

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' ATTITUDES AND TRAINING AS THEY RELATE TO
THEIR LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) PRACTICES TOWARD SELF-CONTAINED
LEARNING DISABLED AND/OR EMOTIONALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS**

by

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(ABSTRACT)

If the intent of Public Law 94-142 is to be realized as it pertains to the provision of appropriate placement and programming within the least restrictive environment for handicapped students, there must be an improved understanding of the attitudes, training, and experience of the principal as they relate to his practices. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and training of elementary school principals in a large mid-Atlantic school system as they related to their least restrictive environment practices toward students with specific learning disabilities and/or emotional disturbances who are placed in self-contained, (Level 4) special education classes in their schools.

A review of literature indicated no instruments emphasizing elementary school principals' attitudes, training, and current LRE practices. A survey instrument was developed that was sensitive to the above variables.

The sample which responded to the survey instrument included 46 elementary school principals who supervise self-contained (level 4) learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired classes out of a total population of 46 principals and 72 special education teachers working with these programs.

The multi-part survey instrument completed by principals included 3 sections: LRE Practices, Opinions Related to LRE Practices, and Demographics. Thirteen LRE activities were delineated to provide a composite of the LRE practices over which the principal has direct influence. The special education teachers responded to a modified survey instrument that focused on their principals' LRE practices.

A naturalistic correlational model (Cooley and Hines, 1976) was used incorporating the global variables of (1) experience; (2) certification; (3) perceived barriers to LRE practices, and (4) opinions related to adequacy of training, priority and placement procedures. On the 13-item LRE practices section of the survey, a discrepancy of means between responding principals and special education teachers was found to exist. This discrepancy may indicate that principals tend to overestimate their levels of involvement in LRE practices. Within the LRE barriers section, 27% of the 46 principals identified 29% or less of the barrier options as interfering with their levels of LRE involvement. Time was the most frequently identified barrier.

On the 8 items related to principals' self-reported opinions regarding adequacy of LRE training, a majority of principals reported their training to be in the very adequate to adequate range. Not one principal who responded indicated that LRE requirements were not a priority.

The following recommendations from this study included further research in the field of administration of school-based special education programs and recommendations for utilizing information found

in this research study: (1) establish LRE as a school-based management plan; (2) conduct comprehensive LRE field tests; (3) systematically address deficiencies in principals' LRE training and experience; (4) develop LRE attitudinal strategies; (5) continue comprehensive facilities planning, and (6) undertake LRE ethnographic study.

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An expression of appreciation is also extended to the elementary principals and special education teachers for their cooperation. On the personal side, I cannot adequately express the gratitude I feel toward my family at home and at work. Their encouragement and support helped sustain me throughout this effort.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated with love to my mother,

, my wife, , and my daughter, . Without their support and encouragement (past, present, and future) I would not be able to seek that next mountain to climb.

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Elementary School Principals' Attitudes and Training as They Relate to
Their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Practices Toward
Self-contained Learning Disabled and/or Emotionally Impaired Students

INTRODUCTION

Public Law 94-142, The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, was a landmark piece of legislation that all educators, both regular and special education, are still attempting to fully implement ten years after its passage. A major educational right for handicapped children in this federal act, and further amplified within state and local regulations, is placement in the least restrictive environment. Least restrictive environment (LRE) is defined as the educational placement in which the handicapped child's individualized education program (IEP) is to be carried out in conformity with the following requirements under Public Law 94-142:

1. to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and
2. special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (§34 C.F.R. 300.500(b)).

To ensure that handicapped children are educated in the least restrictive environment, Public Law 94-142 requires that local school systems provide an array of services designed to meet the needs of the individual student. The regulations state that (a) each public agency shall ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of handicapped children for special education and

related services, (b) the continuum required under paragraph A of this section must (1) include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education [instruction in regular classes, special classes, and instruction in hospitals and institutions], and (2) make provision for supplementary services (such as, resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement. (§300.551) and the various alternative placements included under (§300.551) are available to the extent necessary to implement the individualized education program for each handicapped child. (§300.552)

The term "continuum of services" is used by many school systems to describe their range of services designed to accommodate the educational differences of handicapped children. The continuum of services model used provides the following range of educational options for handicapped children, moving from the least intensive to the most intensive program offerings:

Level 1 - The child is served in the regular education program.

Consultant services are provided to general education instructional staff by special education personnel.

Level 2 - The child is enrolled in the regular education program and served in a special program up to one hour per day by a special education resource room teacher.

Level 3 - The child is served in the regular education program and served in a special program up to three hours per day by a special education resource room teacher.

Level 4 - The child is enrolled full-time in a special class which is housed in a general education building. Special education programming is conducted in a self-contained classroom by a special education teacher.

Level 5 - The child is served in a special wing or a special center. The program includes a range of services provided in a specially designed facility or classroom.

Level 6 - The child is served in a residential program. This is a 24-hour program for severely handicapped students with a need for multiple services.

The implementation of least restrictive environment (LRE) programming (levels 1-4) occurs for most handicapped students within local public school buildings. At these levels, a range of special education programs can be found: (1) consultative services, (2) itinerant programming in speech/language, vision and hearing, (3) resource rooms, and (4) self-contained special education classes. All of these special education programs are usually administered by the building principal.

A review of literature and the researcher's 18 years of experience as both a special education teacher and supervisor have indicated that gains have been made to make the intent of the least restrictive environment (LRE) provision of Public Law 94-142 a reality; however, there appear to exist significant problem areas in the implementation of least restrictive environment (LRE) practices for handicapped students placed in self-contained (Level 4) special education

classrooms. Many times, these handicapped students are assigned to Level 4 programs that are not located within the student's home school. These placements are made by committees which do not involve the building principal. How does this practice affect ownership of the building principal in providing least restrictive programming for these students?

Klopf, in his book on the principal and his/her support of least restrictive environment practices, makes this statement:

"School principals' values and attitudes, knowledge and commitment which mark their daily performance of duties, the willingness to channel or provide technical support and foster interpersonal understanding among staff, parents and children, will largely determine the extent to which handicapped children realize their rights to an appropriate education within the school system." (Klopf, 1975, p.75)

Recent studies (Stainback, 1984; Dickson, 1980; and Bosman, 1979) are bringing into focus the need to more fully examine the attitudes, training and experience of principals as they relate to the competencies needed to effectively provide positive leadership in least restrictive environment (LRE) programming.

The principal's role has become increasingly more complex and changing. Societal changes such as increasing mobility, divorce rates, and economic fluctuations compounded with the educational changes of implementing and monitoring new curriculum, policies, and requirements are creating considerable pressure for the building principal. One specific pressure point of change has been the mandate to provide least restrictive environment (LRE) programming within their school buildings for special education students in self-contained (level 4) classes.

Some recent studies (Bilken, 1985; Ryan, 1984; and Herda, 1980) stress the needs for recognition of the complexities and real problems surrounding the concept of least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE, as a legal mandate, is complex and confusing due in part to multiple and conflicting interpretations from both regular and special educators. Hopefully, a better understanding of the issues and concerns of building principals will lead to the development of more effective training and support systems; systems that will help to more fully implement the intent of Public Law 94-142 as it relates to least restrictive environment programming for handicapped students placed in self-contained special education classes.

Specifically, this study will attempt to gain insight into the attitudes, training, and experience of elementary school principals as these factors relate to the principals' least restrictive environment (LRE) practices toward handicapped students being served in self-contained, special education classrooms within their buildings in a large school system in the mid-Atlantic states.

To gain a better understanding, both the principal and at least one of the special education teachers in his building will self-report through a survey instrument their perceptions of the principal's level of involvement in LRE activities at the local school level.

It is important to note that self-contained, special education programs serve a number of different types of handicapping conditions: learning disabilities, emotional impairment, mental retardation, and visual and auditory impairments. Of all these disabilities, two

categories--learning disabilities (LD) and emotional impairment (EI)--serve the largest number of students, and are most similar in their LRE planning and implementation. For these reasons, the self-contained, special education programs studied will be those serving the learning disabled (LD) and/or the emotionally impaired (EI).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

If the intent of Public Law 94-142 is to be realized as it pertains to the provision of appropriate placement and programming within the least restrictive environment for handicapped students, there must be an improved understanding of the attitudes, training, and experience of the principal as it relates to his/her practices.

Review of literature, documented concerns from principal associations, parent groups, school-system self studies, and professional experience indicate a need to study the attitudes, training, and experience of principals as they relate to their current least restrictive environment practices for learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired students served in self-contained, (Level 4) special education programs.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study will be to examine the reported current least restrictive environment (LRE) practices of elementary school principals serving learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired students placed in self-contained (Level 4), special education classrooms, and the following variables: (1) training of principals and staff; (2) experience; (3) certification; (4) perceived barriers to effective LRE practices; (5) opinions related to adequacy of training, practices, and placement procedures in a large school system in the mid-Atlantic states.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent and in what specific areas are LRE practices utilized by elementary school principals serving learning disabled (LD) and/or emotionally impaired (EI) students placed in self-contained (Level 4), special education classrooms in their schools?
2. What is the range of attitudes related to current LRE practices of elementary school principals serving learning disabled (LD) and/or emotionally impaired (EI) students placed in self-contained (Level 4), special education classrooms in their schools?
3. To what extent are LRE practices associated with such factors as the principal's training, experience, and attitude?
4. Level 4 placement is handled at the area office level without involvement of the building principal. Is there a relationship between this procedure and elementary school principals' opinions and practices?
5. What conditions do principals see as barriers to more effective LRE practices?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant positive relationship between elementary school principals' LRE training and their current LRE practices for Level 4 special education students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant positive relationship between elementary school principals' opinions toward LRE practices and their current LRE practices for Level 4 special education students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant negative relationship between barriers to more effective LRE practices identified by elementary school principals and their current LRE practices for Level 4 special education students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant relationship between elementary school principals' years of experience and their current LRE practices for Level 4 special education students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

Hypothesis 5: There will be no significant relationship between elementary school principals' opinions regarding the handling of Level 4 placements into their buildings by the area office and their current LRE practices for Level 4 special education students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined to provide clarity and consistency:

1. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) means the educational placement in which the handicapped child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) is to be carried out in conformity with the following requirements under Public Law 94-142:
 - (1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and
 - (2) That special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occur only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (34C.F.R.300.550)
2. Specific Learning Disability (SLD) - A specific learning disability as defined by Access to Continuum Education Services is defined as low achievement in relation to the student's age and ability levels. It is indicated when a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability is identified in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics reasoning. The term does not encompass the pupil whose primary disability is the result of visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.
3. Emotional Impairment (EI) - Emotional impairment as defined by Access to Continuum Education Services is defined as behaviors which have developmental deviation in emotional functioning and which interfere directly with learning over a long period of time and to a marked degree. It is an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed.

4. Level 4 Services - A service in which the child is served full-time in a special class which is housed in a general education building; special education programming is conducted in a self-contained classroom.
5. Attitude is defined by Webster (1983) as a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

"...the cruelty of raising unrealistic hopes and underestimating the work necessary to implement even the most human laws must be faced directly, otherwise, there is more to lose through disillusionment and alienation." (Lowenbraun and Afflect, 1979, p.36)

In order to more fully realize the implementation of the least restrictive environment concept for handicapped students as set forth in the provisions of Public Law 94-142, there must be a better understanding of the attitudes, training, and experience of building principals and how they relate to their current LRE practices. There is an abundance of evidence emerging through research, literature, and professional experience of the continuing problems involved in the implementation of LRE as a complex, confusing, and emotionally-laden issue. Morra (1979) states that while, as a concept, the meaning of the least restrictive environment is clear, its everyday translation into implementation is not.

The principal is a critical component in the LRE process. Virtually every component of LRE interfaces with the roles and responsibilities of the regular education administrator. Recognition of the importance of the principal's role in least restrictive environment practices for handicapped students being served in self-contained Level 4, special education classrooms comes from many areas of the total school community. Documentation over the last several years has shown the common thrust of concern for appropriate, least restrictive programming and the important role of the principal.

Level 4 special education teachers in a 1983 issues paper stressed the importance of the building principal as part of their support system for successful programming. They identified the following characteristics of a supportive principal: the desire to have the Level 4 program in his/her building; an active involvement with the program; and the acceptance of the Level 4 class as an integral part of the school.

Two reports (1981 and 1984) from the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (MCALD) parent advisory services to the Associate Superintendent for Special and Alternative Education noted the wide range of attitudes observed among building principals. The reports stated that the the principal sets the tone for the whole school. The more actively involved the principal is, the fewer concerns they hear.

The two most recent reports (1985) from the Citizens' Minority Relations Monitoring Committee expressed concerns about special education and the importance of the principal's role. The committee recommended to the Board of Education that principals be held fully accountable for adherence to all special education regulations and policies.

Continuing concerns about the responsibilities and problems of the building principal in special education have emanated from the principals themselves through their professional organizations. A 1982 informal survey conducted by the Junior/Intermediate/Middle School Principals Association found that the mainstreaming of Level 4

students was their biggest special education issue. The constraints of little or no training of regular education staff in working with special needs students and class size were highlighted as significant barriers. These principals did, however, express their support for mainstreaming (housing special needs students in regular schools) and integrating the educational needs of all students.

The Elementary School Administrators Association, in conjunction with the Department of Educational Accountability, conducted a survey in 1984 regarding principals' concerns about special education. The focus of this survey was the Access to Continuum Education (ACES) which are the standard placement procedures used by this school system to identify, place, and dismiss students in special education programs.

While eighty percent of the principals responded, many had failed to complete the open-ended questions which dealt with least restrictive environment issues. As a result, information was not obtained about principals' feelings of involvement in the various least restrictive environment (LRE) placement and planning meetings. What did emerge was a general concern about the placement of special education students and the lack of resources to support programming.

The state has been very active over the last several years in moving toward the goal to achieve consistent implementation of policies for the appropriate education of handicapped children in the least restrictive environment by 1987. A state task force was appointed in 1983 by the state's Department of Education, Division of Special Education.

During the first year, the task force identified fifty-one perceived barriers to consistent implementation of least restrictive environment policies. From these, four key issue areas were identified to help guide future strategic planning activities:

1. Lack of understanding of the intent of LRE by local schools
2. Lack of organizational structure and support to "customize" programs for regular education and special education students to the degree to which people are accustomed in intensive special education programs
3. Lack of training of general education personnel to receive handicapped students
4. Lack of enforcement in the monitoring process

In 1983, a compilation of promising LRE practices by the state's department of education was developed and distributed and in 1984, another state publication entitled LRE: State of the Art was developed. This publication reviewed state policies and practices from a national perspective.

At the national level, a 1980 private study, "Procedures for Determining the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Placement," was prepared for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. The report summary noted many of the shortcomings of LRE implementation were due to a lack of knowledge, time, or resources. Administrators at the local, state and federal level need to establish complementary practices which are in accordance with--or better yet--facilitate

least restrictive placements. In 1981, the Office of Special Education (OSE) and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) jointly funded and administered a technical assistance project entitled "Administrative Options for LRE - A Training Program for School Administrators."

This study of a large and growing suburban school system will examine attitudes, experience, and training of elementary school principals as it relates to their least restrictive environment (LRE) practices toward Level 4 learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired students served in their schools. An analysis of this information will provide current information regarding the relationship between a principal's attitude, experience, and training and his/her least restrictive environment practices. These data will, hopefully, suggest some next steps for improving the effectiveness of building principals in meeting their responsibilities in least restrictive environment (LRE) programming for handicapped students.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study are:

1. This study will focus only on the least restrictive environment (LRE) practices evidenced by elementary school principals in this large mid-Atlantic school system.

2. The population of this study will be composed of elementary school principals who have Level 4 full-time, self-contained specific learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired classes in their buildings.

3. The sample size is limited to 46 principals and 72 special education teachers.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Since existing research was insufficient to set up the conceptual framework for study, the literature review was experiential and not research based.

This chapter will review four major areas closely related to the purpose of this study. The first section will review literature on effective schools and the principal. The second section will discuss role expectations of the elementary school principal as they relate to LRE. The third section will focus on attitudes of principals toward integration of the handicapped student. The fourth section will review in-service training for principals related to LRE.

Effective Schools and the Principal

This section will focus on literature related to the building principal and his relationship to an effective school. Over the past ten years literature has emphasized the strong influence of the principal's position in effective schools.

Edmonds (1978) beginning with the premise that schools can make a difference, stated that "all children are imminently educable, and the behavior of the school is critical in determining the quality of that education." (p.15) Cohen (1981) cited Edmond's studies which suggest that differences in effectiveness among schools can be attributed to five factors:

- ° Strong administrative and instructional leadership by the school principal
- ° A school climate conducive to learning
- ° Schoolwide emphasis on basic skills instruction
- ° Teacher expectations that all students, regardless of family background, can achieve
- ° Systematic monitoring and assessment of pupil performance related to instructional objectives

Behling (1981) noted that the principal is a crucial factor in the success of any school. He cited the Ford Fellows Study which found that in schools which believe that students can learn, this expectation emanates from the principal to the staff. Principals of effective schools have the following characteristics:

Good principals tend to rock the boat.

Good principals forsake the desire to be loved for the hard tasks of monitoring student progress.

Good principals set achievement goals for their students.

Good principals judge their teachers and themselves by high expectations.

Good principals tend to observe classes frequently.

Good principals structure curriculum and instructional development.

Good principals obtain commitment of the staff to a schoolwide program.

Good principals demand--and get--results, but allow flexibility.

Denbo and Ross (1983) found that schools do make a difference.

High achievement can be directly linked to the quality of the school climate. A primary factor is the strong, involved leadership of the school principal in improving school effectiveness through an emphasis on curriculum development, high expectations for both teachers and students, and administrative procedures that encourage equity and excellence.

Giangreco (1981) stated that the role and responsibilities of the elementary principal are becoming increasingly complex and varied. Responsibility for all duties within the school building rests with the principal. Origin of tasks comes from both outside and inside of the educational system. A major legislative influence on their role and responsibilities comes from PL 94-142.

Gage (1979) acknowledged the leadership pressures brought to bear on principals as they attempt to respond to the responsibilities imbedded in LRE implementation. He states that LRE is an expectation. Principals must make it succeed. To that end he stressed the following practices:

1. Know what staff members are doing.
2. Encourage respect for children.
3. Emphasize positive self-concepts.
4. Exhibit positive attitudes toward the schools and its programs.
5. Provide alternative learning opportunities for all students.
6. Reinforce effective home-school relationships.

LRE Role Expectations of the Principal

Role expectations for principals in their LRE responsibilities involve many facets of both regular and special education. Review of literature in this section will concentrate on the principal's role in carrying out the following LRE responsibilities: organizational leadership, communication, staff development, and instructional leadership.

Organizational Leadership

Vergason, Smith, and Wyatt (1975), Moore (1979), and Colson (1982) identified the building principal as being responsible for the entire program in his building. This administrative authority is critical for the day-to-day leadership of all staff to provide a coordinated, integrated instructional program for students.

Duclos, Litwin, Meyers and Ullrich (1977), and Dougherty (1979) pointed to the principal as the most important person to implement LRE because he is the one in the position to provide administrative leadership. In New England, Dickson and Moore (1980) studied the elementary principal's role in IEP development and implementation in the LRE. They stressed the following organizational responsibilities which require their active involvement:

1. Establish, coordinate, and lead legally mandated, multidisciplinary meetings to ensure due process.
2. Systematically schedule opportunities for regular and special education instructionally-oriented interaction.
3. Clearly define staff roles and responsibilities.

Communication

Kurzberg (1978), Moore (1979), and Rebore (1979) found the participative leadership style most conducive to promoting a receptive climate for the implementation of LRE. This style requires the principal to create an organizational structure that provides opportunities for staff interfacing and communication.

Johnson and Gold (1980) viewed the principal as playing an essential role in coordinating LRE efforts. Specifically, they stressed the importance of the principal in communicating the expectation of acceptance of the handicapped learner by the regular teacher; maintaining open lines of communication between regular and special education staff, and providing comprehensive in-service to teachers in essential skills related to LRE accommodations.

Rebore (1980), and Cone and Hyatt (1980) pointed out the dilemma of the principal's role in ensuring compliance with system policy and legal mandates for the handicapped. Are all these converging demands placing the principal in an untenable position? Herda (1980) felt that the principal is responsible for implementing a legal mandate that has multiple interpretations and ambiguous guidelines. If the principal sets a climate of trust and respect for special and regular educators, they can work together to coordinate and manage effective LRE processes.

Bankstreet College of Education (1982), in a publication on the school principal and special education, synthesized seven key administrative functions: to promote and represent the developing trends and issues which affect special education programs in schools; to foster and participate in constructive staff development; to observe, evaluate, and support the development of appropriate, instructive learning environments; to communicate about assessment programs and methods; to plan, implement and evaluate organizational structures which permit cooperative processes and relationships with school, home, and community; to oversee architectural consideration, and to assure that issues affecting special education students are understood by political representatives and legislators.

Staff Development

McCoy (1981) identified the principal as the primary leadership person for ensuring the quality of educational programs for all students. The principal, as LRE manager, is responsible for fostering

a climate of acceptance, setting collaborative expectations, and providing for staff training and skill development.

Salend (1984) advocated in-service training of regular and special education staff that is designed to address teacher needs in relation to LRE competencies. If LRE is truly to be a shared responsibility, it will be dependent on the quality of communication and support from these previously distinct, educational delivery systems. The principal is the bridge in this collaborative effort.

Talley & Burnette (1982), in their writing on the merger of regular and special education, stressed the importance of the following factors for building administrators:

- 1) Need for efficiency in making and processing referrals for special services and the use of time and information management
- 2) Importance of cooperative planning and coordinated program delivery supported through integrated communication systems
- 3) Need for a systematic process for implementing staff development based on staff input and needs assessment

Instructional Leadership

D'Antoni (1979) in his review of literature cited the instructional leadership of the principal as one of the most important LRE responsibilities. He stressed that the principal is the key to interfacing special and regular education. "The principal is in the authoritative position to be a decision-maker and advocate for handicapped students in his building. The principal, by virtue of his leadership position, holds the key to cooperation, involvement, and

acceptance by faculty and staff of programs for handicapped students."
(p.23)

The movement toward integration of handicapped students in the mainstream demands a new relationship between regular and special education (Hoben, 1980). This will require mutuality of purpose, collaborative effort, and recognition of interdependence. This movement implies for the principal, the responsibility to define both programmatically and organizationally the purpose, function, and territory for all staff.

Johnson and Gold (1980) stated their concern related to the limited background in special education of most principals and its effect when confronted with meeting their LRE responsibilities.

- 1) Traditionally, the principal's role has been limited to regular education programs.
- 2) Principals have limited or no academic background in special education.
- 3) Principals do not accept great responsibility for the special education programs in their buildings since such programs are often under the jurisdiction of a supervisor or director of special education.
- 4) PL 94-142 fails to outline the extent to which the building principal is to participate in the education of handicapped children.

Schultz (1982) highlighted the confusion that exists among regular educators in their LRE role and responsibility. There is a need for

leadership and training to provide direction. Salend (1984) noted in his review of research and literature inconclusive evidence of the efficacy of mainstreaming. He proposed that the variation in the implementation of the LRE may be due to a lack of precise guidelines and procedures.

Robson (1982) indicates all that takes place within the building is considered to be the responsibility of the principal, including both regular and special education. This may cause a role conflict in trying to meet expectations--expectations that principals either are ill-equipped to fulfill or find philosophically untenable.

Principals' Attitudes Toward Integration of Handicapped
Students

The importance of attitudes of general administrators toward the integration of handicapped students into the least restrictive environment is one of the major premises underlying this study. A range of attitudinal definitions have been cited within the literature (Allport, 1925; Overline, 1977; and Schmelkin, 1981) as a frame of reference. Jones and Guskin (1984) define an attitude as "the degree of liking (or disliking) held toward a person, group, issue or other object." (p.15)

Peterson (1977) in her study stated that both the principle and process of LRE relies heavily upon positive attitudes and efficient knowledge of what it is all about. She cited Birch's (1974) proposed attitudes as most conducive to LRE practices.

1. Belief in the right of education for all children
2. Readiness of special education and regular class teachers to cooperate with each other
3. Willingness to share competencies as a team on behalf of pupils
4. Openness to include parents as well as other professional colleagues in planning for and working with children
5. Flexibility with respect to class size and teaching assignments
6. Recognition that social and personal development can be taught, and that they are equally important

Larrivee and Cook (1978) found that attitudes toward integration of the handicapped are complex and multifaceted and identified five

dimensions of attitudes: (a) general philosophy of mainstreaming, (b) classroom behavior of special needs children, (c) perceived ability to teach special needs children, (d) classroom management issues, and (e) academic development of the special needs child. These authors stated that by far, the most predominant factor was general philosophy of mainstreaming.

Jones and Guskin (1984) state, "We can legislate physical access and the provision of educational opportunity as we have done, but we cannot legislate acceptance. A critical obstacle remains--attitudinal barriers." (p.8)

A limited number of studies have focused on the principal's attitude toward LRE. These studies point to the importance of the principal's acceptance and leadership in helping to ensure a successful integrative program. Payne and Murray (1974) found that a supportive principal can help the successful integration of handicapped students. In this study, suburban principals' attitudes toward integration were significantly more positive than urban principals.

Overline (1977) found that principals had more positive attitudes than teachers toward handicapped children. Fitzpatrick and Beavers (1978) found that the attitude of principals is reflected in their teachers' attitudes. Kurzberg (1978) found in her review of literature that the attitude of the principal sets the climate within the building which, in turn, has a direct influence on the acceptance of handicapped students by classroom teachers.

Peterson (1977) found that, "mainstreaming can only be successful if the proper steps are taken to assure the willingness of those concerned with the education of all children to involve themselves in its implementation." (p.55) Acceptance stems from the principal who determines the climate of the school.

Investigating the attitudes of principals in Maine toward LRE within their buildings according to type and level of disability, Davis (1980), found that principals perceived students with mild disabilities as the most successful group to integrate. Cline (1981) found this same acceptance pattern by principals.

Principal's Attitudes and Information

D'Antoni (1979) in his dissertation cited the findings of Horing, Stern, and Cruickshank (1955); Brook and Branford (1971); and Higgs (1975) to establish that a person's attitudes are directly related to the level of information concerning the handicapped and amount of contact with handicapped individuals. They asserted that a lack of willingness by regular educators to accept handicapped children is related to their lack of knowledge in the area of special education. Increasing their knowledge of exceptional children led to increased acceptance. D'Antoni found very limited research focusing on administrator's attitudes toward the handicapped.

Melcher (1972) raised a fundamental question, "How can special education programs succeed if the most immediate educational leader is uninformed and unknowledgeable?" Bullock (1970) in studying elementary principals and their amount of college course work in

special education found that no state required a single course in special education as part of certification for principalship.

Knowledge and understanding of the integrative process was identified by Deleo (1976) as a major requirement to ensure implementation of the LRE process. Payne and Murray (1974) found that the LRE competency ranked first by principals was knowledge of exceptionalities; teaching techniques ranked second. Cline (1981) stated that the principal is the "gatekeeper" and found that success for LRE programming is related to that person's knowledge of the educational needs of handicapped students within their buildings. Higgs (1975) agreed that attitudes toward disabled persons became more positive as information levels increased.

Reehill (1982) in his study of elementary and middle school principals in Bronx County, New York, found that this group was severely lacking in knowledge of the placement of handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. A tendency to program for mildly handicapped in more restrictive educational settings was noted. He recommended the development of in-service training programs for principals focusing on LRE.

Overline (1977) found in her review of literature on integration, a concern that educators have been trained to exclude from the regular program; not to accept and include. Longo (1982) found a need for reappraisal of educational practices to support the implementation of the LRE mandate of P1 94-142. He cited the issue of developing in practice the principles of individualizing instruction. If

handicapped students are returned to a regular school program in which the true nature of the handicap cannot be treated, we are compounding the problem. He suggested that extensive retraining and reorientation are needed to effectively deal with attitude change and skill development.

Jones and Guskin (1984) stressed the importance of receptive school environments to provide equal opportunities for handicapped children. As it relates to school leadership, they noted, "Professionals and administrators who for the first time have been given the responsibility for the handicapped may fear, more or less realistically, that they will not be able to cope with these new responsibilities in addition to the old ones and, in fact, that the presence of handicapped persons in regular classrooms or communities will lead to complications in their professional careers and personal failures or unhappiness." (p.2) To help administrators accept and cope with this new responsibility, and to be both realistic and accurate in their expectations, they stressed the following two factors:

- A. Specific knowledge and information about the nature and needs of the handicapped
- B. Training provided to administrators should be realistic, incorporating both quality and intensity in a problem-solving approach

LRE In-service Training for Principals

This final section will focus on in-service training for principals related to LRE practices. Olivero and Armstead (1981) state that principals are key people in running America's schools; yet their needs for professional development are often neglected. Since they are the key, "incredible" is the word describing the lack of in-service opportunities available.

The following three points regarding in-service training for principals were cited by Somerville (1982): the importance of support for principals' participation in in-service training from the chief administrative office; that practitioners are one of the most fruitful resources for administrative in-service education, and that in-service should be ongoing.

Abernathy and Stiles (1983) stated the concern about the ability of principals to evaluate special education due to a lack of training or experience in special education. Implementation of LRE is expanding the role of the principal with new competencies which require training. They cited Stiles (1981):

Although school principals are involved in the evaluation of special education personnel for contract-related decisions and/or for purposes of instructional improvement, it is often the case that these administrators have had little or no special education training, or classroom experience.

Mori (1979) stated that schools are entering a new era which will require the regular school environment to provide for a greater diversity of students--students who will need a wider variety of

learning experiences. As a result there is a need for preservice and in-service education for principals to accept the roles necessitated by integration of handicapped learners. There seems to Mori to be one key factor which makes LRE effective--the need for quality in-service education. Klopf (1979) supports Mori's contention that new competencies will be required by the school principal for implementing organizational and instructional changes emanating from PL 94-142, competencies which will need to be addressed through in-service training.

Kurzberg (1978), in her review of literature, cited a series of studies: Rubin and Balow (1971); March (1976), and Symons (1974), which found a lack of formal training in special education by principals. Role expectation may be dysfunctional with respect to preparation.

The need for ongoing training programs for principals such as the Maryland Program for Professional Development, Academy for School Principals, was cited by Ruddle (1982). Herda (1980) sees the need for a total school system approach to meet the in-service needs of administrators charged with implementing LRE requirements of P1 94-142 and Section 504.

SUMMARY

Recent research and literature, Edmonds (1978); Cohen (1981), consistently point to the importance of the role and responsibilities of the building principal as instructional leader in effective schools. Their authority, influence, and leadership style significantly set the tone for school climate, expectations, and curriculum development.

Public Law 94-142 mandates LRE. Principals are legally expected to make LRE succeed. However, specific guidelines, Gage (1979); Herda (1980), are either ambiguous or nonexistent. LRE has added another complex administrative responsibility to the principals' role (Giangreco, 1981) which involves increasing collaboration and coordination between regular and special education. These responsibilities are in the general areas of instructional leadership (D'Antoni, 1979; Behlin, 1981); communication (Talley & Burnett, 1982); organization (Dougherty, 1979; Olson, 1982); monitoring (Dickson & Moore, 1980; McCoy, 1981); and staff development (Johnson & Gold, 1980; Salend, 1984).

Several studies (Robson, 1982; Schultz, 1982) have indicated a concern that principals are not equipped for their LRE responsibilities. Constraining factors identified (Dickson & Moore, 1980; Rebore, 1980; Johnson & Gold, 1980) were limited background and training in special education, lack of knowledge related to the nature of handicapping conditions and the legally mandated processes, and the converging demands on the principal's role causing overextension.

The attitude of the school principal toward the integration of handicapped students is important to the successful implementation of LRE. A principal's attitude is reflected in the attitude of the staff (Fitzpatrick & Beavers, 1978). A consistent finding in the literature (Kurzberg, 1978) is the direct influence of the principal on the school climate.

Attitudes toward integration (Larrivee & Cook, 1978) are complex and multifaceted at both the philosophical and pragmatic implementation level. Acceptance of the handicapped (Jones & Guskin, 1984) cannot be legislated. The principle and process of LRE depends upon positive attitudes.

Deleo, 1976; D'Antoni, 1978; and Melcher, 1972, found that the level of information concerning handicapping conditions and the integrative process and the amount of contact with handicapped students affects attitudes. Attitudes toward LRE became more positive (Higgs, 1975) as information levels increased.

Implementing LRE demands new competencies for principals (Klopf, 1979; Abernathy & Stiles, 1983) which will require training. Role expectations may be dysfunctional (Kurzberg, 1979) with respect to preparation. Extensive reorientation and reality-based training (Jones & Guskin, 1974) are needed to help principals. Yet, Olivers and Armstead, 1984, found their in-service needs are often neglected.

This literature review concludes that information and training for principals is important as it relates to attitudes and degree of implementation of LRE both as concept and process. This study will

look at principals' current levels of training, experience, and LRE opinions in relation to their reported LRE practices.

CHAPTER III

Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and training of elementary school principals in a large mid-Atlantic school system as these factors relate to the principals' least restrictive environment practices toward students with specific learning disabilities and/or emotional disturbances who are placed in self-contained, Level 4, special classes in their schools. A survey research design was employed.

The specific focus of this study design was to gather information in response to the research questions:

1. To what extent and in what specific areas are practices to meet the LRE requirements being utilized by elementary school principals housing level 4 specific learning disabilities (SLD) and/ or emotionally impaired (EI) in their school buildings?
2. What is the range of attitudes concerning current LRE practices of elementary school principals housing level 4 specific learning disabilities (SLD)/emotionally impaired (EI) programs?
3. To what extent are LRE practices associated with such factors as training, experience, and attitude?
4. Level 4 placement is handled at the area office level without involvement of the building principal. Is there a relationship

between this procedure and elementary principals' opinions and practices relative to the LRE requirements?

5. What conditions do principals see as barriers to more effective LRE practices?

To answer these questions, a survey was developed for elementary school principals and a corresponding survey was developed for a sample of special education teachers.

Information regarding specific administrative training opportunities provided by this school system was obtained through interviews (see Appendices S and T).

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The school system that was involved in this study has a strong national reputation and a tradition of excellence and innovation in education. It serves an area that encompasses approximately 500 square miles incorporating 152 elementary, middle, intermediate, junior, and senior high schools.

This school system in 1985 had a student enrollment of 94,000 students; is growing, and becoming increasingly more diverse. Approximately 8,500 students were born in over 100 foreign countries. The overall minority enrollment is 29%, which includes 14.2% Black, 9.2% Asian, and 5.4% Hispanic.

In addition, this school system is experiencing a period of accelerated growth that will result in the planned construction of two new senior high schools and eleven elementary schools by 1990. This is a significant change after many years of steady decline in student enrollment.

**GENERAL BACKGROUND - Laws, Policies and Regulations Governing
the Education of Handicapped Children**

In 1978 the Board of Education adopted a policy on the education of handicapped children: "Resolved, That the Board of Education adopt the proposed policy on educating handicapped children as defined under Public Law 94-142, the Education of all Handicapped Children Act of 1975; Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Public Law 94-482, the Vocational Education Act Ammendment of 1976, and the revised State Department of Education Regulation, Programs for Handicapped Children.

In addition, special education programs in this state are governed by the State Board of Education Bylaws, which were revised in 1978. It is interesting to note that this law mandates free educational programs to all handicapped children in the state through age 20. This age requirement differs from Public Law 94-142, which dictates programs from age 3 to 21 years of age. Since this county must conform to both laws, it must serve all handicapped children from birth through age 21.

This school system, in 1981, developed a series of procedural handbooks entitled, "Access to Continuum Education Services," to standardize special education placement procedures. The 4 volumes are divided into elementary, middle, secondary school, and area and central office procedures. These guidebooks, based on the above laws, regulations and policies, help provide the framework for consistent implementation of special education procedures.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

A review of literature indicated no instruments emphasizing elementary school principals' attitudes, training and current practices relative to the least restrictive environment provision of PL 94-142. There are a number of studies that examine a whole range of issues about the principalship and PL 94-142, but none with this specific combination of factors. Therefore, a survey instrument was developed that was sensitive to the above variables.

The content and format of this multi-part survey was derived from a comprehensive review of literature and existing research; federal, state and local regulations; informal interviews with colleagues involved in LRE practices, and my 18 years of experience as a special education teacher and administrator.

PRINCIPAL'S SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This survey is divided into 3 major sections: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Practices, Opinions Related to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Practices, and General Information.

Part I - Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Practices

To assess elementary school principals' ratings of their perceived levels of involvement in LRE practices in their schools, 13 LRE activities have been delineated. These activities, when taken together, provide the composite of least restrictive environment practices over which the principal has direct influence and responsibility.

The principals were asked to respond to each statement from two perspectives: First, indicating their current level of involvement (almost always, frequently, seldom, almost never), and second, identifying those factors that they feel are barriers to more effective LRE practices. Principals were asked to check those barriers that apply from the following choices: none, training of principal and/or staff, staff allocation, space, and time.

In order to obtain another viewpoint of principals' LRE practices, special education teachers assigned to work directly with those schools completes a modified LRE practices survey instrument. This survey paralleled the first section of the principals' LRE practices survey. These staff indicated what they view as their principals' levels of involvement in the 13 LRE activities. They recorded their principals' levels of involvement using the same indicators (almost always, frequently, seldom, and almost never).

INTERVIEWS

Two interviews were conducted with school system staff development leadership personnel to obtain LRE administrative training information from both a historical and current perspective (see Appendices S and T).

Part II - Opinions Related to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Practices

This part of the survey instrument was designed to elicit the principals' opinions regarding training and task priorities as related to specific LRE practices currently used in their schools. A bi-polar response mode was used to obtain the range of their opinions in 9 specific areas of training and task priority.

Included in this section was an opinion question to assess their feelings about the level of involvement they should have in the assignment of level 4 students into their schools. Presently, this is a function of only the area offices in this school system.

Part III - General Information

The last section of the instrument gathered demographic and experiential information. There were two separate response sheets--one for the principals and one for special education teachers.

The principal's general information section asked for sex, age, school enrollment, certification, academic background, number of years of experience (by position) in education, number of years in current assignment, number and type of special education classes served, and the number of special education courses and/or workshops related to LRE requirement and practices.

The special education teacher general information section asked for sex, age, position, certification, academic background, number of years of experience (by position) in education, and number of years in current assignment.

FIELD TESTING OF THE INSTRUMENT

As part of the development process for the survey instrument, a field testing procedure was conducted. The survey instrument was piloted with school system (elementary school) principals and special education teachers who are involved with self-contained special education classes (level 4) for the educable mentally retarded (EMR) and pre-academic students. Six elementary school principals and nine special education teachers responded. The investigator contacted each participant to elicit his/her participation in the field study. A letter of confirmation was sent before they received the actual survey instrument.

SAMPLING

A sampling of elementary school principals was identified in accordance with the school system's Policies and Procedures and in coordination with the Department of Educational Accountability.

The principals asked to volunteer to participate in this study were drawn from those principals who were currently administering specific learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired special class programs (level 4) and were not involved in a concurrent school system special education study of referral and placement practices. While both studies focused on special education issues, they did not overlap or be in conflict. Since principal participation was voluntary, this researcher made individual contact with follow-up letters containing background information to enhance participation.

Additional sources of data were provided by learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired (level 4) special education teachers working with those programs being studied. The sample included 46 elementary school principals and 72 special education teachers that were available out of a total population of 46 elementary school principals and 80 special education teachers working with learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired (level 4) self-contained programs.

Chapter IV

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to examine the reported current least restrictive environment (LRE) practices of elementary school principals serving learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired students placed in self-contained (Level 4) special education classrooms and to analyze the following variables: (1) experience; (2) certification; (3) perceived barriers to effective LRE practices, and (4) opinions related to adequacy of training, priority, and placement procedures in a large mid-Atlantic school system. This chapter presents the data analysis with respect to the five research hypotheses underlying this study.

4.1 Sample Description

The sample for this study involved 46 elementary school principals with self-contained (Level 4) learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired classrooms and 72 special education teachers in a large mid-Atlantic school system. The 46 elementary school principals represent the entire population of 42 principals administering learning disabilities and emotionally impaired Level 4 programs along with 4 more cases which were added from the pilot study that was conducted 3 months earlier. The 72 special education teachers provided a representative sampling of at least one teacher from each of the above schools (refer to Table 1). Within the 46 responding schools, two teachers responded from each of 19 schools, three teachers responded from each of 2 schools with the remaining 25 schools having one teacher completing the survey instrument. In addition, two staff development leadership personnel were interviewed to obtain both a historical and current perspective of administrative training opportunities provided for principals in the area of LRE.

The population of principals with differing styles, training and situations was drawn from a single organizational environment that provided a common frame of operational reference in the areas of curriculum, budget, federal, state, and local policies, procedures and regulations. These factors helped to control some of the extraneous variables in this specialized study.

Highlights of the demographic data reported on the survey instrument indicated the following age and sex characteristics of the

sample surveyed: Twenty-eight (61%) of the 46 principals who responded were male; twenty-three (50%) of the 46 principals who responded were in the 46-55 age range. This has implications for a potentially large turnover rate of principals within the next five years. Sixty-nine (96%) of the 72 special education teachers who responded were female.

Enrollment in the schools surveyed was found to be relatively large with 34 (74%) of the 46 schools being in the 300-600 student range. It is anticipated that with the continuing building boom this trend will continue. Over the next 6 years, 12 new schools are projected for construction to accommodate the rapid growth in student enrollment. During this period, continuing use of portable classrooms will be necessary to help alleviate overcrowded conditions. Classroom space for all types of programs is a major issue. Of the 46 schools studied, 25 (54%) had level 4 classes at both the primary and intermediate grade level. There is a deliberate goal in facility planning to have more than one level 4 class housed in selected elementary school buildings.

Principals' years of experience ranged from 1 to 32 years. Of the 46 surveyed principals, 22 (48%) had 10 or more years of experience administering schools. Survey data indicated that of the 43 principals who responded 27 (63%) of the principals have been in their current assignments 5 years or less with 15 (35%) in their 1st or 2nd year in current assignment.

In the area of instructional experience, the 46 principals surveyed had at least 3 years regular classroom experience with 21 (78%) having 6 to 10 years experience. A majority of school-based administrators, however, have had no direct special education instructional experience with responsibility for administering special education programs in their schools. Thirty-five (83%) of the 42 principals who responded reported no special education classroom experience. It has only been in recent years that there have been more opportunities for special educators to move into elementary principalships.

In examining certification, only 18 (39%) of the 46 principals who responded reported having some type of special education certification. The 46 principals in this sample reported a generally high level of graduate work with 34 (74%) at the Master's Plus 30 Credits Level and 11 (24%) with earned doctorates. According to survey data, 18 (39%) of the 46 principals who responded reported that they have had little or no coursework in special education related to LRE requirements and practices. Within the college/university coursework category 21 (46%) indicated that they have no special education coursework. Surveyed principals, in reporting participation in workshops, revealed 40 (87%) with no non-county workshops and 17 (37%) with no county workshops in the area of LRE.

The reported demographic data related to current principals' special education certification and/or LRE training suggests that an informational deficiency exists for a large percentage of principals

administering and managing school-based special education programs. Table 1 contains a summary of demographic data on surveyed respondents.

Interview information provided by staff development leadership personnel indicates that there is no existing training program for principals with an LRE focus. The last administrative training programs in LRE were held on a voluntary basis in 4-day sessions during the summers of 1980 and 1981. This training has not been provided during the last 6 years.

Table 1

Demographics of Respondents *

Sex	<u>Principals</u>		<u>Special Education Teachers</u>	
	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
Male	28	61	3	4
Female	18	39	69	96
NR	0		0	
<hr/>				
Age				
35	3	7	9	13
36-45	13	28	27	41
46-55	23	50	17	26
56+	7	15	13	20
NR	0		6	
<hr/>				
Years Experience - Regular Education Teacher				
0-2			89	62
3-5	11	28	11	8
6-10	21	53	--	--
11+	8	19	--	--
NR	6			
Years Experience - Special Education Teacher				
None	35	83	(not reported)	
2-7	17	17		
NR	4			
<hr/>				
Years Experience - Elementary Principal				
1-3	12	26	(not reported)	
4-10	12	26		
11-15	13	28		
16+	9	20		
NR	0			
Years in Current Assignment				
1-2	15	35	25	36
3-5	12	28	20	29
6-10	10	23	19	28
11+	6	14	5	7
NR	3		3	
<hr/>				
Certification				
SpEd(K-12)	4	9	13	19
SpEd/RegEd	10	22	7	10
SpEdAdmin	4	9	39	56
Admin/Superv.	46	100	11	15
NR			2	

*** NOTE:**

Relative frequencies are based on all respondents for each question respectively. The number of nonrespondents for each item is tabulated without relative frequencies.

Table 2

Principals Reported LRE Coursework and Workshop Information

	NONE	1-3yrs.	4+
County Coursework			
Frequency	18	14	14
Percent	39	30	31
Coursework College/University			
Frequency	21	14	11
Percent	46	30	24
County Workshops			
Frequency	17	19	10
Percent	37	41	22
Non-county Workshops			
Frequency	0	4	2
Percent	87	9	4

4.2 Measures

4.21 Practices

Responses to thirteen items provided a composite of the least restrictive environment practices over which the principal has direct influence and responsibility. Both elementary school principals and special education teachers involved in the study responded to these items. The principals rated each item from their perceived levels of involvement in LRE practices in their schools. The special education teachers rated each item based on their perceptions of their principals' levels of LRE involvement. (See Appendices B-E for copy of survey instruments.)

This section required all respondents to check the number, ranging from 1 to 4, which most closely depicts their current level of involvement in 13 specific LRE practices. The rating scale, with the following descriptors, helped to delineate their perceived level of involvement:

	<u>percent of time</u>
1 = almost always	(95-80)
2 = frequently	(79-60)
3 = seldom	(59-30)
4 = almost never	(29-05)

As part of the analysis process, practice scores were recoded so that a high score would be indicative of high reported principal involvement. The computed mean scale value for responding principals

within a range of 1 to 4 was 2.95 with a standard deviation of .49 (refer to Appendix F). Sixty-nine percent (32) of the 46 principals who responded reported their level of involvement in LRE practices to be in the frequent to almost always range (refer to Table 3).

Table 3

Principals' Reported Level of Involvement in LRE Practices

	Percent	Frequency
Almost always (over 3.23)	28	13
Frequently (3.23-2.77)	41	19
Seldom (2.77-2.23)	17	8
Almost never (under 2.23)	14	6

From a different perspective, forty-one percent (27) of the 65 special education teachers who responded reported their principals' level of involvement in LRE practices to be in the frequent to almost-always range (refer to Table 4). The computed mean scale value of the responding special education teachers was 2.52 with a standard deviation of .73 (refer to Appendix G). A discrepancy of means between responding principals and special education teachers was found to exist. This discrepancy may indicate that principals tend to overestimate their level of involvement in LRE practices.

Table 4

Special Education Teachers Reported Level of Involvement of Principals in LRE Practices

	Frequency	Percent
almost always (over 3.23)	10	15
frequently (3.23 - 2.77)	17	26
seldom (2.77 - 2.23)	18	28
almost never (under 2.23)	20	31

4.22 Barriers

For each of the 13 LRE practice statements, principals were given the opportunity to check current barriers to more effective LRE practices in their schools. They were to check all the barriers that applied to each item. The following barrier choices were offered in the instrument: none, training of principal and/or staff, staff allocation, space, and time. Within this section are a total of 65 barrier decision points.

Barrier scores were analyzed from two aspects (global and categorical) to assess their association with the independent variable, LRE practices and other dependent variables. The global barrier score was obtained by computing the per cent of responses across 55 items out of the 65 total items which included 5 barriers on each of the 13 LRE practice statements. It is important to note that over the 65 items, 10 barrier options were not appropriate to be selected for certain LRE practice statements. (See Figure 1.)

A mean raw score of 12.33 (with 55 being the maximum possible score) was found with a standard deviation of 6.88 and a mean percent score of .20 with a standard deviation of .62 was found (see Appendix H and I). Only one principal identified no barriers to meeting LRE requirements, and none of the 46 principals identified over 38 barriers. Thirty-six (77%) of the 46 principals identified sixteen (29%) or fewer of the barriers in the 13 LRE statements (refer to Table 5).

Appropriate LRE Barrier Items for LRE Practice Statements

LRE Practice Items	Princ. Trng.	Staff Trng.	Staff Alloc.	Space	Time
1. chair intake	✓	✓	✓		✓
2. chair 60 day review	✓	✓	✓		✓
3. chair annual review	✓	✓	✓		✓
4. provide staff in-service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. monitor student progress	✓	✓	✓		✓
6. organize reg/sp.ed communicator	✓	✓	✓		✓
7. assign space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. use staff (part-time)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. staff aware/profssnl. lit.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. communicate - LRE expect.	✓	✓	✓		✓
11. monitor curriculum	✓	✓	✓		✓
12. provide communication - LRE practices	✓	✓	✓		✓
13. dev. written LRE procs	✓	✓	✓		✓

Figure 1

Table 5

Principals' Reported Number of LRE Barriers to More Effective Practices for Meeting LRE Requirements

Number of Barriers Identified	Percent	Frequency
None	2	1
3- 9	36	17
10-16	39	18
17-38	23	10
over 38	0	0

Based on the following five barriers used in the survey instrument, categorical scores were computed as another measurement reference point. A percent score was computed based on the number of barriers selected across 13 practice statements as appropriate.

LRE Barrier Categories

Training of principal

Training of staff

Staff allocation

Space

Time

Principals' Training Barrier

Principals had the opportunity to select this barrier across each of the 13 LRE practice statements. Twenty-eight (61%) of the 46 principals never reported this as a barrier with 7 (15%) of the principals identifying their LRE training as a barrier only once out of 13 LRE statements (refer to Table 6). A mean raw score of 1.13 with a standard deviation of 2.18 was found (refer to Appendix J). The high percentage of principals who did not perceive their training as a barrier was surprising in light of the training deficits indicated in the demographic section of the survey instrument and from interview data.

Table 6**Principals' Reported Number of Principal Training as a Barrier to More Effective Practices for Meeting LRE Requirements**

Number of Barriers Identified	Percent	Frequency
None	63	31
1-2	25	12
3-5	8	4
over 5	4	2

Staff Training Barrier

Principals had the opportunity to select this barrier across each of the 13 LRE practice statements. Twelve (26%) of the principals never reported staff training as a barrier. Twenty-seven (59%) of the 46 principals reported staff training as a LRE barrier in 23 percent of the LRE practice statements. When taken together, this accounts for 85% of the principals' decisions in this specific area (refer to Table 7). A mean raw score of 2.0 with a standard deviation of 1.94 was found (see Appendix K). This is a similar response pattern to that reported in principals' training as a barrier in that responding principals did not perceive staff training as a large barrier to LRE practices.

Table 7

Principals Reported Number of Staff Training as a Barrier to More Effective Practices for Meeting LRE Requirements

Number of Barriers Identified	Percent	Frequency
None	26	12
1-3	59	27
4-6	13	6
over 6	2	1

Staff Allocation Barrier

Principals had the opportunity to select this barrier across each of 12 LRE practice statements. Sixteen (35%) of the 46 principals never reported this as a barrier. Nineteen (40%) of the 46 principals reported staff allocation as a barrier in the range of 1 to 2 times. When taken together, this accounts for 75% of the principals' decisions in this specific area (refer to Table 8). A mean raw score of 1.63 with a standard deviation of 1.94 was found (refer to Appendix L). This pattern of a relatively low number of barriers to LRE practices being identified may be another indication of principals' LRE training and experiential needs.

Table 8

Principals Reported Number of Staff Allocation as a Barrier to More Effective Practices for Meeting LRE Requirements

Number of Barriers Identified	Percent	Frequency
None	35	16
1-2	40	19
3-5	20	9
6-8	5	2

Space Barrier

Principals had the opportunity to select this barrier across 4 LRE practice statements. Twenty-five (54%) of the 46 principals never reported this as a barrier. Sixteen (35%) of the principals reported space as a barrier only once out of 4 LRE practice statements. When taken together, this accounts for 89% of the principals' decisions in this specific area (refer to Table 9). A mean raw score of .63 with a standard deviation of .85 was found (see Appendix M). The impact of rapidly increasing school enrollment with the subsequent necessity for temporary space accommodations (i.e. portable classrooms) appeared not to be reflected in this barrier option to a substantial degree.

Table 9

Principals Reported Number of Space as a Barrier to More Effective Practices for Meeting LRE Requirements

Number of Barriers Identified	Percent	Frequency
None	54	25
1	35	16
2-3	11	5

Time Barrier

Principals had the opportunity to select this barrier across each of the 13 LRE practice statements. Only 1 of the 46 principals never reported time as a barrier. Twenty-six (57%) of the principals reported time was a barrier over 50% of the 13 LRE practices. This is the largest reported barrier of five barriers identified for the principals (refer to Table 10). A mean raw score of 6.93 with a standard deviation of 3.38 was found (see Appendix N). Time as a barrier provides another indication of the multiple and converging demands both perceived and actually placed on school-based administrators today in meeting the role expectations of their leadership position.

Table 10

Principals Reported Number of Time as a Barrier to More Effective Practices for Meeting LRE Requirements

Number of Barriers Identified	Percent	Frequency
None	2	1
1- 6	41%	19
7-10	41%	19
11-13	16%	7

4.23 Training Adequacy Opinions Related to LRE Practices

Principals were asked to self-report opinions regarding their training adequacy as it relates to eight specific LRE practices currently used in their schools. A five-point Likert Scale was used with a bipolar response mode which ranged from, "I feel well trained," to , "I need more training."

The computed mean scale value within a range of 1 to 5 was 3.86 with a standard deviation of .78 (see Appendix O). Principals reported they felt adequately trained to meet LRE requirements in their schools. Thirty (67%) of the principals reported their LRE training to be in the very adequate to adequate range. Ten (22%) of the principals reported they were well trained, while only 5 principals (11%) reported feeling inadequately trained. No principal of the 45 who responded self-reported, "I need more training" (refer to Table 12). In regard to principals' LRE training, both as a possible LRE barrier and from their self-reported perceptions of training inadequacy, the response pattern regarding their lack of perceived need for training again emerges.

Table 12

**Principals Self-reported Opinions Regarding their Training Adequacy
to Eight LRE Practices Currently Used in their Schools**

Reported Training Adequacy Levels	Percent	Frequency
Well trained (5.0-4.63)	22	10
Very Adequately Trained (4.5-3.88)	31	14
Adequately Trained (3.75-3.0)	36	16
Not Adequately Trained (2.88-1.88)	11	5
Need More Training (1.8-1.0)	0	0

4.24 Priority Opinions Related to LRE Practices

Within the same section of the survey in which principals responded to opinions about their training adequacy, they also responded to their LRE priority opinions. The same procedure was used to depict priority opinions.

Over the 5 point scale, the computed mean scale value was 4.23 with a standard deviation of .59 (see Appendix P). Twenty-one (49%) of the 43 principals who reported in response to those 8 specific LRE practices self reported that they give meeting LRE requirements a high priority. Not one principal who responded indicated in this survey that meeting LRE requirements was not a priority (refer to Table 13). While LRE is self-reported by the responding principals as a priority, a relatively large number of principals placed LRE as a priority in the useful, but not necessary, category. When this opinion is considered in the context of a rapidly expanding and changing school system, this reported perception may have a significant influence in the commitment of the principals' time and energy to the LRE process.

Table 13

**Principals' Self-reported Opinions Regarding their Priority on Eight
LRE Practices Currently Used in their Schools**

<u>Reported Priority Ratings</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
High priority (5.0-4.5)	49	21
Useful, but not necessary (4.4-3.5)	42	18
Low priority (3.4-2.5)	9	4
Not a priority (2.4-1.0)	0	0

4.25 Level 4 Student Placement Opinions

A one-question item was included in the opinionnaire section to obtain from principals their feelings regarding the current practice of area office assignments of Level 4 students to the special education classes in their buildings without their involvement.

The same procedures were used in this section as were employed with the other opinionnaire sections. Twenty (43%) of the 46 principals reported they should not be involved in level 4 student placement and 13 (28%) of the principals indicated a little involvement (refer to Table 14). The computed mean scale value was 1.90 with a standard deviation of .92 (see Appendix Q). Most special education students are placed in level 4 programs outside their home schools. Given this reality, the strong tendency of the reporting principals to minimize their preferred level of involvement in the placement process of special education students into their buildings needs to be considered.

Table 14

Principals' Self-reported Opinions Regarding the Current School System's Practice of Area Office Assignments of Level 4 Students to the Special Education Classes in their Buildings

<u>Preferred Level of Involvement</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
No involvement	43	20
Little involvement	28	13
Somewhat involved	24	11
Involved	4	2
Totally involved	0	0

4.3 Model

Cooley and Lohnes (1976) stated in their text that educational innovations should be evaluated in natural settings. With this in mind, a naturalistic correlational model was used to organize, interpret, and understand data gathered through the survey instrument. They recommended this analysis approach for educational field studies. The naturalistic correlational model is defined as, "the observation of variations which occur naturally on a large set of variables characterizing salient features of a system under study and synthesis of a statistical model of the system by correlational analysis."

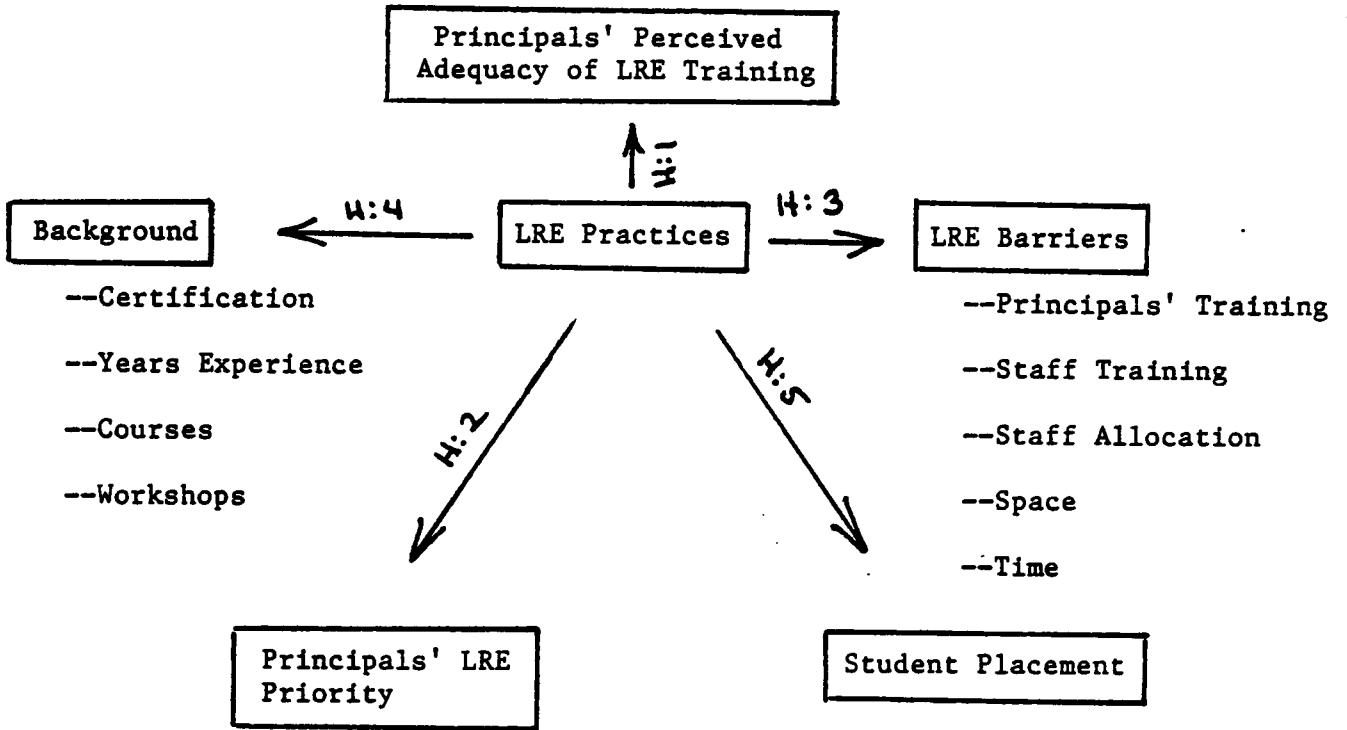
Using this approach, the following model was designed to pull together the following associations that were thought to influence LRE Practices (see Figure 2). The following sections will discuss each hypothesis.

An alternative analysis plan was attempted using a factorial design. Using this plan, the 13 LRE practice items were categorized into five domains and analyzed according to the principal's LRE role. The five LRE role categories identified were:

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Practice Items</u>
Chairing	1, 2, 3
Inservice	4, 9
Staff Utilization	6, 8
Communication	10, 12, 13
Direct Administrative	5, 7 , 11
Support to Special Education	

This procedure was not successful due to insufficient items in each category.

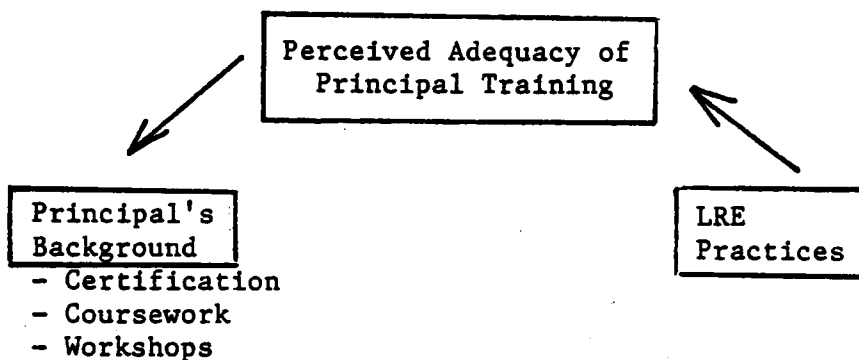
Analysis Plan Using Global Variables



NOTE: H = Hypothesis

Figure 2

4.4 Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant, positive relationship between elementary school principals' LRE training and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.



A Pearson Product-moment procedure (See Table 15) was employed to calculate the correlations between the dependent variable of principals' perceived LRE training adequacy, certification, courses, and workshops with the independent variable of principals' LRE practices.

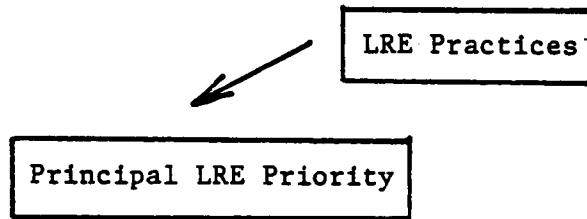
Principals' self-reported mean scores in LRE training were in the adequate range.

As judged by the correlations found in Table 15, (on this measure, with a reported correlation of $r=.18$), there was no significant positive relationship found between elementary school principals' perceived adequacy of training and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education students (learning disabled and/or

Figure 3

emotionally impaired) in their buildings. There is a reported discrepancy between reported level of involvement and perceived LRE training adequacy and reported level of LRE training and special education experience.

4.5 Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant positive relationship between elementary school principals' priorities toward LRE practices and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.



A Pearson Product-moment Procedure was employed to calculate the correlations between the dependent variable of principals' self-reported LRE priority opinions and the independent variable of principals' LRE practices. A significant positive relationship was found to correlate at ($r=.38$) level between elementary school principals' priorities toward LRE practices and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings. Of all

Figure 4

Table 15

Intercorrelational Matrix of Factors Involved with LRE

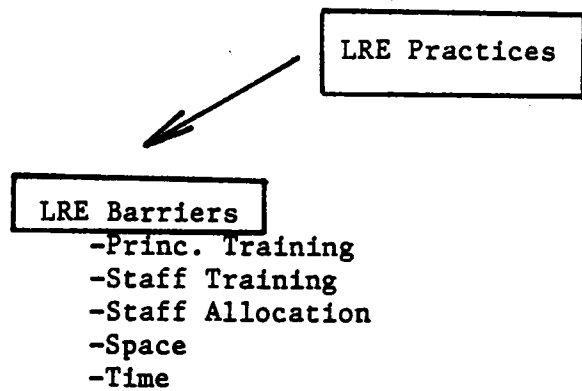
	LRE Practice	LRE Barriers	Stud.Place. Opinion	Prin.Trng. Barrier	StaffTrng. Barrier	StaffAlloc. Barrier	Space Barrier	Time Barrier
Certification	-.01	.30	-.04	-.02	.15	.38*	.21	.30
Years Principal	.11	.07	.03	.01	-.16	.08	-.16	.22
Courses	.01	.23	-.10	-.10	.09	.42*	.18	.19
Workshops	.15	.22	.13	-.13	.17	.32	-.07	.28
Princ.Training Adequacy Opinion	.18	-.32	-.00	-.57**	-.36*	.01	.01	-.07
LRE Priority Opinion	.38*	-.12	-.21	-.18	-.04	.11	-.13	-.14
LRE Practice	1.00	-.39*	-.03	-.31	-.22	-.25	-.47*	-.15
LRE Barriers	-.39*	1.00	-.09	.71**	.65**	.61**	.51**	.80**
Student Placement Opinion	-.03	-.09	1.00	-.21	-.11	-.15	-.08	.12
Prin. Training Barrier	-.32	.71**	-.21	1.00	.62**	.17	.39*	.32
Staff Training Barrier	-.22	.65**	-.11	.62**	1.00	.19	.36*	.22
Staff Allocation Barrier	-.25	.60**	-.12	.16	.19	1.00	.20	.43*
Space Barrier	-.47*	.51**	-.11	.39*	.36*	.20	1.00	.35*
Time Barrier	-.15	.80**	.12	.32	.22	.43**	.26	1.00

the dependent variables, priority provided the strongest positive correlation.

It is important to consider that while LRE as a priority provided a significant positive relationship to LRE practices, a large percentage (49%) of the reporting principals placed LRE as a priority in the useful, but not necessary category. When considered against principals' increasing task demands and diminishing available time, this reported level of perceived priority may be a constraining factor in determining the principals' level of involvement in LRE practices.

An analysis of the associations among the other dependent variables (Table 15) indicate two variables that appear to have a positive influence on principals' LRE priority opinions but not at a significant level. The two variables are: courses, which include both school system in-service courses and college/university courses at ($r=.22$) and workshops, which includes both school system and non-school-system workshops at ($r=.22$).

4.6 Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant negative relationship between barriers to more effective LRE practices identified by elementary school principals and their current level of involvement LRE practices for level 4 special education students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.



A Pearson Product-moment Procedure (see Table 15) was used to calculate the correlations between the dependent global variable of LRE barriers and the dependent categorical variable LRE barriers of: Principal Training, Staff Training, Staff Allocation, Space, and Time with the independent variable of principals' LRE practices.

A significant negative relationship was found to correlate at ($r = .38$) between the global dependent variable of barriers and the independent variable of practice. The data indicate that the greater the perceived LRE Barriers as a total component the less reported involvement by principals in LRE practices. The impact of this finding is heightened by the apparent discrepancy between reported demographic and interview data indicating limited principals' LRE training and special education instructional experience and their low identification of barriers to LRE practices.

An analysis of the categorical barrier variables (See Table 15) indicates that all of the five variables were negatively associated with LRE practices. One variable, Space ($r = .47$), was significantly

Figure 5

correlated. While not found to be statistically significant, the three variables of principal training ($r=-.31$), Staff Allocation ($r=-.25$), and Staff Training ($r=-.24$) appear to be influential to some degree. The barrier Time was found to have the weakest correlation ($r=-.20$). This finding was not expected by the researcher.

4.7 Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant relationship between elementary principals' years of experience and their current level of involvement in LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

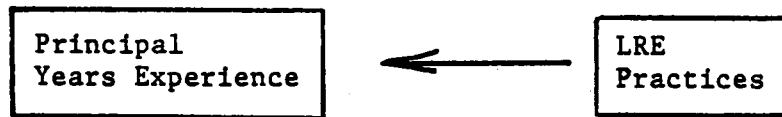


Figure 6

A Pearson Product-moment Procedure (see Table 14) was used to calculate the correlations between the dependent variable of principals' years of experience with the independent variable of principals' LRE practices. A correlation coefficient ($r=.09$) was found indicating that on this measure there was not the significant relationship between elementary principals' years of experience and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings. The variable of principals' years of experience did not correlate with any strength to other variables used in the study (refer to Table 15).

4.8 Hypothesis 5: There will be no significant relationship between elementary school principals' opinions regarding the handling of Level 4 placements into their buildings by the area office and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

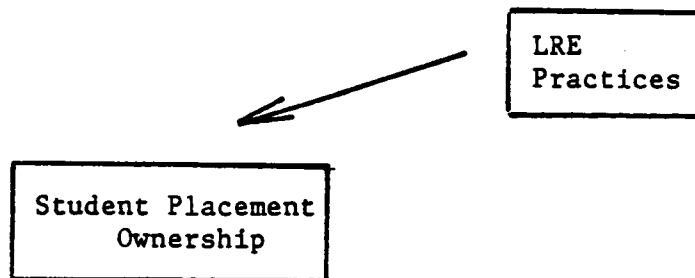


Figure 7

A Pearson Product-moment Procedure (see Table 15) was employed to calculate the correlations between the dependent variable of Level 4 Student Placement Opinions with the independent variable of principals' LRE practices. A correlation coefficient ($r=.03$) was found indicating that on this single item measure there was not a significant relationship between elementary school principals' opinions regarding the handling of Level 4 placements into their buildings by the area office and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

An analysis of the variable level 4 student placement ownership, with the other variables in the study, did not show any significance. However, the variable of principal training barrier ($r=-.21$) correlation indicates a possible negative association with Level 4 student placement ownership.

Even though this was only a single item within the survey instrument, a large percentage (71%) of the responding principals reported a preference for little to no involvement in the assignment of Level 4 special education students in their buildings.

4.9 Summary of Research Findings

A naturalistic correlational model (Cooley and Hines, 1976) incorporating the global variables of: (1) experience; (2) certification; (3) perceived barriers to effective LRE practices, and (4) opinions related to adequacy of training, priority, and placement procedures in a large mid-Atlantic school system were used to examine

the reported current least restrictive environment (LRE) practices of elementary school principals serving learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired students placed in self-contained (Level 4) special education classrooms (see Figure 7).

The sample for this study incorporated 46 elementary school principals with self-contained (Level 4) learning disabilities and/or emotionally impaired classrooms and 72 special education teachers in a large mid-Atlantic school system. The 46 elementary school principals represent the entire population of principals administering learning disabilities and emotionally impaired Level 4 programs in the school system studied. The 72 special education teachers provide a representative sampling of at least one teacher from each of the involved schools. The sample population was drawn from a single organizational environment that provided a common frame of operational reference in the following areas: curriculum, budget, federal, state, and local policies, procedures and regulations.

Analysis of demographic data indicated that most principals are male (61 percent) and in the 36-55 age range (78 percent). The special education teacher sample indicates that 95 percent are female.

School enrollment is relatively large and growing with 74 percent of surveyed schools being in the 300-600 range. Twelve new schools are projected for construction in the next six years. Classroom space is a major issue especially in the short term.

While the 46 principals in this sample reported a generally high level of graduate work with 59 percent at the Master's Plus 30 Credits

level and 24 percent with earned doctorates, only 39 percent have some type of special education certification. Eighteen (39%) of the 46 principals reported that they have had little or no coursework in special education related to LRE requirements. Interview data indicated that principals have had no LRE training by the school system in over 6 years.

On the 13-item LRE practices section of the survey, a discrepancy of means between responding principals and special education teachers was found to exist. The computed mean scale value for responding principals within a range of 1 to 4 was 2.95 with a standard deviation of .49. Sixty-nine percent (32) of the 46 principals who responded reported their level of involvement in LRE practices to be in the frequent (79-60%) to almost always (95-80%) range. While forty-one percent (27) of the 65 responding special education teachers reported their principals' levels of involvement to be in the frequent to almost-always range. Their computed scale value was 2.52 with a standard deviation of .73. This discrepancy may indicate that principals tend to overestimate their levels of involvement in LRE practices.

For each of the 13 LRE practice statements, principals were given the opportunity to check current barriers to more effective LRE practices in their schools. Within this section are a total of 65 barrier decision points. Barrier scores were analyzed from two aspects (global and categorical). Since 10 barrier options were not appropriate to be selected for certain LRE practice statements, the

global barrier score was obtained by computing across 55 items. A mean raw score of 12.33 (out of a maximum score of 55) with a standard deviation of 6.88 and a mean percent score of .20 with a standard deviation of .62 was found. Seventy-seven percent of the 46 principals identified 29% or less of the barrier options as interfering with their level of LRE involvement.

LRE barriers were also analyzed for each of the five following categories: training of principal, training of staff, staff allocation, space, and time. Sixty-one percent of the 46 principals never reported their training as a LRE barrier when considering staff training; 85% of the 46 principals reported this as a barrier in less than 3 of the 13 LRE statements. Almost the same pattern was observed when staff allocation as a barrier was reviewed. Seventy-five percent of the principals reported this as a barrier in less than 2 of the 12 possible LRE statements.

Space as a barrier was an appropriate choice in only 4 of the 13 LRE practice statements. Fifty-four percent of the 46 principals never reported space as a barrier. Time was the most frequently identified barrier. Fifty-seven percent of the 46 principals reported time as a barrier over 50% of the 13 LRE practices.

On the 8 items related to principals' self-reported opinions regarding their adequacy of LRE training, a computed mean scale value within a range of 1 to 5 was 3.86 with a standard deviation of .78 was found. The 45 principals who responded to this instrument reported they felt adequately trained with 38 (67%) reporting their LRE training to be in the very adequate to adequate range.

Within the same 8 items that principals self-reported their LRE priority opinions the computed mean scale value within a range of 1 to 5 was 4.23 with a standard deviation of .59. Forty-nine percent of the 43 principals who responded self-reported that they gave meeting LRE requirements a high priority. Not one principal who responded

indicated in this survey that meeting LRE requirements was not a priority.

A similar indication was found by Wright, Cooperstein, Renneker, and Padilla (1982) in their 4-year national longitudinal study of implementation of PL 94-142. This study identified the attitudinal constraint of a tempered commitment to LRE as a constraining factor to implementation.

The outcome of the one-item opinionnaire question focusing on principals' self-reported feelings regarding the school system's current practice of area office assigning Level 4 students to the special education classes in their buildings without their involvement was a computed mean scale value of 1.90 within a range of 1 to 5 with a standard deviation of .92. Forty-three percent of the 46 principals reported they should not be involved and 28% indicated a need for little involvement.

Under a correlational model, principals' self-reported priority to LRE had the strongest and most significant positive correlation at a .38 level with principals' LRE practices. When looking at specific LRE barrier categories, space at a $-.47$ level was found to be significant.

Principals' perceived adequacy of LRE training in this study was not significantly associated with principals' LRE practices. A positive, but not significant, association was found between LRE coursework taken and perceived adequacy of LRE training with a .33 correlation.

The single item measure on principals' opinions regarding the handling of Level 4 placements into their buildings by the area office did not result in a significant correlation ($-.01$) with principals' LRE practices.

In summary, of the five hypotheses tested, the four following hypotheses were supported at a significant level: Hypotheses 2--There was a significant positive relationship ($r=.38$) between elementary school principals' priorities toward LRE practices and their current LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

Hypothesis 3--There was a significant negative relationship ($r=-.38$) between barriers to more effective LRE practices identified by elementary school principals and their current level of involvement in LRE practices for Level 4 Special Education Students (learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired) administered in their buildings.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

This chapter presents a discussion of the results, draws conclusions from the data, and suggests implications. Considerations for future research will also be presented.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the reported current least restrictive environment (LRE) practices of elementary school principals serving learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired students placed in self-contained (Level 4) special education classrooms in their schools. The following variables were considered in relation to principals' LRE practices: (1) training of principals and staff, (2) experience, (3) certification, (4) perceived barriers to effective LRE practices, and (5) opinions related to adequacy of training, LRE as a priority, and Level 4 student placement procedures in the school system studied.

A sample of 46 elementary school principals administering self-contained (Level 4) learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired programs and 72 special education teachers responded to the survey instrument developed for this survey. In addition, interview data related to administrative training programs provided by the school system were obtained from staff development leadership personnel. This provided an opportunity to analyze reported information from

elementary principals and special education teachers working within a single organizational environment.

The survey instrument was designed to gather information from elementary principals on:

1. their current levels of involvement in 13 specified LRE activities
2. perceived barriers to effective LRE practices
3. opinions related to the adequacy of their LRE training
4. LRE as a priority
5. their current involvement in Level 4 student placement practices
6. demographic information in the areas of experience, certification, LRE training and enrollment

Special education teachers responded to items on principals' LRE practices and provided demographic information.

Discussion

An interesting profile of participating elementary principals emerged from the demographic section of the survey in the areas of certification, special education experience and LRE training. A deficiency in LRE training and experience in special education appears to exist based upon reported data.

These patterns appear to be consistent with other studies (Bullock, 1970; Mori, 1979; Kurzberg, 1980; Olson, 1982, and Yules, 1985) that have raised concerns about the continuing knowledge and experiential gap that exists with the building principals who are

responsible for LRE programming. Olson (1982) found in his study that 72% of the secondary principals reported taking no college special education credits. Likewise, Bullock (1970) found that 65% of the elementary principals reported the same lack of special education training. Yules (1985) in her dissertation stated that general school administrators who have neither the personal experience with handicapped persons, nor the academic training in special education areas need to be exposed to administrative topics that contain special education emphasis.

The LRE practices section of the survey instrument assessed elementary school principals' reported levels of LRE involvement. Special education teachers within a parallel survey instrument reported their perceptions of their principals' levels of LRE involvement. Principals perceived themselves to be highly involved with seventy-eight percent of the 46 principals reporting themselves to be involved in LRE practices in the almost-always to frequent range. Forty-one percent of the 65 responding special education teachers reported their principals' levels of LRE involvement to be in the almost-always to frequent range. A discrepancy of perceived level of LRE involvement was found. This discrepancy may indicate that principals tend to overestimate their levels of involvement in LRE practices. In view of their limited LRE training and special education experience, did the principals recognize the range and complexity of action steps imbedded within these LRE practice statements? Did the nature or wording of the instrument tend to

elicit from principals an expected response to a student services issue?

Beside each LRE practice item, principals identified barriers (principal training, staff training, staff allocation, space and time) to meeting LRE requirements. These scores were analyzed both globally and by specific barrier categories. Under this format, principals tended not to self report a large percentage of barriers as interfering with LRE practices. Thirty-nine (78%) of the principals identified only 29% of the possible barriers.

This response pattern raises several questions in searching for tentative conclusions. In view of principals' lack of reported LRE training and first-hand special education experience, were the principals really attuned to the implications and constraints inherent within each LRE practice statement? Did the survey instrument, through its wording or limited range of barrier choices, not provide respondents with barrier options that reflect constraints they encounter?

Time was the most frequently cited barrier. Only one of the principals failed to report time as a barrier. Time was not found in this study to be significantly correlated to LRE practices. Time is a generalized complaint by administrators facing an ever-increasing work load and range of responsibilities, and was recently cited as a general constraint in a 1985 school system study of the changing role of the elementary principal. In this study, over half of the principals indicated the time consuming nature of managing their

special education responsibilities. It was identified as one of the burdens of special programs.

When analyzing the specific LRE barriers of principal and staff training, responding principals did not perceive these as large barriers. It was found that 63% of the 46 principals never reported their training as a barrier and 86% of these principals reported staff training as a barrier only 23% of the time across all practice items.

The reported responses by principals may reveal a continuing discrepancy between their actual training and experience and perceived need for training. Several contributing factors may be involved that could be causing this blind spot in principals' perceptions of training need. The feeling of being so overwhelmed and overextended in coping with the pressures of rapid growth (i.e., overcrowded facilities) does not allow them the time to look beyond the surface of some tasks. Another factor may lie in the wording of the instrument which may mask the complexity of these LRE activities.

The same general response pattern was found when staff allocation was considered as a barrier. A similar semantic factor in the instrument may be involved in effecting their perceived needs for staff allocation. Staff allocation may have been a limiting term when thinking of possible support options. It may have conveyed the narrow option of a classroom teacher or instructional assistant allocation rather than considering the possible need for curriculum and training support staff as a broader range of staffing alternatives.

Space as a LRE barrier was only applicable in four of the thirteen practice statements. The instrument provided limited opportunities to consider space as a barrier. When appropriate, twenty-eight (57%) of the principals never reported this as a barrier. The limited response to space as a barrier may again have been affected by the interpretation of the word space. In retrospect, another category titled, Class Size, may have been more sensitive in eliciting another real barrier to LRE practice.

Principals self-reported opinions regarding their training adequacy in relation to eight specific LRE practices currently used in their schools. No principal reported he needed more training. Only 16% of the principals reported they felt inadequately trained. A different reporting format and focus in this section of the survey did not alter the pattern of responses which tend to deny the need for training despite the previously cited informational and experiential gaps. Possibly the response pattern that was established early in the survey carried over into subsequent sections--a contagion effect.

Within the same section of the survey instrument, principals self-reported opinions to LRE practices as a priority. Not one principal indicated in this survey that meeting LRE requirements was not a priority. However, in what may be a better indicator of commitment, twenty-two (51%) of the principals reported that LRE is in the useful but not-necessary-to-low priority range.

Data from this study suggest that elementary principals may be indicating a tempered commitment to LRE compounded by their reported

lack of training in LRE and limited special education instructional experience. There is evidence in the literature (Peterson, 1971; Larrivee and Cook, 1978, and Jones and Guskin, 1984) that indicates the important linkage of attitudes toward integration of the handicapped which is a complex and multifaceted process intertwined with all areas of education and efficient knowledge of what LRE is all about. D'Antoni (1979) in his dissertation cited extensive review of literature to establish that a person's attitudes are directly related to the level of information concerning the handicapped and the amount of contact with handicapped individuals.

A one-question item was included in the opinionnaire section to obtain principals' feelings regarding the current school system's practice of area office assignments of Level 4 students to the special education classes in their buildings without their involvement. Seventy-one percent of the principals indicated they preferred little to no involvement in the placement decision.

This preference, when considered in the context of the previous indicator (LRE as a lower priority), raises questions about the level of "ownership" principals possess toward the Level 4 programs in their buildings. Are such factors as the current placement procedures, which is handled outside the school and the fact that these programs serve students from other communities, negatively impacting on the building principal's sense of "ownership"? Do these factors reinforce the perception that Level 4 programs are an add-on and not integrated into their total school program? Is it compounded by their lack of LRE training and special education experience?

Madeline Will (1986) stated in her task force report (Educating Students with Learning Problems--a Shared Responsibility) from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services the concern that school administrators take the view that responsibility for students with learning problems belongs to special education but is delivered at the building level. This perception does not encourage ownership of the program's goals and thereby lessens the principal's administrative influence to support, develop, and sustain these programs.

Conclusions

Tentative conclusions, requiring additional investigation and verification, may be drawn from the present study. Elementary school principals in this school system who administer Level 4 special education classes for learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired students as a group reported limited training related to LRE and minimal direct instructional experience in special education. In contrast, this same group perceives themselves to be adequately trained and highly involved in LRE practices in their schools. This discrepancy needs to be addressed in a systematic and comprehensive approach. Johnson and Gold (1980) raising the same concern, related principals' limited background and training in special education and the effect when confronted with meeting their LRE responsibilities.

In this study, a significant positive relationship was found between principals' self-reported priorities toward LRE practices and their current LRE practices. This relationship should be tempered with the knowledge that in this instrument LRE as a priority is felt by over half the respondents to be in the useful but-not-necessary range. Madeline Will (1986) stated that a principal's sense of priority translates into the use of his influence and the setting of high expectations and standards. According to the results of this study, a principal's sense of LRE as a priority needs to be raised to the necessary level.

A low relationship was found between principal's opinion regarding the placement of special education students into Level 4 classrooms in

the buildings by the area office and their current LRE practices. It was found that most principals self-reported a preference for little to no involvement in these placement decisions. This may be a red flag regarding ownership of special education programs, or an indication that this decision does not need building-level input. However, when considered with principals' LRE priority opinions, this area needs further study.

A significant negative relationship was found between barriers to LRE practices and principals' LRE practices in this study. It should be noted that principals tended not to self-report barriers. This response may be the result of deficiencies in the instrument, principals' lack of special education experience and training, which masked the complexities imbedded in LRE practices, or their perceptions of expected responses in their roles as principals.

Space as a specific barrier to LRE practices was found to have a significant negative relationship. Planned space for special education programming must continue to be part of the school system's comprehensive facilities planning for both new schools and in the modernization of existing buildings. This approach promotes collaboration between regular and special education. Planned space ensures appropriately designed facilities for the unique needs of programs and the placement of special education classrooms in areas of the building that promote and facilitate LRE activities.

In this study, caution is needed when considering class size as a potential barrier to LRE practices. While it was assumed to be a

space barrier, class size may need to be considered more directly as a separate barrier. The impact of additional students with special education needs into a regular classroom is a numerical factor that should be considered in the study of LRE practices.

Recommendations

The following recommendations include further research in the field of administration of school-based special education programs and recommendations for utilizing information found in this research study.

Establish LRE as a School-based Management Plan

- (A) LRE is both operationally and conceptually integral to both regular and special education. It provides an opportunity and challenge to bring these dual service delivery components and resources together in an unified and integrated educational initiative. In order to provide the necessary administrative structure, focus, endorsement and coordinated support of the school system, a school-based management plan approach is recommended.

A school-based management plan would provide a planning tool which addresses LRE as part of the total school operation. This plan, which is approved, monitored, and evaluated by the area associate superintendents, would help insure that in those schools where LRE needs to be a management objective, it is systematically addressed with in-school staff involvement and specific action steps that delineate and commit required support systems.

This process would provide a sounder basis for LRE evaluation, modification and accountability. It would also provide some important leverage to bring ownership of special programs administered at the local school level to the building principal.

Conduct Comprehensive LRE Field Test

(B) Both literature (Bilken, 1985; Ryan, 1984, and Herda, 1980) and experience stress the need to recognize the complexities and real challenges surrounding the concept of LRE. Currently, various components of the LRE process are being implemented on a school-specific basis. A comprehensive LRE procedure as presented in the survey instrument is not presently operating. A field testing of the LRE process using a comprehensive and systematic approach within a management plan model is recommended. This would provide a realistic, school-based needs assessment opportunity to identify those prerequisite skills, competencies and supports required by all parties involved (student, staff, administration and parent) to effect LRE.

(C) The elementary school principals' group involved in this study were found to have limited direct instructional experience with special education and with little or no reported training to meet their LRE responsibilities. All school system principals now have some type or level of

special education service in their buildings. This training and experiential deficiency must be addressed in spite of principals' reported perceptions of feeling well trained with high levels of involvement in LRE practices. Implementing LRE demands new competencies for principals (Klopf, 1979; Abernathy and Stiles, 1983) which require training. Role expectations may be dysfunctional (Kurzberg, 1979) with respect to preparation. Extensive reorientation and reality-based training (Jones and Guskin, 1974) are needed to help principals. This training need is further amplified by the relatively high turnover rate in principalships due to retirements and new school construction.

A comprehensive review of principals' LRE training and inservice programming is recommended at the local, state and university level. A comprehensive system of personal development is required under Public Law 94-142 (20 U.S.C. 1413(a)(3)). These regulations state that each annual plan must include a description of programs and procedures to ensure inservice training of general and special education personnel. Each annual program plan must:

1. Describe the process used in determining the inservice training needs of personnel engaged in the education of handicapped children.
2. Identify the areas in which training is needed, such as individualized education programs, non-discriminatory

testing, least restrictive environment, procedural safeguards, and surrogate parents.

3. Specify the groups requiring training (such as special teachers, regular teachers, administrators, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, physical education teachers, therapeutic recreation specialists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, medical personnel, parents, volunteers, hearing officers, and surrogate parents).
4. Describe the content and nature of training for each area under paragraph (f)(2) of this section.
5. Describe how the training will be provided in terms of (i) geographical scope (such as statewide, regional or local), and (ii) staff training source (such as college and university staffs, state and local educational agency personnel, and non-agency personnel).
6. Specify: (i) The funding sources to be used, and (ii) The timeframe for providing it.
7. Specify procedures for effective evaluation of the extent to which program objectives are met (34 C.F.R. 300.380-300.387).

Continue Comprehensive Facilities Planning

- (D) As this school system continues to respond to rapid growth in its student enrollment with the construction of new

schools, the comprehensive facilities planning process will provide planned space for special education programs. This is an excellent example of collaboration between regular and special education. Another corollary component should be the planned allocation of staff to support special programming requirements within these new and modernized facilities.

Develop LRE Attitudinal Strategies

- (E) Principals need to perceive LRE as a necessary priority. Attitudinal strategies need to be developed that will raise both sensitivity and awareness levels. Information related to the movement toward the merger of special and regular education, that educating children with learning problems is a shared responsibility (Will, 1986), needs to be disseminated. In addition, principals need to be apprised of the legal and due process implications emerging from recent legislation, such as the "Handicapped Children's Protection Act of 1986," also known as the Attorney's Fee Act.

Ethnographic Study Should be Undertaken

- (F) While the importance of the role of the principal in effecting the LRE process has been the focus of this study, a broader understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all participants is needed. Olson (1982) indicated the same concern when he stated that the building principal is by no means solely responsible for the provision of special education services in the building.

In order to better understand the perceived LRE role requirements of school-based personnel, including principals, regular and special education professional and support staff and parents in implementing LRE practices an ethnographic study should be undertaken.

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**APPENDIX A
CONTINUUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES***

Levels 1, 2, and 3

The child is enrolled in general education and receives supplementary special education services.

Levels 4, 5

The child is enrolled in special education and participates in the general education program, as appropriate.

LEVEL 6

The child is served in a residential program. This is a 24-hour program for severely handicapped students with a need for multiple services.

LEVEL 5

The child is served in a special wing or a special center. The program includes a range of services provided in a specially designed facility or classroom.

LEVEL 4

The child is served full-time in a special class which is housed in a general education building. Special education programming is conducted in a self-contained classroom; therapies are provided as needed.

LEVEL 3

The child is served in a special program up to three hours a day.

LEVEL 2

The child is served in a special program up to one hour per day.

LEVEL 1

The child is served in the general education program. Consultant services are provided to general education instructional staff.

* Based on State Department of Education Special Education Bylaw

APPENDIX B

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) SURVEY

Principal

APPENDIX B

March 14, 1986

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The attached survey is designed to gather information regarding your current practices, opinions, and training related to the provision of least restrictive environment (LRE) programming for level 4 special education students placed in your special education classes.

Least restrictive environment (LRE) means the educational placement in which the handicapped child's IEP is to be carried out in conformity with the following requirements under Public Law 94-142:

1. to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and
2. special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (§ 121a.550 (b))

Using this definition as a frame of reference, please complete the survey questions. The information provided by your responses will be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the principal's role in this important part of educational planning for handicapped students.

There is no intention or need to identify a specific respondent to this study. The information will be analyzed and reported in an aggregate form. Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential.

Your time and thought are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Pottinger

Directions: Review the following statements which describe LRE activities over which you as the elementary principal have direct influence. Respond to each statement from two viewpoints:

1. Beside each statement, check the number which most closely depicts your current level of involvement in specific practices for meeting LRE requirements:

2. Beside each statement, check all the listed factors you feel are barriers to more effective practices for meeting LRE requirements:

Legend

Per cent of time

(95-80)

(79-60)

(59-30)

(29- 5)

1 almost always

2 frequently

3 seldom

4 almost never

APPENDIX C

LRE PRACTICE STATEMENTS	Current Level of Involvement					Current Barriers To More Effective LRE Practice In My School (✓) (Check all that apply)					
	1	2	3	4		None	TRAINING Principal Staff		Staff Allocation	Space	Time
1. Chair intake conference for level 4 students											
2. Chair 60-day review meeting for level 4 students											
3. Chair annual review meeting for level 4 students											
4. Provide staff inservice (within the last 2 years) in accommodating handicapped students in the regular program											

APPENDIX C
OPINIONS RELATED TO LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)
PRACTICES

This section is designed to elicit your opinion related to specific practices for meeting LRE requirements in your school. For each statement, there are two response scales. After reading each statement, please check the box on the continuum of responses to indicate your opinion regarding the following issues:

1. Monitoring LRE programming for effectiveness and appropriateness:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. My knowledge of federal, state and HCPS regulations:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Conducting staff development:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. My knowledge of the characteristics of learning disabled and/or emotionally impaired students in my school:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Chairing IEP/SARD meetings for LRE programming:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX C
OPINIONS RELATED TO LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)
PRACTICES
 (continued)

6. Monitoring the use of MCPS curriculum by special education teachers:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
□	□	□
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
□	□	□

7. Interpreting LRE practices to staff, students, and parents:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
□	□	□
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
□	□	□

8. Developing annual written procedures related to LRE process:

I feel well-trained	My training is adequate	I need more training
□	□	□
I give this a high priority	This is useful, but not necessary	I give this a low priority
□	□	□

9. Area office assignment of level 4 students to the special education classes in my school:

I feel I should be totally involved	I feel I should be somewhat involved	I feel I should not be involved
□	□	□

**APPENDIX C
GENERAL INFORMATION
Principal**

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>School Enrollment</u>
1 <u> </u> Male	1 <u> </u> -35	1 <u> </u> 300 or less
2 <u> </u> Female	2 <u> </u> 36-45	2 <u> </u> 301-600
	3 <u> </u> 46-55	3 <u> </u> 601-900
	4 <u> </u> 56+	4 <u> </u> 901+

<u>Certification</u>	<u>Academic Background</u>
1 <u> </u> Special Education (K-12)	1 <u> </u> Master's Degree
2 <u> </u> Special Education/Regular Education (K-12)	2 <u> </u> Master's + 30
3 <u> </u> Administration/Supervision	3 <u> </u> Doctoral Degree
4 <u> </u> Special Education Administration	4 <u> </u> Other
5 <u> </u> Other _____ (specify)	

Number of years of experience (by position) in education (including this year)

regular education teacher	_____	special education teacher	_____
elementary principal	_____	other administrative positions	_____

Number of years in current assignment _____

Special education classes (level 4) in building

1 primary
 2 intermediate
 3 both
 4 additional _____
 (specify)

Indicate the number of 3-credit courses taken related to LRE requirements and practices

MCPS course	_____
College/University	_____
Other	_____

Indicate the number of 1-3 hour workshops taken related to LRE requirements and practices

MCPS workshop	_____
non-MCPS	_____

APPENDIX D

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) SURVEY

Teacher

APPENDIX D

March 14, 1986

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The attached survey is designed to gather information regarding your principal's current practices, opinions, and training related to the provision of least restrictive environment (LRE) programming for level 4 special education students placed in your special education classes.

Least restrictive environment (LRE) means the educational placement in which the handicapped child's IEP is to be carried out in conformity with the following requirements under Public Law 94-142:

- 1. to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and**
- 2. special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (§ 121a.350 (b))**

Using this definition as a frame of reference, please complete the survey questions. The information provided by your responses will be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the principal's role in this important part of educational planning for handicapped students.

There is no intention or need to identify a specific respondent to this study. The information will be analyzed and reported in an aggregate form. Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential.

Your time and thought are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Pottinger

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) PRACTICES

Directions: Beside each statement, check the number which most clearly depicts the current level of involvement of the building principal in specific practices for meeting LRE requirements.

Legend:

Per cent of time		
(95-80)	1	almost always
(79-60)	2	frequently
(59-30)	3	seldom
(29- 5)	4	almost never

	Current Level of Involvement			
	1	2	3	4
1. Chairs intake conference for level 4 students				
2. Chairs 60-day review meeting for level 4 students				
3. Chairs annual review meeting for level 4 students				
4. Provides staff inservice (within the last 2 years) in accommodating handicapped students in the regular program				
5. Monitors each handicapped student's progress through classroom observations, teacher conferences, and review of achievement data				
6. Organizes opportunities which permit communication between regular and special education staff (planning time for coordination)				
7. Assigns space for special education classrooms to promote total acceptance (e.g., primary class in primary wing)				
8. Uses part-time staff in different ways to support educational placements (i.e., special education instructional assistant in regular classroom; team-teaching)				
9. Makes staff aware of professional books, journals, and other information about the characteristics of handicapped students				

APPENDIX E

**LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) PRACTICES
(continued)**

Current Level of
Involvement

	1	2	3	4
10. Communicates to total staff the expectation of commitment to move special education students toward their appropriate LRE placement				
11. Monitors the use of MCPS's curriculum by special education teachers				
12. Provides communication regarding the school's practices to meet the LRE requirements to staff, students, and parents				
13. Develops and updates annually, with staff involvement, written procedures related to meeting LRE requirements, including the delineation of staff roles and responsibilities				

APPENDIX E

GENERAL INFORMATION
Teacher

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Position</u>
1 ___ Male	1 ___ -25	1 ___ Special Education Tea
2 ___ Female	2 ___ 26-35	2 ___ Supervisor of Special Services
	3 ___ 36-45	3 ___ Assistant Supervisor Special Services
	4 ___ 46-55	
	5 ___ 56+	

<u>Certification</u>	<u>Academic Background</u>
1 ___ Special Education (K-12)	1 ___ Bachelor's Degree
2 ___ Special Education/Regular Education (K-12)	2 ___ BA + 15 hours
3 ___ Administration/Supervision	3 ___ BA + 30 hours
4 ___ Special Education Administration	4 ___ Master's Degree
5 ___ Other	5 ___ Doctoral Degree

Number of years of experience (by position) in education (including this year)

regular education teacher	___	special education teacher	___
elementary principal	___	other administrative positions	___

Number of years in current assignment ___

APPENDIX F

**Principals' Reported Level of Involvement
in LRE Practices**

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	1.62	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	2.00	1	2.2	2.2	4.3
	2.10	1	2.2	2.2	6.5
	2.15	2	4.3	4.3	10.9
	2.22	1	2.2	2.2	13.0
	2.23	1	2.2	2.2	15.2
	2.42	1	2.2	2.2	17.4
	2.46	1	2.2	2.2	19.6
	2.54	1	2.2	2.2	21.7
	2.77	4	8.7	8.7	30.4
	2.83	1	2.2	2.2	32.6
	2.85	2	4.3	4.3	37.0
	2.92	3	6.5	6.5	43.5
	3.00	3	6.5	6.5	50.0
	3.08	3	6.5	6.5	56.5
	3.15	4	8.7	8.7	65.2
	3.17	1	2.2	2.2	67.4
	3.23	2	4.3	4.3	71.7
	3.25	1	2.2	2.2	73.9
	3.31	2	4.3	4.3	78.3
	3.33	1	2.2	2.2	80.4
	3.38	1	2.2	2.2	82.6
	3.42	1	2.2	2.2	84.8
	3.46	3	6.5	6.5	91.3
	3.62	2	4.3	4.3	95.7
	3.77	2	4.3	4.3	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	2.954	Std Dev	.493	Minimum	1.615
Maximum	3.769				
Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0		

APPENDIX G

**Special Education Teacher's Reported Level of
LRE Practice Involvement for Their Principals**

VALUE	FREQ	PCT	CUM PCT	VALUE	FREQ	PCT	CUM PCT	VALUE	FREQ	PCT	CUM PCT
1.88	1	2	2	2.15	3	5	31	3.88	4	6	77
1.15	1	2	3	2.23	3	5	35	3.88	3	5	82
1.23	1	2	5	2.31	3	5	48	3.15	1	2	83
1.38	1	2	6	2.38	3	5	45	3.23	1	2	85
1.46	4	6	12	2.46	1	2	46	3.31	2	3	88
1.54	3	5	17	2.54	2	3	49	3.38	1	2	89
1.62	1	2	18	2.62	1	2	51	3.62	1	2	91
1.77	1	2	20	2.69	5	8	58	3.69	4	6	97
1.85	2	3	23	2.77	4	6	65	3.77	2	3	100
2.88	1	2	25	2.85	1	2	66				
2.88	1	2	26	2.92	3	5	71				

M I S S I N G D A T A

VALUE	FREQ	VALUE	FREQ	VALUE	FREQ
.	15				
Mean	2.515	Std Dev	.723	Minimum	1.888
Maximum	3.769				
Valid Cases	65	Missing Cases	15		

APPENDIX H

Principals' Reported LRE Barrier Raw Scores

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0.0	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	-3.00	3	6.5	6.5	8.7
	5.00	2	4.3	4.3	13.0
	6.00	3	6.5	6.5	19.6
	7.00	3	6.5	6.5	26.1
	8.00	1	2.2	2.2	28.3
	9.00	5	10.9	10.9	39.1
	10.00	1	2.2	2.2	41.3
	11.00	2	4.3	4.3	45.7
	12.00	1	2.2	2.2	47.8
	13.00	7	15.2	15.2	63.0
	14.00	4	8.7	8.7	71.7
	15.00	2	4.3	4.3	76.1
	16.00	1	2.2	2.2	78.3
	17.00	1	2.2	2.2	80.4
	18.00	2	4.3	4.3	84.8
	19.00	2	4.3	4.3	89.1
	20.00	1	2.2	2.2	91.3
	21.00	1	2.2	2.2	93.5
	22.00	1	2.2	2.2	95.7
	27.00	1	2.2	2.2	97.8
	38.00	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	12.326	Std Dev	6.877	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	38.000				
Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0		

APPENDIX I

Principals' Reported LRE Barrier Scaled Scores

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0.0	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	.05	3	6.5	6.5	8.7
	.08	2	4.3	4.3	13.0
	.09	3	6.5	6.5	19.6
	.11	2	4.3	4.3	23.9
	.12	2	4.3	4.3	28.3
	.14	4	8.7	8.7	37.0
	.15	2	4.3	4.3	41.3
	.17	1	2.2	2.2	43.5
	.18	2	4.3	4.3	47.8
	.20	5	10.9	10.9	58.7
	.22	5	10.9	10.9	69.6
	.23	1	2.2	2.2	71.7
	.25	3	6.5	6.5	78.3
	.26	1	2.2	2.2	80.4
	.29	3	6.5	6.5	87.0
	.32	1	2.2	2.2	89.1
	.34	1	2.2	2.2	91.3
	.35	2	4.3	4.3	95.7
	.42	1	2.2	2.2	97.8
	.62	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.196	Std Dev	.112	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	.615				
Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0		

APPENDIX J AND APPENDIX K

Reported LRE Barrier - Principal Training

APPENDIX J

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0.0	28	60.9	60.9	60.9
	1.00	7	15.2	15.2	76.1
	2.00	5	10.9	10.9	87.0
	3.00	1	2.2	2.2	89.1
	4.00	1	2.2	2.2	91.3
	5.00	2	4.3	4.3	95.7
	7.00	1	2.2	2.2	97.8
	11.00	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	

Mean	1.130	Std Dev	2.177	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	11.000				

Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0
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Reported LRE Barrier - Staff Training

APPENDIX K

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0.0	12	26.1	26.1	26.1
	1.00	6	13.0	13.0	39.1
	2.00	15	32.6	32.6	71.7
	3.00	6	13.0	13.0	84.8
	4.00	3	6.5	6.5	91.3
	5.00	2	4.3	4.3	95.7
	6.00	1	2.2	2.2	97.8
	10.00	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	

Mean	2.000	Std Dev	1.944	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	10.000				

Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0
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APPENDIX L AND APPENDIX M

Reported LRE Barrier - Staff Allocation

APPENDIX L

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0.0	16	34.8	34.8	34.8
	1.00	14	30.4	30.4	65.2
	2.00	5	10.9	10.9	76.1
	3.00	2	4.3	4.3	80.4
	4.00	4	8.7	8.7	89.1
	5.00	3	6.5	6.5	95.7
	6.00	1	2.2	2.2	97.8
	8.00	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.630	Std Dev	1.536	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	8.000				
Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0		

Reported LRE Barrier - Space

APPENDIX M

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0.0	25	54.3	54.3	54.3
	1.00	16	34.8	34.8	89.1
	2.00	2	4.3	4.3	93.5
	3.00	3	6.5	6.5	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	.630	Std Dev	.853	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	3.000				
Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0		

APPENDIX N

Reported LRE Barrier - Time

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0.0	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	1.00	1	2.2	2.2	4.3
	2.00	3	6.5	6.5	10.9
	3.00	3	6.5	6.5	17.4
	4.00	6	13.0	13.0	30.4
	5.00	3	6.5	6.5	37.0
	6.00	3	6.5	6.5	43.5
	7.00	3	6.5	6.5	50.0
	8.00	6	13.0	13.0	63.0
	9.00	6	13.0	13.0	76.1
	10.00	4	8.7	8.7	84.8
	11.00	3	6.5	6.5	91.3
	12.00	2	4.3	4.3	95.7
	13.00	2	4.3	4.3	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	6.935	Std Dev	3.376	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	13.000				
Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0		

APPENDIX O

Principals' Self-reported Opinions Regarding Adequacy of LRE Training

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	1.88	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	2.50	1	2.2	2.2	4.4
	2.75	2	4.3	4.4	8.9
	2.88	1	2.2	2.2	11.1
	3.00	3	6.5	6.7	17.8
	3.13	2	4.3	4.4	22.2
	3.25	3	6.5	6.7	28.9
	3.38	3	6.5	6.7	35.6
	3.63	2	4.3	4.4	40.0
	3.75	3	6.5	6.7	46.7
	3.88	2	4.3	4.4	51.1
	4.00	4	8.7	8.9	60.0
	4.13	2	4.3	4.4	64.4
	4.38	2	4.3	4.4	68.9
	4.50	4	8.7	8.9	77.8
	4.63	3	6.5	6.7	84.4
	4.75	1	2.2	2.2	86.7
	4.88	2	4.3	4.4	91.1
	5.00	4	8.7	8.9	100.0
	.	1	2.2	MISSING	
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	3.856	Std Dev	.779	Minimum	1.875
Maximum	5.000				
Valid Cases	45	Missing Cases	1		

APPENDIX P

**Principals' Self-reported Opinions Regarding
LRE as a Priority**

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	2.50	1	2.2	2.3	2.3
	2.88	1	2.2	2.3	4.7
	3.00	1	2.2	2.3	7.0
	3.25	1	2.2	2.3	9.3
	3.50	3	6.5	7.0	16.3
	3.63	1	2.2	2.3	18.6
	3.75	1	2.2	2.3	20.9
	3.88	2	4.3	4.7	25.6
	4.00	2	4.3	4.7	30.2
	4.13	2	4.3	4.7	34.9
	4.25	3	6.5	7.0	41.9
	4.38	4	8.7	9.3	51.2
	4.50	6	13.0	14.0	65.1
	4.63	9	19.6	20.9	86.0
	4.75	2	4.3	4.7	90.7
	4.88	1	2.2	2.3	93.0
	5.00	3	6.5	7.0	100.0
	.	3	6.5	MISSING	
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	4.227	Std Dev	.588	Minimum	2.500
Maximum	5.000				
Valid Cases	43	Missing Cases	3		

APPENDIX Q

Principals' Self-reported Opinions Regarding Preferred Level of Involvement in Level 4 Student Placement Practices

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	1	20	43.5	43.5	43.5
	2	13	28.3	28.3	71.7
	3	11	23.9	23.9	95.7
	4	2	4.3	4.3	100.0
	TOTAL	46	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.891	Std Dev	.924	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	4.000				
Valid Cases	46	Missing Cases	0		

APPENDIX R

Frequency Distributions of 13 Practices Items

Char Char Char In- mont comm accp ptst prof expt sped prac Writ
in 60 an svc

1

RELFR

TOT F	100%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1	10.9	15.2	19.6	6.52	2.22	2.17	6.82	11.6	9.09	6.98	0.00	8.89	24.4
2	21.7	21.7	21.7	26.1	20.0	21.7	2.27	39.5	25.0	6.98	21.7	24.4	22.2
3	17.4	17.4	17.4	26.1	51.1	34.0	18.2	23.3	59.1	34.9	37.0	51.1	37.8
4	50.0	45.7	41.3	41.3	26.7	41.3	72.7	25.6	6.82	51.2	41.3	15.6	15.6
MEAN	3.07	2.93	2.80	3.02	3.02	3.15	3.57	2.63	2.64	3.30	3.20	2.73	2.44
SD	1.08	1.14	1.19	.98	.75	.84	.85	1.00	.75	.89	.78	.84	1.03
VALID	46	46	46	46	45	46	44	43	44	43	46	45	45

Frequency Distributions of 13 Practices Items (Number of cases per response)

Char Char Char In- mont comm accp ptst prof expt sped prac Writ
in 60 an svc

1

ABFRE

TOT F	46	46	46	46	45	46	44	43	44	43	46	45	45
1	5	7	9	3	1	1	5	5	4	3	0	4	11
2	10	10	10	12	9	10	1	17	11	3	10	11	10
3	8	8	8	12	23	16	8	10	26	15	17	23	17
4	23	21	19	19	12	19	32	11	3	22	19	7	7
MEAN	3.07	2.93	2.80	3.02	3.02	3.15	3.57	2.63	2.64	3.30	3.20	2.73	2.44
SD	1.08	1.14	1.19	.98	.75	.84	.85	1.00	.75	.89	.78	.84	1.03
VALID	46	46	46	46	45	46	44	43	44	43	46	45	45

APPENDIX S

Interview - Supervisor, Department of Staff Development

Date of Interview: September 9, 1986

Background

The supervisor reviewed training programs for administrators and discussed factors to be considered in developing training opportunities for principals related to LRE.

I. In reviewing administrative training programs offered by this school system since 1971, only 1 program, which was conducted twice in 1980, dealt directly with mainstreaming. However, many other programs provided information and skill development needed to implement LRE concepts and practices (refer to Administrative Training Programs--September 1971-May 1986).

II. It is important to note that the administrative training program is offered on a voluntary basis. The course offering on mainstreaming was discontinued due to a perceived lack of interest.

The supervisor, while agreeing that training for principals in the area of their LRE responsibilities is needed, feels that the how and who does it needs to be considered.

It was the perception that principals perceive themselves as being overwhelmed with increasing responsibilities which further fragment their time. This factor must be kept in mind in developing training and in-service strategies for principals.

In working with principals under this premise, the following techniques and training formats were suggested.

1. As part of the revised ACES procedures, communicate the expectation that LRE is one of their job responsibilities.
2. Build a principal training component into the revised ACES process.
3. Develop a one-sheet "Helpful Hints" to serve as a visual reminder to principals using a commonsense, pragmatic format.

Something that would be easily posed that could help structure and sequence LRE procedures.

4. Pull together for principals through A&S Meetings and ongoing communication the linkage of the revision of ACES and the Board of Education special education initiatives in facilities planning, identification and placement, and transition to world of work, and the importance of their role.
5. Develop a needs assessment for principals to assess their perceived training needs and training format preference.
6. Explore other models for training principals and their staffs that may be more situational or school specific. For example, could pupil personnel worker and psychologist teams in-service and work with their assigned building principals and staff.
7. Provide principals with a menu of in-service training options.

APPENDIX T

Interview - Supervisor of In-service Training in the Office of the Associate Superintendent for Special and Alternative Education

Date of Interview: August 6, 1986

Background

The supervisor reviewed his leadership responsibilities since 1977 in developing in-service training programs for building principals in this school system as it relates to special education mainstreaming and placement practices.

I. Access to Continuum Education System (ACES)

During a 2-year period (1977-78), special education placement procedures were disseminated to central office, area office and school-based staffs. The focus was on local school placement procedures called the Educational Management Team (EMT) and School Admissions, Review and Dismissals Committee (SARD).

The following sequence of training was used:

- A. An orientation meeting of all principals and administrative and supervisory staff using large-group format was held.
- B. Area level training for principals, two staff members, and area office staff was conducted. The intent of these sessions was to prepare principals to go into the field with area office support to train their faculties and communities in the new ACES procedures. Videotape presentations were prepared by central office as support materials to the training package.
- C. Local school training was conducted by the principal with support personnel. Videotape materials and prepared procedural notebooks were used as support materials.

The intent and content of these was to provide information related to the new procedures (i.e., use of forms) and direction on conducting the required meetings.

In 1981, training occurred following the above sequence regarding area and central office admission, review and dismissals procedures (AARD, CARD). Principals were again the focal point of these training efforts.

II. During the summers of 1980 and 1981, 60 principals and their EMT/SARD teams participated on a voluntary basis in a 4-day session that focused on providing information and training in the following areas:

- a. Public Law 94-142
- b. simulation of handicapping conditions with site visits
- c. team building
- d. collaboration strategies between regular and special education
- e. mainstreaming processes
- f. classroom accommodations

III. On a voluntary basis, selected elementary and secondary principals and their EMT teams were given a week's training in team functioning. These teams were instructed in the whole process using simulations and case studies.

Between 1977 and 1980, 6 local school teams and their principals were trained each summer. A total of 24 school teams went through this training.

By 1981, it was felt that EMT functioning was going well. With this in mind, training emphasis shifted to school in-service coordination for mainstreaming (SICM). It is interesting to note that a monitoring system for the above training was never implemented. During the last 6 years, despite many changes in local school administrators, this training has not been provided.

However, in an effort to improve the process and procedures involved in the identification of students with suspected learning disabilities, this school system is participating in the State Department of Education learning disability project. Under the LD project, each elementary school will be gradually trained in these new, more comprehensive procedures. All elementary schools should be trained by 1988.

The model places much emphasis on improved team decision making at the school level under the leadership of the building principal and direct involvement of the school psychologist.

The school system is currently involved in a systematic and comprehensive revision of their ACES procedures. Implementation is tentatively scheduled for the 1987-88 school year. This would provide a good opportunity to again focus on in-service training.

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