content and skills tested must correspond to the content and skills taught.

Three federal laws dealing with the disabled have direct implications for high school graduation programs. Section 504 of the 1970 Rehabilitation Act requires that "No otherwise handicapped individual... shall solely by reason of his handicap be excluded, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Educational Policy Reform Research Institute, 2002). Schools received federal funding; consequently, the provisions of Section 504 of the 1970 Rehabilitation Act

applied to educational programs such as high school graduation testing. In addition, schools must, according to the Office of Civil Rights regulations, make “reasonable accommodations to known physical or cognitive limitations of an otherwise qualified handicapped applicant or employee, unless the recipient can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of its program” (29 U.S.C. §§ 701 et. seq., 1973).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997), (Pub.L. No. 102-119, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq., 1991) mandates procedural safeguards to ensure free specialized and individualized educational services for the disabled in the least restrictive environment. Federal courts have stated that the directive for a free and appropriate education does not guarantee any particular educational outcome such as passing a required high school graduation test. “A disabled student who has received appropriate educational services in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) but is unable to master the skills tested on a graduation test may be denied a high school diploma without violating the IDEA” (Brookhart v. Illinois State Bd. of Education, 697 F.2d 179 7<sup>th</sup> Cir.1983) as long as the school has made a “good faith” effort.

In Brookhart v. Illinois State Board of Education (1983), the seventh Circuit court set the parameters for test modifications for the disabled. Several disabled students who had completed their Individual Education Plan (IEP) were given a certificate of completion, not a diploma because they were unable to pass the high school graduation test mandated by the local school district. The court required adequate notice, in which this case, one and one half years notice was not enough. Notice had to be greater for the disabled than for the non-disabled, as the IEP process takes time, and the disabled may need more time to acquire the tested knowledge and skills.

Finally, the first court case pertaining to students with disabilities and exit exams was the Board of Education v. Ambach (1981). In this case, the court held that the state had the power to require the passing of a competency exam for the receipt of a diploma and the denial of diplomas to students with disabilities was not a violation of the education for all handicapped children act (Board of Education v. Ambach, 1981).

An analysis of the legal and public policy issues pertaining to exit exams and students with disabilities raises a number of important considerations:

- 1) The denial of a diploma to students with disabilities has a negative effect on future educational and occupational attainment and can thwart the underlying goals of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the American Disability Act (ADA).
  - 2) Decisions about the participation of an individual student with disabilities in a state or local assessment program should be made by the students' IEP team.
  - 3) Students with disabilities must receive adequate notification of the testing requirement and the date of the test to allow time for the students IEP to be adjusted to include the material being tested.
  - 4) Students with disabilities must be afforded the opportunity to learn the material covered on exit exams or alternative assessments.
  - 5) Students with disabilities must receive appropriate accommodations on exit exams.
  - 6) If an exit exam is not appropriate for a student with a disability, with reasonable accommodations, the student must receive an alternate assessment.
- (EPRRI, 2002)

The participation of students in exit exams can present some legal issues that policy makers and administrators in the schools need to acknowledge. There are clear standards set to help students and teachers become successful in meeting the goals established.

#### Students with Learning Disabilities and Testing

Wright (2002) conducted a study that examined the effects of a high stakes standardized test (SAT-9), on a large inner city elementary school in southern California. The study addresses the following questions: a) How much of an emphasis is there on the SAT-9? b) Do teachers believe the SAT-9 is a fair and valid measure of teaching and student learning? And c) How has the SAT-9 affected the curriculum taught to students, especially ESL students? The data from the teachers, along with the data from analyses and reported observations provided evidence to support that high stakes testing is having harmful effects on teachers, students and the curriculum. The results of the study revealed that standardized testing has not resulted in high quality teachers but it has resulted in a narrowed curriculum and a possible and harmful effect on both teachers and students.

Amerin and Berliner (2002b) conducted a study that focused on eighteen states with consequences attached to their testing programs. Four separate standardized tests were examined ACT, SAT, NAEP and AP tests. An archival time-series research design was used to examine the state-by-state and year-to-year data on each transfer measure. The time-series design was used to determine the degree to which large-scale social or governmental policies make an impact. Historical records and data were collected from agencies, government archives, calls, and emails to and from agency personnel and directors. The results from this study states that in all but one analysis the students learning was indeterminate, remained at the same level, or

actually went down when high stakes policies were instituted. Evidence for increased student learning was not found.

Wright (2002), Amerin and Berliner (2002b), studies indicate that standardized testing has not resulted in higher quality teaching and learning, it has resulted in a narrowed curriculum that poses to have harmful effects on both teachers and students. Using qualitative research methodologies, the data that were provided for teachers and data from document analysis provided evidence that high stakes testing is having a harmful effect on teachers, students and the curriculum.

Ysseldyke, Dennison and Nelson (2003) and Thurlow, Elliott and Ysseldyke (1998) report on their studies that large-scale high stakes assessments can have intended and unintended positive consequences for students with disabilities. In their studies empirical and anecdotal evidence for positive consequences of large-scale high stakes assessments for students with disabilities were examined. Multiple methodologies were used to gather the data: a qualitative media survey, and environmental scan of the State Special Education Directors, a focus group, and a national survey on state assessment practices. The primary positive consequences across the methodologies used were increased participation of students with disabilities in testing programs, high expectations and standards, improved instruction and improved performance. The overall findings were that large-scale high stakes assessments can have intended and unintended positive consequences for students with disabilities. The empirical evidence was not enough to provide a causal statement about the impact of large-scale assessment.

Schulte, Villwork, Wichard, and Stallings (2001) study focused on a school districts accountability plan and a large-scale program over a five-year period. The program included grade level proficiency standards for students and cash incentives for staff to increase student

growth. The study was done as a part of a U.S. Office of Special Education Programs' grants to examine the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education reform. The results of this study indicated that students with disabilities improved in regards to mean reading scores and percentage proficient in reading in elementary schools across the five years. The students encountered difficulty meeting the states grade proficiency standards, with approximately 40% not meeting the states performance standard in reading.

### Virginia's High Stakes Testing

In the year 2004, 20 states required students to pass exit exams to graduate from high school. Five more states plan to phase in exit exams by 2009 (Center on Education Policy, 2005). The Center on Education Policy (2005) describes exit exams in three categories, based on each state's description of its tests:

- 1) *Minimum competency exam* (MCEs), which generally focus on basic skills below the high school level
- 2) *Standards-based exams* (SBEs), which are aligned with state standards and are generally targeted at the high school level
- 3) *End-of-Course exams* (EOCs), which are tied to the content specific courses at the high school level and are usually standards-based, but the distinguishing feature is that students take each test after completing a specific course

In Virginia, the class of 2004 was the first cohort group that was required to take the State's end-of-course exam instead of the states previous minimum competency exit exam that was the Literacy Passport Test. Virginia's end of course exam is the Standards of Learning. The Standards of Learning Test is given at grades 3, 5, and 8, and specific courses in high school. Some schools may take tests at other grade levels based on the schools' curriculum. The

schools' content is aligned with the standards appropriate to the grade level. The subjects that are tested include: English: Writing; English: Reading; Algebra I; Algebra II; Geometry; Biology; Earth Science; Chemistry; World History to 1500; World History from 1500 to the Present; U.S. History; and World Geography (VDOE, 2006). The students' performance for each test is recorded on a scale of 0-600. A student must receive a score of 400 or higher to pass the test. If a student scores 500 or more is considered to have performed at an advanced level, while a student scoring between 0-399 is considered to have failed the test. The students who fail these tests are given the opportunity to take them up to three more times in order to pass. If the students score within 375-399 high school students are given the opportunity of taking the test immediately after failing the test.

*Figure 1.* Range of SOL scores in the State of Virginia.

0-399	Failing
400-499	Pass Proficient
500-600	Pass Advanced

In Virginia, students with disabilities are allowed to use accommodations as noted on their IEP's to take end-of-course exams. If the students receive a passing score of this test, they will receive a standard diploma. Virginia has various diplomas that are available for students with disabilities to give them options if they are unable to pass the high stakes test. There is a Modified Standard Diploma for students who do not meet the requirements for a standard or advanced diploma.

Figure 2. Diploma offerings in the State of Virginia.

<b>Standard Diploma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to all students who meet the basic course requirement and electives, and earn at least six verified credits by passing end-of-course SOL test or other assessments approved by the board of education</li> </ul>
<b>Advanced Studies Diploma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides student the “key” to entry into post-secondary institutions or employment</li> <li>• Maintain high expectations and a focus on the general education curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Modified Diploma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended for students at the secondary level who have a disability and meet the credit requirements for a Standard Diploma.</li> <li>• Eligibility and participation in the program determined by the student’s IEP team and the student, when appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Special Diploma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their IEP and who do not meet the requirements for other diplomas</li> </ul>
<b>Certificate of Program Completion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to students who complete prescribed programs of study defined by a local school board but who do not qualify for diplomas</li> </ul>
<b>General Education Development Certificate (GED)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (GED) Available to students who do not qualify for diplomas (regulations governed by the GED program)</li> </ul>

Note: Virginia Department of Education (2006). *K-12 school data, 2006*. Available from the

Virginia Department of Education website <http://vdoe.state.va.us>



Alternative assessment is used for students who are not receiving instruction that is geared for testing using the Standards of Learning (SOL). Alternative assessments were first identified in federal law as assessments for those students unable to participate in state and district wide assessment programs (Thurlow, 2004). Alternative assessments are used to provide a mechanism for students to participate in and benefit from assessment programs. There are two types of alternative assessments designed for students with disabilities. The first type of alternative assessment is called Virginia Alternative Assessment Program (VAAP). This program is an assessment for students:

- with a current IEP
- with a significant cognitive disability
- who require extensive direct individualized instruction
- who have been traditionally exempted
- not working toward a standard, advanced or modified standard diploma

The second test, Virginia grade level alternative (VGLA) provides students in grades three through eight an alternative to testing whose nature and level of disability prevents them from participating in the regular SOL test. It is designed for students who have been taught Virginia Standards of Learning at grade level, but are unable to demonstrate individual achievement on the regular SOL test(s) even with accommodations (VDOE, 2006). The criteria for participating in alternative grade level assessments are:

- Students are required to have a current IEP.
- The student would need to demonstrate individual achievement of Standards of Learning content through means other than multiple choice.

- As a result of the student's disability, the student is unable to demonstrate individual achievement on the regular Standards of Learning test for the assigned grade level using available accommodations.

The alternative tests are not paper pencil test and do not use the standard multiple-choice format. The Virginia Alternative Grade Level Assessment (VGLA) uses student portfolios, which is called a Collection of Evidence (COE) in which the case manager and teachers who are a part of the IEP team gather information during the school year that represents the student's knowledge of the identified SOL objectives. The collection of evidence is collected at the end of each school year and staff members that are familiar with the SOL's form a committee to score the collected material. The student's work is scored according to the presentation of work that is solely that of the student. A reviewer looking at work samples, audio/video tapes, anecdotal records, interviews and charts and graphs scores a collection of evidence. Each collection will receive a score for each objective that shows sufficient evidence and meet the VGLA requirements. The scores are then tabulated and submitted to the Virginia Department of Education.

#### Educators' Perceptions of High Stakes Testing

In addition to the historical accounts of standards and testing, there continues to be a plethora of information produced on teachers' perspectives on high stakes testing and outcomes of these tests. These include theoretical and philosophical papers, as well as interviews, observations or conversations with educators (Airasian, 1993; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Previous studies conducted have been used to address how students with disabilities have not been successful with minimum competency test without looking at factors that have been used to help them succeed. In a study conducted by Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas

(2000), educators were interviewed to find out their perceptions about policies, standards, and testing efforts to improve the quality of education. The implications noted in this study were that teachers, administrators, and politicians need to be aware of what is necessary for a child to be successful in passing minimum competency test. The study addressed the need to have proper and adequate training, materials and booklets provided, and formal and informal discussions with other teachers about expectations (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 2000).

Teachers have always been a critical part in the accountability process. Administrators' will always need teachers to be committed to the process of helping all students meet curriculum standards assessed in the high stakes environment. Kaplan and Owings (2001) conducted a study to see how principals can help teachers with high stakes testing. Teachers in Virginia were randomly surveyed to measure the perceived effects of high stakes testing on classroom practices. In this study, teachers expressed the need for instructional leaders, and principals to be knowledgeable about high stakes testing and accountability because when teachers lack the confidence necessary to perform they want administrators to offer feedback and resources (Kaplan & Owings, 2001).

#### Administrators' Perceptions of High Stakes Testing

Egley and Jones (2004) conducted a study designed to compare administrators' perceptions of Florida's high stakes testing program in relation to the size of the school district. This study was interested in understanding how high stakes testing affected rural administrators. They were also interested in examining how the perceptions of administrators in rural districts might be similar to or different from administrators in suburban and urban districts. Online surveys were done, and those who did not respond were sent paper copies. Sixty-seven Florida school district administrators across Florida were invited to participate. Forty-eight percent of all

districts (32 of 67) agreed to participate. Three hundred twenty-five surveys were completed that included 212 principals, 96 assistant principals, and 17 who did not indicate their administrative rank. Rural administrators found that Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results more useful than urban administrators in helping them assess teachers' strengths and weaknesses across the subject areas of writing and math. More than half of the rural administrators noted that the FCAT had a positive effect on developmentally appropriate practices; a third reported that the FCAT had a negative effect, and a tenth reported that the FCAT had no effect.

Typically, there were positive and negative effects, on rural administrators than on urban and suburban administrators. The positive effect were that rural administrators did not feel that they were more motivated by the testing program to do a better job, it was useful for assessment, and was useful in meeting the academic needs of students. Administrators felt the negative effects of more pressure to improve their test scores than urban administrators did (Egley & Jones, 2004).

Manset and Washburn (2002), the authors of the study adapted for the current investigation, examined the perception of administrators and principals on the impact of requiring a minimum competency graduation examination for students with learning disabilities. A second area of interest in their study was whether administrators felt that the conditions created by the test would contradict efforts to provide inclusive or appropriately alternative course offerings. Manset and Washburn (2002) were interested in the administrators' perceptions because they felt educators are able to see from a perspective that would shed light on the impact of the graduation requirements. The following questions framed the study: 1) How do Virginia administrators perceive that the new graduation requirements impact the educational experiences and outcomes of students with learning disabilities; and (2) What changes did administrators perceive were needed in order to best support students in meeting these

requirements? The study employed survey methodology. Surveys were mailed to 117 directors of special education who were responsible for secondary students with disabilities in the state of Indiana; all 358 high school principals in the state of Indiana were also surveyed. Of the initial sample, 58 directors of special education (50%), representing 60% of the planning districts, and 204 principals from 57% of Indiana's public high schools responded ( $n = 262$ ) (Manset & Washburn, 2002). The survey created consisted of five major parts with a total of 65 closed items. Questions on the survey pertained to the current and future impact of requiring the passing of the Graduation Qualifying Exam for graduation and instructional practices and programming that predict success on the exam. The survey was developed using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 = strongly disagree or definitely false, 2 = disagree or probably false, 3 = neutral or neither true nor false, 4 = agree or probably true, and 5 = strongly agree or definitely true. A descriptive summary of responses for participants were provided through the reporting of percentage of administrators. Bar charts were used to illustrate the mean of response types to help support the descriptive statistics (Manset & Washburn, 2002).

Directors of Special Education and Principals were generally in agreement on their responses with the exception of two factors. The special education directors and principals had differing opinions related to perceived changes that would occur in the next three years because of the graduation qualifying exam requirement. Both groups agreed that repeated failure on the GQE would have influenced student decisions to drop out, but Directors were significantly more likely to agree that repeated failure on the GQE influence the decision to drop out (Manset & Washburn, 2002). In this case, principals were more likely to agree that there would be an increase in staff and instructional support because of the GQE requirement. The directors were noted to appear less optimistic that these resources would be provided based on the GQE

requirements. Manset and Washburn's study wanted to look at the perceptions of directors and principals because of their insight in the public school sector. By working in the classroom, first hand teachers as well as administrators play an invaluable part in offering suggestions to help in education reform. The implications from this study helped to form the basis of a need to view the opinions of directors, principals, and lead teachers in the state of Virginia.

### Summary

The research that has been done on high stakes testing continues to be controversial and inconclusive with results that vary based on the type of research questions that are asked and the type of tests that are examined. There is agreement that access to general education is important to success on graduation qualifying examinations, and that efforts should be made to promote and support inclusive practice in order for students to receive a high school diploma (Manset & Washburn, 2002). With the growing concern and push for accountability in Virginia, it is important to know and understand from a leadership perspective the views of administrators in relation to high stakes testing and students with learning disabilities.

## CHAPTER 3- METHODOLOGY

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to investigate the research questions in the study. Specifically, this chapter outlines the methodology, the selection of subjects, the instrumentation, the data collection strategies, and data analysis. This study is an adaptation of Manset and Washburn's (2002) descriptive study of Indiana administrators' perceptions related to the minimum competency graduation examination requirements, and the impact on students with learning disabilities. The specific research questions that guided this study are:

- 1) How do Virginia administrators perceive that the graduation requirements impact the educational experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities?
- 2) What changes do Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in meeting those requirements?

### Methodology

In order to find out the perceptions of a large group of participants about a particular issue, survey methodology is the appropriate strategy to implement (Alreck & Settle, 1995). Moreover, this study seeks to adapt a previous study conducted by Manset and Washburn (2002), which used a survey methodology. As such the current investigation provides an extension of the previous research building onto extant knowledge of administrators' perceptions of high stakes testing, the impact it has on the students, and the programs and policies that are being developed to promote student success.

## Population

The target population consisted of directors of special education, high school principals, and lead teachers throughout the state of Virginia. The administrators who were asked to participate in this research study were: (a) Virginia Special Education Directors (26.9%,  $n = 131$ ) (b) Virginia High School Principals (56.7%,  $n = 258$ ); and (c) Virginia High School Lead Teachers (16.3%,  $n = 121$ ). The lists of respondents were developed from information available on the Virginia Department of Education website, as well as the school division websites personnel contact pages.

## Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study was adapted from research conducted by Manset and Washburn (2002). Their study concentrated on administrative views of high stakes and minimum competency testing, in general, and state-mandated high school exams, using data for the state of Indiana. This study is able to be adapted because Indiana and Virginia have similar high stakes testing programs that focus on student scores in language arts and mathematics curriculum standards. As with both states students, with learning disabilities are required to pass a graduation exam in order to receive a diploma.

The original Manset and Washburn survey instrument (1998) was developed based on an extensive review of the literature on minimum competency exams. The content validity was drawn from a review of the literature related to the survey, and through the principal component analysis, where categories of responses were validated through their correlation. According to Dillman (1999) content validity determines if the survey items are representative of the topic being measured. It was acknowledged by the researchers that the original survey was not formally piloted, but they did informally have knowledgeable colleagues take the survey and



respond. Co-workers of the researchers in the field of education and assessment were used as the expert panel to take the survey and offered suggestions (Manset, S., personal communication, October 12, 2005). A 5-point Likert scale was used with the respondents having to mark 1 = strongly disagree or definitely false, 2 = disagree or probably false, 3 = neutral or neither true nor false, 4 = agree or probably true, and 5 = strongly agree or definitely true.

For the current study, a similar questionnaire designed to be self-administered was used, using guidelines suggested in *The Survey Kit* by Fink (1995) (see Appendix A). The survey was revised to include information that relates to Virginia and the Standards of Learning (SOL). In order to pilot the revised instrument, a panel of experts reviewed the survey. The panel reviewed the research questions and offered suggestions to revise the survey to reflect participants in the state of Virginia (Dillman, 1999).

The revised instrument was modified accordingly, and then was administered to a pilot group of seven administrators who also were students in the researchers cohort group through Virginia Tech. Their titles included: Director of Special Education, Superintendent, Lead Teacher and Principals from seven different Virginia school divisions. Administrators initially were asked through emails and phone calls if they would be willing to participate. Once agreement was assured, emails and phone calls were sent to their division superintendents requesting approval for them to participate in the pilot study. Because one participant was a superintendent, a request was not necessary to be sent to that school division. After two weeks, follow up phone calls were made to superintendents who did not respond by email and approval was finally granted for all seven school divisions (Dillman, 1999).

A survey packet was developed for the pilot study that included a cover page, survey, comments and suggestions page, request for a summary of findings page, and a postage paid

envelope. The participants were advised that the information that they would be providing was confidential and their identity would be kept anonymous. Each survey contained an identifying number to verify which participants had responded. Each copy of the survey instrument was numbered so that the researcher could send follow-up mailings to those who had yet to return the survey, and helped to minimize follow-up mailings to those who had already returned the questionnaire. All participants responded in the appropriate period of two weeks so follow up post cards were not used as a part of the pilot study. Surveys were numbered and dated according to when they were received.

The results of the pilot test identified that the option for a neutral response on the original and pilot survey was noted as a concern; hence, a second pilot survey was created omitting all neutral responses. A second group that was surveyed was doctoral candidates from Virginia Tech who are currently Virginia administrators ( $n = 15$ ). This group of participants was administrators in the state of Virginia who were familiar with the topic of this study. This survey group was given the questionnaire using direct administration. The advantage of this method was to provide a high response rate, and it allowed the researcher the opportunity to explain the study and answer any questions the participants had before the completing the questionnaire (Dillman, 1999). The participants were given a brief overview about the importance of the study and appreciation for their participation. The participants received an envelope that included a cover letter, pilot survey and a comments page for suggestions. They were asked to look at the format of the survey, wording, and format of the letters provided. The participants were advised that the information that they would be providing was confidential and their identity would be kept anonymous. The survey did include a number at the top of the page to illustrate how the final mailing would be marked for tracking purposes only. Participants were instructed to

complete the entire survey and write in any suggestions that they had on the survey. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete and suggestions were given to the researcher for changes. Open dialogue took place with the participants and researcher and suggestions were changed where appropriate.

No distinct difference between the two pilot surveys in relation to neutral responses was noted so the neutral response option was placed back into the final survey. The responses of the pilot groups were analyzed and items were modified as follows:

1. The word “corporation” was replaced with “school division”
2. Separate surveys for administrators were combined into one survey
3. A descriptive block was replaced to be coded for the administrator’s job title.
4. Another section was also included (Other) so that if an administrator was responsible for working with special needs students and their title was not noted they could chose this option. Numbering and alignment were also adjusted accordingly, and
5. Survey distribution through email by using an electronic version to receive responses.

The participants in the pilot group were excluded from the final group of participants for the official survey. The average time for survey completion in the pilot studies was 20 minutes. Given that the original survey was designed to take 20-25 minutes to complete (Manset & Washburn, 2002), the findings of less time to complete was viewed positively.

## Data Collection and Management

The population for this study was limited to Directors of Special Education, High School Principals, and Lead Teachers in the state of Virginia. Lead Teachers were not included in the original survey; however, based on the literature (Crockett, 2002; Manset & Washburn, 2002) and personal experience, these individuals were included in this study because they work most closely with students with learning disabilities. Because there are varied titles for positions in each school division, the lead teacher names were retrieved from the Department of Education website for each school division by a title search. In this search, supervisors of special education as well as the lead teacher title were used to identify the individuals to be included in the survey. Some school divisions had no lead teachers and some had more than one. For counties that did not have websites or email addresses listed, phone calls were made to verify lead teachers names and email addresses. A current list of Principals and Directors of Special Education were retrieved from the Virginia Department of Education website for the 2006-2007 school year. The comprehensive list for Principals included name of school division, name of school, addresses, and phone number. The list did not include e-mail addresses for Principals or any contact information for Lead Teachers. An internet search was conducted in each school division website in an attempt to find office e-mail addresses for Principals and Lead Teachers. The list for Directors of Special Education included name of division, address, phone number, and email address. All names and email addresses were placed into a database using Microsoft Outlook. This database helped to group the participants by school division and title so that mass distribution of email surveys could take place.

In order for the researcher to obtain permission for public school employees to participate in a research based survey, it was necessary that permission from each Virginia division

superintendent be acquired. Virginia division superintendent names were retrieved from the 2006-07 Department of Education website and email address were retrieved from each school division website.

Superintendents were initially sent an email on September 11, 2006, advising them of the study and inviting their division's participation (see Appendix B). The email explained the importance of the study, assured anonymity, and confidentiality. Attached to each email was a copy of the IRB application, cover letter for the survey and a copy of the survey to be emailed to the participants in each division. The division superintendents were advised that the survey would be internet based and could be accessed through an attached link that was a part of their email. Each superintendent was advised that if he or she did not want their division to participate in the study to please respond to the email. Superintendents were given two weeks to respond. Emails were sent to 132 public school divisions in the state of Virginia. There were 15 responses from superintendents who requested their division not to be included in the study, 17 that responded granting permission via email. Eighteen school divisions requested that survey applications be completed prior to permission being granted. Each application was completed and included all information required by each school division. One hundred seventeen Virginia school division superintendents agreed to allow surveys to be sent to administrators.

Once the final potential respondent group was known, the names of all Directors of Special Education, Principals, and Lead Teachers were arranged alphabetically by division and kept in a binder. This helped to provide a systematic way to verify when emails were received, and how many participants were in each school division. A checklist was also included to note which divisions declined participation, email verification, and confirmation of when the survey was completed. The checklist included the division's name, schools included, permission

granted or denied, and a note sections if an application was required. The superintendents were given two weeks and follow-up reminders were sent out including the date in which the surveys would be sent out to school divisions. Some superintendents forwarded the emails to administrators and had them to participate in the survey before it was official launched. This caused a loss of 34 responses prior to the official date of the mass email. The survey was closed and reopened on October 1, 2006 for all other participants.

The administrators received the initial email on October 1, 2006 (see Appendix C) asking for their participation in the study. The email was a letter that included a link to participate in the online survey, the survey instrument (see Appendix C) and an explanation of the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The letter assured the Directors of Special Education, Principals, and Lead Teachers that they would receive a copy of the summary of the findings, if they completed the “Request for a Summary of the Findings” form (see Appendix D). The email contained an attached copy of IRB approval (see Appendix E) and advised the administrators that their division superintendent had granted permission for their school division to participate in this study.

A total of 510 survey emails were sent out; 148 emails were returned for the following reason, 1) with incorrect addresses, and 2) administrators who no longer worked for the respective division, and 3) emails that were blocked until approval was granted from the division research committee. Accurate email addresses were obtained for 82 of the 148 emails that were returned. Surveys were sent to the correct email addresses two weeks after the initial mailing took place. Eight counties requested applications to be submitted for division research approval. This process took 2-3 weeks and delayed the time in which follow-up reminders were sent to the original group. These 66 participants remained in the non-respondent category at that time until

approval of the application was granted. Bourque and Fielder (1995) indicate, “the surest method for increasing response rates is through follow-ups” (p. 150); and, that “the greatest efficiency for follow-ups seems to peak at about week three or four” (p. 154). As such, follow-up email was sent to all non-respondents, including those with a newly corrected email address, on October 22, 2006 (see Appendix F) seeking participation a second time. In order to be able to conduct follow-up reminders, identification numbers were assigned to each email’s web address to be able to track the responses for the purpose of follow up reminders. According to Bourque and Fielder (1995), this is the least obtrusive method. The authors also indicated, “There are two major reasons for assigning identification numbers before mailing. First, you will be able to keep track of who responded by logging the returns against a master sample list of the individual and knowing who has not responding allows you to limit your follow-up efforts...” (p. 152). The final deadline for participants to complete the survey was November 1, 2006. A final email was sent to all participants thanking them again for participation and providing them a link to view a summary of the survey results once they were completed.

#### Response Rate

A response rate of 26% ( $n = 134$ ) was obtained having made three contacts with the participants in this study during the survey administration process (see Table 1). It is important to take into consideration the length of the survey to help understand the response rate. To complete the 70-question item survey it would require administrators to set aside time (approximately 20 minutes) and commitment to complete its entirety. This requirement likely reduced the response rate of the study. As noted in the previous study by Manset and Washburn (2002) the length of the questionnaire helped strengthen the reliability of the survey and helped

to provide a means by which to explore administrators' perceptions on a variety of issues related to high stakes testing and students with learning disabilities.

Table 1

*Number of Participating Schools*

Administrators	Total Survey Distributed	Total Usable Responses	% Returned	Response Total	% of Total Groups
Director of Special Education	131	26	26.9	32	24
<b>Coordinator of Special Education</b>	0	2	-	2	.01
Principal	258	54	56.7	68	50
<b>Assistant Principal</b>	0	5	-	7	.05
Lead Teacher	121	17	16.3	19	14
<b>Other</b>	0	0	-	10	12
<i>Special Education Teacher</i>					
<i>Transition Specialist</i>					
<i>Special Education Department Supervisor</i>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

## Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. A descriptive summary of responses of Special Education Directors, Principals, and Lead Teacher were provided through the reporting of percentages of administrators. Because the surveys were supplied by using Survey Monkey © an internet survey program, the data were analyzed and the mean and frequency scores were used. The information was uploaded into the Statistical Package for Analysis SPSS (Green &



Salkind, 2003). Inferential statistics was used to answer the research questions. According to Green and Salkind, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is an appropriate statistical procedure to employ to determine statistically significant difference among three or more means. Since three variables were used to address factors related to high stakes testing and students with learning disabilities, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was therefore appropriate to determine if there was a significant difference in responses.

## CHAPTER 4-RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of Virginia Special Education Directors, High School Principals, and High School Lead Teachers to determine how they perceive that the graduation requirements impact the educational experiences and outcomes of students with learning disabilities. The study explored two research questions: (a) How do Virginia administrators perceive that the graduation requirements impact educational experiences and outcomes of students with learning disabilities? and (b) What changes do Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in meeting those requirements?

This chapter reports the participant data, results for each of the research questions, followed by discussion of the question results, and a summary of all findings.

### Participant Data

Three populations of Virginia school administrators were targeted to participate in this research: (a) Special Education Directors ( $n = 131$ ); (b) High School Principals ( $n = 258$ ); and (c) High School Lead Teachers ( $n = 121$ ). A total of 510 surveys were mailed electronically to all participating school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The entire population was contacted so there no sampling was needed. The descriptive statistics related to participant groups are found in Appendix G. The questionnaire identified the title that applied to their position. The titles were collapsed once results were received to reflect the titles identified for this study (see Table 2). Table 2 reports the number of surveys distributed in each participants group, along with the number of respondents who returned usable surveys.

Table 2

*Participant Data*

Administrators	Total Survey Distributed	Total Usable Responses	% Returned	Response Total	% of Total Groups
Director of Special Education (Coordinator)	131	28	26.9	34	24
Principal (Assistant Principal)	258	59	56.7	75	50
Lead Teacher (Supervisor) (Specialist) (Chairperson)	121	17	16.3	29	26
Total	510	104	99.9	138	100

## Descriptive Analysis of Survey Results

In order to address the research questions, survey questions were collapsed into one question when several questions were similar in context (see Appendix G). A descriptive analysis was conducted that included means, standard deviations, and frequency scores. Each research question is organized by discussing descriptive information for: Directors of Special Education, Principals, and Lead Teachers. To determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the means, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. Significance was determined at the ( $p < 0.05$ ) level.

*Research Question One*

How do Virginia administrators perceive that the graduation requirements impact educational experiences and outcomes of students with learning disabilities?

In order to address research question one there were seventeen questions used from the survey. The questions related to: (a) course selection, (b) support services, and (c) instructional resources.

*Directors of Special Education*

Overall, Directors were generally in agreement on their responses with the exception of two factors relating to course selection (see Table 3). There was a large agreement in the areas of support services and instructional resources. Directors agreed that practice test and test taking strategies would be increased in the classrooms because of the graduation requirement. They also agreed that there would be increased administrative support for general and special education teachers that taught inclusion classes. The Directors disagreed that there would be an increase in pullout services because of the graduation requirements. This finding was similar with the findings in Manset and Washburn's (2002) study. Directors also disagreed that students would receive more math and language arts instruction due to the graduation requirements.

Table 3

*Mean Perception Scores of Directors-Research Question One*

Factors	Question #	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Course Selection</b>				
Course Selection	7	29	3.24	1.15
Basic Academics	8	29	3.66	.94
Less Vocational	10	29	3.10	1.32
Summer School	11	29	3.28	1.78
Increase Pull-Out	12	29	2.86	1.27
Math and Language	13	29	2.90	1.24
Decrease Pull-Out	51	26	3.69	1.05
<b>Support Services</b>				
Teacher Knowledge	53	26	4.15	.73
Administrative Support	56	25	4.12	.88
Professional Development	58	26	3.62	.90
Paraprofessionals	60	26	3.77	.86
<b>Instructional Resources</b>				
Instructional Materials	63	24	3.88	.85
Practice Tests	64	25	4.16	.69
Test Taking Strategies	65	25	4.32	.69
Support Services				
<i>Special Education</i>	66	25	4.44	.59
Remedial Courses	68	25	3.48	.92
Support Service				
<i>Regular Education</i>	70	24	4.29	.69

## Principals

Overall, Principals were generally in agreement on their responses with the exception of four factors relating to course selection (see Table 4). There was a large agreement in the area of support services and instructional resources. Principals felt that the use of practice test, and test taking strategies would increase because of the graduation requirements. They also agreed that support services in general education and special education would increase because of graduation requirements. Principals tended to disagree with the following factors; 1) students experiencing less of a course selection; 2) enrolling in less vocational or career preparation; 3) spend more time in a pullout setting and 4) receive more math and language arts instruction because of the graduation requirements.

Table 4

*Mean Perception Scores of Principals-Research Question One*

Factors	Question #	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Course Selection</b>				
Course Selection	7	44	2.80	1.13
Basic Academics	8	44	3.48	1.00
Less Vocational	10	44	2.52	1.09
Summer School	11	44	3.30	1.09
Increase Pull-Out	12	44	2.77	1.34
Math and Language	13	44	2.48	1.11
Decrease Pull-Out	51	44	3.27	.93
<b>Support Services</b>				
Teacher Knowledge	53	37	4.11	.61
Administrative Support	56	35	4.03	.66
Professional Development	58	35	3.57	.66
Paraprofessionals	60	35	3.66	.85
<b>Instructional Resources</b>				
Instructional Materials	63	36	3.94	.86
Practice Tests	64	36	4.39	.55
Test Taking Strategies	65	35	4.56	.50
Support Services				
<i>Special Education</i>	66	35	4.37	.70
Remedial Courses	68	35	3.71	.93
Support Service				
<i>Regular Education</i>	70	35	4.11	.76

### Lead Teachers

Overall, Lead Teachers were generally in agreement with the exception of two factors relating to course selection (see Table 5). There was a large agreement in the area of instructional resources and support services. Lead Teachers tended to agree that increase use of practice and test taking strategies would occur because of the graduation requirements. They also agreed that there would be an increase in support services for special education. Lead Teachers disagreed with the factor that students would enroll in less vocational or career preparation courses because of the graduation requirements. They also disagreed that students would enroll in more math and language arts classes because of the graduation requirements.



Table 5

*Mean Perception Scores of Lead Teachers-Research Question One*

Factors	Question #	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Course Selection</b>				
Course Selection	7	20	3.00	1.33
Basic Academics	8	19	3.26	1.24
Less Vocational	10	20	2.95	1.36
Summer School	11	20	3.30	1.13
Increase Pull-Out	12	20	3.05	1.40
Math and Language	13	20	2.75	1.29
Decrease Pull-Out	51	19	3.37	1.21
<b>Support Services</b>				
Teacher Knowledge	53	19	4.16	.69
Administrative Support	56	19	3.84	.77
Professional Development	58	19	3.53	1.07
Paraprofessionals	60	19	3.21	1.40
<b>Instructional Resources</b>				
Instructional Materials	63	19	3.63	.96
Practice Tests	64	17	4.41	.51
Test Taking Strategies	65	17	4.53	.62
Support Services				
<i>Special Education</i>	66	17	4.47	.62
Remedial Courses	68	16	3.75	1.13
Support Service				
<i>Regular Education</i>	70	17	3.88	.99

### Comparison across groups

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between administrators and factors relating to administrators' perceptions on how the graduation requirement impact educational experience and outcomes of students with learning disabilities. Follow up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. Multiple comparison was done using the Tukey test, a test that does not assume equal variances among the three groups (see Appendix I). Overall, Administrators were in agreement on their responses in relation to research question one. There were no statistically significant differences between administrators' responses (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Analysis of Variance for Administrators*

Factor		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i>
Less Choice	Between Groups	2	1.241	3.488	1.744	.294
	Within Groups	90		126.469	1.405	
	Total	92		129.957		
Basic Courses	Between Groups	2	.830	1.776	.888	.439
	Within Groups	89		95.213	1.070	
	Total	91		96.989		
Less Vocational	Between Groups	2	2.173	6.501	3.251	.120
	Within Groups	90		134.617		
	Total	92		141.118		
Summer School	Between Groups	2	.004	.009	.005	.996
	Within Groups	90		101.152	1.124	
	Total	92		101.161		
Pull Out	Between Groups	2	.297	1.057	.529	.744
	Within Groups	90		160.126	1.779	
	Total	92		161.183		
Language/Math	Between Groups	2	1.148	3.250	1.625	.322
	Within Groups	90		127.417	1.416	
	Total	92		130.667		

Decrease Pull-Out	Between Groups	2	1.299	2.804	1.402	.279
	Within Groups	79		85.257	1.079	
	Total	81		88.061		
Teacher Knowledge	Between Groups	2	.051	.046	.023	.950
	Within Groups	79		35.478	.449	
	Total	81		35.524		
Administrative						
Support	Between Groups	2	.731	.850	.425	.485
	Within Groups	76		44.138	.581	
	Total	78		44.987		
Professional Training	Between Groups	2	.052	.088	.044	.950
	Within Groups	77		65.462	.850	
	Total	79		65.550		
Paraprofessional	Between Groups	2	1.359	3.729	1.864	.263
	Within Groups	77		105.659	1.372	
	Total	79		109.388		
Instruction	Between Groups	2	.801	1.242	.621	.453
	Within Groups	76		58.935	.775	
	Total	78		60.177		
Increase Support	Between Groups	2	1.374	.954	.477	.259
	Within Groups	75		26.033	.347	
	Total	77		26.987		

Additional							
Test Taking	Between Groups	2	1.249	.885	.442	.293	
	Within Groups	75		26.564	.354		
	Total	77		27.449			
Increase Support Special Education	Between Groups	2	.163	.135	.067	.850	
	Within Groups	74		30.567	.413		
	Total	76		30.701			
Remediation	Between Groups	2	.547	1.025	.513	.581	
	Within Groups	73		68.383	.937		
	Total	75		69.408			
Increase Support							
Regular Education	Between Groups	2	1.316	1.668	.834	.274	
	Within Groups	73		4.266	.634		
	Total	75		47.934			

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\* $p \leq .05$ .

### *Research Question Two*

What changes do Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in meeting those requirements?

In order to address research question two there were thirteen questions used from the survey. The questions related to: (a) teacher support, (b) administrative and staff support, and (c) services and resources.

#### Directors of Special Education

Overall, Directors were generally in agreement with exception of one of the factors relating to changes needed to best support students. There was a high agreement in the area of

teacher supports and administrative support. These areas include increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations, increase willingness of general education teachers to include students with disabilities, increased level of special education support to general education teachers doing inclusion and additional professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services. Directors tended to disagree in the area of teacher support that involved increased time in pullout used to support students.

Table 7

*Mean Perception Scores of Directors-Research Question Two*

Factors	Question #	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Teacher Support</b>				
Increase Pull Out	32	27	2.52	1.01
Increase Time	33	27	4.30	.67
Increase Teacher Knowledge	34	27	4.48	.64
Increase Willingness	35	27	4.44	.70
Advocacy	36	27	4.19	1.00
<b>Administrative and Staff Support</b>				
Administrator Support	37	27	4.56	.64
Professional Development	40	26	4.54	.58
Para Professional	42	27	4.22	.89
Co-Teaching	43	27	3.37	1.01
<b>Services and Resources</b>				
Increase Support Services	46	27	4.11	.93
Increase Remedial Courses	47	27	3.56	1.05
Decrease Case Load	48	26	3.92	.80
Decrease Inclusive Classes	49	27	3.59	.93

## Principals

Overall, Principals were in agreement with all factors relating to changes needed to best support students. There was a high agreement in the area of teacher supports which was, increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations. Principals had a low agreement in the area of increased pullout being used to best support students.

Table 8

*Mean Perception Scores of Principals Research Question Two*

Factors	Question #	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Teacher Support</b>				
Increase Pull Out	32	39	3.08	1.09
Increase Time	33	39	3.92	.59
Increase Teacher Knowledge	34	40	4.45	.55
Increase Willingness	35	40	4.30	.65
<b>Administrative and Staff Support</b>				
Advocacy	36	39	4.00	.83
Administrator Support	37	40	4.33	.66
Professional Development	40	40	4.22	.66
Para Professional	42	40	4.30	.79
Co-Teaching	43	39	4.10	.88
Increase Support Services	46	40	4.15	.80
<b>Services and Resources</b>				
Increase Remedial Courses	47	39	3.87	.92
Decrease Case Load	48	40	3.58	.93
Decrease Inclusive Classes	49	40	3.58	1.17

## Lead Teachers

Overall, Lead Teachers were in agreement with all factors relating to changes needed to best support students. There was a high agreement with two factors in the area of teacher supports and administrative supports: 1) increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations and 2) additional paraprofessional assigned to teachers that



instruct students with learning disabilities. Lead Teachers had a low agreement in the area of increased pullout being used to best support students.

Table 9

*Mean Perception Scores of Lead Teachers Research Question Two*

Factors	Question #	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Teacher Support</b>				
Increase Pull Out	32	19	3.00	1.41
Increase Time	33	19	3.58	1.01
Increase Teacher Knowledge	34	19	4.47	.61
Increase Willingness	35	19	4.32	1.00
Advocacy	36	19	4.21	.86
<b>Administrative and Staff Support</b>				
Administrator Support	37	19	4.16	.90
Professional Development	40	19	4.11	.94
Para Professional	42	19	4.68	.48
Co-Teaching	43	19	4.16	.96
<b>Services and Resources</b>				
Increase Support Services	46	19	4.05	.78
Increase Remedial Courses	47	19	3.79	.86
Decrease Case Load	48	19	3.84	1.02
Decrease Inclusive Classes	49	19	4.00	1.05

Comparison across groups

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between administrators and factors relating to changes Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in passing the GQE's. Follow up tests were conducted to evaluate

pairwise differences among the means. Multiple comparisons was done using the Tukey test, a test that does not assume equal variances among the three groups (see Appendix J). There was a significant means between the groups in the question relating to increased time in general education  $F(2, 82) = 5.59, p = .02$ . There was also a significant difference between administrator groups on the factor related to providing additional utilization of co-teaching arrangements in inclusive general education classes  $F(2, 82), p = .004$ .

Table 11

*Analysis of Variance for Administrators-Research Question Two*

Factor		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i>
Pull out	Between Groups	2	2.026	5.314	2.657	.138
	Within Groups	82		107.150	1.311	
	Total	84		112.824		
Increase Time	Between Groups	2	5.587	5.864	2.932	.005*
	Within Groups	82		43.030	.525	
	Total	84		48.894		
Increase Teacher						
Knowledge	Between Groups	2	.025	.018	.009	.975
	Within Groups	83		29.378	.354	
	Total	85		29.395		
Increase Willingness	Between Groups	2	.319	.363	.181	.728
	Within Groups	83		47.172	.568	
	Total	85		47.525		
Advocacy	Between Groups	2	.512	.815	.408	.601
	Within Groups	82		65.232	.796	
	Total	84		66.047		
Administrator						
Support	Between Groups	2	1.837	1.858	.929	.166
	Within Groups	83		41.968	.506	
	Total	85		43.026		
Professional	Between Groups	2	.038	.033	.017	.963

Development	Within Groups	83		36.525	.440	
	Total	85		36.559		
Para Professional	Between Groups	2	2.408	2.421	1.211	.0096
	Within Groups	82		41.226	.503	
	Total	84		43.647		
Co-Teaching	Between Groups	2	5.895	10.411	5.206	.004*
	Within Groups	82		72.412	.883	
	Total	84		82.824		
Increase Support						
Services	Between Groups	2	.087	.123	.062	.917
	Within Groups	83		58.174	.707	
	Total	85		58.837		
Increase Remedial						
Courses	Between Groups	2	.900	1.62	.814	.411
	Within Groups	82		74.184	.905	
	Total	84		75.812		
Decrease Case Load	Between Groups	2	1.299	2.158	1.079	.278
	Within Groups	82		68.147	.831	
	Total	84		70.306		
Decrease Inclusive						
Classes	Between Groups	2	1.116	2.590	1.295	.332
	Within Groups	83		96.294	1.160	
	Total	85		98.884		

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\* $p < .05$

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The perceptions of Virginia special education directors, high school principals, and lead teachers regarding the graduation requirements impact on the educational experiences and outcomes for students with learning disabilities are the focus of this research. Additionally, this study investigated the changes that Virginia administrators perceived are needed in order to best support students in meeting those requirements.

Administrators' perceptions of graduation requirements on the educational experiences and outcomes for students with learning disabilities may predict their likelihood to implement and provide resources for teachers and staff. To measure the administrators' perceptions a 70-item survey with a five-point Likert scale was used. Each of the questions was analyzed using descriptive statistics that included frequency distributions, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

This chapter begins with a summary discussion, and is followed with the conclusions drawn from these data. Following the conclusions, recommendations for practitioners and future research are discussed. This chapter closes with personal reflections about conducting this study.

### Summary Discussion

In summary, three primary findings resulted from this study: (1) As a result of the graduation exams there is agreement among administrators that access to general education is important to the success of GQE; (2) Instructional focus related to the GQE, including greater use of practice materials and instruction in test taking strategies would increase and be offered to students with learning disabilities as a part of the general education curriculum and individualized curriculum also; (3) Teachers training and support from administrators would be necessary for the success of special education students on the GQE's.

Previous studies have reported that increased participation of students with disabilities in testing programs can have intended and unintended consequences attached (Thurlow, Elliott & Ysseldyke, 1998; Ysseldyke, Dennison, & Nelson, 2003). Virginia's SOL test for graduation purposes has taken place for three years. In this study administrators agreed that students having access to the general education curriculum would predict success for students with learning disabilities. Decisions would need to be made by the students IEP committee to determine if the students would be able to pass the SOL and what services would need to be provided. With legal considerations given, students with disabilities must be provided with reasonable accommodations, and if necessary, alternative assessments.

The increased use of instructional focus with materials, testing, and curriculum was a factor in all of the studies researched as well as the study being adapted. There was an overwhelming agreement that providing students with the materials that are similar to the test would help them be successful in passing the test. This suggests that the test would be a driving force in curricular change. Administrators did not feel that based on graduation exams students would receive more math and language arts instruction; however they did agree that students would enroll in more courses that focused on basic academic skills. It is important for administrators to understand policies and practices for students with learning disabilities participating in high stakes test.

Administrators agreed that additional instructional and staff support, such as paraprofessionals, reduced class size, and smaller caseloads, would contribute to the success of students with learning disabilities on the GQE. However, there were varying opinions if this would happen over the next three years. It should be acknowledged that the original study was conducted when Indiana began its first year of high stakes testing; Virginia is approaching its

third year of testing. The use of resources to provide for the success of students is governed by funding for programs and staff through the political arena. The remedial efforts that have been provided are used for all students and many times the design of the program is not geared to meet the needs of special education students (Manset & Washburn, 2002). In Kaplan and Owings study, teachers expressed the need for instructional leaders, and principals to be knowledgeable about high stakes testing and accountability (2001). Virginia administrators agreed and felt that more professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services would offer them the support that they need for students to be successful.

The increased use of high stakes testing poses challenges and opportunities for educators of students with learning disabilities. While, testing has given students the opportunity to be exposed and included in consistent standards that are meant to encourage improved education, these standards may prove to be unrealistic expectations for many students with learning disabilities. As indicated by administrators' responses, the accessibility to the mainstream curriculum for high school students with learning disabilities must be increased.

### Conclusions

The investigation examining administrators' perceptions was guided by the following research questions:

1) How do Virginia administrators perceive that the graduation requirements impact educational experiences and outcomes of students with learning disabilities?

Administrators agreed that access to general education is important to the success of students with learning disabilities. With this notion a decrease in pullout services while giving full access to inclusion would be necessary. They also felt that due to the testing requirements students

would be exposed to increased use of practice test and testing taking strategies, and general and special education teachers would receive increased administrative support in inclusion classes.

2) What changes do Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in meeting these requirements? The changes that administrators perceived are needed to support students to meet these requirements are 1) Exposure to professional development and training to help students be successful in taking GQE; 2) Increased levels of teacher and administrative supports; 3) Increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations; and 4) Additional paraprofessional assigned to teachers that instruct students with disabilities.

Clearly, the results of this investigation indicated that Virginia administrators perceive that the graduation examination has had an impact on the educational experience and outcomes of students with learning disabilities, and provided insight on the changes that are needed to support students meet those requirements.

#### Recommendations for Practice

There are several recommendations for practice that maybe valuable to special education administrators, school administrators, and teachers. The recommendations are drawn from the research data, and they are qualified in that regard as well.

1. In order or administrators and teachers to provide appropriate access to the general curriculum, staff development will need to be provided using research based instructional strategy methods. Administrators in this study agreed that staff development and administrative support of general and special education teachers is necessary for student with learning disabilities to be successful on the SOL.
2. It is also important to prepare students for high stakes test-taking by developing explicit teaching of test-taking procedures and strategies in the curriculum. Administrators felt that as a



result of the graduation requirement, greater use of practice materials and instruction in test-taking strategies would increase and be offered to students with learning disabilities as a part of the general education curriculum and individualized curriculum.

3. It will be necessary for collaboration to take place with special and general education teachers as well as paraprofessionals, because all students who participate in high stakes testing are expected to have access to the general education curriculum. School administrators should emphasize the importance of collaborative relationships with staff in meeting the educational needs of students with learning disabilities in inclusive instructional settings.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Given the findings and conclusions of this study, this research offers several recommendations for future research:

1) The participants used in this study included administrators who worked with students at the high school level and played a key role in being informed about graduation requirements. However, future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study to see if middle school administrators and teachers who work with students with learning disabilities describe similar results.

2) The data for this study were obtained by using a questionnaire with administrators and lead teachers. In future studies, interviews from administrators and lead teachers, conducted by the researcher, would provide more detailed descriptions and verifications of the actual practices that occur in each school and/or school division.

3) This study focused on the perceptions of administrators on high-stakes testing of students with learning disabilities. A questionnaire was used which did not give the respondents

the opportunity to expand on their thoughts. Therefore it is recommended to employ interviewing techniques to allow administrators the opportunity to express their thoughts.

#### Personal Reflections on the Research Process

Based on my experience with conducting this particular study, I recommend that some aspects should be modified for future replications or extensions of this study. First, the researcher should ensure that division superintendents understand that the survey should not be shared with participants until the day in which the survey should be viewed. In my study, this misunderstanding caused participants to see the survey in advance, which prevented their responses from being used. Secondly, the researcher should follow up with participants by also using paper surveys. This procedure could increase the response rate. Emails were sent out to participants and two reminders however, participants without email addresses were not able to respond. Third, a revised survey should include demographic information located at the beginning of the survey. This was not done in the original survey, however, it would have provided an in-depth look at location of participants, division size, school size and special education student population. Finally, I would reduce some questions that were on the original survey because they appeared to have similar meanings that could be collapsed into one question or re-worded.

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Appendix-A

Administrators' Survey

**Survey of High School Principal's Perceptions of High Stakes Testing of Students with Learning Disabilities**

**Instructions:**

The following questionnaire specifically seeks information regarding how the implementation of the Standards of Learning (SOL) end of course Qualifying Exam impacts the school experience of students with learning disabilities. For the purpose of clarity, the following items are identified

- "Standard's of Learning" refers to the end of course Qualifying Exam, also called "SOL"
- "Students with learning disabilities" refers to those students identified for special education services under the specific categorical label of learning disabled
- Lead Teacher refers to specialists at the high school level who advise teachers of legal policies dealing with special education and oversees special education teachers

As you respond to questions, please also keep in mind that we are interested in students' experiences and school services at the high school level. If your school division encompasses more than one high school, please respond by considering the general trends among the schools and students within all of the high schools.

**Please respond to each item, by circling the number that represents your response choice. Please leave no item unanswered. We appreciate your participation.**

**Thank you very much in advance for your energy, time, and thoughtful responses. Please share some information about your school division.**

1.

Please check (√)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Director of Special Education
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coordinator of Special Education
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Principal
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lead Teacher
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**Please circle the word or words that best indicates your agreement with how well each statement describes your district.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. Secondary general education teachers in our division are supportive of inclusive programming for students with learning disabilities. . .	1	2	3	4	5
3. Secondary teachers in our division utilize instructional materials that resemble the format of various parts of the SOL. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
4. Secondary teachers in our division appear <u>less</u> supportive of inclusive programming for students with learning disabilities as a result of using the SOL as part of the graduation requirement. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5

**B. For each of the statements describing current and future impacts of the SOL, please circle the number that best characterizes how true you believe the statement is for students with learning disabilities in your school planning district.**

<b>Students with learning disabilities who fail the SOL one or more times . . .</b>	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
5. are <u>provided</u> remedial efforts. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
6. are <u>strongly encouraged</u> to participate in remedial efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
7. are <u>required</u> to participate in remedial efforts. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
<b>As a result of the implementation of the SOL, student with learning disabilities . . .</b>	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
8. experience less choice of course selection. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
9. enroll in more courses that focus on basic academic skills.	1	2	3	4	5
10. repeat general education courses for remediation purposes. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
11. enroll in less vocational or career preparation courses.	1	2	3	4	5
12. are attending summer school more often . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
13. spend more time in resource or "pull-out" settings.	1	2	3	4	5
14. receive more math and language arts instruction. .	1	2	3	4	5
15. My responses to the majority of the above questions are based on numerical data. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
<b>As a result of the SOL graduation requirement, students with learning disabilities <u>will . . . in the future</u></b>	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
16. experience less choice of course selection. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
17. spend more time in resource or "pull-out" settings.	1	2	3	4	5
18. participate in fewer vocational or career preparation courses . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
19. attend summer school more often . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
20. failure of the SOL influences decisions to leave school prior to graduating . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5

	Practically none	A Few	Neither True Nor False	About Half	Practically All
<b>C. Please indicate approximately <u>how many</u> high school students with learning disabilities participate in the following <u>types of remedial efforts</u> following their failure to pass one or more parts of the SOL. . . . .</b>					
21. summer school courses. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
22. repetition of general education courses. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
23. increased time in resource room settings . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
24. pull-out instruction during general education courses. . .	1	2	3	4	5
25. tutoring before or after school. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
26. special remedial classes offered during study hall or homeroom. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
<b>D. Please indicate <u>how many</u> high school students with learning disabilities who are considered at risk for failure on the SOL . . .</b>					
27. receive remedial instruction for the SOL in special education classes or settings. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
28. receive remedial instruction by special education teachers. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
29. receive remedial efforts during their ninth grade year. . .	1	2	3	4	5
30. receive remedial instruction prior to high school. . .	1	2	3	4	5

<b>E. To what extent do you agree that the provision of the following services or resources predicts SOL success for students with learning disabilities.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
31. increased time in pull-out instruction . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
32. increased time in general education. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
33. increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
34. increased willingness of general education teachers to include students with disabilities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
35. greater advocacy of special education teachers for inclusive programming. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
36. increased level of administrative support to general education teachers doing inclusion. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
37. increased level of special education support to general education teachers doing inclusion. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
38. school wide efforts to promote participation of all students in extra-curricular activities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
39. additional professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
40. inclusive general education classes with 20 or fewer students. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
41. additional paraprofessionals assigned to teachers that instruct students with learning disabilities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
42. additional utilization of co-teaching arrangements in inclusive general education classes. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
43. availability and use of calculators during instructional activities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
44. increased availability and use of instructional materials that resemble the format of the tests. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
45. increased special education support services, (i.e., counselors, psychologist etc.) . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
46. increased availability of tutoring services within the community. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
47. increased number of remedial courses. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5

<b>F. To what extent do you agree that the provision of the following services or resources <u>predicts SOL success</u> for students with learning disabilities.</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
48. decreases to special educators' case load. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
49. decreases in the average number of students in inclusive general education classrooms. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
50. there is a need to gather information regarding what predicts SOL success for students with learning disabilities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
<b>G. To what extent do you agree that the following changes will occur within the next three years in response to the SOL graduation requirements?</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
51. decreased time in pull-out instruction. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
52. increased time in general education. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
53. increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
54. Increased willingness of general education teachers to include students in their classrooms. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
55. greater advocacy for inclusive programming on the part of special education teachers. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
56. increased administrative support offered to general education teachers doing inclusion. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
57. school wide efforts to promote participation of students in extra-curricular activities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
58. additional professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
59. inclusive general education classes with 20 or fewer students. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
60. additional paraprofessional assigned to teachers that instruct students with learning disabilities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
61. additional utilization of co-teaching arrangements in inclusive general education classes. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
62. increased availability and use of calculators during instructional activities. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5

<b>H. To what extent do you agree that the following changes will occur within the next three years in response to the SOL graduation requirements?</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
63. increased availability and use of instructional materials that resemble the format of the tests. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
64. increased use of practice tests . . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
65. additional instruction in test taking strategies. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
66. increased special education support services, (i.e., counselor, psychologist etc.). . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
67. increased availability of tutoring services within the community. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
68. increased number of remedial courses. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
69. mandatory ninth grade enrollment in remedial classes that focus on SOL preparation. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5
70. increased special education support to general education teachers working in inclusion settings. . . . .	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX-B

## Superintendent's Email

**From: Lynn Clayton-Prince**  
**To: Virginia Superintendents**  
**Cc:**  
**Bc: Individual Superintendents Names**  
**Subject: Virginia Tech Survey**  
**Attachments: IRB Application**

Dear Virginia Superintendent,

My name is Lynn Clayton-Prince and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. As part of my doctoral work I am interested in administrators' opinions of graduation examinations, and I am conducting an opinion survey of Virginia high school principals, Directors of Special Education and Lead Teachers of Special Education at the secondary level.

I would like to request your permission for administrators in your division to participate in a survey that I am conducting. This survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and their participation is both voluntary and confidentiality is assured. Neither you nor school division will be identified in the final report. Please only respond to this email if you request that your division be excluded from participating in this survey.

If you would like me to send you a summary of the study results, please print your name and email address on the "Request for a Summary of the Findings" attachment. Once the surveys are received, they will be kept separate.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 4506 Bell Rd., Powhatan, VA 23139, phone 804-598-6377. You are also encouraged to contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Susan Magliaro, at 226 War Memorial Hall 0313, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, 24061, phone 540-231-1802. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Please click on to the following link to view this survey at  
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=794292448256>

Sincerely

Lynn Clayton-Prince  
Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Susan Magliaro  
Department of Education  
Advisor

## Appendix C

## Administrator's Email

**From: Lynn Clayton-Prince**  
**To: Administrators**  
**Cc:**  
**Bc: Dr. Sue Magliaro**  
**Subject: Virginia Tech Survey**  
**Attachments:**

---

Dear Virginia Administrator,

My name is Lynn Clayton-Prince and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. As part of my doctoral work, I am interested in administrators' opinions of graduation examinations, and I am conducting an opinion survey of Virginia high school principals, directors/superintendents of special education and lead teachers of special education at the secondary level.

This survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and your participation is both voluntary and confidentiality is assured. Neither your school nor school division will be identified in the final report.

Participation in this research project will take some time but your contribution will be appreciated. You can reap personal satisfaction knowing you have made a meaningful contribution merely by expressing your opinion.

If you would like me to send you a summary of the study results, please print your name and email address on the "Request for a Summary of the Findings" sheet. Once they are received, they will be kept separate from the survey.

Please click on to the following link to participate in this survey at:  
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=794292448256>

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 4506 Bell Rd., Powhatan, VA 23139, phone 804-598-6377. You are also encouraged to contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Susan Magliaro, at 226 War Memorial Hall 0313 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, 24061, phone 540-231-1802. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Lynn Clayton-Prince  
Doctoral Candidate



## Appendix-D

## Request for Summary of the Findings

**From: Lynn Clayton-Prince**  
**To: Administrators**  
**Cc:**  
**Bc:**  
**Subject: Virginia Tech Survey**  
**Attachments: Summary of the Findings**

---

Please send me a summary of the findings of your study, "Administrators' Perspectives of the Impact of Mandatory Graduation Qualifying Examinations for Students with Learning Disabilities". Please send this report to me at:

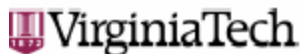
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OR

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix-E

## IRB Approval



Office of Research Compliance  
 Institutional Review Board  
 1880 Pratt Drive (0497)  
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
 540/231-4991 Fax: 540/231-0959  
 E-mail: moored@vt.edu  
 www.irb.vt.edu

FN#000005724 expires 7/20/07  
 IRB # is IRB00000567

DATE: September 27, 2006

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Susan G. Magliaro  
 Lynn Clayton-Prince

FROM: David M. Moore 

SUBJECT: **IRB Exempt Approval:** "Administrators' Perspectives of the Impact of Mandatory Graduation Qualifying Examinations for Students with Learning Disabilities", IRB # 06-442

I have reviewed your request to the IRB for exemption for the above referenced project. I concur that the research falls within the exempt status. Approval is granted effective as of September 27, 2006.

As an investigator of human subjects, your responsibilities include the following:

1. Report promptly proposed changes in previously approved human subject research activities to the IRB, including changes to your study forms, procedures and investigators, regardless of how minor. The proposed changes must not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects.
2. Report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

cc: File

*Invent the Future*

## Appendix-F

## Administrators Follow up Email

**From: Lynn Clayton-Prince**  
**To: Administrators**  
**Cc:**  
**Bc: Dr. Sue Magliaro**  
**Subject: Virginia Tech Survey**  
**Attachments: IRB Approval; Survey URL**

---

Dear Virginia Administrator,

Several days ago, you received a survey about high school graduation examinations. Since your opinion is important, I want to again encourage you to take the time and participate. Your time and effort will be greatly appreciated.

Please click on to the following link to view this survey at  
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=794292448256>

You may have already completed your survey. If this is the case, please disregard this reminder.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my Chairperson, Dr. Susan Magliaro at, 226 War Memorial Hall 0313, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, 24061, phone 540-231-1802.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Lynn Clayton-Prince  
Doctoral Candidate

## Appendix-G

## Descriptive Statistics-Research Question 1

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSSCHOIC	Director of Special Education	29	3.24	1.154	.214	2.80	3.68
	Principal	44	2.80	1.133	.171	2.45	3.14
	Lead Teacher	20	3.00	1.338	.299	2.37	3.63
	Total	93	2.98	1.189	.123	2.73	3.22
ENBASAC	Director of Special Education	29	3.66	.936	.174	3.30	4.01
	Principal	44	3.48	1.000	.151	3.17	3.78
	Lead Teacher	19	3.26	1.240	.285	2.67	3.86
	Total	92	3.49	1.032	.108	3.28	3.70
LSSVOC	Director of Special Education	29	3.10	1.319	.245	2.60	3.61
	Principal	44	2.52	1.089	.164	2.19	2.85
	Lead Teacher	20	2.95	1.356	.303	2.32	3.58
	Total	93	2.80	1.239	.128	2.54	3.05
ATTSUMMR	Director of Special Education	29	3.28	.960	.178	2.91	3.64
	Principal	44	3.30	1.091	.164	2.96	3.63
	Lead Teacher	20	3.30	1.129	.252	2.77	3.83
	Total	93	3.29	1.049	.109	3.07	3.51
PULLOUT	Director of Special Education	29	2.86	1.274	.237	2.38	3.35
	Principal	44	2.77	1.344	.203	2.36	3.18
	Lead Teacher	20	3.05	1.395	.312	2.40	3.70
	Total	93	2.86	1.324	.137	2.59	3.13
MRMALA	Director of Special Education	29	2.90	1.235	.229	2.43	3.37
	Principal	44	2.48	1.110	.167	2.14	2.81
	Lead Teacher	20	2.75	1.293	.289	2.15	3.35
	Total	93	2.67	1.192	.124	2.42	2.91
DTIMEPUL	Director of Special Education	26	3.69	1.050	.206	3.27	4.12
	Principal	37	3.27	.932	.153	2.96	3.58
	Lead Teacher	19	3.37	1.212	.278	2.78	3.95
	Total	82	3.43	1.043	.115	3.20	3.66
NTIMEKNO	Director of Special Education	26	4.15	.732	.143	3.86	4.45
	Principal	37	4.11	.614	.101	3.90	4.31

	Lead Teacher	19	4.16	.688	.158	3.83	4.49
	Total	82	4.13	.662	.073	3.99	4.28
NADMIN	Director of Special Education Principal	25	4.12	.881	.176	3.76	4.48
	Lead Teacher	35	4.03	.664	.112	3.80	4.26
	Lead Teacher	19	3.84	.765	.175	3.47	4.21
	Total	79	4.01	.759	.085	3.84	4.18
PROFTRAI	Director of Special Education Principal	26	3.62	.898	.176	3.25	3.98
	Lead Teacher	35	3.57	.850	.144	3.28	3.86
	Lead Teacher	19	3.53	1.073	.246	3.01	4.04
	Total	80	3.58	.911	.102	3.37	3.78
APARA	Director of Special Education Principal	26	3.77	.863	.169	3.42	4.12
	Lead Teacher	35	3.66	1.235	.209	3.23	4.08
	Lead Teacher	19	3.21	1.398	.321	2.54	3.88
	Total	80	3.59	1.177	.132	3.33	3.85
NINTEST	Director of Special Education Principal	24	3.88	.850	.174	3.52	4.23
	Lead Teacher	36	3.94	.860	.143	3.65	4.24
	Lead Teacher	19	3.63	.955	.219	3.17	4.09
	Total	79	3.85	.878	.099	3.65	4.04
NUSPRTES	Director of Special Education Principal	25	4.16	.688	.138	3.88	4.44
	Lead Teacher	36	4.39	.549	.092	4.20	4.57
	Lead Teacher	17	4.41	.507	.123	4.15	4.67
	Total	78	4.32	.592	.067	4.19	4.45
ADDTSTTK	Director of Special Education Principal	25	4.32	.690	.138	4.04	4.60
	Lead Teacher	36	4.56	.504	.084	4.39	4.73
	Lead Teacher	17	4.53	.624	.151	4.21	4.85
	Total	78	4.47	.597	.068	4.34	4.61
NSUPPORT	Director of Special Education Principal	25	4.44	.583	.117	4.20	4.68
	Lead Teacher	35	4.37	.690	.117	4.13	4.61
	Lead Teacher	17	4.47	.624	.151	4.15	4.79
	Total	77	4.42	.636	.072	4.27	4.56
NREMED	Director of Special Education Principal	25	3.48	.918	.184	3.10	3.86
	Lead Teacher	35	3.71	.926	.156	3.40	4.03
	Lead Teacher	16	3.75	1.125	.281	3.15	4.35
	Total	76	3.64	.962	.110	3.42	3.86
NSPEDSUP	Director of Special Education	24	4.29	.690	.141	4.00	4.58

Principal	35	4.11	.758	.128	3.85	4.37
Lead Teacher	17	3.88	.993	.241	3.37	4.39
Total	76	4.12	.799	.092	3.94	4.30

## Appendix-H

## Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)-Research Question One

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
LSSCHOIC	Between Groups	3.488	2	1.744	1.241	.294
	Within Groups	126.469	90	1.405		
	Total	129.957	92			
ENBASAC	Between Groups	1.776	2	.888	.830	.439
	Within Groups	95.213	89	1.070		
	Total	96.989	91			
LSSVOC	Between Groups	6.501	2	3.251	2.173	.120
	Within Groups	134.617	90	1.496		
	Total	141.118	92			
ATTSUMMR	Between Groups	.009	2	.005	.004	.996
	Within Groups	101.152	90	1.124		
	Total	101.161	92			
PULLOUT	Between Groups	1.057	2	.529	.297	.744
	Within Groups	160.126	90	1.779		
	Total	161.183	92			
MRMALA	Between Groups	3.250	2	1.625	1.148	.322
	Within Groups	127.417	90	1.416		
	Total	130.667	92			
DTIMEPUL	Between Groups	2.804	2	1.402	1.299	.279
	Within Groups	85.257	79	1.079		
	Total	88.061	81			
NTIMEKNO	Between Groups	.046	2	.023	.051	.950
	Within Groups	35.478	79	.449		
	Total	35.524	81			
NADMIN	Between Groups	.850	2	.425	.731	.485
	Within Groups	44.138	76	.581		
	Total	44.987	78			
PROFTRAI	Between Groups	.088	2	.044	.052	.950
	Within Groups	65.462	77	.850		
	Total	65.550	79			
APARA	Between Groups	3.729	2	1.864	1.359	.263
	Within Groups	105.659	77	1.372		
	Total	109.388	79			
NINTEST	Between Groups	1.242	2	.621	.801	.453
	Within Groups	58.935	76	.775		

	Total	60.177	78			
NUSPRTES	Between Groups	.954	2	.477	1.374	.259
	Within Groups	26.033	75	.347		
	Total	26.987	77			
ADDTSTTK	Between Groups	.885	2	.442	1.249	.293
	Within Groups	26.564	75	.354		
	Total	27.449	77			
NSUPPORT	Between Groups	.135	2	.067	.163	.850
	Within Groups	30.567	74	.413		
	Total	30.701	76			
NREMEDI	Between Groups	1.025	2	.513	.547	.581
	Within Groups	68.383	73	.937		
	Total	69.408	75			
NSPEDSUP	Between Groups	1.668	2	.834	1.316	.274
	Within Groups	46.266	73	.634		
	Total	47.934	75			



## Appendix-I

## Multiple Comparisons-Research Question One

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Respondents	(J) Respondents	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PPULLOUT	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.56	.287	.132	-1.24	.13
		Lead Teacher	-.48	.343	.343	-1.30	.34
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.56	.287	.132	-.13	1.24
		Lead Teacher	.08	.320	.969	-.69	.84
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.48	.343	.343	-.34	1.30
		Principal	-.08	.320	.969	-.84	.69
PNTMGEN	Director of Special Education	Principal	.37	.181	.105	-.06	.81
		Lead Teacher	.72(*)	.217	.004	.20	1.24
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.37	.181	.105	-.81	.06
		Lead Teacher	.34	.203	.212	-.14	.83
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.72(*)	.217	.004	-1.24	-.20
		Principal	-.34	.203	.212	-.83	.14
PTCHKNW	Director of Special Education	Principal	.03	.148	.975	-.32	.39
		Lead Teacher	.01	.178	.999	-.42	.43
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.03	.148	.975	-.39	.32
		Lead Teacher	-.02	.166	.989	-.42	.37
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.01	.178	.999	-.43	.42
		Principal	.02	.166	.989	-.37	.42
PWLLINCL	Director of Special Education	Principal	.14	.188	.723	-.30	.59
		Lead Teacher	.13	.226	.836	-.41	.67
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.14	.188	.723	-.59	.30
		Lead Teacher	-.02	.210	.997	-.52	.49
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.13	.226	.836	-.67	.41
		Principal	.02	.210	.997	-.49	.52
PADVINCL	Director of Special Education	Principal	.19	.223	.686	-.35	.72

		Lead Teacher	-.03	.267	.995	-.66	.61
PADMINSU	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.19	.223	.686	-.72	.35
		Lead Teacher	-.21	.250	.677	-.81	.39
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.03	.267	.995	-.61	.66
		Principal	.21	.250	.677	-.39	.81
	Director of Special Education	Principal	.23	.177	.398	-.19	.65
	Principal	Lead Teacher	.40	.213	.155	-.11	.91
PSPEDSU		Director of Special Education	-.23	.177	.398	-.65	.19
		Lead Teacher	.17	.198	.677	-.31	.64
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.40	.213	.155	-.91	.11
		Principal	-.17	.198	.677	-.64	.31
	Director of Special Education	Principal	.03	.165	.979	-.36	.43
		Lead Teacher	-.01	.199	.997	-.49	.46
P20FWRST	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.03	.165	.979	-.43	.36
		Lead Teacher	-.05	.185	.966	-.49	.40
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.01	.199	.997	-.46	.49
		Principal	.05	.185	.966	-.40	.49
	Director of Special Education	Principal	.31	.179	.191	-.11	.74
		Lead Teacher	.43	.214	.113	-.08	.94
PPARAPRO	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.31	.179	.191	-.74	.11
		Lead Teacher	.12	.198	.817	-.35	.59
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.43	.214	.113	-.94	.08
		Principal	-.12	.198	.817	-.59	.35
	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.08	.192	.913	-.54	.38
		Lead Teacher	-.46	.230	.117	-1.01	.09
PCOINCLU	Principal	Director of Special Education	.08	.192	.913	-.38	.54
		Lead Teacher	-.38	.214	.179	-.90	.13
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.46	.230	.117	-.09	1.01
		Principal	.38	.214	.179	-.13	.90
	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.73(*)	.235	.007	-1.29	-.17
		Lead Teacher	-.79(*)	.281	.017	-1.46	-.12
PCOINCLU	Principal	Director of Special Education	.73(*)	.235	.007	.17	1.29
		Lead Teacher	-.06	.263	.976	-.68	.57
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.79(*)	.281	<b>.017</b>	.12	1.46
		Principal	.06	.263	.976	-.57	.68

PSUPPORT	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.04	.209	.981	-.54	.46
		Lead Teacher	.06	.252	.971	-.54	.66
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.04	.209	.981	-.46	.54
		Lead Teacher	.10	.234	.909	-.46	.66
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.06	.252	.971	-.66	.54
		Principal	-.10	.234	.909	-.66	.46
PNCREMD	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.32	.238	.384	-.88	.25
		Lead Teacher	-.23	.285	.691	-.91	.45
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.32	.238	.384	-.25	.88
		Lead Teacher	.08	.266	.949	-.55	.72
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.23	.285	.691	-.45	.91
		Principal	-.08	.266	.949	-.72	.55
DCASELD	Director of Special Education	Principal	.35	.230	.289	-.20	.90
		Lead Teacher	.08	.275	.953	-.58	.74
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.35	.230	.289	-.90	.20
		Lead Teacher	-.27	.254	.547	-.87	.34
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.08	.275	.953	-.74	.58
		Principal	.27	.254	.547	-.34	.87
DSTDINCL	Director of Special Education	Principal	.02	.268	.998	-.62	.66
		Lead Teacher	-.41	.323	.420	-1.18	.36
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.02	.268	.998	-.66	.62
		Lead Teacher	-.42	.300	.337	-1.14	.29
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.41	.323	.420	-.36	1.18
		Principal	.42	.300	.337	-.29	1.14

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## Appendix-J

## Descriptive Statistics-Research Question Two

		N	M	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
INCRPULL	Director of Special Education	27	2.52	1.014	.195	2.12	2.92	1	4
	Principal	39	3.08	1.085	.174	2.73	3.43	1	5
	Lead Teacher	19	3.00	1.414	.324	2.32	3.68	1	5
	Total	85	2.88	1.159	.126	2.63	3.13	1	5
INCRGEN	Director of Special Education	27	4.30	.669	.129	4.03	4.56	2	5
	Principal	39	3.92	.580	.093	3.74	4.11	3	5
	Lead Teacher	19	3.58	1.017	.233	3.09	4.07	1	5
	Total	85	3.96	.763	.083	3.80	4.13	1	5
TCHKNW	Director of Special Education	27	4.48	.643	.124	4.23	4.74	3	5
	Principal	40	4.45	.552	.087	4.27	4.63	3	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.47	.612	.140	4.18	4.77	3	5
	Total	86	4.47	.588	.063	4.34	4.59	3	5
WLLINCL	Director of Special Education	27	4.44	.698	.134	4.17	4.72	3	5
	Principal	40	4.30	.648	.103	4.09	4.51	3	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.32	1.003	.230	3.83	4.80	1	5
	Total	86	4.35	.748	.081	4.19	4.51	1	5
ADVINCL	Director of Special Education	27	4.19	1.001	.193	3.79	4.58	1	5
	Principal	39	4.00	.827	.132	3.73	4.27	2	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.21	.855	.196	3.80	4.62	3	5
	Total	85	4.11	.887	.096	3.91	4.30	1	5
ADMINSU	Director of Special Education	27	4.56	.641	.123	4.30	4.81	3	5
	Principal	40	4.33	.656	.104	4.12	4.53	2	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.16	.898	.206	3.72	4.59	2	5
	Total	86	4.36	.718	.077	4.21	4.51	2	5
SPEDSU	Director of Special Education	27	4.41	.797	.153	4.09	4.72	2	5
	Principal	40	4.38	.586	.093	4.19	4.56	3	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.42	.607	.139	4.13	4.71	3	5
	Total	86	4.40	.656	.071	4.25	4.54	2	5

PRODEV	Director of Special Education	26	4.54	.582	.114	4.30	4.77	3	5
	Principal	40	4.22	.660	.104	4.01	4.44	2	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.11	.937	.215	3.65	4.56	2	5
	Total	85	4.29	.721	.078	4.14	4.45	2	5
PPARAPRO	Director of Special Education	27	4.22	.892	.172	3.87	4.57	2	5
	Principal	40	4.30	.791	.125	4.05	4.55	2	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.68	.478	.110	4.45	4.91	4	5
	Total	86	4.36	.781	.084	4.19	4.53	2	5
COTEACH	Director of Special Education	27	3.37	1.006	.194	2.97	3.77	2	5
	Principal	39	4.10	.882	.141	3.82	4.39	2	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.16	.958	.220	3.70	4.62	2	5
	Total	85	3.88	.993	.108	3.67	4.10	2	5
SUPPORT	Director of Special Education	27	4.11	.934	.180	3.74	4.48	2	5
	Principal	40	4.15	.802	.127	3.89	4.41	2	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.05	.780	.179	3.68	4.43	3	5
	Total	86	4.12	.832	.090	3.94	4.29	2	5
PNCRREMD	Director of Special Education	27	3.56	1.050	.202	3.14	3.97	2	5
	Principal	39	3.87	.923	.148	3.57	4.17	2	5
	Lead Teacher	19	3.79	.855	.196	3.38	4.20	3	5
	Total	85	3.75	.950	.103	3.55	3.96	2	5
DCASELD	Director of Special Education	26	3.92	.796	.156	3.60	4.24	2	5
	Principal	40	3.58	.931	.147	3.28	3.87	1	5
	Lead Teacher	19	3.84	1.015	.233	3.35	4.33	1	5
	Total	85	3.74	.915	.099	3.54	3.94	1	5
DINCL	Director of Special Education	27	3.59	.931	.179	3.22	3.96	2	5
	Principal	40	3.58	1.174	.186	3.20	3.95	1	5
	Lead Teacher	19	4.00	1.054	.242	3.49	4.51	2	5
	Total	86	3.67	1.079	.116	3.44	3.91	1	5

## Appendix-K

## Analysis of Variance-Research Question Two

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PPULLOUT	Between Groups	5.314	2	2.657	2.026	.138
	Within Groups	107.510	82	1.311		
	Total	112.824	84			
PNTMGEN	Between Groups	5.864	2	2.932	5.587	<b>.005</b>
	Within Groups	43.030	82	.525		
	Total	48.894	84			
PTCHKNW	Between Groups	.018	2	.009	.025	.975
	Within Groups	29.378	83	.354		
	Total	29.395	85			
PWLLINCL	Between Groups	.363	2	.181	.319	.728
	Within Groups	47.172	83	.568		
	Total	47.535	85			
PADVINCL	Between Groups	.815	2	.408	.512	.601
	Within Groups	65.232	82	.796		
	Total	66.047	84			
PADMINSU	Between Groups	1.858	2	.929	1.837	.166
	Within Groups	41.968	83	.506		
	Total	43.826	85			
PSPEDSU	Between Groups	.033	2	.017	.038	.963
	Within Groups	36.525	83	.440		
	Total	36.558	85			
P20FWRST	Between Groups	2.421	2	1.211	2.408	.096
	Within Groups	41.226	82	.503		
	Total	43.647	84			
PPARAPRO	Between Groups	2.654	2	1.327	2.240	.113
	Within Groups	49.172	83	.592		
	Total	51.826	85			
PCOINCLU	Between Groups	10.411	2	5.206	5.895	<b>.004</b>
	Within Groups	72.412	82	.883		
	Total	82.824	84			
PSUPPORT	Between Groups	.123	2	.062	.087	.917
	Within Groups	58.714	83	.707		
	Total	58.837	85			
PNCRREMD	Between Groups	1.628	2	.814	.900	.411
	Within Groups	74.184	82	.905		
	Total	75.812	84			
DCASELD	Between Groups	2.158	2	1.079	1.299	.278
	Within Groups	68.147	82	.831		
	Total	70.306	84			
DSTDINCL	Between Groups	2.590	2	1.295	1.116	.332
	Within Groups	96.294	83	1.160		
	Total	98.884	85			

## Appendix-L

## Multiple Comparisons-Research Question Two

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Respondents	(J) Respondents	Mean Difference (I-J)	SD	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
PPULLOUT	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.56	.287	.132	-1.24	.13
		Lead Teacher	-.48	.343	.343	-1.30	.34
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.56	.287	.132	-.13	1.24
		Lead Teacher	.08	.320	.969	-.69	.84
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.48	.343	.343	-.34	1.30
		Principal	-.08	.320	.969	-.84	.69
PNTMGEN	Director of Special Education	Principal	.37	.181	.105	-.06	.81
		Lead Teacher	.72(*)	.217	<b>.004</b>	.20	1.24
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.37	.181	.105	-.81	.06
		Lead Teacher	.34	.203	.212	-.14	.83
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.72(*)	.217	<b>.004</b>	-1.24	-.20
		Principal	-.34	.203	.212	-.83	.14
PTCHKNW	Director of Special Education	Principal	.03	.148	.975	-.32	.39
		Lead Teacher	.01	.178	.999	-.42	.43
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.03	.148	.975	-.39	.32
		Lead Teacher	-.02	.166	.989	-.42	.37
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.01	.178	.999	-.43	.42
		Principal	.02	.166	.989	-.37	.42
PWLLINCL	Director of Special Education	Principal	.14	.188	.723	-.30	.59
		Lead Teacher	.13	.226	.836	-.41	.67
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.14	.188	.723	-.59	.30
		Lead Teacher	-.02	.210	.997	-.52	.49
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.13	.226	.836	-.67	.41
		Principal	.02	.210	.997	-.49	.52
PADVINCL	Director of Special Education	Principal	.19	.223	.686	-.35	.72
		Lead Teacher	-.03	.267	.995	-.66	.61
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.19	.223	.686	-.72	.35
		Lead Teacher	-.21	.250	.677	-.81	.39
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.03	.267	.995	-.61	.66
		Principal					

		Principal	.21	.250	.677	-.39	.81
PADMINSU	Director of Special Education	Principal	.23	.177	.398	-.19	.65
		Lead Teacher	.40	.213	.155	-.11	.91
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.23	.177	.398	-.65	.19
		Lead Teacher	.17	.198	.677	-.31	.64
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.40	.213	.155	-.91	.11
		Principal	-.17	.198	.677	-.64	.31
PSPEDSU	Director of Special Education	Principal	.03	.165	.979	-.36	.43
		Lead Teacher	-.01	.199	.997	-.49	.46
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.03	.165	.979	-.43	.36
		Lead Teacher	-.05	.185	.966	-.49	.40
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.01	.199	.997	-.46	.49
		Principal	.05	.185	.966	-.40	.49
P20FWRST	Director of Special Education	Principal	.31	.179	.191	-.11	.74
		Lead Teacher	.43	.214	.113	-.08	.94
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.31	.179	.191	-.74	.11
		Lead Teacher	.12	.198	.817	-.35	.59
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.43	.214	.113	-.94	.08
		Principal	-.12	.198	.817	-.59	.35
PPARAPRO	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.08	.192	.913	-.54	.38
		Lead Teacher	-.46	.230	.117	-1.01	.09
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.08	.192	.913	-.38	.54
		Lead Teacher	-.38	.214	.179	-.90	.13
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.46	.230	.117	-.09	1.01
		Principal	.38	.214	.179	-.13	.90
PCOINCLU	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.73(*)	.235	<b>.007</b>	-1.29	-.17
		Lead Teacher	-.79(*)	.281	.017	-1.46	-.12
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.73(*)	.235	<b>.007</b>	.17	1.29
		Lead Teacher	-.06	.263	.976	-.68	.57
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.79(*)	.281	.017	.12	1.46
		Principal	.06	.263	.976	-.57	.68
PSUPPORT	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.04	.209	.981	-.54	.46
		Lead Teacher	.06	.252	.971	-.54	.66
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.04	.209	.981	-.46	.54
		Lead Teacher	.10	.234	.909	-.46	.66
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.06	.252	.971	-.66	.54



		Principal	-.10	.234	.909	-.66	.46
PNCRREMD	Director of Special Education	Principal	-.32	.238	.384	-.88	.25
		Lead Teacher	-.23	.285	.691	-.91	.45
	Principal	Director of Special Education	.32	.238	.384	-.25	.88
		Lead Teacher	.08	.266	.949	-.55	.72
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.23	.285	.691	-.45	.91
		Principal	-.08	.266	.949	-.72	.55
DCASELD	Director of Special Education	Principal	.35	.230	.289	-.20	.90
		Lead Teacher	.08	.275	.953	-.58	.74
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.35	.230	.289	-.90	.20
		Lead Teacher	-.27	.254	.547	-.87	.34
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	-.08	.275	.953	-.74	.58
		Principal	.27	.254	.547	-.34	.87
DSTDINCL	Director of Special Education	Principal	.02	.268	.998	-.62	.66
		Lead Teacher	-.41	.323	.420	-1.18	.36
	Principal	Director of Special Education	-.02	.268	.998	-.66	.62
		Lead Teacher	-.42	.300	.337	-1.14	.29
	Lead Teacher	Director of Special Education	.41	.323	.420	-.36	1.18
		Principal	.42	.300	.337	-.29	1.14

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## Appendix-M

**Research Question One**

**How do administrators' of Virginia perceive that the graduation requirements impact educational experience of students and outcomes of students with learning disabilities?**

**Survey Questions:**

*As a result of the implementation of the SOL's, students with learning disabilities...*

- 7. experience less choice of course selection
- 8. enroll in more courses that focus on basic academics
- 10. enroll in less vocational or career preparation courses
- 11. are attending summer school more often
- 12. spend more time in resource or "pull-out" settings
- 13. receive more math and language arts instruction

*To what extent do you agree that the following changes will occur within the next three years in response to the SOL's graduation requirements?*

- 51. increased time in pull-out instruction
- 53. increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations
- 55. increased administrative support offered to general education teachers doing inclusion
- 57. additional professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services
- 60. additional paraprofessional assigned to teachers that instruct students with learning disabilities

*To what extent do you agree that the following changes will occur within the next three years in response to the SOL's graduation requirements?*

- 63. increased availability and use of instruction materials that resemble the format of the tests
- 64. increased use of practice tests
- 65. additional instruction in test taking strategies
- 66. increased special education support services, (i.e., counselor, psychologist etc.,)
- 68. increased number of remedial courses
- 70. increased special education support to general education teachers working in inclusion settings.

## Research Question Two

### **What changes do Virginia administrators perceive are needed in order to best support students in meeting these requirements?**

*To what extent do you agree that the provision of the following services or resources predicts SOL's success for students with learning disabilities?*

31. Increased time in pull-out instruction
32. Increased time in general education
33. Increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations
34. Increased willingness of general education teacher to include students with disabilities
35. Greater advocacy of special education teachers for inclusive programming
36. Increased level of administrative support to general education teachers doing inclusion
30. Additional professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services
41. Additional paraprofessionals assigned to teachers that instruct students with learning disabilities
42. Additional utilization of co-teaching arrangements in inclusive general education classes
45. Increased special education support services (i.e. counselors, psychologists, etc.)
47. Increased number of remedial courses
48. Decreases to special educators' cases load
49. Decrease in the average number of students in inclusive general education classrooms

## Appendix-N

## Survey Questions and Frequencies

**Question 1. Secondary general education teachers in our school division are supportive of inclusive programming for students with learning disabilities.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	8%	12%	18%	12%
High School Principal	0%	6%	8%	69%	18%
Lead Teacher	7%	7%	13%	40%	33%

**Question 2. Secondary teachers in our school division utilize instructional materials that resemble the format of various parts of the SOL's.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	15%	54%	27%
High School Principal	0%	0%	0%	43%	57%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	14%	21%	64%

**Question 3. Secondary Teachers in our school district appear less supportive of inclusive programming for students with learning disabilities as a result of using the SOL's as part of the graduation requirement.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	4%	50%	31%	15%	0%
High School Principal	16%	46%	16%	20%	2%
Lead Teacher	0%	47%	13%	27%	13%

*For each of the statements describing current and future impacts of the SOL's, please circle the number that best characterizes how true you believe the statement is for students with learning disabilities in your school planning district.*

**Students with learning disabilities who fail the SOL's one or more times...**

**Question 4.....are provided remedial efforts**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	4%	38%	54%
High School Principal	0%	0%	2%	6%	92%
Lead Teacher	7%	0%	0%	27%	67%

**Question 5.....are strongly encouraged to participate in remedial efforts**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	0%	8%	0%	35%	58%
High School Principal	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
Lead Teacher	7%	0%	0%	20%	73%

**Question 6.....are required to participate in remedial efforts**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	16%	32%	32%	8%	12%
High School Principal	10%	8%	16%	26%	40%
Lead Teacher	40%	7%	20%	13%	20%

As a result of the implementation of the SOL's, students with learning disabilities

**Question 7.....experience less choice of course selection**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	8%	19%	19%	42%	12%
High School Principal	16%	25%	25%	32%	2%
Lead Teacher	14%	21%	21%	21%	21%

**Question 8.....enroll in more courses that focus on basic academic skills**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	4%	8%	15%	62%	12%
High School Principal	5%	14%	20%	52%	9%
Lead Teacher	23%	8%	23%	38%	8%

**Question 9.....repeat general education courses for remediation purposes**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	4%	15%	23%	46%	12%
High School Principal	9%	32%	27%	32%	0%
Lead Teacher	36%	21%	14%	7%	21%

**Question 10.....enroll in less vocational or career preparation courses**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	12%	27%	12%	35%	15%
High School Principal	14%	50%	9%	25%	2%
Lead Teacher	21%	21%	21%	21%	14%

**Question 11.....are attending summer school more often**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	4%	12%	46%	27%	12%
High School Principal	7%	16%	30%	36%	11%
Lead Teacher	14%	14%	36%	29%	7%

**Question 12.....spend more time in resource or “pull out” settings**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	15%	31%	12%	35%	8%
High School Principal	23%	25%	14%	30%	9%
Lead Teacher	14%	43%	7%	14%	21%

**Question 13....receive more math and language arts instruction**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	15%	31%	12%	35%	8%
High School Principal	0%	7%	23%	60%	9%
Lead Teacher	8%	23%	31%	38%	0%

**Question 14.....My responses to the majority of the above questions are based on numerical data**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	5%	16%	53%	16%	11%
High School Principal	9%	14%	21%	47%	9%
Lead Teacher	31%	8%	46%	0%	15%

As a result of the SOL's graduation requirement, students with learning disabilities *will...in the future*

**Question 15....experience less choice of course selection**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	4%	12%	15%	65%	4%
High School Principal	5%	26%	21%	48%	0%
Lead Teacher	14%	21%	21%	21%	21%

**Question 16.....spend more time in resource or "pull-out" setting**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	8%	42%	19%	27%	4%
High School Principal	7%	35%	14%	44%	0%
Lead Teacher	14%	43%	7%	14%	21%

**Question 17.....participate in fewer vocational or career preparation**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	8%	31%	15%	42%	4%
High School Principal	9%	56%	5%	28%	2%
Lead Teacher	14%	29%	29%	7%	21%

**Question 18.....are attend summer school more often**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	4%	35%	31%	19%	12%
High School Principal	7%	23%	33%	35%	2%
Lead Teacher	14%	36%	21%	29%	0%

**Question 19.....failure of the SOL's influences decisions to leave school prior to graduating**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	4%	15%	19%	46%	15%
High School Principal	5%	36%	29%	26%	5%
Lead Teacher	7%	21%	29%	14%	29%

**Question 20.....My response to the above questions are based on numerical data**

	Definitely False	Probably False	Neither True or False	Probably True	Definitely True
Director of Special Education	5%	16%	53%	16%	11%
High School Principal	8%	11%	32%	35%	14%
Lead Teacher	30%	10%	40%	10%	10%



*Section C. Please indicate approximately how many high school students with learning disabilities participate in the following types of remedial efforts following their failure to pass one or more parts of the SOL's*

**Questions 21...summer school courses**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	9%	68%	18%	5%	0%
High School Principal	18%	54%	8%	21%	0%
Lead Teacher	21%	57%	7%	14%	0%

**Question 22....repetition of general education courses**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	5%	59%	0%	32%	5%
High School Principal	12%	52%	15%	12%	8%
Lead Teacher	14%	43%	14%	29%	0%

**Question 23....increased time in resource setting**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	5%	73%	9%	9%	5%
High School Principal	25%	35%	15%	22%	2%
Lead Teacher	14%	43%	14%	29%	0%

**Question 24....pull out instruction during general education courses**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	9%	64%	18%	9%	0%
High School Principal	35%	48%	5%	10%	2%
Lead Teacher	36%	36%	14%	14%	0%

**Question 25.....tutoring before or after school**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	9%	38%	14%	10%	10%
High School Principal	8%	34%	5%	45%	8%
Lead Teacher	7%	71%	14%	0%	7%

**Question 26....special remedial classes offered during study hall or homeroom**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	29%	38%	14%	10%	10%
High School Principal	55%	24%	5%	13%	3%
Lead Teacher	36%	36%	0%	14%	14%

**Section D. Please indicate how many high school students with learning disabilities who are considered at risk for failure on the SOL's....**

**Question 27 receive remedial instruction for the SOL's in special education classes or settings....**

	Practically None	A few	Neither True Nor False	About Half	Practically All
Director of Special Education	0%	32%	9%	41%	18%
High School Principal	3%	28%	13%	46%	10%
Lead Teacher	8%	38%	8%	38%	8%

**Question 28. ....receive remedial instruction by special education teachers**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	0%	41%	5%	32%	23%
High School Principal	0%	20%	12%	50%	18%
Lead Teacher	15%	15%	15%	23%	31%

**Question 29....receive remedial efforts during their ninth grade year**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	0%	27%	5%	55%	14%
High School Principal	2%	15%	18%	50%	15%
Lead Teacher	8%	23%	8%	54%	8%

**Question 30... receive remedial instruction prior to high school**

	Practically None	A Few	About Half	Many	Practically All
Director of Special Education	0%	23%	9%	55%	14%
High School Principal	8%	22%	11%	53%	6%
Lead Teacher	25%	42%	0%	17%	17%

Section E. To what extent do you agree that the provision of the following services or resources predict SOL's success for students with learning disabilities?

**Question 31 increase time in pull out instruction**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	17%	29%	38%	17%	0%
High School Principal	5%	31%	23%	33%	8%
Lead Teacher	15%	23%	15%	23%	23%

**Question 32 increase time in general education**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	0%	63%	33%
High School Principal	0%	0%	21%	67%	13%
Lead Teacher	8%	0%	31%	46%	15%

**Question 33. increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	8%	33%	58%
High School Principal	0%	0%	2%	50%	48%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	8%	46%	46%

**Question 34. increased willingness of general education teachers to include students with disabilities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	8%	33%	58%
High School Principal	0%	0%	10%	50%	40%
Lead Teacher	8%	0%	8%	23%	62%

**Question 35. greater advocacy of special education teachers for inclusive programming**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	4%	4%	8%	33%	50%
High School Principal	0%	8%	10%	56%	26%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	15%	31%	54%

**Question 36. increased level of special education support to general education teachers doing inclusion**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	8%	29%	63%
High School Principal	0%	2%	2%	55%	40%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	15%	38%	46%

**Question 37. increased level of special education support to general education teachers doing inclusion**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	8%	33%	54%
High School Principal	0%	0%	5%	52%	42%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	8%	46%	46%

**Question 38 school wide efforts to promote participation of all students in extra-curricular activities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	4%	12%	21%	38%	25%
High School Principal	0%	8%	20%	35%	38%
Lead Teacher	8%	8%	23%	46%	15%

**Question 39 additional professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	4%	39%	57%
High School Principal	0%	2%	5%	60%	32%
Lead Teacher	0%	8%	23%	23%	46%

**Question 40 inclusive general education classes with 20 or fewer students**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	17%	33%	46%
High School Principal	0%	5%	45%	45%	45%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	0%	23%	77%

**Question 41 additional paraprofessional assigned to teachers that instruct students with learning disabilities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	17%	46%	17%	21%
High School Principal	0%	8%	10%	46%	36%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	23%	23%	54%

**Question 42 additional utilization of co-teaching arrangements in inclusive general education classes**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	4%	38%	54%
High School Principal	0%	0%	5%	51%	44%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	0%	23%	77%

**Question 43 availability and use of calculators during instructional activities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	29%	21%	50%
High School Principal	0%	2%	18%	42%	38%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	15%	38%	46%

**Question 44 increased availability and use of instructional materials that resemble the format of the tests**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	8%	38%	54%
High School Principal	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	8%	38%	54%

**Question 45 increased special education support services, (i.e., counselors, psychologist etc.)**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	17%	42%	17%	25%
High School Principal	0%	13%	10%	54%	23%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	46%	23%	31%

**Question 46 increased number of remedial courses**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	21%	50%	25%
High School Principal	2%	8%	35%	40%	15%
Lead Teacher	8%	8%	8%	54%	23%

**Section F. To what extent do you agree that the provision of the following services or resources predicts SOL's success for students with learning disabilities.****Question 47. decreases to special educators' caseload**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	17%	25%	46%	12%
High School Principal	2%	20%	22%	28%	28%
Lead Teacher	0%	8%	23%	23%	46%

**Question 48 decreases in the average number of students in inclusive general education classrooms**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	12%	46%	38%
High School Principal	5%	3%	13%	41%	38%
Lead Teacher	0%	8%	8%	15%	69%

**Question 49 there is a need to gather information regarding what predicts SOL success for students with learning disabilities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	9%	39%	52%
High School Principal	0%	3%	3%	44%	51%
Lead Teacher	8%	0%	15%	23%	54%

**Section G. To what extent do you agree that the following changes will occur within the next three years in response to the SOL's graduation requirements?**

**Question 50. decreased time in pull-out instruction**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	4%	13%	9%	52%	22%
High School Principal	0%	27%	24%	43%	5%
Lead Teacher	8%	23%	15%	38%	15%

**Question 51. increased time in general education**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	4%	43%	48%
High School Principal	0%	14%	14%	59%	14%
Lead Teacher	8%	8%	23%	46%	15%

**Question 52. increased teacher knowledge and utilization of instructional accommodations**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	22%	43%	35%
High School Principal	0%	3%	5%	70%	22%
Lead Teacher	0%	8%	0%	69%	23%



**Question 53. increased willingness of general education teachers to include students in their classrooms**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
Director of Special Education	0%	13%	35%	26%	26%
High School Principal	0%	11%	14%	62%	14%
Lead Teacher	15%	23%	23%	38%	0%

**Question 54. greater advocacy for inclusive programming on the part of special education teachers**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	9%	9%	57%	26%
High School Principal	0%	3%	11%	72%	14%
Lead Teacher	0%	8%	15%	46%	31%

**Question 55. increased administrative support offered to general education teachers doing inclusion**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	5%	14%	48%	33%
High School Principal	0%	3%	11%	66%	20%
Lead Teacher	0%	15%	8%	77%	0%

**Question 56. school wide efforts to promote participation of students in extra-curricular activities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	52%	17%	26%
High School Principal	0%	3%	8%	72%	17%
Lead Teacher	8%	15%	15%	46%	15%

**Question 57 additional professional development activities and training addressing inclusive school services**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	4%	9%	52%	35%
High School Principal	0%	3%	3%	68%	26%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	0%	69%	31%

**Question 59 inclusive general education classes with 20 or fewer students**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	9%	26%	43%	22%
High School Principal	3%	23%	11%	31%	31%
Lead Teacher	8%	46%	8%	15%	23%

**Question 60 additional utilization of paraprofessional assigned to teachers that instruct students with learning disabilities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	4%	4%	35%	48%	9%
High School Principal	3%	14%	11%	50%	22%
Lead Teacher	8%	38%	23%	15%	15%

**Question 61. additional utilization of co-teaching arrangements in inclusive general education classes**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	5%	14%	50%	32%
High School Principal	0%	8%	11%	58%	22%
Lead Teacher	0%	15%	15%	38%	31%

**Question 62 increased availability and use of calculators during instructional activities**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	41%	27%	32%
High School Principal	0%	8%	14%	53%	25%
Lead Teacher	0%	15%	23%	31%	31%

**Section H. To what extent do you agree that the following changes will occur within the next three years in response to the SOL's graduation requirements?**

**Question 63 increased availability and use of instructional materials that resemble the format of the tests**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	18%	55%	27%
High School Principal	0%	0%	3%	56%	42%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%

**Question 64 increased use of practice tests**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	14%	45%	41%
High School Principal	0%	0%	0%	44%	56%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	8%	25%	67%

**Question 65 additional instruction in test taking strategies**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	5%	55%	41%
High School Principal	0%	3%	3%	49%	46%
Lead Teacher	0%	0%	0%	42%	58%

**Question 66 increased special education support services, (i.e., counselor, psychologist etc.)**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	27%	45%	18%	9%
High School Principal	3%	14%	19%	42%	22%
Lead Teacher	0%	42%	33%	0%	25%

**Question 67 increased availability of tutoring services within the community**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	14%	41%	27%	18%
High School Principal	3%	6%	26%	49%	17%
Lead Teacher	0%	27%	0%	45%	27%

**Question 68 increased number of remedial courses**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	5%	23%	64%	9%
High School Principal	3%	19%	25%	42%	11%
Lead Teacher	8%	17%	8%	33%	33%

**Question 69 mandatory ninth grade enrollment in remedial classes that focus on SOL preparation**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	18%	23%	41%	18%
High School Principal	6%	6%	26%	46%	17%
Lead Teacher	0%	17%	17%	33%	33%

**Question 70 increased special education support to general education teachers working in inclusion settings**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Director of Special Education	0%	0%	14%	48%	38
High School Principal	0%	3%	14%	51%	31%
Lead Teacher	0%	17%	17%	33%	33%

## Appendix-O

**Permission of Use of Survey**

**To:** Lynn Clayton-Prince  
**From:** Genevieve Williamson  
**Bc:**  
**Cc:**

Lynn, you have my permission to use the survey. Since that study, I moved on to intervention work and don't have any other research related to this topic. The article will describe the process for completing the study, and the reference list should provide some guidelines. Good luck, I will be interested in what you find out.

Genny

Genevieve Williamson  
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