

A STUDY OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' KNOWLEDGE,
ATTITUDES, AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION RELATIVE
TO THE EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED,

by

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DEDICATION

To , and

If the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 had been the law of the land when they were three years old, we would all be richer for the contributions they would have made to our society. was already an adult when the law came into being and and were adolescents. Their lost potential, because public education did not have to provide for them, has been my incentive to become an administrator and to fight for the right of handicapped children to have an education. They are only representatives of the thousands of handicapped adults who were deprived of early free and appropriate public education, but they are three I knew and loved.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1975, the Congress of the United States mandated The Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This mandate committed the U. S. Office of Education (now the Department of Education) to giving top priority to the goal of a free and appropriate education for all handicapped children. Education for all handicapped children can be mandated and even financed by the federal government, but it cannot be accomplished without the cooperation of the state and local education agencies, with the prime responsibility placed on the local school district. Realistically, a staff in Washington, D.C. can paper monitor the activities related to education of the handicapped, but employing a staff large enough to monitor each local educational agency would be financially devastating. Passing the monitoring to state government to supervise the education of all handicapped children is somewhat more appropriate but may also be unrealistic except in an overseer capacity.

The states have not proved themselves to be effective in implementation of laws for the education of the handicapped as evidenced by the fact that PL 94-142 passed in 1975 was preceded by state statutes and court orders requiring similar services to the handicapped in forty-eight

of the fifty states. Many states passed equal education laws for the handicapped prior to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Table 1). States had the statutes to prescribe education of the handicapped, but millions of children with special education needs were not being educated in 1975 when the federal legislation was passed.

Education is not a right of local municipalities, but it is within the rights of the state legislature which has allowed local school districts to plan and manage for the education of its citizenry. The schools in actuality belong to the state and not the local district.

Local district powers are limited to those powers allowed to them by the state government. The organization for the administration of public schools in most states is accomplished through either an elected or appointed board of education who, as a lay group, represent the public of the governmental unit and who serve as the policymakers for the school district. There were 15,834¹ boards of education in the United States with a minimum of three members on each board in 1977. In their role of providing for local education, the boards have certain obligations. Davidson describes the function of the board of education

¹National Center for Education Statistics Education Directory: Public School Systems 1977-78.

Table 1

State Mandates Prior to Federal Mandates for
Education of the Handicapped

Mandates Prior to Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act				After Section 504 but Prior to PL 94-142			
Prior to 1960		1960-69		1970-72		1973-75	
Hawaii	1949	Rhode Island	1964	Kentucky	1970	Arizona	1973
Delaware	1943	Illinois	1965	Alabama	1971	Arkansas	1973
New Jersey	1954	New Hampshire	1965	Alaska	1971	Colorado	1973
		Connecticut	1966	Washington	1971	Maine	1973
		Florida	1968	Oklahoma	1971	Missouri	1973
		Georgia	1968	Idaho	1972	Montana	1973
		Indiana	1969	Louisiana	1972	Nebraska	1973
		Texas	1969	New Mexico	1972	Nevada	1973
		Utah	1969	South Carolina	1972	New York	1973
		Wyoming	1969	Tennessee	1972	Oregon	1973
				Vermont	1972	Wisconsin	1973
				Virginia	1972	Iowa	1974
						Kansas	1974
						North Carolina	1974
						West Virginia	1975

Information for this table from Torres, S., Special Education Administration Policy Manual. Council for Exceptional Children. Reston, Virginia, 1977.

to establish the general policy and establishment of rules and regulations for employment of the superintendent, for employee personnel functions, for instructional programs, for pupil personnel functions, for school plant and for public relations. The board must approve and adopt an annual budget and consequently estimate the necessary taxation needed for the budget.²

The school superintendent manages and supervises the schools but only under the policy as directed by the board of education. The knowledge and the attitude of the board of education are, therefore, extremely important in the adoption of new programs. Davidson,³ Dickinson⁴ and Tuttle⁵ all cite the need for knowledgeable school boards in developing sound and responsible policies for America's schools.

The major responsibility of education was left to the states through the implied powers clause of the

²J. L. Davidson, Effective School Board Meetings (West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Company, 1970).

³Ibid.

⁴W. E. Dickinson, New Dimensions in School Board Leadership (Evanston, Illinois: National School Boards Association, 1969).

⁵E. M. Tuttle, School Board Leadership in America (Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printers, 1963), p. 35.

Constitution of the United States. Using a Hamiltonian interpretation of the general welfare clause of the Constitution, the federal government has long shown interest and supported public education through legislation, White House conferences and contributions to Education Commission of the States. In 1917, the U. S. Congress gave its first funding to local public education through the Smith Hughes Act for vocational education. This continues to be the longest operating aid to education by the federal government.

In 1958, in reaction to Russia's "Sputnik" success, the federal government began to invest money in the improvement of teaching science, mathematics and foreign language. Funds were utilized to train teachers, investigate teaching methods and materials. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed authorizing vast sums of money to the states in exchange for programs designed to improve education of the disadvantaged.⁶

The focus on equal opportunity in education was mandated by the Supreme Court in 1954 when it overturned the 1896 case of Plessy vs. Ferguson (16 S.Ct. 1138) of separate but equal education in Brown vs. Topeka Board of

⁶J. Berke and M. Kirst, Federal Aid to Education, Who Benefits? Who Governs? (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath Company, 1972), p. 16.

Education (74 S.Ct. 686) to desegregation of public education.⁷ Through civil rights legislation and education of the handicapped legislation, the federal government has taken a strong position in support of this concept. As an adjunct activity, compliance and regulatory functions have also been taking place at the federal level. Local administrators of education have been content taking federal monies for implementation of programs but have objected to government regulation.⁸ In the history of federal involvement in education, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act is the most specific both in statutory language and its regulations. It specifies whom will be educated, how it will be done, when it will be done, and what will happen if it is not done. Many areas, however, are left to state definition, regulation or statute. In addition, instead of providing school districts with a "golden egg," the law specifies how state and local divisions will expend their own money. The parallel treatment of rights of handicapped individuals through PL 94-142 and Section 504 of the

⁷Frank Brown, "Equal Educational Opportunity, the Law and the Courts," Urban Education, VI, July 1976, pp. 135-148.

⁸J. Brody, "One Way or Another, 'Your' Curriculum Flows from the Potomac," American School Board Journal, October 1977, pp. 38-40.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 discourages the threatened nonparticipation of any school district in education of the handicapped.

Court decisions regarding education of the handicapped and enactment of PL 94-142, Section 504 and similar laws at the state levels have made education of handicapped children a recent focal point in educational circles. Workshops, conferences, films and texts are springing up throughout the country to assist school districts in implementation of a free and appropriate education within the least restrictive environment for all handicapped children. Grumblings are heard throughout the land that the task is too difficult, costs too much money, or can be accomplished only at significant cost to nonhandicapped children. There is discussion that school districts would rather not "get the money" and simply not participate. The "money" is usually in reference to Part B, Education of the Handicapped Act, which was revised and amended by PL 94-142. Critics do not show much concern that many states had passed equivalent legislation prior to the passage of PL 94-142, but it focused on the federal law.

Regulation in special education under PL 94-142 is enforced and compliance required only when funding is involved. Unenforced legislation is useless on any level, and it will be useless to the handicapped child. Regulation

of education of the handicapped is crucial as PL 94-142 is implemented, but from where will this regulation ultimately come? Will enforcement of education for all handicapped children be self-monitored at the local level or will the measure of compliance at the local level come from state investigation and evaluation? Will handicapped children be dependent on the federal government to serve as the watchdog of their educational rights?

As early as the late 1800s, special classes were being organized for deaf, mentally retarded and physically handicapped. By 1950, thirty-four states had laws subsidizing education for exceptional children, but not until 26 years later did all states have these laws.⁹ The impetus for the passage of the legislation in all the states came not from a sense of responsibility but rather from court decrees and the federal legislation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This lack of initiative by the states is recognized by state administrators and exemplified by Mark Shedd, Commissioner of Education of Connecticut.

⁹ M. Reynolds and J. Birch, Teaching Exceptional Children in All America's Schools (Reston, Virginia: Council for Exceptional Children, 1977), p. 16.

Over the past several decades, the drive to achieve more equitable school systems has come from the federal governments and not states and locals.

School desegregation, sex equality, equal opportunities for the handicapped, bilingual education, all have received their push from Washington, not the states.¹⁰

This is not true of all states, of course, as some of the states, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Texas, Utah and Wyoming, notably, passed statutes for the education of all children in the late 1960s. New Jersey, Hawaii, and Delaware passed statutes as early as 1954, 1959 and 1943, respectively.¹¹

A free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment for all handicapped children is the goal of the Education of the Handicapped Act. This goal can only be realized through the cooperation of local, state and federal governments. The financial cost of appropriately educating the handicapped is high, and many school districts simply feel they cannot bear the cost. Prior to the passage of PL 94-142, most states already provided additional funds to offset differential costs. Decisions of what is

¹⁰M. Shedd, "The State-Federal Partnership: Making It Work for Schools," The School Administrator, Vol. 34, May 1977, pp. 18-19.

¹¹S. Torres, Special Education Administration Policies Manual (Reston, Virginia: Council for Exceptional Children, 1977).

appropriate may vary from district to district; and as a result, some handicapped children may be treated differently. Resentment and prejudice in school and community may create a hostile environment educationally and socially for the handicapped.

The regulations of PL 94-142 are specific enough to serve as minimum standards for appropriate education, but the federal government is too far from local districts to inspect and evaluate programs for handicapped children. States have been given the obligation of safeguarding the mandates. In many states, however, state departments of education are understaffed, underbudgeted and too political for this task. The educational system is faced with a need to strengthen state education governance before it can expect total compliance by local districts. There is activity in this direction evidenced by the federal government's financial support of Education Commission of the States¹² and allowance of funds for administration of PL 94-142 through Sections 121a.621 and 121m. of the PL 94-142 regulations.¹³ There is, of course, some

¹²AASA Federal Policy Statement, A Summary," The School Administrator, Vol. 34(6), 1977, p. 12.

¹³Federal Register, Education of Handicapped Children, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Tuesday, August 23, 1977.

reluctance on the part of local school districts to increase the powers and scope of state education offices.¹⁴ Local school districts still want autonomy, but advocates of education of the handicapped must first be assured that all school districts without supervision will provide for all handicapped children. Only local boards of education can insure equal educational opportunity.

Local school districts will need assistance in education of personnel, planning, and restructuring so that implementation is meaningful not frustrating and futile.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 is permissive legislation. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is not permissive but mandatory, if federal funds are received. Furthermore, the various state legislative acts for education of the handicapped and court decrees are mandatory in almost all of the fifty states. Responsible school board members need to be cognizant of state and federal legislation to exercise their power and to understand the issues involved in noncompliance. Cognizance of this problem may be increasing inasmuch as a 1977 survey of subscribers to the School Board

¹⁴W. L. Boyd, "The Public, the Professionals and Educational Policy Making: Who Governs?", Foders College Record, Vol. 77, May 1976, pp. 539-577.

Journal were asked to identify their greatest concerns from a checklist of seventeen items and a space to list "other concerns." Of those using the open-end space, the greatest concern was "mandated state programs and a subsequent lack of adequate funding to accomplish such mandates."¹⁵

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

If education of all handicapped children is adopted merely as a response to the federal mandate, we can anticipate the programs to be of short duration and be funded only to the level required by state and federal regulations. What is needed to create lasting change for the handicapped citizens of America is a strong commitment on the local level to accept the responsibility of education of the handicapped so it becomes an integral part of the local education plan and not "a state or federal program." To accomplish this end, enlightened school board members are needed so that they become the responsible parties for education of all handicapped children. The extent of the knowledge and level of attitude of school board members

¹⁵K. Underwood, L. McCluskey and G. Umberger, "What Bugs Board Members About Schools and What Peeves the Public About Them Are Two Different Matters," American School Board Journal, October 1978, pp. 25-26.

regarding the education of the handicapped must be known to identify problems in provisions of service to handicapped children by the local school division.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is threefold: to assess the knowledge of school board members pertaining to PL 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112), to investigate the attitude of local school board members regarding handicapped children, and to ascertain the source and methodology from which school board members received their information regarding PL 94-142 and Section 504.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The survey was mailed to a sample of school board members who were subscribers to the School Board Journal as of February 1979. The School Board Journal has approximately 28,000 subscribers. Not all subscribers are school board members at the local level, some are school administrators and some state school board members. In the random selection of subjects from the subscription rolls, it was not possible to tell what category is represented; therefore, some of the sample were those subscribers who are not local school board members.

The study does not control for level of education of the subjects, number of years served on the board of education, or any special interests an individual board member may have. The random sample of the subjects and the size of the sample are designed for the management of this limitation.

A mailed survey form provides an inherent limitation inasmuch as the results are dependent on subjects who wish to cooperate. This is particularly true when it is a blind survey with no possibility of direct follow-up. Control for this limitation to the greatest extent possible is the use of a cover letter from the School Board Journal and a return addressed envelope.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The title school board in this research study applies to a board of control for a public school. School board is used as the umbrella terminology for "school committee," "board of school trustees," "board of school commissioners" or "school inspectors."

Rules and regulations for the education of the handicapped refers to the regulations published by the United States Commissioner's Office to administer and regulate the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 (PL 93-112).

The term, attitude, in this study "is a state of readiness, a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli."¹⁶

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study asks the following research questions:

1.0 What is the level of knowledge of the respondents regarding the rules and regulation set by the federal government for the administration of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112)?

1.1 What is the relationship between geographical regions and knowledge?

1.2 What is the relationship between school size and knowledge?

1.3 What is the relationship between type of school district and knowledge?

1.4 What are the specific knowledge deficits of the respondents?

1.5 What is the relationship between knowledge and perceived sources of information?

2.0 What are the respondents' attitudes toward education of the handicapped?

¹⁶A. N. Oppenheim, Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1966), p. 105.

2.1 What is the relationship between level of attitude and geographic region?

2.2 What is the relationship between level of attitude and school size?

2.3 What is the relationship between level of attitude and type of school division?

2.4 What is the relationship between perceived sources of information and attitude level?

3.0 What is the relationship between level of attitude and knowledge?

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature should not only serve as a bank of information for the researcher but should also serve as a warning. When an area is almost unexplored, there may be reasons that do not appear obvious to the researcher in planning a design. There is a sparsity of research using boards of education reported in the literature; yet, here certainly is an area that is of great importance to education. Boards of education are the policymakers of the public schools and, therefore, information about boards should help us to understand the educational systems and give insight into ways to negotiate change in the schools. Much is written about boards, but little of what is reported is from research. Books and journal articles describing what boards should do abound in the literature, but these articles are theoretically based and are not descriptive or data-based research projects.

BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The makeup of boards of education was investigated as early as 1926 by George Counts who reported that most school board members were of the upper middle class social

structure.¹ Counts' study has provided impetus for many studies on board composition (in 1952, Brown,² in 1971, Keyek,³ and in 1973, Hottleman,⁴ and by the National School Boards Association). These surveys have been done by mail, by questionnaire at school board conventions, and by direct interviews. Over the years, there has been a leveling out of income categories as reported in a study published in May 1978 that reports 26 percent of board members make less than \$20,000 a year, 32.8 percent make \$20,000 - \$29,999, 18.7 percent make \$30,000 - \$39,999, and 22.4 percent make \$40,000 or more.⁵

¹George Counts, The Social Composition of Boards of Education (New York: Arno Press, 1969, original edition, 1927).

²Robert Brown, "The Composition of School Boards," School Board Journal, August 1954, pp. 23-24.

³Eugene Keyek, "A Second Look at School Board Reports," New Jersey School Leader, May/June 1974, p. 27.

⁴Girard Hottleman, "School Boards: Moneyed Men Governing the Poor," The Massachusetts Teacher, Vol. 52, No. 4, January 1973, p. 116.

⁵K. Underwood, L. McCluskey and G. Umberger, "What Bugs Board Members About Schools and What Peeves the Public About Them Are Two Different Matters," American School Board Journal, October 1978, p. 34.

How board members make decisions has been studied by the National School Boards Association itself,⁶ by Goldhammer in his classic study of school board research,⁷ and recently by Paul Blanchard and Robert Kline who compared decision making in the southern region of the National School Boards Association and the other regions.⁸

An attitude survey to discern factors that affect board members regarding occupational education was completed in 1970 in the State of New York. Survey forms were returned by 34 percent of those receiving them. Spengler,⁹ using a Likert scale attitude questionnaire, found that large city board members and members of the New York regional programs, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, had more positive attitudes toward occupational education than board members of other districts.

⁶Peter Cistone, Understanding School Boards, Problems and Prospects (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1975).

⁷Keith Goldhammer, The School Board (New York Center for Applied Research in Education, 1964).

⁸P. Blanchard and Robert Kline, The Importance of Regionalism in the Decision Making Style of Local Boards of Education, ERIC, March 1977.

⁹James Spengler, Attitudes of School Board Members Toward Occupational Education (Albany, New York: New York State Education Department), ERIC, February 1978.

ATTITUDE STUDIES

Over 100 studies on the attitudes of different populations toward various populations of the handicapped have been reported in the last five years. These studies encompassed attitudes toward mentally retarded, hearing impaired, blind, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, physically handicapped, cerebral palsied, preschool handicapped, minority handicapped and adolescent handicapped. The attitudes of peers, teachers, employers, doctors, siblings, parents, administrators, Norwegians, Americans, student teachers, college students and the handicapped themselves have been measured. Only a few of these studies are related to the attitudes of board members toward education of handicapped education.

Kirst and Vacc surveyed 149 regular education teachers to identify their attitudes toward emotionally disturbed children being mainstreamed into regular education classes. They found that the majority of the teachers felt that emotionally disturbed children would have an adverse effect on the regular students and that the emotionally disturbed students would be better served in separate classes.

¹⁰ Nancy Kirst and Nicholas Vacc, "Emotionally Disturbed Children and Regular Classroom Teachers," Elementary School Journal, 77, No. 4 (1977), pp. 309-317.

DeLeo rated attitudes of administrators and teachers from small, medium and large communities on integration of handicapped into regular classes and found that the attitudes were more favorable toward integration in small and medium-size communities than they were in large communities.¹¹ A 1975 survey of 22 medical doctors from a large city found that 54 percent recommended institutionalization for even moderately retarded individuals.¹²

Principals from suburban school divisions were significantly more positive in attitude than those from urban districts about placing handicapped children in regular classes according to Payne and Murray,¹³ while a study by Guerin and Szatlocky found that principals reported positive attitudes about handicapped children after having the children in their buildings and working with them on a daily basis.¹⁴

¹¹Anthony DeLeo, The Attitudes of Public School Administrators and Teachers Toward the Integration of Children with Special Needs Into Regular Education Programs, Xerox University Microfilms, No. 76-18, 930, 1976.

¹²N. Karen Kelly and Frank Menolascino, "Physicians' Awareness and Attitudes Toward the Retarded," Mental Retardation, 13, No. 6 (December 1975), pp. 10-13.

¹³R. Payne and C. Murray, "Principals' Attitudes Toward Integration of the Handicapped," Exceptional Children, 41, 1974, pp. 123-125.

¹⁴G. Guerin and K. Szatlocky, "Integration Programs for the Mildly Retarded," Exceptional Children, 41, (1974) pp. 173-179.

PRECEDENT STUDIES

Two studies were found that are closely related to this study. Both studies undertook to investigate knowledge of school board members regarding statutes for the education of handicapped children. One study surveyed school board members in two states, while the other examined board members' knowledge of special education legislation in one state. Both studies utilized author-designed tests and compared knowledge to selected characteristics.

A study of New Jersey board members' knowledge and attitude about the education of the handicapped was conducted by Peatruck in 1970. New Jersey had passed legislation mandating special education in 1954 for mentally retarded and the physically handicapped and permissive legislation in 1959 for socially maladjusted and emotionally disturbed. Amendments to previous legislation were made in 1966 to include all categories of handicapped children.

When Peatruck undertook his study, great disparity between districts existed in provisions of programs for the handicapped. These differences did not parallel per pupil assessed valuation. The state paid 50 percent of the cost of programs for the handicapped. Peatruck's purpose was to find why some school districts provided extensive programs while others did not.

Peatrick surveyed two board members from each of New Jersey's 547 school districts with a 56 percent return of the questionnaire. He compared demographic variables of sex, length of time on the board, relation to a handicapped person, and visiting a class for handicapped children with knowledge and attitude scores.

Statistically significant variables found to be related to knowledge and attitude toward New Jersey laws for educating the handicapped were sex, age, close association with a handicapped person, and visiting a class for the handicapped. Board members thirty-nine years or younger, female, having a close association with a handicapped person and having visited a class for handicapped children favored providing educational programs for the handicapped and had a high level of knowledge of New Jersey special education laws. The number of years an individual served on the board and the size of the school district represented had no statistical significance with either knowledge or attitude scores. Knowledge scores are shown in Table 2.

Peatrick also asked board members who they believed had primary responsibility for educating the handicapped. The majority of board members indicated that the local school district should have the responsibility of educating handicapped children with the exception of blind students. Responsibility for education preferences is shown in

Table 2¹⁵

Knowledge of Laws on the Handicapped
Demonstrated by Board Members
in New Jersey Study

Number of Correct Responses	Number of Board Members	Percentages
0	13	2.1
1	90	14.8
2	189	31.0
3	182	29.8
4	103	16.9
5	30	4.9
6	3	0.5
Total	610	100.0

¹⁵George Peatrick, School Board Members and the Education of Handicapped Students, ERIC, 1970, p. 71.

Table 3.¹⁶

Allen studied knowledge of boards of education and superintendents about state mandated special education regulations. A population of all school board members in Indiana and Kentucky who belonged to the state school boards association (ISSBA and KSBA, respectively) and their superintendents was selected for the study. This resulted in a pool of 492 districts which were then divided into strata of the population. A random sample was then taken from each strata resulting in a sample of 526 individuals. From this sample, 30.8 percent returned the mailed questionnaire.

Allen's questionnaire was based on state and federal constitutions, state statutes and state rules and regulations respective to each state. The questionnaire was submitted to a panel familiar with the state's mandatory legislation, and revisions were made. The study was then piloted with twelve subjects, nine board members and three superintendents. The resultant questionnaire had twelve questions on the Indiana form and sixteen on the Kentucky instrument.

The study reported no significant difference between board members and superintendents in the two states on

¹⁶George Peatrick, School Board Members and the Education of Handicapped Students, ERIC, 1970.

Table 3¹⁷

Responsibility for Educating the Handicapped
As Viewed by Board Members
in New Jersey

Categories of Handicap	EDUCATING AGENCIES					Total
	Special School District	Local School District	State Operated Agency	Parents' Responsibility	Other	
Educable	136	392	67			595
Trainable	160	324	107	4		595
Hard of Hearing	147	337	102	7		593
Deaf	194	208	189	3	1	595
Partially Sighted	151	307	126	8		592
Blind	196	175	213	5	1	590
Neurologically Perceptually Impaired	192	273	118	4		587
Orthopedically Handicapped	163	328	91	5		587
Chronically Ill	120	329	115	22		586
Emotionally Disturbed	174	269	134	12		589
Socially Maladjusted	143	299	117	28		587
Multiply Handicapped	206	222	153	4	1	586
Potentially Severe Learning Disability	186	310	93	4		593

¹⁷ Peatrick, p. 92.

questions about specific mandatory special education. Superintendents did score significantly higher on knowledge than did board members. The size of the school district was nonsignificant with knowledge scores.

In analysis of subscales of the instrument, scores were affected by the interaction of size and board members' or superintendents' roles. Superintendents' scores increased with the size of the school district, while board members' scores decreased with the size of the school district.

Allen found significant differences in the demographic data collected: age, level of education, tenure on board, relation to a handicapped person, meetings attended on special education, number of articles read, number of state communiques read, but no analysis was made of these factors in relation to knowledge scores.¹⁸

Demographic information about school board members is available, but the use of school board members as subjects in research presents problems. Board members cannot be forced to participate in surveys, and most studies use the survey technique. To interview board members for purposes of research either means use of a

¹⁸C. Allen, An Analysis of Superintendents' and School Board Members' Knowledge of Special Education, University Microfilms, 1977.

very small sample or extensive cost for travel and time.
The attitude and knowledge of school board members on
particular issues is very important but extremely difficult
to collect.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

The population on which the study is based is local school board members as represented by subscribers to the School Board Journal. There is not an available list of all members of local boards of education in the United States. Membership on school boards is determined in different ways according to state statute.

Members in some states are elected and in others are appointed. The number of persons on school boards also differ. Some states use three, five, or seven-person boards, while others base board representation on population. Board members are selected at varying times of the year and serve varied terms, all dependent on state or local statutes.

The organization of school districts throughout the United States also differs. In West Virginia, for example, all districts are county-wide; while in Virginia, a district may encompass a county, city, or town. In Illinois, school districts are divided by township units, consolidation of township units or subdivisions of units. In Illinois, one board within a township may represent an elementary school

district, while another represents a secondary district of the same geographical area. There is little homogeneity of board composition from one state to another. Therefore, if one based representation for a study on state population, the number of board members might well be overrepresented; while if based on numbers of districts, there is no more assurance of a representation of board membership because of the diversity of numbers of those on boards.

Lacking an ideal selection, therefore, the population for this study consists of school board members who are members of the National School Boards Association and therefore subscribers to the School Board Journal which is mailed to all members of the National School Boards Association.

From the subscribers list, the editors of the School Board Journal selected the subjects for the study by a "pull" of slightly more than one-fourth of the list. Pulling every fourth name on the list resulted in selecting 3,559 subscribers. The large selection was made to allow dropping of subscribers who may receive the journal but are not school board members (i.e., libraries, universities, organizations).

The survey was designed to be totally anonymous with no follow-up to be made; therefore, a large pool of subjects was necessary to assure sufficient data return. Percentage of return was a known sacrifice to guarantee

anonymity of those returning the questionnaire. Every state was represented in the sample.

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument consists of five parts. Part I contains information about the school district; Part II contains information about the respondent and consists mainly of demographic information. Questions in these two sections are replication of the questions the School Board Journal has used in previous surveys. The demographic information and pressing management concerns are part of ongoing research the School Board Journal uses for an update on school board membership.

Question 4, "Has your school district held any due process hearings in reference to handicapped children?" and question 5, "Has your school district been engaged in any litigation regarding the handicapped?" are the only two questions added for this study to Part I.

In Part II of the survey instrument, question 7, "Do you have a relative who is handicapped?" was added for this study. All other questions in Part I and II are replications from the study previously reported in the literature review. The questions added were added to determine if familiarity with due process hearings, litigation, or personal experience with a handicapped relative would have a variable effect on the responses of

subjects to sections three and four of the survey form.

Part III of the survey instrument contains questions regarding the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and the rules and regulations from the Federal Register, August 23, 1977. Subject matter for the questions was selected from the sections of the regulations judged by the author to cause the most difficulty in school districts' interpretation. The judgment was made on the basis of issues cited in the literature and court cases. The subject matter judged to be most relevant was put into a question format by the researcher. The questions were then reviewed and revised with appropriate university personnel. The revised questions were then submitted to three pilot tests. The pilot groups were students in educational psychology, undergraduate students in a survey course in special education, and graduate students in a class on administration and supervision of special education. Questions missed by two or more of the graduate students were revised or dropped from the questionnaire. Using Kuder Richardson procedure, questions showing a low reliability were revised or dropped from the questionnaire. The questions were then submitted to the editors of the School Board Journal who made further suggestions for deletion and change. From the original pool of thirty-five questions, twenty questions were used in the final survey form. Inter-item reliability for school board members' knowledge scores was .4.

The attitude statements contained in Part IV of the survey form were divided into three parts to reflect attitudes toward free appropriate education, least restrictive environment, and financing special education. The statements were constructed with a response range of four points: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree. The statements represent common problems expressed in discussions of educating the handicapped, law cases regarding education of the handicapped, and problems presented in current literature.

The statements were submitted to nine advanced graduate or post masters students in a graduate seminar in special education administration. They were asked to place the attitude statements in one of five categories. The categories were reduced to three as a result of this procedure. Statements reflecting attitudes about financing education of the handicapped contained in Part IV included items 1, 10, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 25. Statements regarding the impact that education of the handicapped would or could cause in regular education affecting administrators, teachers, peers and the handicapped themselves are found in items 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14 and 24. Statements regarding attitudes toward exclusion or inclusion of special education students in regular school programs are contained in statements 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 19. The statements were made in both positive and negative structure.

The selection of most favorable to least favorable was made on the basis of responses to the attitude statements by the nine advanced graduate students. If there were two or more conflicting responses from this group, the statement would have been dropped from the study. No conflict was found from the seminar group.

Computation of attitudes was made by first reversing all statements to positive structure and assigning a value of four to the extreme position of most favorable to free and appropriate education of all handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. The extreme negative position was assigned a value of one, least favorable to free and appropriate education of all handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. A possible positive score would be 100; a possible negative score would be 25.

The rationale for judging each of the statements of attitude is as follows:

1. Local funds spent on the handicapped should equal those spent for the nonhandicapped.

A "strongly agree" on this statement is regarded as most favorable inasmuch as it reflects the respondent's opinion that education of all handicapped children is the local school district's responsibility.

2. Having handicapped children in their school building is distracting for normal children.

A "strongly disagree" on this response is regarded as most favorable for the perspective that handicapped children are no more distracting than nonhandicapped children.

3. Placing handicapped children in classes with nonhandicapped will cause disruptive behavior among the nonhandicapped.

A "strongly disagree" on this response is regarded as most favorable from the perspective that handicapped children are no more disruptive than nonhandicapped children.

4. Nonhandicapped children will benefit from having handicapped children in their classes.

"Strongly agree" is indicative that the respondent feels handicapped children have as much to offer society as nonhandicapped children and is therefore most favorable to least restrictive environment.

5. Regular classroom teachers will need additional training to teach handicapped children.

A "strongly agree" on this statement is regarded as supportive of inservice programs and further training to provide appropriate education for handicapped children.

6. Children who cannot talk should not attend public school.

"Strongly disagree" is the response that is indicative that the respondent is supportive of free and

appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

7. Handicapped children learn best in special self-contained classes designed for their special problems.

While specially designed classes will be most beneficial to those with certain types of disabilities, an extreme "strongly agree" would be indicative of a respondent's opinion that he did not favor least restrictive environment; therefore, the favorable answer is "strongly disagree."

8. The local school district should provide programs for the severely handicapped who need daily living and social skills.

"Strongly agree" by the respondent reflects an attitude of free and appropriate education of all handicapped children.

9. Children who are not toilet trained should not be admitted to public schools.

"Strongly disagree" is the response supportive of free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

10. The money from the federal government to subsidize education of the handicapped is not worth the paperwork for public schools.

"Strongly agree" is interpreted as being the response most favorable to special education.

11. A deaf-blind child should not be in public school.

The response of "strongly agree" would be indicative that the respondent was not in favor of least restrictive environment or free and appropriate education.

12. Children who cannot walk should not attend public schools.

The response of "strongly agree" would be indicative that the respondent was not in favor of least restrictive environment or free and appropriate education.

13. Handicapped children will learn more if they are educated with nonhandicapped children.

The response of "strongly agree" reflects the respondent's support of least restrictive environment.

14. Handicapped children should be educated with nonhandicapped.

The response of "strongly agree" reflects the respondent's support of the philosophy of least restrictive environment.

15. Handicapped children should not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities.

The response of "strongly disagree" would be indicative that the respondent would be in favor of full participation in school activities for the handicapped child.

16. The local school district should provide educational programs only for handicapped children who can profit from an academic program.

A response of "strongly disagree" indicates the respondent's support of free and appropriate education.

17. Education of the handicapped should be paid through federal funds.

"Strongly agree" suggests the respondent feels no fiscal responsibility for education of the handicapped. The responsibility should rest with the local education agency; therefore, "strongly disagree" is the preferred response.

18. The public schools should not have to provide interpreters for deaf students.

A "strongly agree" response to this statement is treated as negative toward a free appropriate public education.

19. Handicapped children will be self-conscious and embarrassed in classes with nonhandicapped.

"Strongly agree" responses for this statement are treated as negative toward least restrictive environment. Agreement might well be indicative of sympathy toward handicapped children; however, it is also indicative that the respondent views handicapped children as "different."

20. Public schools should not pay for physical therapy.

"Strongly agree" is treated as a negative response toward a free appropriate public education.

21. The public schools should pay the cost of tuition, room and board for a handicapped student when the school does not have an appropriate program for the student.

"Strongly agree" responses are treated positively.

22. Regular classroom teachers should be paid a differential salary for having handicapped children in their classes.

A response of "strongly agree" is treated as a negative response.

23. The state should pay the cost of educating handicapped children.

"Strongly agree" is treated as a negative response.

24. Normal children will make fun of handicapped children in their classes.

"Strongly agree" is treated as a negative response.

25. The public schools should provide braille readers for blind students.

"Strongly agree" is treated as a positive response toward a free appropriate public education.

The questionnaire with a cover letter from the editor of the School Board Journal was mailed to the sample population. The return envelopes were addressed to the

office of the School Board Journal where they were opened and forwarded to the investigator without any evidence of city or town of mailing.

The returns were coded for keypunching and processing. Each form was given an identification number which was used on each of the two cards needed for recording the data. Fifteen forms were coded and cards punched for analysis of the system. Three coding items were changed after the mini-analysis, retested, and then the rest of the forms were coded and punched.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences¹ was used to analyze the data (Chart 1) to answer the research questions.

¹Norman Nie, C. Hadlai Hull, Gene Jenkins, Karin Steirbrenner and Dale H. Bent, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, second edition, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975.

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Analysis Procedure</u>	<u>Standard</u>
1.0 RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE			
1.1 The central tendency and dispersion of scores	Section I scores	Mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution	Not applicable
1.2 Relationship between geographical region and knowledge	Section I scores and demographic data	Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05
1.3 Relationship between school size and knowledge	Section I scores and school size demographic data	Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05
1.4 Relationship between type of school district and knowledge	Section I scores and type of school district demographic data	Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05
1.5 Specific knowledge deficits	Section I scores	Frequency distribution	Not applicable
1.6 Perceived sources and knowledge relationship	Section I and III scores	Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05

Chart 1

Analysis of Data Plan

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Analysis Procedure</u>	<u>Standard</u>
2.0 RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED			
2.1 The central tendency and dispersion of scores	Section II scores	Mean, frequency distribution	Not applicable
2.2 The relationship between level of attitude and geographic region	Section II scores and demographic data	Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05
2.3 The relationship between level of attitude and school size		Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05
2.4 The relationship between level of attitude and type of school district		Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05
2.5 Perceived sources and attitude scores	Section III scores and perceived sources (III)	Analysis of variance	Alpha \leq .05

Chart 1 (continued)

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Analysis Procedure</u>	<u>Standard</u>
3.0 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE AND KNOWLEDGE			
3.1 Total scores	Section I scores Section II scores	Pearson Product- Moment Correlation Coefficient	Alpha \leq .05
3.2 Sub scores	Section I scores Section II scores	Pearson Product- Moment Correlation Coefficient	Alpha \leq .05

Chart 1 (continued)

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Demographics

In March 1979, a survey questionnaire was administered through the mail to every fourth subscriber to the American School Board Journal. Five hundred eighty-nine usable instruments were returned which represented 17 percent of the survey sample.

Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia were represented in the survey. No responses were received from Hawaii or Delaware. The number of returned questionnaires is reported by state and region in Table 4. The majority of responses were received from the Central and Northeast regions with equal representation from populous and sparsely populated states.

School Districts Represented in Survey

Respondents were asked to identify the size of the school district they represented with school population given in five ranges: districts under 1,000, districts 1,000 to 4,999, districts 5,000 to 9,999, districts 10,000 to 24,999, and districts with more than 25,000 enrollment. Analysis of responses to this item are set forth in Table 5. In order to clarify the relationship between the size of the respon-

Table 4

Distribution of Returned Survey Instruments by State and
National School Boards Association Region

Central	No.	Western	No.	Pacific	No.	Northeast	No.	Southern	No.
Illinois	58	Colorado	13	Alaska	4	Connecticut	10	Alabama	4
Indiana	20	Kansas	9	Arizona	6	Maine	4	Arkansas	3
Iowa	20	Nebraska	7	California	23	Maryland	4	Florida	6
Kentucky	3	New Mexico	4	Idaho	4	Massachusetts	15	Georgia	3
Michigan	28	North Dakota	5	Nevada	1	Delaware	0	Louisiana	2
Minnesota	21	Oklahoma	2	Oregon	17	New Hampshire	10	Mississippi	3
Missouri	17	South Dakota	1	Utah	1	New Jersey	28	North Carolina	7
Ohio	22	Montana	12	Washington	15	New York	50	South Carolina	8
Wisconsin	31	Wyoming	3	Hawaii	0	Pennsylvania	36	Tennessee	6
						Rhode Island	2	Texas	19
						Vermont	3	Virginia	12
						Washington DC	1	West Virginia	2
Totals	220		66		71		163		75

ents' districts and all the total districts in the United States, Table 5 includes data from the National School Boards Association¹ which identifies the distribution of school districts in the United States by enrollment. One hundred one respondents represented districts of less than a thousand students, two hundred forty-two represented districts of 1,000 to 4,999, and one hundred thirty represented districts of 5,000 to 9,999. Seventy-five of the respondents represented districts of 10,000 to 24,999, and thirty-eight of the respondents were from districts of more than 25,000 pupils. A comparison of the number of districts of a particular enrollment size included in this study to the total number of United States districts of that size is presented in column three of Table 5. If the districts in this study were comparable to the national distribution, the figures in column one and three should be in the same order of magnitude. The reader will note that the opposite is true--larger school districts have a proportionately larger representation than smaller districts. This discrepancy is discussed in Chapter 5.

The respondents were asked to identify the type of school district they represented. The results of this

¹National School Boards Association, A Survey of Special Education Costs in Local School Districts (Washington, D.C., 1979), p. 3.

Table 5

Comparison of Districts Represented in Survey with
All Districts in the United States According
to Enrollment Size

Size of District (Enrollment)	Distribution of Districts in United States		Distribution of Districts in NSBA Survey		Percentage of Districts Represented in Survey
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
0 - 999	8,843	54.6	101	17.2	1.2
1,000 - 4,999	5,530	35.0	242	41.3	4.3
5,000 - 9,999	1,104	7.0	130	22.8	11.7
10,000 - 24,999	530	3.3	75	12.8	14.1
25,000 or more	187	1.2	38	6.5	20.3

*Information for columns 2 and 3 taken from National School Boards Association, A Survey of Special Education Costs in Local School Districts (Washington, D. C., 1979), p. 3.

tabulation were: urban, 59; suburban, 196; rural, 102; small town, 158; and other, 69. Notations by respondents were made indicating that these sixty-nine represented county districts encompassing rural and small town or parochial schools.

Board Members in the Study

When asked to identify the way in which they became school board members, five hundred fifty-one indicated that they were elected to their board positions, thirty-three indicated they were appointed, and five did not respond to the question. Some of the appointed members reported they had been appointed to fill an unfinished term, while others were appointed according to state or local statutes.

Thirty-two percent of the subjects have served on the school board for two years or less, 33 percent three to five years, 25 percent six to ten years, and 10 percent ten years or more.

Board members were requested to indicate their ages. Results of the analysis of this item (Table 6) showed age appears to be normally distributed with the majority of persons aged 36 to 60. When asked to indicate their level of educational attainment, less than 1 percent of those who returned the survey said they had less than a high school education. Approximately 72 percent said they had at least a college degree.

Table 6
Age Distribution of School Board Members
Responding to Survey

Age	Number
Under 25	5
26-35	70
36-40	108
41-50	213
51-60	132
Over 60	59
No age given	2
Total	589

Knowledge of Respondents

Investigation of knowledge of board members regarding education of handicapped children as mandated by the federal government through PL 94-142 and Section 504 was accomplished through the use of twenty questions pertaining to the regulations of these federal acts. The scores ranged from no correct responses to seventeen correct responses with a mean of 10.79 correct responses. The standard deviation of the scores was 3.00. Unanswered questions were scored as errors resulting in the two scores of 0 by respondents who filled in the rest of the survey form but did not elect to fill in the knowledge section.

Twenty-eight percent answered less than half of the questions correctly with the remaining 72 percent answering 50 percent or more of the questions correctly. Ten percent of the respondents answered 85 percent of the questions correctly. The dispersion of scores of the respondents resulted in a negative skewness (-.672) and a positive kurtosis (.691). These relationships are depicted in Figure 1. The reader will note a nearly normal distribution resulted from the dispersion analysis.

The twenty questions were divided by the researcher into three areas according to the subject matter of the questions. Six questions were identified as containing information regarding the local plan for special education services, eight dealt with the issue of free and appropriate

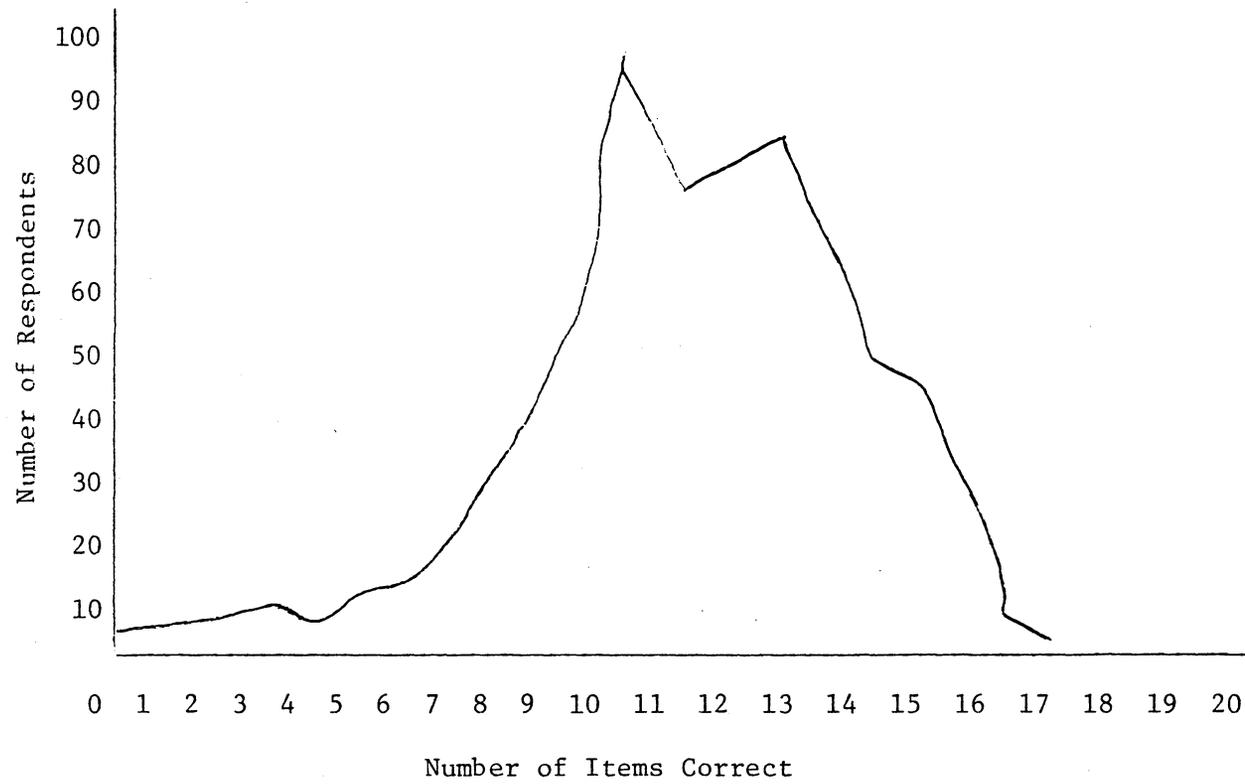


Figure 1
Dispersion of Respondents' Correct Knowledge Scores

education, and the remaining six with funding for special education through PL 94-142. The number of questions for the areas was not equal; therefore, the mean scores are juxtaposed to compare scores for each area of questions. These results are set forth in Table 7. School board members scored approximately 50 percent in the subsets as well as in the total scores.

Knowledge Scores and District Characteristics

To answer the research question which centered on the relationship between total scores on the knowledge inventory and National School Boards Association region, size (enrollment) of district and type of school district, univariate analysis of variance were performed. The results are set forth in Table 8. No significant differences were observed for region and type of district to the total scores on the knowledge inventory. Total knowledge scores did not differ significantly when considering variables of school type and geographical region.

Significant differences ($F = 3.114$; $p < .015$) were found to exist on the knowledge scores when the district's enrollment was viewed. To determine the actual mean differences, Scheffe's² a postpriori test for mean difference

²Roger E. Kirk, Experimental Design: Procedures for the Behavioral Sciences (Belmont, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 188-189.

Table 7
Subset Means of School Board Members'
Knowledge Scores

Category	Means	Possible Scores
Local plan	3.12	6
Free appropriate education	4.94	8
Funding for education of handicapped	2.73	6
Total	10.79	20

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations and Univariate Analysis of
Variance for Knowledge Scores by National School
Boards Association Region, District Size and
Type of District

Region	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	F
1. Central	10.71	3.01	
2. Western	10.55	3.40	
3. Pacific	11.18	2.80	
4. Northeast	11.13	2.70	
5. Southern	10.08	3.30	
Analysis of Variance for Regions			1.430
Size (Enrollment)	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	F
1. 0 - 999	9.79	3.25	
2. 1,000 - 4,999	11.08	2.63	
3. 5,000 - 9,999	11.02	3.23	
4. 10,000 - 24,999	10.93	3.08	
5. 25,000 or more	10.51	3.02	
Analysis of Variance for Size			3.114*
Type	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	F
1. Urban	10.91	3.45	
2. Suburban	11.08	2.76	
3. Rural	10.65	3.00	
4. Small Town	10.56	3.04	
5. Other	10.62	3.02	
Analysis of Variance for Type			.105

*The following pairwise comparisons were significant:

2 > 5 (p < .01)	3 > 1 (p < .01)	4 > 1 (p < .01)
2 > 1 (p < .01)	4 > 5 (p < .05)	5 > 1 (p < .01)
3 > 5 (p < .01)		

was applied. Board members from districts whose enrollment was under 1,000 scored significantly ($p < .01$) lower than members from larger districts. Further, members from districts with enrollment of greater than 25,000 scored significantly ($p < .01$; $p < .05$) lower than those from districts from 1,000 to 25,000.

Attitude Scores

Nonreplies to attitude questions would falsely lower attitude scores; therefore, those with incomplete responses were dropped from total score computation. Further, many recorded both agree and disagree answers indicating a neutral position. No neutral position was possible on the four-point scale. Marking more than one response on the four-point scale was recorded as missing data, and those cases were dropped in computation of total attitude scores. These response modes resulted in the dropping of 149 cases in computation of total attitude scores.

The scores for attitude ranged from 34 to 86. The least favorable to free and appropriate education of all handicapped children in the least restrictive environment would be a score of 25, one point for each strongly disagree statement put in positive structure. The most favorable score to a free appropriate education for all handicapped children in a least restrictive environment

(four points for each strong agree positively stated attitude statement) would result in a possible score of 100.

The total mean for responses on the attitude inventory was 62.66. Five percent of the valid cases scored less than 50 percent on the attitude section. The scores for attitude are depicted in Figure 2.

Respondents' selections to the individual attitude statements were examined to find particular items that were regarded either favorably or unfavorably by the school board members. Frequency of response selection, percentages of the subjects selecting a response and the mean for each item were tabulated and are displayed in Table 9. Review of the data indicates that on the majority (13) of the items, respondents did not differentiate themselves. No clear attitude tendency was noted for the majority of the attitude items. On nine items, however, respondents answered favorably to the education of handicapped children in the least restrictive environment. Items 2 through 6 and 12, 14 and 19 dealt with the concept of placement of handicapped children. School board members indicated their support of the concept as reflected in responses to those items. Further, the respondents suggested lack of support for paying regular classroom teachers more money when they have handicapped children in their classes (item 22).

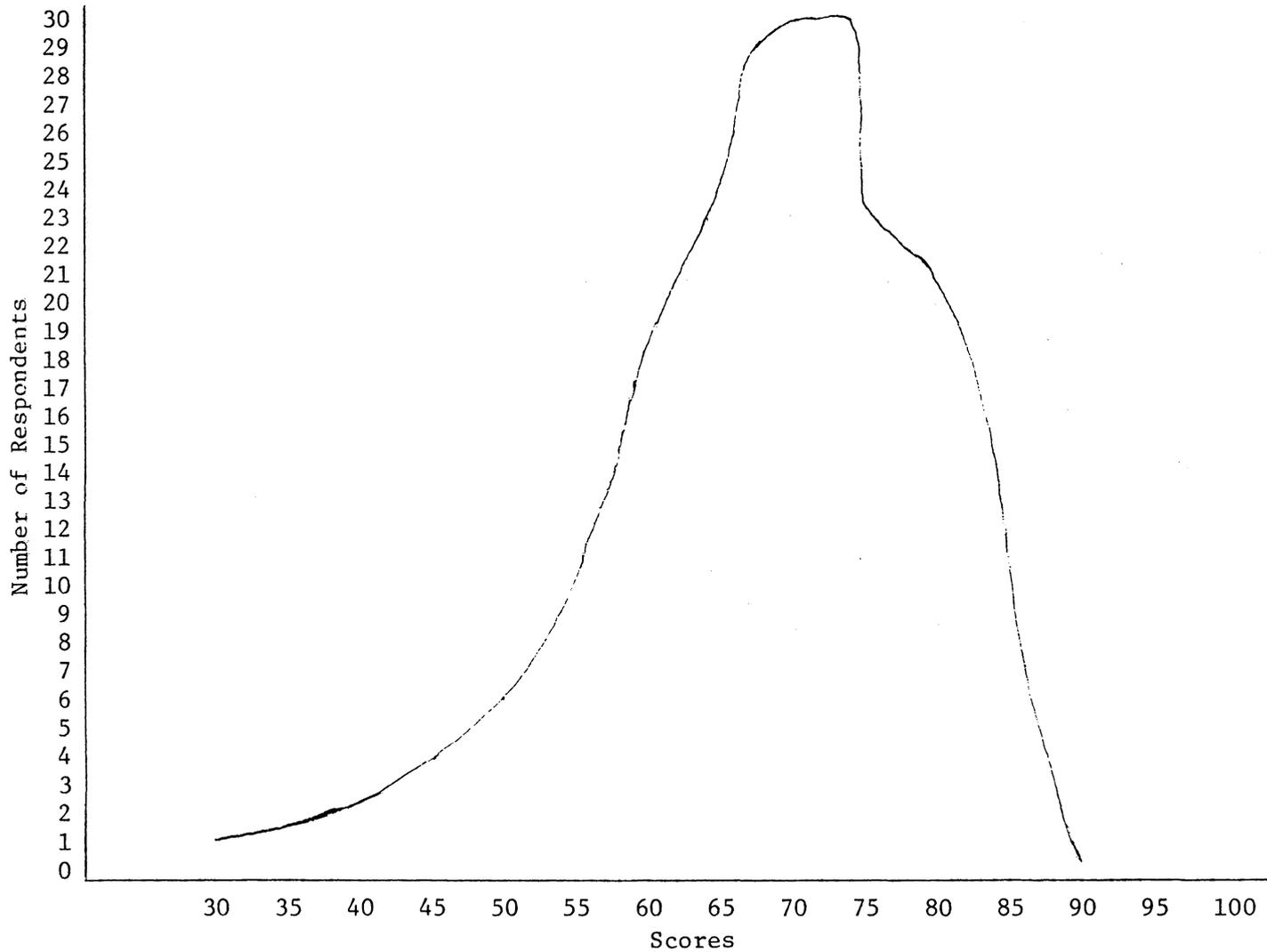


Figure 2

Dispersion of Scores from School Board Members' Responses to Attitude Survey

Table 9

Adjusted Responses to Attitude Statements on Handicapped*

Statement		Least Favorable Attitude				Most Favorable Attitude			
Item No.	Mean	Frequency 1	Percent	Frequency 2	Percent	Frequency 3	Percent	Frequency 4	Percent
1	2.36	149	26.0	155	27.0	182	31.7	88	14.9
2	3.06	15	2.6	90	15.5	318	54.7	158	27.2
3	3.06	14	2.4	76	13.1	337	58.3	151	26.1
4	2.97	15	2.6	92	15.9	362	62.5	110	19.0
5	3.27	4	.7	37	6.3	336	57.5	207	35.4
6	2.89	41	7.1	118	20.5	276	48.0	140	24.3
7	2.42	67	11.8	193	34.0	245	43.1	63	11.1
8	2.32	115	20.0	148	25.8	254	44.3	57	9.9
9	2.19	121	20.9	251	43.4	177	30.6	29	5.0
10	2.65	70	12.7	122	22.1	289	52.3	72	13.0
11	2.49	77	13.5	215	37.6	198	34.6	82	14.3
12	3.17	14	2.4	34	5.9	368	63.7	162	28.0
13	2.55	19	3.4	166	29.6	324	57.8	52	8.8
14	2.84	20	3.6	110	19.9	361	65.3	62	11.2
15	1.70	186	32.5	369	64.4	12	2.1	6	1.0
16	2.61	52	9.1	197	34.6	238	41.8	82	14.4
17	2.17	120	21.1	256	44.9	168	29.5	26	4.6
18	2.43	56	10.0	243	43.2	224	39.9	39	6.9
19	2.86	10	1.8	112	20.2	377	67.9	56	10.1
20	1.90	151	26.4	302	52.9	99	17.3	19	3.3
21	1.98	144	25.1	227	39.9	168	29.3	35	6.1
22	2.97	23	4.0	102	17.7	318	55.1	134	23.2
23	2.10	93	16.9	318	57.7	129	23.4	11	2.0
24	3.54	9	1.6	163	29.1	339	60.5	49	8.7
25	2.67	41	7.3	151	27.0	315	56.4	52	9.3

*Adjusted responses: all statements reversed to positive structure (see page 34)

Conversely, school board members responding to the attitude inventory were unfavorable to including handicapped children in extracurricular activities. Further, the respondents did not support paying for costs for private placement when the school division does not have an appropriate placement. Finally, school board members indicated that the state should pay the cost for educating handicapped children.

Univariate analysis of variance was performed to test the relationship between total scores on the attitude survey and National School Boards Association region, size (enrollment) of district and type of school district. The results are set forth in Table 10. No significant differences were observed for region and type of district to the total scores on the attitude survey. Total attitude scores did not differ significantly when considering variables of school type and geographic region.

A significant difference ($F = 4.591$; $p < .001$) was found to exist on the attitude scores when the district's enrollment was considered. To determine the actual mean differences, Scheffe's³ a postpriori test for mean difference was applied. Board members from districts whose

³Kirk, op. cit.

Table 10

Means, Standard Deviations and Univariate Analysis of
Variance for Attitude Scores by National School
Boards Association Region, District Size and
Type of District

Region	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	F
1. Central	62.52	8.25	
2. Western	63.30	7.50	
3. Pacific	62.36	8.90	
4. Northeast	63.00	8.90	
5. Southern	62.05	7.90	
Analysis of Variance for Regions			.820
Size (Enrollment)	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	F
1. 0 - 999	59.18	7.68	
2. 1,000 - 4,999	62.16	8.18	
3. 5,000 - 9,999	64.13	8.32	
4. 10,000 - 24,999	64.90	8.46	
5. 25,000 or more	64.26	8.76	
Analysis of Variance for Size			4.591*
Type	Mean \bar{X}	Standard Deviation	F
1. Urban	63.88	8.16	
2. Suburban	64.07	8.78	
3. Rural	60.10	8.68	
4. Small Town	61.94	7.51	
5. Other	63.89	8.42	
Analysis of Variance for Type			.872

*The following pairwise comparisons were significant:

4 > 2 (p < .01)	3 > 1 (p < .01)	5 > 1 (p < .01)
4 > 1 (p < .01)	5 > 2 (p < .01)	2 > 1 (p < .01)
3 > 2 (p < .01)		

enrollment was under 5,000 scored significantly ($p < .01$) lower than members from larger districts.

Relationship of Knowledge and Attitude Scores

The correlation of total knowledge and total attitude scores as measured by the instruments in this study was .2805 significant at $p < .001$. Using the subsets of attitude scores in the area of finance correlated with total knowledge at the .1613 level significant at $p < .001$. Total knowledge scores and attitude scores in the area of inclusion of handicapped children in public school programs correlated at .2399 significant at $p < .001$. The results are set forth in Table 11. Total knowledge scores and attitude scores in the area of impact on public schools correlated at .2096 significant at $p < .001$.

The correlation of total attitude scores and subsets of the knowledge scores was .2789 for local plan questions significant at $p < .001$. The correlation for total attitude scores and subsets of the knowledge scores for questions on free and appropriate public education was .1899 significant at $p < .001$ and .1507 for questions dealing with funding significant at $p < .001$.

PERCEIVED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The respondents were asked to identify their sources of information regarding education of the handicapped and

Table 11

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for Subsets
and Total Knowledge with Subsets and
Total Attitude Scores

	Knowledge Total	Planning	Free and Appropriate	Funding
Attitude Total	.2805	.2789	.1899	.1506
Finance	.1613	.1435	.1583	.0537*
Inclusion/Exclusion	.2399	.2933	.1164**	.1338
Impact on Regular Education	.2096	.1715	.1586	.1470

All significant at $p < .001$

*Finance and funding, not significant

**Significant at $p < .005$

PL 94-142. The local education agency was credited with providing the greatest number of respondents with information, followed by the state school boards association, the state education association and the National School Boards Association. Only 39 respondents cited the Bureau of Education of the Handicapped as a source they had used. A tabulation of sources and types of provision of information is shown in Table 12.

Perceived sources of information acquisition were tested for relationship with the mean knowledge scores. Reading and attendance at a meeting regarding special education resulted in significant differences in knowledge scores. The highest mean scores were found with the variable of reading. Significant relationships were not found with variables of convention or meeting. No significant differences in knowledge means were found at the $p < .05$ probability level for interaction of any two or three of the independent variables. The relationship between sources of information and knowledge scores are displayed in Table 13.

The attitude scores of the school board members were tested for relationship with the perceived sources of information acquisition. Mean scores for attitude had no significant difference with single variables of convention, workshop, reading or meeting. A statistically significant

Table 12
 Summary of Sources of Information for School
 Board Members' Knowledge Acquisition

	Convention Workshop	Reading	Meeting
Local education agency	53	192	92
State education association	36	140	42
State School Boards Association	56	174	54
National School Boards Association	30	129	21
Bureau of Education of the Handicapped	7	26	6
Other	34	54	44
n*	216	715	259

*Total perceived sources n (1,190) exceeds total survey n due to multiple sources of information by study participants.

Table 13
 Effect of Perceived Sources of Information
 on Knowledge Means

Variable	Mean Yes Responses	Mean No Responses	F Ratio
Convention/ Workshop	12.04	10.47	.099
Reading	11.54	9.62	.000
Meeting	12.02	10.32	.005
Speaker	11.68	10.66	.459

interaction with independent variables of convention and meeting was found. The variance of attitude scores when tested with perceived sources of information acquisition are displayed in Table 14.

DUE PROCESS AND KNOWLEDGE

Due process hearing and litigation relating to the education of handicapped children were tested for a relationship with knowledge scores. No significant difference was found. That is, mean knowledge scores for school board members in whose districts due process hearings were held were not significantly different from those school board members who had not had due process hearings in their districts. The same was true when litigation was considered.

DUE PROCESS AND ATTITUDE

Due process hearings and litigation relating to the education of handicapped children were tested for a relationship with attitude scores. Individuals who had due process hearings in their schools scored significantly ($F = 4.95$; $p < .007$) higher than those who had not, which

Table 14
 Effect of Perceived Sources of Information
 on Attitude Means

Variable	Mean Yes Responses	Mean No Responses	F Ratio
Convention/ Workshop	65.23	61.75	.186
Reading	63.63	60.66	.060
Meeting	65.09	61.46	.062
Speaker	64.49	62.14	.055

indicates a more favorable attitude. Litigation regarding handicapped children did not yield a significant difference in attitude scores of those who had experienced litigation and those who had not.

Eighty-six respondents indicated involvement of their school district in litigation regarding education of handicapped children. Litigation involving placement was the most frequently cited cause of suits with fifty-five respondents identifying placement as the cause of court suits. Twenty-eight cited evaluation, thirteen least restrictive environment, and nine free and appropriate public education. Sixteen respondents listed other causes for litigation identifying twelve-month education, transportation, state regulations and financing of overseas placement as issues in litigation.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

School board members participating in the study are knowledgeable about the rules and regulations set forth from the federal laws for the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for the education of handicapped children as evidenced by their responses to the questions on the survey on the regulations of these acts. Seventy-two percent of the board members selected the correct response on ten or more of the questions.

No significant difference in knowledge scores was found between board members from any of the five National School Boards Association geographical regions. No significant difference was found in knowledge scores between school board members from a particular type school district. Significant differences were found to exist on knowledge scores of board members from school districts under 1,000 and those from districts over 25,000. Board members from the smaller school districts scored lower than those of all other size districts, while board members from districts over 25,000 scored significantly lower than those from districts with school populations from 1,000 to 24,999. The school board members were most knowledgeable regarding the free and appropriate public education and least knowledgeable about regulations for financing obligations and restrictions on the use of federal monies for the education of handicapped children.

Significant differences were found for knowledge scores when the perceived sources of information were reading or attending a meeting.

The mean score for the attitude survey was 62.66 out of a possible 100 for most favorable to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, indicating neither a very positive or very negative cumulative attitude. No significant differences were found in

attitude of school board members from the various types of school districts of their geographical regions. Significantly lower attitude scores were found for school board members from school districts under 5,000. No significant differences in attitude scores were found when school board members perceived conventions, workshops/meetings or reading as their sources of information. A statistically significant interaction was found when convention with meeting was the perceived source.

Significant differences in knowledge scores were not found when due process hearing or litigation actions were reported by the board members, but a significant difference was found in positive attitude scores of school board members who experienced due process hearings.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The National Center for Education Statistics reports a total of 15,834 school districts in the United States, with over half of these districts with less than a thousand children. The return of survey forms in this study from districts under one thousand constituted only 17.2 percent of the total surveys returned and represented only 1.2 percent of the school districts under a thousand in the country. These small school districts, however, have very few handicapped children to educate and, therefore, little interest in this study. The number of school districts under six hundred students accounts for 41.8 percent of all school districts; however, they only educate 3.5 percent of the public school population.¹

The proportion, in this study, of school districts from 10,000 to more than 25,000 is large but not unexpected, considering that school districts in this category educate more than 45 percent of public school age children in the United States. Their special education costs are double per child than those of regular education according to National

¹National School Boards Association, A Survey of Special Education Costs in Local School Districts (Washington, D.C., 1979), p. 3.

School Boards Association's Survey of Special Education Costs in Local School Districts.²

Service on school boards is not an occupation but rather an additional task taken on by an individual. Only 4 percent of the respondents are retired, and 1 percent reported being currently unemployed. Fifteen percent of the respondents are housewives, and 5 percent did not report an occupation.

School board meetings, committee meetings for the board, studying reports, appearances by board members at school, political or social functions are all time-consuming tasks to add to the individual's household or occupational day. Responding to an additional form may have been beyond the tolerance level of the great majority who received the survey form.

Some of the respondents noted annoyance at being asked questions of race, sex, income, or occupation and therefore did not answer all the questions, but they did fill out the rest of the form. The comments reflected a fear of being personally identifiable, that the researcher would be prejudiced if the respondent answered questions on sex, income and years of education.

²Ibid., p. 8.

Seventeen percent of the survey forms were returned. The researcher can only make general assumptions on the return and accept the fact that, without substantial capital outlay to personally interview individuals, a mailed survey form is the most expedient method available. Follow-up forms may have increased the percentage of return but necessitated either a complete remailing or sacrificing anonymity. Anonymity was of prime concern because of the knowledge testing and attitude scale.

The returned questionnaires came from forty-eight states. No reply was received from Hawaii which has a state-operated education system and may have been ignored because the questionnaire clearly addresses local boards of education. Twelve forms were sent to Delaware and none returned. In 1978, Delaware was court-mandated to consolidate ten northern school divisions into one for desegregation purposes; therefore, some of the Delaware members of the National School Boards Association may no longer have been serving on a board of education.

Whether or not knowledge of mandated regulations for the handicapped is essential to board members is not the question of this study, but it certainly is an underlying assumption of the study. If we do not believe knowledge increases performance, education becomes an act of futility rather than purpose. Since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, more

money has necessarily been budgeted to educate children who were not educated before and to provide appropriate education to children who were underserved. It can be assumed that school board members have necessarily become more aware of the needs and problems of educating handicapped children than they were prior to the enactment of the federal legislation.

The total scores on the knowledge questions were encouraging. This was not a test of information from carefully structured lectures given over a period of time but rather a reflection of what had been garnered by board members from a variety of sources. Knowledge of individual state regulations seems to have affected scores according to notations by respondents. A respondent would answer a question and state in the margin, "this is Chapter 766," "none of these answers are correct for Pennsylvania," "we are changing our law so now it is this," (next to one answer) and "now it is this" (next to another).

Greater dispersion in total knowledge scores was found in this study than in either Allen's or Peatricks' studies. Peatricks' scores were all collected from one state, while Allen's were collected from two states with greater dispersion between the states than within the states. A wide range of scores from forty-eight states is therefore not seen as unusual. Seventy-two percent of all respondents correctly answered 50 percent or more of the

multiple choice knowledge questions, and 10 percent answered 85 percent of the questions correctly. Breaking the knowledge questions into the three categories--local plan, free appropriate public education and funding--resulted in a mean score of 4.94 for the eight questions on free appropriate public education, a mean of 3.1 for the six questions for the local plan, and a mean of 2.7 for the six funding questions. Board members were more knowledgeable about what should be available than how the funding should and could be utilized.

Smaller school districts' board members had lower knowledge scores than the larger districts. There are small school districts in the United States that have no handicapped children in their population. This was noted by several respondents, while others noted that their handicapped population was so small that they paid tuition to other districts or had formed cooperatives to serve the children. The largest school districts' board members had lower knowledge scores than medium-size districts. Since large districts have the greatest density of handicapped children and expend a larger proportion of their funds for special education, this finding is difficult to understand. Perhaps board members from very large districts are isolated from special education problems.

Attitude questions generated many comments from the respondents. They expressed frustration because they could

not choose a neutral position in the forced choice format. To compensate for the neutral position, many respondents selected two responses or chose none, resulting in 149 cases being dropped from further computation on attitude. The responses were converted to numerical scores with positive attitudes toward free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment producing the highest scores. Inclusion of any scores with missing items would therefore misrepresent total attitude.

Only 15 percent of the respondents indicated that local school districts should spend as much to educate a handicapped child as a nonhandicapped child. The National School Boards Association survey of costs for special education found the expense of educating handicapped children from 1.2 to 2 times greater than the expenditures needed for nonhandicapped. Education for handicapped children usually means smaller classes, special equipment, and transportation as a minimum; therefore, cost is higher to give these children an equal opportunity for education. Lack of strong agreement that handicapped children should even get equal funding exemplifies the need for federal requirements of education of the handicapped. Thirty-two percent of the group did agree that equal funds should be spent on the handicapped and nonhandicapped, but 53 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed that equal funding should be available. Further evidence of a lack of belief that handicapped children should be

publicly educated were the findings that the respondents did not agree that the federal (76 percent against) or the state (74.6 against) should pay for the education of handicapped children.

The implication seems quite clear, three-fourths of the board members in this study do not believe public education has the responsibility of educating handicapped children.

On statements of inclusion or exclusion from public school programs, the respondents had a mean score of 22 with a possible highest favorable score of 36. The items that were least favorable to the board members were inclusion of handicapped children in extracurricular activities which was rejected by 97 percent of the respondents. This high score affected the total mean for this area, because no other statement rated a least favorable by such a large percentage. The next highest least favorable attitude was 64 percent adverse to admission of nontoilet trained children to the public schools. The group was favorable to children who cannot walk or talk being included in the public school programs, but 50 percent of the group did not find a deaf-blind child to be appropriately placed in a public school program.

Statements on impact are indicative of support for mainstreaming handicapped children, but some caution is needed in this interpretation because of responses in the

finance area. School board members may favor educating handicapped with nonhandicapped, because they do not favor funding programs for handicapped children.

The board members who indicated their school district had held due process hearings did not score significantly higher or lower on the knowledge questions than those board members who did not indicate that their school district did not have hearings; however, a difference in attitude scores was found. Individuals who had indicated they had the process scored significantly higher in attitude than those who indicated they had not. It is possible, particularly in very large school divisions, that school districts would hold due process hearings without board members being aware of hearings except to approve expenditures incurred during due process or funding or not funding programs as a result of the hearing decision. It is also possible that the due process procedure eliminates pressure from parents on individual board members resulting in less phone calls and complaints. A more thorough investigation of due process and litigation is needed to understand the results in this study. Knowing the number of hearings decided in favor of the district versus those decided for the parent might also explain the attitude results. Investigation of the involvement of board members in the due process procedure would further clarify the findings.

CONCLUSIONS

School board members have knowledge regarding the education of handicapped children under the regulations for the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

The attitude of school board members toward the education of handicapped children is neither highly positive nor is it notably negative.

The size of the school district the board members represents affected both attitude and knowledge scores. School board members from very small and very large school districts scored lower on the knowledge portion of the survey than those from medium-size districts.

Board members from small school districts had a more negative attitude about education of handicapped children than those from larger districts.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The survey of knowledge and attitude of board members on PL 94-142 and Section 504 and the education of the handicapped has implications on several different levels. There are further research implications, and there

are serious implications for the need of continuation of federal and state support of the rights of handicapped children to be educated at public expense in the public schools. Further, there are implications to give direction to advocates of education of handicapped children in areas of inservice and public relations.

Research Applications

This study was designed to investigate what board members know of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and attitudes of board members about education of the handicapped. The study therefore is somewhat subjective and perhaps a more objective view would be gained from examining voting records from school board meetings on issues related to the education of the handicapped.

The study could be replicated with the modification of using direct interview technique. This method presents hazards in the great expense to travel to all states to come up with an equivalent sample.

Investigation of knowledge and attitude of school personnel other than school board members relative to the education of the handicapped is needed. The policymakers of public schools are board members, but superintendents and principals are responsible for the administration of the policy. If board members, superintendents and principals are not in agreement on the policy for education of handi-

capped children, frustration and failure are possible outcomes. Replication is, therefore, suggested for local school administrators.

Implications for Support of Special Education

Perhaps the most important implication for this study is that, without strong supportive legislation, education of handicapped children could be in jeopardy unless advocates of education of handicapped children can find a method to convince local board of education members that there should be a local commitment for the education of these children.

Special education is working in America's schools now. Children are no longer totally excluded from school because they cannot talk, cannot walk, or control their bladders. Children are being prepared for the work force who formerly were taught self-help skills and counting games, if they were allowed to attend school at all. If a child lived in a certain state or city, he received an education; moving to another area, he was denied of that right. Handicapped children went to school, failed and dropped out, because the schools did not meet their needs. Since the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, all children, no matter where in the United States or its territories they may live, are guaranteed a right to education.

Punitive measures have been used to reach this level of service. Parents went to court over their children's right to an education. State legislatures passed laws to assure handicapped children a right to education. The federal government provided a law and financial incentive. If a state did not see that the provisions of the law were met, punitive measures were provided.

School boards have not been approached with merits of educating the handicapped, but rather the approach has been toward a need to meet the federal statute. If school board members do not believe public schools must provide equal education opportunities to handicapped children, special education is in jeopardy. A commitment at the local level is the best guarantee for education of handicapped children, because it is at the local level that the child lives, grows and becomes a working or at least a social entity in the society. It is at the local level where immediate needs of the child are seen and must be met. Appeals to state and federal levels delay the education of the child. Commitment to educate handicapped children must be as strong as the commitment to educate nonhandicapped children from six years of age to graduation. To bring the goal to fruition requires educating board members and the community in general about the needs and desirability of educating handicapped children. The study reveals little correlation between knowledge of the law governing

education of the handicapped and attitude, but how one feels about educating handicapped children will affect whether or not programs are provided. If board members have a "money down the rat hole" philosophy toward educating handicapped children, they will not support quality programs. Education of the handicapped will be perfunctory, if provided at all.

The study reflects a need to begin a new campaign in special education to show the public the success of education of all handicapped children.

THE 1981 PERSPECTIVE

This study was initiated in the spring of 1979 and now reaches completion in the fall of 1981. The problem has greater meaning and is more germane in 1981 than it was in 1979. Two and one-half years ago advocates of education of handicapped children had the force of the Bureau for Education of Handicapped behind them while state department special education personnel were concerned with methods to monitor local special education programs. Local education agencies were providing new special programs and extending services to the handicapped buoyed by federal dollars.

If the Education for All Handicapped Children Act is amended or repealed, states need not follow the regulations of the act. A decrease in social welfare services by the federal government may well result in the phasing out of funds for the education of handicapped children. Though the

federal funding originally predicted through PL 94-142 never has reached the anticipated percentage of cost of educating the handicapped, the funding did assist school districts in paying the excess costs for special education. If a state accepts any money from the federal government for the education of handicapped, no matter how low the appropriation, the state must follow the regulations.

Approximately 100,000 additional handicapped children each year, since 1976, are receiving special services.³ No great backlash from parents of nonhandicapped children has occurred. There have been occasional mutterings but no great outcry that education of the handicapped was being made at the sacrifice of education of the "normal" child. There have been no strikes by teachers because handicapped children have been mainstreamed or because teachers had to attend inservice. The dire predictions of opponents of education of handicapped children have not come true. Almost four million handicapped children are being served in America's schools. Will the lack of authorization for funding PL 94-142 mean these children will not receive educational service? School board members in future years may be faced with this question. The results of the attitude survey in this study reveal that support of special education from local school board members may be reluctant.

³Education Daily, July 13, 1981.

Without funding from the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, school districts are still faced with another act of Congress that mandates education of the handicapped. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states:

No otherwise qualified handicapped individual . . . shall solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal finance assistance.⁴

The state of New Mexico elected not to participate in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act but found they had to provide the majority of services required by that act because of Section 504. If, however, the federal government gives no federal financial support to the state for any purpose, the mandates of Section 504 would not have to be followed, and it would be up to school districts' board members to determine the extent of services to handicapped children.

The constitutional interpretations of the United States court system in both the Mills⁵ and PARC⁶ decisions

⁴Federal Register, Vol. 42, No. 86, Wednesday, May 4, 1977.

⁵Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia, 348 F Supp. 866 (D.D.C. 1972).

⁶Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1971).

preceded both the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In both of these cases, the court mandated education of the handicapped.

If federal support of education of handicapped children is removed, education of handicapped children will continue to be the responsibility of the state and local school systems. Massachusetts and New Jersey both had more stringent state statutes on education of handicapped children than the federal act but have now amended their state statutes to decrease service to handicapped children. Philadelphia is engaged in a "second generation" PARC suit pertaining to education of severely and profoundly handicapped children.

If there is a change in federal support of special education, local school districts will still have handicapped children to educate, but greater local responsibility and leadership will be needed. The policymakers for the school district will need to understand the needs of the handicapped in their schools, and their attitude toward the education of the handicapped children will be critical.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE ON FEDERAL REGULATIONS
FOR EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

This survey of school board members is intended to report levels of information regarding the federal regulations for the Education of the Handicapped Act (94-142) and civil rights for the handicapped, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The information from this questionnaire will be used to determine areas of information that need further dissemination and the most effective ways to disseminate the information to board members. The survey form will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. We ask that you complete the form and return it as soon as possible. If you receive this form and are not a member of a local school board, please complete the form, but be sure to indicate your position or title.

WE NEED INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT!

1. In what state is your school system? _____
2. The school district student population is: _____ less than 1,000; _____ 1,000 to 4,999; _____ 5,000 to 9,999; _____ 10,000 to 24,999; _____ more than 25,000.
3. Your school district is: _____ urban, _____ suburban, _____ rural, _____ small town, _____ other.
4. Has your school district held any due process hearings in reference to handicapped children? _____ yes, _____ no, _____ don't know. If yes, how many? _____
5. Has your school district been engaged in any litigation regarding the handicapped? _____ If so, was it related to: _____ placement, _____ evaluation, _____ least restrictive environment, _____ free education, _____ other? (if other, please briefly identify) _____
6. How many members of your board are men _____, women _____?
7. Are members of your board _____ elected, or _____ appointed?
8. From the following list, please check the three most pressing management concerns in your school district:
 - _____ drug abuse
 - _____ curriculum reform
 - _____ outmoded facilities

- declining enrollments
 steady or declining tax base
 teacher militancy
 discipline
 desegregation
 cutting staff to balance budget
 public apathy
 collective bargaining with teachers
 federal interference
 high cost of energy
 new legal rights of students
 coping with "accountability"
 cutting programs to balance budget
 other (explain): _____
-

WE NEED INFORMATION ABOUT YOU!

1. Are you: male, female?
2. Are you: Afro-American, Anglo-American,
 Spanish-American, American Indian, other
 (please explain) _____?
3. Are you: under 25, 26-35, 36-40,
 41-50, 51-60, over 60?
4. What is your highest education attainment? less
 than high school, high school graduate, post
 high school training, college degree, advanced
 college degree.
5. How many years have you served on the school board? _____
6. How many terms have you served on the school board? _____
7. Do you have a relative who is handicapped yes,
 no.
8. If you are currently employed, what is your occupation?

9. Are you married? yes, no.
10. What is your family income? less than \$20,000,
 \$20,000-\$29,000, \$30,000-\$39,999,
 \$40,000 and up.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE LAW?

Please answer each of these questions to the best of your knowledge by circling the letter of the response you think is correct. Please do not consult anyone else; just respond with what you think is the most accurate answer.

1. According to information I've receive, the local school district has the responsibility to provide specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the handicapped only if
 - a. there is a sufficient number of children with a handicapped condition to make up a special class.
 - b. the school district has sufficient funding for the instruction.
 - c. there is a court mandate for the special instruction.
 - d. the child resides within the school district boundaries.
2. As I understand the law, parents of handicapped children are required to pay
 - a. 1/3 of the cost of the education and related service.
 - b. 1/4 of the cost of the education and related service.
 - c. none of the education cost but all of related service.
 - d. none of the education or related service cost.
3. If a handicapped child cannot be educated locally and must be educated in a day or residential program outside your district, the district must
 - a. meet 60% of the cost of the day care or residential care of the child.
 - b. meet all the costs of the day care or residential care of the child except medical.
 - c. pay for the educational cost of the program but not the room and board cost.
 - d. pay the total cost only if the child is from an indigent family.
4. As far as I know, the individualized instruction programs (IEP) required by PL 94-142 are
 - a. a set of objectives for the class the child will attend.
 - b. a statement of what parents want their children to accomplish.

- c. a contract between school and parents for the child's successful performance level.
 - d. a statement of the needs of the child and what will be provided to meet these goals.
5. It is my understanding that PL 94-142 mandates that all handicapped children receive a free and appropriate education by September 1, 1978, if they are between
 - a. 3 and 18 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
 - b. 3 and 21 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
 - c. 5 and 18 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
 - d. 5 and 21 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
6. I believe that our local school district can use its PL 94-142 dollars to
 - a. supplant funds now used for handicapped children.
 - b. totally fund present and new special education programs.
 - c. pay excess costs of special education programs.
 - d. pay a minimum of 40% of the costs of the special education program.
7. If our state should decide not to participate in the 94-142 requirements and therefore receive no funding
 - a. we are still responsible for providing a free and appropriate education for all handicapped children under the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 - b. we are responsible only to our state requirements for education of the handicapped.
 - c. our state will lose all federal funding for school programs.
 - d. the punitive guidelines for noncompliance have not been written.
8. The mandate of free and appropriate education for all handicapped children intends
 - a. for all handicapped children to be served within the local school district facilities.
 - b. that all handicapped children be mainstreamed.
 - c. that all special education teachers will serve only as resource personnel to regular classroom teachers.

- d. that handicapped children will be educated with nonhandicapped to the maximum extent appropriate.
9. If we receive funding for special education under 94-142, the level of funding for our district will be for
 - a. the total number of children identified as handicapped and served by our district.
 - b. a total number that does not exceed 12% of the school population who are identified as handicapped and receive services by our district.
 - c. a total number of 12% of our school age population no matter how many handicapped children are identified and served in our school district.
 - d. a total of 12% of the handicapped children being served.
10. The state must refuse to pass federal funds onto the local agency when
 - a. the local district cannot count enough handicapped children to generate a reimbursement of \$7,500 in federal funds.
 - b. the local district application does not meet state requirements.
 - c. the state determines that children can best be served by a regional center.
 - d. a & b.
11. It is my understanding that if our school district does not comply with our own local application
 - a. the state can refuse to pass on 94-142 funds from the federal government.
 - b. the U. S. Commissioner can order the state to cease funding our district.
 - c. the U. S. Commissioner can cut off 94-142, Title I, Title III, and Vocational Education Act funds.
 - d. all of the above.
12. Our local education agency application for special education must
 - a. contain a budget.
 - b. be open for public examination.
 - c. have a state education advisor on its planning board.
 - d. a & b.

13. PL 94-142 requires state and local agencies to protect the privacy of the handicapped, but our local education agency application must also
 - a. list the names of all children to be served.
 - b. insure confidentiality.
 - c. assure that information no longer be destroyed in five years.
 - d. a & b.

14. PL 94-142 as I perceive it, established priorities for handicapped children and the first priority of the law is the education of
 - a. preschool handicapped.
 - b. educable physically handicapped.
 - c. all unserved handicapped children.
 - d. all secondary level mentally retarded handicapped with vocational training.

15. If the Congress of the U. S. does not appropriate sufficient funds for 94-142
 - a. the states are mandated to assume financing of the program.
 - b. the law becomes tabled and will not be required until funding is available.
 - c. the local school districts will still be responsible for most of the mandates of the law.
 - d. a & c.

16. Our local school district in complying with the intent of the education of the handicapped law must provide a free and appropriate education to all handicapped
 - a. who can profit from an educational program.
 - b. of appropriate age who are identified and need service.
 - c. for whom we have an operating program.
 - d. who are in the educable intelligence range.

17. Under its free and appropriate education statements, PL 94-142 is mandating appropriate education for
 - a. culturally deprived children.
 - b. handicapped children.
 - c. gifted and talented children.
 - d. all of the above.

18. As I understand the information on parental rights, if parents do not approve of the educational placement of their children
- a. the school must change the placement to the one the parents prefer
 - ' b. the school has the final decision in the child's placement.
 - ✓ c. the state department of special education will make the final decision.
 - d. a hearing will be held and an impartial hearing officer will decide.
19. In planning the special education program, the school district must use
- ✓ a. the state advisory committee.
 - b. a local advisory committee.
 - c. a local and state committee of special educators.
 - d. a committee which has at least two administrators and four teachers.
20. A child in your school district has an orthopedic problem which does not affect his school performance but does require that the child receive physical therapy. In this case
- a. your local school must pay the cost of the physical therapy.
 - * b. your local area pays for physical therapy only if the school employs a physical therapist.
 - c. the local district has no responsibility for paying physical therapy costs.
 - d. each of the related services must be examined individually.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

We would like your opinion! Please rate the following to indicate how you feel about the statement. Your choices range from strongly disagree to agree. Put a circle around the answer that most agrees with how you feel about the statement. Remember, we are interested in your opinion; answer on that basis, not whether or not you know the statement refers to something that has already been mandated. (SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree.)

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. | Local funds spent on the handicapped should equal those spent for the non-handicapped. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 2. | Having handicapped children in their school building is distracting for normal children. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 3. | Placing handicapped children in classes with nonhandicapped will cause disruptive behavior among the nonhandicapped. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 4. | Nonhandicapped children will benefit from having handicapped children in their classes. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 5. | Regular classroom teachers will need additional training to teach handicapped children. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 6. | Children who cannot talk should not attend public school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 7. | Handicapped children learn best in special self-contained classes designed for their special problems. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 8. | The local school district should provide programs for the severely handicapped who need daily living and social skills. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 9. | Children who are not toilet trained should not be admitted to public schools. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 10. | The money from the federal government to subsidize education of the handicapped is not worth the paperwork for public schools. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 11. | A deaf-blind child should not be in public schools. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 12. | Children who cannot walk should not attend public schools. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 13. | Handicapped children will learn more if they are educated with nonhandicapped children. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 14. | Handicapped should be educated with nonhandicapped. | SD | D | A | SA |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 15. | Handicapped children should not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 16. | The local school district should provide educational programs only for handicapped children that can profit from an academic program. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 17. | Education of the handicapped should be paid through federal funds. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 18. | The public schools should not have to provide interpreters for deaf students. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 19. | Handicapped children will be self-conscious and embarrassed in classes with non-handicapped. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 20. | Public schools should not pay for physical therapy. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 21. | The public schools should pay the cost of tuition, room and board for a handicapped student when the school does not have an appropriate program for the student. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 22. | Regular classroom teachers should be paid a differential salary for having handicapped children in their classes. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 23. | The state should pay the cost of educating handicapped children. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 24. | Normal children will make fun of handicapped children in their classes. | SD | D | A | SA |
| 25. | The public schools should provide braille readers for blind students. | SD | D | A | SA |

WHO TOLD YOU?

The source of your information regarding Education of Handicapped Children, PL 94-142 and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1973 is very important to further plans for information dissemination.

1. Have you attended a workshop or conference regarding these laws? yes, no. If yes, was this workshop conducted by
- a. your local school district?
 - b. your state department of public instruction?
 - c. the State School Boards Association?
 - d. National School Boards Association?
 - e. the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped?
 - f. any other group? Please specify _____
-
2. Have you read pamphlets or articles on PL 94-142 or Section 504? yes, no. Was this information distributed by
- a. your local school district?
 - b. your state department of public instruction?
 - c. the State School Boards Association?
 - d. National School Boards Association?
 - e. the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped?
 - f. any other group? Please specify _____
-
3. Have you attended a meeting on the subject of PL 94-142 or Section 504? yes, no. If yes, was it conducted by
- a. your local school district?
 - b. your state department of public instruction?
 - c. the State School Boards Association?
 - d. National School Boards Association?
 - e. the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped?
 - f. any other group? Please specify _____
-
4. Have you had a speaker on PL 94-142 or Section 504 at any school board meeting? yes, no. Was this speaker from a national group? Please specify _____
- Was this speaker from a state group? Please specify _____
- Was this speaker from a local group? Please specify _____
-

APPENDIX B

PERCENTAGES OF CORRECT RESPONSES AND
DISTRACTORS TO KNOWLEDGE
QUESTIONS

1. According to information I've receive, the local school district has the responsibility to provide specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the handicapped only if
 - 1.0% a. there is a sufficient number of children with a handicapped condition to make up a special class.
 - 0.3% b. the school district has sufficient funding for the instruction.
 - 2.6% c. there is a court mandate for the special instruction.
 - *96.1% d. the child resides within the school district boundaries.

2. As I understand the law, parents of handicapped children are required to pay
 - 0.2% a. 1/3 of the cost of the education and related service.
 - 0.2% b. 1/4 of the cost of the education and related service.
 - 8.6% c. none of the education cost but all of related service.
 - *91.1% d. none of the education or related cost.

3. If a handicapped child cannot be educated locally and must be educated in a day or residential program outside your district, the district must
 - 2.5% a. meet 60% of the cost of the day care or residential care of the child.
 - *52.2 b. meet all the costs of the day care or residential care of the child except medical.
 - 41.3% c. pay for the educational cost of the program but not the room and board cost.
 - 4.0% d. pay the total cost only if the child is from an indigent family.

4. As far as I know, the individualized instruction programs (IEP) required by PL 94-142 are
 - 6.0% a. a set of objectives for the class the child will attend.

- 0.4% b. a statement of what parents want their children to accomplish.
 - 6.3% c. a contract between school and parents for the child's successful performance level.
 - *87.3% d. a statement of the needs of the child and what will be provided to meet these goals.
5. It is my understanding that PL 94-142 mandates that all handicapped children receive a free and appropriate education by September 1, 1978, if they are between
- *8.6% a. 3 and 8 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
 - 39.4% b. 3 and 21 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
 - 23.9% c. 5 and 18 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
 - 28.0% d. 5 and 21 years of age and the requirement is not consistent with state law or practice.
6. I believe that our local school district can use its PL 94-142 dollars to
- 29.8% a. supplant funds now used for handicapped children.
 - 15.6% b. totally fund present and new special education programs.
 - *41.2% c. pay excess costs of special education programs.
 - 13.4% d. pay a minimum of 40% of the costs of the special education program.
7. If our state should decide not to participate in the 94-142 requirements and therefore receive no funding
- *66.2% a. we are still responsible for providing a free and appropriate education for all handicapped children under the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 - 12.7% b. we are responsible only to our state requirements for education of the handicapped.
 - 16.3% c. our state will lose all federal funding for school programs.
 - 4.8% d. the punitive guidelines for noncompliance have not been written.

8. The mandate of free and appropriate education for all handicapped children intends
- 13.4% a. for all handicapped children to be served within the local school district facilities.
 - 6.2% b. that all handicapped children be mainstreamed.
 - 0.5% c. that all special education teachers will serve only as resource personnel to regular classroom teachers.
 - *79.9% d. that handicapped children will be educated with nonhandicapped to the maximum extent appropriate.
9. If we receive funding for special education under 94-142, the level of funding for our district will be for
- 65.5% a. the total number of children identified as handicapped and served by our district.
 - *28.2% b. a total number that does not exceed 12% of the school population who are identified as handicapped and receive services by our district.
 - 4.4% c. a total number of 12% of our school age population no matter how many handicapped children are identified and served in our school district.
 - 1.9% d. a total of 12% of the handicapped children being served.
10. The state must refuse to pass federal funds onto the local agency when
- 2.3% a. the local district cannot count enough handicapped children to generate a reimbursement of \$7,500 in federal funds.
 - 47.8% b. the local district application does not meet state requirements.
 - 10.4% c. the state determines that children can best be served by a regional center.
 - *39.5% d. a & b.
11. It is my understanding that if our school district does not comply with our own local application
- *22.2% a. the state can refuse to pass on 94-142 funds from the federal government.
 - 4.8% b. the U. S. Commissioner can order the state to cease funding our district.
 - 7.0% c. the U. S. Commissioner can cut off 94-142,

Title I, Title III, and Vocational Education Act funds.

- 66.0% d. all of the above.
12. Our local education agency application for special education must
- 5.6% a. contain a budget.
8.9% b. be open for public examination.
1.3% c. have a state education advisor on its planning board.
*84.2% d. a & b.
13. PL 94-142 requires state and local agencies to protect the privacy of the handicapped, but our local education agency application must also
- 5.7% a. list the names of all children to be served.
*39.4% b. insure confidentiality.
2.3% c. assure that information no longer be destroyed in five years.
52.6% d. a & b.
14. PL 94-142 as I perceive it, established priorities for handicapped children and the first priority of the law is the education of
- 3.8% a. preschool handicapped.
26.5% b. educable physically handicapped.
*68.6% c. all unserved handicapped children.
1.1% d. all secondary level mentally retarded handicapped with vocational training.
15. If the Congress of the U. S. does not appropriate sufficient funds for 94-142
- 4.4% a. the states are mandated to assume financing of the program.
5.5% b. the law becomes tabled and will not be required until funding is available.
*52.0% c. the local school districts will still be responsible for most of the mandates of the law.
38.1% d. a & c.
16. Our local school district in complying with the intent of the education of the handicapped law must provide a free and appropriate education to all handicapped
- 8.4% a. who can profit from an educational program.
*82.6% b. of appropriate age who are identified and need service.

- 0.9% c. for whom we have an operating program.
8.1% d. who are in the educable intelligence range.
17. Under its free and appropriate education statements, PL 94-142 is mandating appropriate education for
- 0.0% a. culturally deprived children.
*64.5% b. handicapped children.
0.9% c. gifted and talented children.
34.5% d. all of the above.
18. As I understand the information on parental rights, if parents do not approve of the educational placement of their children
- 5.8% a. the school must change the placement to the one the parents prefer
9.2% b. the school has the final decision in the child's placement.
12.7% c. the state department of special education will make the final decision.
*72.3% d. a hearing will be held and an impartial hearing officer will decide.
19. In planning the special education program, the school district must use
- 10.8% a. the state advisory committee.
*47.5% b. a local advisory committee.
15.1% c. a local and state committee of special educators.
26.5% d. a committee which has at least two administrators and four teachers.
20. A child in your school district has an orthopedic problem which does not affect his school performance but does require that the child receive physical therapy. In this case
- 11.0% a. your local school must pay the cost of the physical therapy.
5.0% b. your local area pays for physical therapy only if the school employs a physical therapist.
*51.8% c. the local district has no responsibility for paying physical therapy costs.
32.2% d. each of the related services must be examined individually.

*correct response

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APPENDIX C

Washington, D.C. 20007

March 23, 1979

Dear School Board Member:

The American School Board Journal is conducting a study in an effort to improve services to, and understanding of, school boards in this country.

The purpose of the study -- a form is enclosed with the hope that you will complete it -- is to learn more about the opinions of current school board members on P.L. 94-142, the federal law regarding the education of handicapped children.

With that in mind, we'd be most grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete the form we've enclosed and to mail it back to The American School Board Journal in the postage-paid envelope we've also tucked in.

This is a completely anonymous survey, using random sampling techniques. Because of the survey's anonymity, there'll be no coding, and consequently no follow-up inquiry will be possible. This is the only request you'll receive. Please help us collect this valuable information which we hope will improve services to school board members everywhere.

Sincerely,

Editor and Assistant Publisher

DLM/ef
enclosures:
questionnaire
postage-paid return envelope

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A STUDY OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' KNOWLEDGE,
ATTITUDES, AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION RELATIVE
TO THE EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED

by

Shirley A. Underwood

(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was threefold: to assess the knowledge of school board members pertaining to PL 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112), to investigate the attitude of local school board members regarding handicapped children and to ascertain the source and methodology from which school board members receive their information regarding PL 94-142 and Section 504.

Mailed survey forms were sent to local school board members selected from the subscribers list of the American School Board Journal. The survey forms consisted of a demographic section, an author-made knowledge indices, an author-made attitude scale and information sources identification section.

The size of the school district which a member represents made a significant difference in both knowledge and attitude scores. No significant relationship was found between knowledge or attitude with geographic area or type of district. Significant differences were found between

knowledge and reading about education of the handicapped.

Attitude scores reflecting favorable attitudes toward education of the handicapped increased with the experience of due process hearings in the school district. Seventy-two percent of the respondents correctly answered ten or more of the twenty knowledge questions correctly. The mean for knowledge was 10.86. The mean score for attitude toward the education of the handicapped was 62.66 from a possible score of 100 which would be the most positive attitude toward a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

The author concludes that school board members are knowledgeable about the education of handicapped children under the regulations for the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

The attitude of school board members toward the education of handicapped children is neither highly positive nor is it notably negative.

The size of the school district the board members represents affected both attitude and knowledge scores. School board members from very small and very large school districts scored lower on the knowledge portion of the survey than those from medium-size districts.

Board members from small school districts had a more negative attitude about education of handicapped children

than those from larger districts.

The survey of knowledge and attitude of board members on PL 94-142 and Section 504 and the education of the handicapped has serious implications for the need of continuation of federal and state support of the rights of handicapped children to be educated at public expense in the public schools. Further, there are implications to give direction to advocates of education of handicapped children in areas of inservice and public relations.