Evaluation Measures: Do They Measure the Special Education Administrator's Roles and

Responsibilities by Which They Are Held Accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004

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Administration and Supervision of Special Education

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Abstract

Special education is a field inherent with compliance and accountability issues. Special Education Administrators are tasked with the responsibility of implementing programs and maintaining compliance with state and federal standards while ensuring high quality educational performance. This research examined how the current Special Education Administrators are being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA. In addition, the previous roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrator were reviewed in order to provide background information and to provide insight into Special Education Administrators' perceptions of key responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. The guiding questions for this study are: (1) What do Special Education Administrators perceive as their role and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004? (2) Do Special Education Administrators perceive their evaluation tool as an adequate measure of the current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004? (3) Does the criteria by which Special Education Administrators are evaluated reflect what the research supports as those components related to roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004?

The research design included quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. The population for this study was stratified sample of 30 Special Education Administrators for the Commonwealth of Virginia. An online survey was utilized to conduct the initial research. In addition, in-depth interviews of special education administrators were conducted in order to gain a better understanding of how they are currently being held accountable.

Research revealed that Special Education Administrators perceive they are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA; though research concludes that current performance evaluation methodology does not measure the professional standards, including the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator. The conclusions of this study emphasize the importance of examining the performance

evaluation procedures for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Dedication

       This dissertation work is dedicated to my family. A deepest appreciation goes to my husband, Larry who never lost faith in me and provided the emotional and physical support required for me to reach this long-term personal goal. I also dedicate this work to my daughter Kellie, who has provided me with inspiration and motivation to reach for my dreams. Finally, I would like to make a special dedication to Tiffany, my youngest daughter, who initiated my interest in the field of special education.

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

In August of 1984, I began my professional career working with individuals with
disabilities. My wish for knowledge in the area of special education was sparked by the
birth of my second child who has multiple disabilities. My interest and awareness of this
area led to my studies in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in additional
endorsements in special education.

My goal in entering the field of special education was not only to gain an
understanding of my daughter's disability, but also to act on the desire to help other
parents understand the disabling conditions of their children. I have had the privilege of
working with a diverse group of individuals with disabilities. These groups have been
diverse in age, disabling classification, and socioeconomic status.

Statement of the Problem

Special education is a field inherent with compliance and accountability issues.
Federal dollars are received by schools, with regulations and mandates in place as
qualifiers for such funds. Administrators of special education programs are tasked with
the implementation of programs, maintaining compliance with state and federal standards
while ensuring high quality educational performance. These tasks are often completed at
the hands of untrained administrators.

It is clear that there is a shortage of highly qualified administrators in the field of
special education (Lashley, 2006). Furthermore, this area of need calls for continued
research in understanding the complexity of administrative roles in special education.

This research study examines how the current Special Education Administrators
are being held accountable under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with
Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA). The previous roles and responsibilities of the
Special Education Administrator are reviewed in order to provide background
information. This topic is important for several reasons. First, the new federal regulations
under NCLB call for more accountability on the part of all administrators, increasing the
accountability for testing requirements and the accountability standards for school

districts. Administrators are tasked with setting measurable adequate yearly progress objectives for all students, as well as for subgroups of students defined by socioeconomic background, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, and disability (Linn, Baker, & Betebenner, 2002).

Second, issues surrounding the reauthorization of IDEA 2004 contain new responsibilities for administrators overseeing programs for students with disabilities. IDEA 2004 regulations hold schools accountable for ensuring students with disabilities achieve high standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Third, literature in the field suggests the roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrators have changed, demanding new skills and knowledge standards, and refinement of the administrator's functions. The skills necessary to fulfill the requirements and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004 have come to a crossroads due to the new legislative mandates.

Finally, this topic is of interest because of personal experience and a desire to support the appropriate educational programming for students with disabilities as well as recruiting and maintaining highly qualified administrators in the field of special education.

Theoretical Base/Relationship to Prior Knowledge

A review of the literature related to the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrators reveals the theoretical base and body of research directly related to this substantive area focused on the roles, responsibilities, functions, tasks, and duties of the Special Education Administrator prior to the implementation of NCLB and IDEA 2004. There are various studies for review on the previous roles and responsibilities of the administrator; however, no identified studies have looked at the existing evaluating practices of the Special Education Administrator under the current federal regulations of NCLB and IDEA 2004. As changes occur in special education programs, and consequently in the expectations of the Special Education Administrator, it is critical to consider performance evaluations under the current accountability standards (Johnson, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how the current Special Education Administrators are being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. The data was systematically gathered and analyzed through the process of research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The theoretical base developed in the study provides a detailed clarification of the previous roles and responsibilities and the evaluation practices of the Special Education Administrator in the Commonwealth prior to implementation of NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Research Questions

The over-all guiding questions for this study are: (1) What do Special Education Administrators perceive as their roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004; (2) Do Special Education Administrators perceive their evaluation tool as an adequate measure of the current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004; and (3) Does the criteria by which Special Education Administrators are evaluated reflect what the research supports as those components related to roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004?

Significance of the Study

Research in this area could assist in the development of an appropriate tool to evaluate Special Education Administrators in order to ensure they have the knowledge and skills necessary to administer all programs for which they are accountable. The literature in the field suggests the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator have changed, demanding new skills and knowledge standards, and refinement of the functions of the Special Education Administrator. The training needs necessary to fulfill the requirements and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004 have come to a crossroads due to the new legislative mandates, which call for higher levels of accountability for lessening the achievement gap among all subgroup of children (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003).

The passage of NCLB and IDEA 2004 has recreated the landscape of public education. These changes are comprehensive and critical for the Special Education Administrators. Special education administration is at a crossroad, where special education, general education, and educational administration come together (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003). As the inclusive practices and outcome accountability measures have

intensified, special education leaders have been challenged with new roles and responsibilities to solve the problems in a diverse, complex, high-stakes educational environment (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003).

Wigle and Wilcox (2002) investigated the competencies of Special Education Administrators. Their analysis of the data suggested that Special Education Administrators perceived themselves as having moderately high levels of competencies in various skill areas recognized as being important to the educational needs of a diverse population of students. However, many of the administrators perceive themselves lacking important skills needed for overseeing the programming for students with disabilities (Wigle & Wilcox, 2002).

The *National Leadership Evaluation Study*, conducted in 2002, using a non-random sample of 510 administrators from 21 U. S. states found over 18% of administrators had never received an evaluation in their current position. Eighty-two percent of the participants evaluated found the evaluation to be inconsistent, ambiguous, and counterproductive. Only 54% reported their evaluation to be based on clear standards, and 47% believed the evaluation assisted them in improving their administrative performance (Reeves, 2004).

In the *Performance Evaluation of Special Education Administrators: Considerations and Recommendations*, Johnson indicated that as changes occur in our educational programs the evaluation of Special Education Administrators as part of the accountability process must be considered. Accountability in leadership is critical (Johnson, 1998). As special education undergoes changes and school districts move toward inclusive models, the Special Education Administrator's roles and responsibilities will also change. It is critical to revisit the evaluation of Special Education Administrators (Johnson, 1998).

Limitations of the Study

There have been many limitations identified in this study. The limitations in this study must be considered prior to reporting the results.

1. Coverage error in the target population for the survey included surveyed school divisions' Special Education Administrators who were not provided permission to

respond by their school board. The researcher was unaware of these school divisions prior to developing the sampling frame.

2. Sampling error in the stratification of the sample not all school divisions were provided equal probability of selection.

3. The researcher did not investigate nonresponse error. There was no way for the researcher to determine which Special Education Administrator, and from which school division, responded to the online survey.

4. The is no way to determine how closely the characteristics of the respondents and the characteristics of their school divisions mirror the typical school division in Virginia and other states.

5. The formation of the interview questions and the interpretation of the data may have been affected by the researcher's bias.

In addition to the identified limitations, there are delimitations in the study. The study is based on Special Education Administrators from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the reader of the research must make the decision if the study's results can be applied to their educational settings. The reader should compare the findings to their own school environment and state regulations.

A description of the characteristics of the participating school districts' Special Education Administrators will be provided in a prologue to Chapter 4 in order to enable the readers to confidently make the transferability decision.

Overview of the Research

This research involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. The combined quantitative and qualitative methods will permit triangulation of the data. Data was collected through survey questionnaires and structured interviews from participating Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through continuous data collection and analysis, a substantive theory was developed to describe how current Special Education Administrators are being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Chapter One includes: (1) an introduction of the topic; (2) a statement of the purpose and significance of the study; (3) the research questions; (4) definitions of terms; and (5) limitations of the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the related literature,

describing the problem in its current context; briefly reviewing the historical evolution of special education; and describing the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrators prior to the implementation of NCLB and IDEA 2004. Theoretical literature and professional commentary concerning the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrators are reviewed before refining the focus to the evaluation of the Special Education Administrators. Chapter Three describes the methodology that was utilized in the study, including a rationalization of the study's design, the sampling procedures, the data collection, the data organization, and the data analysis procedures. Prologue to Chapter Four briefly illustrates the characteristics of the school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Chapter Four describes the analysis of the data. Chapter Five provides a discussion of the conclusions and implications of the research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Scholars in the Field

The Special Education Administrator plays a major role in the implementation of local, state, and federal regulations. The role of the administrator in this area has been the focus of scholarly writing and research.

In order to gain a greater understanding of the importance of the evaluation of the Special Education Administrator, the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator have been reviewed from the following group of scholars: Bonnie Billingsley, professor of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, author of *Special Education Teacher Retention and Attrition* (2004); Carl Lashley, an assistant professor of Educational Leadership at the University of North Carolina and co-author with Mary Lynn Boscardin, an associate professor of Special Education Program at the University of Massachusetts author of *Special Education at a Crossroad* (2003); Debora Bays from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University author of *Supervision Practices in Virginia: A Survey of Local Directors of Special Education (2000)*; Daniel Sage at the Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation of Syracuse University and Leonard C. Burrello at Indiana University School of Education authored *The Scope of Special Education* (1994), *Policy and Management in Special Education*(1986) and *Leadership in Educational Reform: An Administrator's Guide to Changes in Special Education* (1994); E. M. Sullivan from West Virginia Graduate College author of *Identifying Challenges to Rural Education: Role Clarification for Administrators* (2000); W. W. Swan from Department of Educational Leadership at The University of Georgia authored *Supervision in Special Education. In G.R. Firth & E.F. Pajak (Eds.). Handbook of Research on School Supervision* (1998)**;** James M. Kauffman and D. P. Hallahan from the University of Virginia Curry School of Education author of the *Handbook of Special Education* (1981); Douglas Reeves, founder of the Center for Performance Assessment; Lewis R. Johnson, assistant professor in special education at Arkansas State University.

There has been a great deal of commentary and study in understanding the role of the Special Education Administrator. Several scholars have predominantly focused their attention on this area. Daniel Sage and Leonard C. Burrello addressed issues such as the

overall scope of special education, policy and management issues of special education, and the changes in administration of special education during times of reform. James M. Kauffman of the University of Virginia identified the need for guidance of the Special Education Administrator through his authored publication of the *Handbook of Special Education*. Debora Bays from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University concentrated her research on the practices of Special Education Administrators in rural areas. Mark Goor, Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at George Mason University, authored the book *Leadership for Special Education Administration*.

In the area of evaluation, there have been numerous studies conducted on the school administrator. One notable scholar is Douglas Reeves, faculty member of leadership programs sponsored by the Harvard Graduate School of Education and author of *Accountability for Learning: How Teachers and School Leaders Can Take Charge* and *Continuum of Performance for Selected Subcategories of Leadership Behavior.* Reeves is the CEO and founder of the Center for Performance Assessment, an international organization focused on improving student achievement and educational equity (Center for Performance Assessment, 2005).

Another notable scholar includes Lewis R. Johnson, assistant professor in special education at Arkansas State University. Johnson authored *Performance Evaluation of Special Education Administrators: Considerations and Recommendations* and co-author of *The Relationship between Local Education Agency Special Education Program Characteristics and Program Compliance*. In addition, Carl Lashley addressed the accountability of the Special Education Administrator in *Position Responsibilities and Relationships in the Evaluation of District Level Special Education Administrators*.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this review:

Accountability is

1. Accountability. Accountability in this study refers to an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. "It is the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in light of agreed expectations There is a difference between responsibility and accountability:

responsibility is the obligation to act; accountability is the obligation to answer for an action" (Service Canada, 2007).

2. <u>Average daily attendance</u>. The average daily attendance is the average daily membership for grades K-12, the enrollment figure, used to distribute state per pupil funding. It includes students with disabilities ages 5-21 (Virginia Department of Education, 2007). In this study, the average daily attendance report is utilized to identify the student population.

3. *Evaluation*. Evaluation is the assessment of value: the act of considering or examining something in order to judge its value, quality, importance, extent, or condition (Encarta Dictionary, 2006).

4. *Formal evaluation*. Formal evaluation is the collection of data using procedures under controlled conditions; an assessment procedure that contains specific rules for administration, scoring, and interpretation.

5. *Informal evaluation*. Informal Evaluation is an appraisal of performance by casual observation or by nonstandardized procedures. It is an assessment procedure without firm administration, scoring, and interpretation rules.

6. *Socioeconomic status*. Socioeconomic status is a measure of an individual or family's relative economic and social ranking. For this research project the socioeconomic status is based on the school divisions' local composite index, this determines a school division's ability to pay for the cost of education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007).

7. *Special education.* Specially designed instruction to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities, as defined in the IDEA (U. S. Department of Education, Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2006).

8. *Student with disability*. A student with disabilities can be defined as a child who has mental retardation, a hearing impairment including deafness, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment including blindness, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, because of that disability, needs special education and related services.

9. *Supervisor*. A supervisor includes school personnel who provide supervision. Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors of Special Education, Supervisors of Special Education, or teacher peers can fill this role.

10. *Special Education Administrator*. The Special Education Administrator is the person whose primary purpose is to perform administrative and managerial duties as needed to fully implement a comprehensive special education program. Titles often used for this administrative position are special education director, special education program director, supervisor of special education, coordinator of special services, special service administrator, and special needs director. Van Aubrey (1988) reported that while the Special Education Administrator may or may not hold administrative certification, this person is charged with the responsibility of coordinating all aspects of a special education program.

11. *Special Education December 1 Child Count*. The Special Education December 1 Child Count is the number of students between the age of 5 and 21 that receive special education and related services on December 1.

Overview of the History of Special Education

One of the strongest influences in special education began in the 1950s with the organization of the National Association for Retarded Children (now the National Association for Retarded Citizens). This organization consisting of parents of children with disabilities and professional organizations, such as the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), organized in order to place political pressure for legislation intervention (Council of Exceptional Children, 1997).

As early as the 1960s, advocates lobbied for a Federal role in providing for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities (Council of Exceptional Children, 1997). Advocates lobbied Congress to supply the funding and leadership needed to support millions of American children who were not receiving appropriate educational services (American Youth Policy Forum and Center on Education Policy, 2002).

Under the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations, federal laws were passed requiring states to provide personnel training, regional resource centers, model programs, and other services to support the education of children with disabilities (Kauffman &

Hallahan, 1981). The U.S. Office of Education and Department of Health, Education and Welfare created the Division of Handicapped Children and Youth (1965) to promote training and the implementation of new programs for children with disabilities.

Following the passage of Title IX in 1964, The United States Congress passed several bills regarding the education of students with disabilities. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a vast collection of revolutionary legislation designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1981). In terms of educating children with disabilities, these laws expressed the spirit of the people resoundingly. They argued that children with disabilities must be guaranteed a free and appropriate public education (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1981).

In 1966 the Bureau for Education of the Handicapped was established under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Education Act (ESEA). Subsequently, the federal government established initiatives resulting in small amounts of funding to support the education of children with disabilities (Council of Exceptional Children, 2003). As the number of initiatives increased, the Bureau of ESEA recommended that these initiatives be placed under a single law. This recommendation resulted in the 1970 passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act, P.L. 91-230 (Council of Exceptional Children, 2003).

Throughout the period of the 1960s and early 1970s, parents advocated for state laws requiring Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to provide special education for students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Limited financial support for the educational services was being provided at this time (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Although several states passed laws and made provisions for the funding of special education, many children with disabilities remained underserved or unserved by public schools (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996).

In addition to legislative action, two landmark federal court cases, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1971) and Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972), found the responsibility of States and local school districts to educate individuals with disabilities is derived from equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). These decisions, along with legislative action laid

the foundation for federal support for the education of children with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

In 1975, Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, better known as Public Law 94-142, to assist states and localities in protecting the rights of children with disabilities, and their families. The law was amended in 1986 (P.L. 99-457) and again in 1990 by P.L. 101-476. In the 1990 amendment, the name of the law was changed from the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) to The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Keeping with the major provisions of the previous laws, 99-142 and 99-457, the 1990 amendment reauthorized and expanded the discretionary programs, mandated transition services, defined assistive technology devices and services, and added autism and traumatic brain injury to the list of categories of students eligible for special education and related services (Office of Special Education Programs, 1997).

IDEA was reauthorized in 1997 to provide curriculum suggestions to improve educational programming for children with disabilities. The State Department of Education released a document entitled, *Office of Special Education Programs' IDEA Amendments of 1997 Curriculum*. This document suggested the reauthorization be viewed as an opportunity to review, strengthen, and improve the education of children with disabilities and to enable them to achieve a quality education.

The targeted goals Congress identified as objectives to achieve through the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 is identified in Table 1 (Office of Special Education Programs, 1998).

Table 1

Informal Education Goals for IDEA 97

1. Strengthening the role of parents

2. Ensuring access to the general curriculum and reforms

3. Focusing on teaching and learning while reducing unnecessary paperwork requirements

4. Assisting educational agencies in addressing the costs of improving special education and related services to children with disabilities

5. Giving increased attention to racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity to prevent inappropriate identification and mislabeling

6. Ensuring schools are safe and conducive to learning

7. Encouraging parents and educators to work out their differences by using nonadversarial means

On January 23, 2001, President George W. Bush sent a comprehensive education reform entitled No Child Left Behind to Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). President Bush asked members to consider the role the federal government plays in closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers in the educational system. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was the resulting reform. This act exemplifies the four principles of the reform plan President Bush introduced as his educational platform. These four principles are as follows: (1) stronger accountability for results; (2) expanded flexibility and local control; (3) expanded options for parents; and (4) an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

The U.S. Department of Education (2004) suggested NCLB is the most sweeping reform of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). NCLB redefines the federal role in K-12 education to help improve the academic achievement of all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). This educational reform includes regulations governing the programs administered under Title I, part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). These regulations include the implementation of statutory provisions regarding State Educational Agency (SEA), Local Educational Agency (LEA), and school accountability for the academic achievement of all students, including those with disabilities. NCLB substantially increases the testing requirements for states and sets demanding accountability standards for schools, districts, and states. This includes the setting of measurable adequate yearly progress objectives for all students, as well as for subgroups of students defined by socioeconomic background, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, and disability (Linn, Baker, & Betebenner, 2002).

Under Title I, the State is responsible for establishing the State academic content and achievement standards. In addition, the State is responsible for implementing a system of high quality, yearly student academic assessments that are aligned with the State's academic content standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) aligns closely with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), helping to ensure equity, accountability and excellence in education for children with disabilities (U.S Department

of Education, 2005). The State also is responsible for developing guidelines for alternate assessments for students with disabilities who cannot participate in the regular State assessments. For assessments under Title I, the Individual Education Program (IEP) team operates in an environment in which the academic content and achievement standards and assessments are set by the State (U.S Department of Education, 2006).

The accountability measures as defined by IDEA 2004 and NCLB include new responsibilities for administrators overseeing programs for students with disabilities. With respect to these new roles and responsibilities, higher education programs will need to review the knowledge and skill base standards for special education administration licensure.

In 1975 six states provided endorsements in special education administration. By 1985, 26 states offered a special education administration endorsement (Valesky, 1984; Hirth, 1995). By 1992, special education administration endorsements were granted in 38 states.

Currently more state education agencies are offering an endorsement in special education administration (Hirth & Valesky, 1992). Current research indicates a need for unification of regular and special education (Hirth & Valesky, 1992). This unification may decrease the need for a separate special education administration endorsement. However, the current regulations under IDEA 2004 mandate a continuum of services to meet individual educational needs. IDEA 2004 along with the No Child Left Behind Act holds local divisions accountable for meeting the individual and academic needs of all children including those with disabilities.

In conclusion, administrators may need specialized training in special education leadership to ensure they possess the competencies necessary to supervise programs for children with disabilities (Hirth & Valesky, 1992). In order to prepare for the future of all students including those with disabilities, we need to understand the evolution of the roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrators. Kohl and Marro (1971) suggested the Special Education Administrator, more than any other, would be involved either directly or indirectly in decisions affecting the lives of millions of people.

Overview of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, P.L. 107-110 is the leading federal reform initiative since the implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The NCLB Act was initiated in order to hold states responsible for ensuring all students are held to high standards (Department of Education, 2006). "The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments (20 U. S. C. § 6301 Statement of Purpose)." In order for federal funding to be allocated for NCLB implementation, the states have agreed to implement annual assessments to measure student academic proficiency. As in other states, the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to provide annual report cards concerning the progress of their schools for which they have accepted funds. NCLB Act mandates national standards for: (1) teacher quality; (2) reading instruction; (3) research based instructional programs; and (4) professional development.

Under NCLB, local school districts are held accountable for the adequate yearly progress (AYP) reporting of the general school population and four designated groups, one of which is children with disabilities. NCLB mandates established academic standards for all students, including special education students. The law is an attempt to establish accountability for results and improve the inclusiveness and fairness for all students. Meeting NCLB's requirements and those of IDEA 2004 present a significant challenge for educational administrators (Sorrentino & Zirkel, 2004). Sorrentino & Zirkel (2004) reported, "NCLB adds significant obligations to the already complex regulation covering special education (p. 9)."

Research Studies Included for Review

History of Special Education Administration

Specific parameters for selection of the studies for the review were set prior to searching the literature. First, studies were to look across time at the roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrators. Second, studies were to be conducted with factors connected to NCLB and IDEA 2004. Third, studies were to be conducted prior to the implementation of the NCLB and IDEA 2004. Fourth, studies

were to be conducted on methods of evaluating the Special Education Administrator prior to the implementation of the NCLB and IDEA 2004. This was done to account for the changes in the educational system and the efforts to educate children with disabilities.

An Overview of Studies Included

Descriptions of the three studies included for review appear in Table 2 and Appendix A. The studies are arranged in chronological order with the most current studies as the first one reviewed in the table. These studies are summarized by the following elements: (a) author and year of publication; (b) purpose of the study; (c) definitions; (d) methodology and sample used; and (e) major findings related to the changing roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrators.

Purpose of the Study

As early as 1923, there are references to the role of special education administration. Burrello (1979) suggests, "The quantity and variety of personnel in leadership positions increased as the parameters of special education gradually expanded to include students with less apparent exceptionalities, functional as well as organic disabilities, and relatively less severe degrees of deviance from normalcy (p. 6)." Further reinforcing the role identity of the Special Education Administrator is the appearance of professional organization such as the Council of Administrators of Special Education and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

In 1951, the International Council for Exceptional Children, a non-profit professional special interest group, organized the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE). The membership grew from the original twenty-four people to over five thousand members (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1981). Major issues and concerns regarding the delivery of services for children with disabilities were addressed as early as 1973. The Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) developed a policy statement on the "Organization and Administration of Special Education."

Congress, in 1958, approved Public Law 85-926, which authorized the appropriation of one million dollars per year for the training of teachers and leadership personnel in the field of mental retardation (Kirk, 1962). The greater part of the funding was used in the area of leadership, providing financial support for college and university instructors and state and local training of supervisors and directors. Title III, Section 301,

authorized financial support, including funding through grants for educational training of supervisors and administrators of programs and also for research personnel for educating children with disabilities.

In 1971, *A Normative Study of the Administrative Position in Special Education* was conducted by Pennsylvania State University, with the support of the Office of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Kohl & Marro, 1971). The authors of the study concluded most Special Education Administrators held a regular education administrative training and certification, lacking the specific training for the administration of special education.

The findings indicated the title for individuals who administer special education varies tremendously from state to state and even to the local level the titles have varied from Director of Special Education, Supervisor of Special Education, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, and Director of Pupil Personnel Services. Many Special Education Administrators have also been involved in providing direct services for children with disabilities (Kohl & Marro, 1971).

Willenbery (1966) reported that after more than a half century of public school programs for exceptional children, there is still no single source of comprehensive information providing a rationale structure and process for the administration of special education programs. Colleges and universities are preparing leadership personnel without the basic tool of such instruction—a textbook on the subject (Willenbery, 1966).

Forty years later, there continues to be a lack of consistency in the structure and process for the administration of special education programs (Bays, 2000). Not only do Special Education Administrators hold different titles and have differing duties and responsibilities, there is also an inconsistency at the state level on the requirements and certifications required to administer programs for students with disabilities.

Roles and Responsibilities of Special Education Administrators

Identifying the role of the Special Education Administrator is difficult as this role varies according to the school district's structure and size. This administrative position requires knowledge and expertise essential to supervising special education programs (Osborne, DiMattia & Durran, 1993). Studies reviewed during the literature review are summarized in Table 2.

Mackie and Engel (1955) conducted a study identifying the chief duties of a Special Education Administrator in large school districts. The responsibilities and the percentage of time spent on these activities are: (1) administrative duties (40%); (2) supervisory duties (23%); (3) direct services to children (14%); (4) public relations (11%); (5) in-service education (6%); and (6) professional study and research (6%).

In addition, Mackie and Engel identified competencies as related to the roles and responsibilities believed to be important for Special Education Administrators. Leadership ability and working with the community were identified as essential skills. Supervisors identified student-centered activities such as recognition of teaching ability and effective teacher-pupil relationships as the most important skills (Kohl & Marro, 1971).

Table 2

Roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator

Author	Purpose	Definition	Sample	Methodology
Reeves, Douglas B. (2004)	Develop a specific, accurate evaluation system for educational leaders	Leadership evaluation	Nonrandom sample of 510 administrative leaders in 21 states	Survey
Sullivan, E.M. (2000)	Role clarification for administrators	Tasks, function, perceptions	Fifty-five school districts, Superintendents, Principals, Special Education Administrators	Survey
Johnson, L.R. (1998)	Performance evaluation of special education administrators	Performance evaluation, evaluation process, purpose of evaluation, procedures of evaluation, evaluation models		Literature review
Goor, M.B. (1995)	Administrative functions defined by specific task	Planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting		Case studies
Osborne, DiMattia, and Durran (1993)	Effective management of special education programs	Knowledge, techniques, management, roles, job description	State In-service training program participants	Needs assessment survey
Mackie and Engel (1955)	Chief duties of the special education administrator	Administrative duties, supervisory duties, direct services, public relations, in-service, professional studies		

In 1970, Newman conducted research entitled *Administrative Tasks in Special Education.* A survey was used to gather data from a 100 randomly selected public school districts. The school district populations were between 13,000 and 30,000. Newman identified seven administrative duties of Special Education Administrators: (1) planning; (2) organizing; (3) staffing; (4) directing; (5) coordinating; (6) reporting; and (7) budgeting. Newman suggested that there was a significant relationship between training and experience (Newman, 1970).

Debora Bays (2000) reported the primary responsibilities of the directors of special education are administrative in nature. She suggested that directors play a role in the instructional supervision through collaboration and communication with principals and teachers. Directors are tasked with providing professional development opportunities for their special education staff, as well as participating in planning meetings focused on the education of individual students with disabilities. They also provide instructional materials and personnel to support the delivery of instruction to students with disabilities.

Skills and Knowledge Standards for Administrators of Special Education

The Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) Professional Standards Project Report, conducted in 1966 was referred to as the most complete report of areas of knowledge needed by the special education leader. Table 3 compares the CEC's 1966 standards to the 2004 standards for Special Education Administrators.

In 2005, the Council of Exceptional Children identified Special Education Standards to address the *CEC Knowledge and Skill Base for All Beginning Special Education Administrators*. These standards focus on ten specific areas of knowledge: (1) Foundations; (2) Development and Characteristics of Learners; (3) Individual Learning; (4) Instructional Strategies; (5) Learning Environments and Social Interactions; (6) Language; (7) Instructional Planning; (8) Assessment; (9) Professional and Ethical Practice; and (10) Collaboration.

Table 3

Council of Exceptional Children Knowledge and Standards for Special Education Administrators

1966	2004
Total Education Process	Foundations
Knowledge of Professional Responsibilities	Development & Characteristics of Learner
Fiscal Procedures	Individual Learning Differences
Curriculum	Instruction Planning
Supervision	Assessment
Diagnostic Procedures	Collaboration
Personnel Practices	Profession & Ethical Practices
Public Relations	
School Law	
Plant Planning	
Research Techniques	

Based on the number of skills categorized for each standard, certain standards appear to receive more focus than others. These standards are addressed in this section. The Foundation standard addresses issues concerning laws and policies for general and special education, theories and philosophies, human resource management, funding, and legal and ethical issues. The Instructional Strategies standard focuses on general curriculum, instruction, and how special education supports access to the general curriculum. It also addresses professional development and budgeting of resources. The Collaboration standard recognizes the need for knowledge and skills in dealing with parents, family, and community members including developing and implementing intra- and interagency agreements supporting shared responsibility for students with disabilities.

Leadership Characteristics

Lead scholars in the field of special education leadership, Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran (1993) suggested the Special Education Administrator must be proficient in communication skills. The administrator must collaborate with school building administrators to develop programs between special education and general education (Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran, 1993). The Special Education Administrator must have knowledge of instructional learning techniques of students with special learning needs. They must also work with outside agency representatives at the local, state, and federal levels to communicate their school district's goals and objectives in order to achieve support for their educational programs. Performing continuing evaluation and review of compliance regulations, as required by legal mandates at the state and federal levels, is also a priority for the Special Education Administrator (Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran, 1993).

In addition, the Special Education Administrator must also have more generalized skills such as management of special education budgeting and personnel (Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran, 1993). Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran suggested the Special Education Administrator's role requires a leadership style that continuously examines itself, through the objective evaluation of personal behavior, for the express purpose of improving the quality of education services to student with disabilities. The position of Special Education Administrator requires a leader who, by developing effective models

of collaboration with others can improve the readiness within the general education mainstream for the inclusion of those with special education needs (Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran, 1993). The leadership role of the Special Education Administrator involves a complex set of functions, in order to develop and expand services to children who have disabilities and others within the general education (Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran, 1993).

Goor (1995) suggested successful leadership is a complex blend of personal characteristics and specific skills. He developed a self-inventory questionnaire school leaders could use with prospective Special Education Administrators (Table 4). Successful special education leaders are open to participation, diversity, conflict, reflection, and mistakes, with the ability to communicate a clear mission, listen well, and participate as an influential team member (Goor, 1995).

Table 4

Self-inventory Questionnaire for Prospective Administrators of Special Education

1. Do I have the ability to act as an authority figure and influence others?
2. Am I willing to take responsibility and to be held accountable for the completion of task?
3. Do I have the ability to solve problems using creative and unique solutions?
4. Do I have the ability to empower individuals to perform their jobs in a manner that supports their strengths and abilities?
5. Do I willingly acknowledge and accept the consequences for my decisions?
6. Can I make a decision knowing there is not a clear-cut solution to the problem?
7. Can I be a productive team member?
8. Do I accept and make use of constructive criticism?
9. Do I recognize and tolerate frustration in others and myself?
10. Do I have the ability to perform multiple tasks?
11. Do I recognize that change is inevitable?
12. Do I have the ability to articulate personal and professional goals?

Adapted from "*Leadership for special education administration"* by M. B. Goor, 1995, Fort Worth: Harcourt Publishers.

Functions of the Special Education Administrator

Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran (1993) suggested job descriptions for the position of the Special Education Administrator. One suggestion was that Special Education Administrators be skilled in providing technical assistance for the development of effective models of collaboration. The second suggestion was administrative leadership should have the knowledge to assist in promoting strong advocacy for children. Third, administrators should have the skills to communicate effectively the content and implications of federal and state laws, regulations, court decisions, and policy statements pertaining to the education of children with disabilities. Next, administrators would need skills to enable them to coordinate the planning and implementation of educational programs and other services for children with disabilities. Fifth, administrators should have the knowledge to responsibly prepare the local annual special education plan and effectively recruit support for it through local agencies and parent groups, and maintain current and updated information on special education with special attention to the census, program evaluation, and fiscal data. In addition, this leadership role requires the ability to initiate administrative leadership with building level administrators in developing and supervising special education programs and human resource management, planning effective district-wide awareness, screening, assessment, and placement programs, and planning, organizing, and implementing programs to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected.

Goor (1995) reported that Special Education Administrators have to be task oriented and organized in order to deal with multiple responsibilities. These administrators need good planning and decision-making skills, as well as the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively (Goor, 1995).

Sullivan (2000) conducted a study to examine the expectations held by administrative personnel with respect to the role of the Special Education Administrator. Fifty-five county school superintendents, 55 district-level Special Education Administrators, and 150 public school principals (randomly selected N=150) were sent a survey consisting of 40 specific tasks organized under seven administrative functions. A demographic questionnaire and a survey instrument, validated by Newman in 1967, were mailed to the 260 study participants. Respondents indicated if the person responsible for

administering special education actually performed each task, and the degree of importance of the task. Data generated by the study was assigned response codes consistent with the categories in the instrument, arrayed, and processed by using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test all hypotheses. In instances where the null hypothesis was rejected, the Scheffe' method of multiple comparisons was used for post hoc analysis. Responses were received from 40 (73%) superintendents, 55 Special Education Administrators (100%), and 107 (71%) principals. Table 4 identifies the seven administrative functions of the Special Education Administrator and the defined tasks as suggested by Sullivan.

Sullivan (2000) reported study participants identified 34 of the 40 identified tasks and functions performed by the Special Education Administrator within the important to very important range. There appeared to be significant differences in the perceptions of the superintendent, principal, and Special Education Administrator. Since the perceptual incongruence was occurring mostly between the principal and Special Education Administrator, Sullivan suggested this could lead to conflict with program implementation and could result in less effective delivery of services to students with disabilities. The participants as a total group shared common perceptions regarding the majority of the functional tasks concerning their importance and implementation (Sullivan, 2000). Lashley and Boscardin (2003) reported Special Education Administrators are challenged to collaborate with principals in order to assure high quality programs.

Evaluating the Special Education Administrator

Changes in U.S. educational programs in response to NCLB and IDEA 2004 have increased the responsibilities for the Special Education Administrators. Not only are they responsible for all duties discussed previously, they are now obligated to provide team-based program leadership and management, and shared administrative responsibility for special education programs (Johnson, 1998). The performance of the Special Education Administrators must be considered in context with NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Herman (1991) suggested the performance evaluation of administrators is a process. He reported that those key tasks are critical to an administrator's job should compare anticipated performance to actual performance (Herman, 1991). The evaluation

of the Special Education Administrator is an element of the accountability process. Evaluation should consider the management of special education compliance, personnel, facilities, and resources, and the provision of leadership to support program development (Herman, 1991). Accountability in the leadership of special education is critical as school districts move to inclusive program models and shared administrative responsibilities for students with disabilities (Lashley, 1991). Under the current federal regulations of NCLB and IDEA 2004, it is critical administrators of special education be held accountable for the education of students with disabilities.

Purpose of evaluating the Special Education Administrator

The administration of special education is a challenging task presenting circumstances that raise public questions about the administrator's performance (Johnson, 1998). Implementing a high-quality, valid, and reliable system of administrative evaluation offers Special Education Administrators the feedback necessary for professional development and improvement.

Bolton (1980) identified several rationales for evaluating the administrators of special education. First, he suggested that evaluations provide the information to improve administrative performance and guide selection of professional development activities. Second, he believes that by identifying programmatic weaknesses the special education administrator will implement the needed changes in procedures and programs. Third, he indicated that evaluation is a basis for professional recognition and advancement in compensation. Finally, the evaluation can be successfully utilized as a tool of protection against unwarranted criticism.

In 1991, Rammer stated administrative evaluation provides formative data to facilitate professional improvement and summative data to establish professional effectiveness. With the merging of general and special education programs under NCLB and IDEA 2004, Special Education Administrators now share responsibility for the education of all students, especially those with disabilities, and therefore must share accountability (Osborne, DiMattia, and Curran, 1993). Lashley, as early as 1991, reported that accountability in the administration of special education is critical. In 2003, Lashley and Boscardin suggested special education leaders have been challenged with new roles

and responsibilities as the outcome accountability measures intensify under the current federal regulations.

Evaluation Models

There has been a variety of evaluation models used to evaluate Special Education Administrators. A model commonly used in the 1980s was the Management by Objectives model; also know as the professional performance contract. When utilizing this model the Special Education Administrator would follow identified steps: (1) develop a series of objectives; and (2) develop an action plan during consultation with their immediate supervisor. The documentation and evaluation of the completed actions created the source of the administrator's performance (Johnson, 1998).

Rating scales are utilized as another evaluation model for Special Education Administrators. This model consists of a series of identified characteristics on which the supervisor rates the administrator. Johnson (1998) reported the traditional rating scale is subjective and has poor reliability.

A third model for administrative evaluation is the self-evaluation method that brings together the traditional scale model and the objective model. This model is known as the administrative outcomes model and has been utilized more in recent years. This evaluation method is based on identified roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator. A variety of data collection methods are utilized to obtain a clear picture on the performance of the administrator: (1) performance observations; (2) checklists; (3) rating scales; (4) interviews; and (5) portfolios (Johnson, 1998).

Johnson (1998) reported that models representing comprehensive performance evaluations of Special Education Administrators must include valid, reliable, meaningful, useful, and practical components. Based on Johnson's research, the Leadership Behaviors (Appendix A) and the Special Education Program Management Performance instruments were developed as models for evaluating the performance of Special Education Administrators (Appendix B). The collection of data from these evaluation instruments is used as formative records to enable the Special Education Administrator to construct professional development objectives. The Special Education Administrator's professional development objectives should be reviewed with their supervisor, and updated and evaluated on a continuing basis (Johnson, 1998).

Conclusions

Due to the educational mandates of NCLB and IDEA 2004, and instructional changes brought about by these federal regulations, the accountability measures for Special Education Administrators should be considered for thorough review. At this time, the questions remain: (1) What do Special Education Administrators perceive as their role and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004; (2) Do Special Education Administrators perceive their evaluation tool as an adequate measure of the current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004; and (3) Does the criteria by which Special Education Administrators are evaluated reflect what the research supports as those components related to roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology of the research in terms of the purpose of the study, research questions, type of design, procedures for instrument development, data collection procedures, and method of data analysis. Survey responses are obtained and analyzed to answer the research questions identified in the study. Information gained from the data provides recommendations for further study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide insight into Special Education Administrators' perception of key responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. The information gained through survey responses help determine if the evaluation tools being utilized throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia measure the current roles and responsibilities that research supports as those components related to roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. The guiding questions for the study are summarizes in Table 5.

Table 5

Guiding Research Questions

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1. What do Special Education Administrators perceive as their roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004?

2. Do Special Education Administrators perceive their evaluation tool as an adequate measure of the current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004?

3. Does the criteria by which Special Education Administrators are evaluated reflect what the research supports as those components related to roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004?

Procedures

The design of this study is survey research. An online survey questionnaire containing both qualitative and quantitative questions was utilized to collect and analyze the Special Education Administrators' perceptions. Descriptive statistics are used to examine variability among the data, determining how the data are related . Informational demographic data are compiled and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Survey results are analyzed in relation to the researched variables to determine if there is a relationship between how Special Education Administrators are evaluated and their roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Research Methods

Stratification was utilized to obtain a random sample of the 132 school divisions by socio-economics, student population, and number of identified students with disabilities. The sample included 20 participants from each subgroup. The selection from the subgroups was conducted by dividing the 20 by three and then choosing the divisions based on percentages identified in each of the following reports; the Local Index Composite report was used to identify the socio-economic status of the school divisions, the student population of the schools divisions was obtained from the Average Daily Attendance report, and the number of identified students with disabilities was obtained by reviewing the Special Education December 1 Child Count report.

The random stratification allowed for a diverse sampling of Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For instance, in the area of socio-economic the percentage of students participating in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program greatly varies throughout Virginia. Such as, in the most current report available from the Virginia Department of Education (2006), Falls Church reported 7.49% of their students received free or reduced price lunch while Lee reported 64.69% students qualifying for the program.

Survey Methodology

The method for gathering the data incorporated an online survey and structured interviews. The online questionnaire included a two-part survey utilizing the internet as a resource for contacting the participants. The SurveyMonkey was used to develop and collect the online survey data. The benefits from using an internet survey were that

respondents had the opportunity to control the questions pace and sequence, and were able to gather an impression of the context of the survey and estimate the amount of time in completing the survey (Stemple, 2004). Secondly, the benefit of gathering data by internet is that it allowed for a more efficient, economical, and timely response in the collection of the data. Schonlau, Fricker, and Elliott (2002) reported that time spent on preparing the surveys, e-mailing the surveys, and conducting the analysis of the data is comparable to traditionally mailed surveys. Third, by using this internet method for surveying the participants, the researcher did not have to spend valuable time inputting return responses.

Krantz (2000) determined that there is little difference between results collected from web-based and laboratory based surveys. The benefits of online research far outweigh the disadvantages (Frantz, 2000).   The length of the survey and the time required to complete the survey was considered in order to increase participant response rate (Bhaskaran, 2001; Stemple, 2004).

In addition to the online survey, structured interviews were conducted in order to gain a greater depth of understanding of how current Special Education Administrators are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested that interviews, and other qualitative methods, can be utilized to achieve a better understanding of a phenomenon and enables the researcher to "gain more in-depth information."

Instrumentation

The instruments for this study included: (1) an online survey and (2) structured interviews. The first instrument utilized was survey. The survey consisted of a two part self-administered online questionaire (Appendix E). The first part is an individual data page used to collect data on the characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics are analyzed to determine if there are related variables in the types of methods used for evaluating the Special Education Administrators. The individual data page collects information on: (1) Gender; (2) Age; (3) Salary Range; (4) Number of year in their current position; and (5) Number of years in working the educational field.

The second part of the survey questions the Special Education Administrators' perception of their roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. This part also

collects information relating to whether they believe their evaluation tool is an adequate measure of the current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Items for the survey were formulated from several sources. First, the framework for item development was based on the Johnson's (1998) *Leadership Behaviors and the Special Education Program Management Performance* evaluation tools (Appendix B). Second, knowledge and skills identified by the Council of Exceptional Children for all beginning Special Education Administrators provided additional content for item development (Appendix C). Third, a review of literature provided additional information on the roles and responsibilities performed by Special Education Administrators. Finally, selected professionals from local educational agencies, educational leadership doctoral students, and institutions of higher education critically assessed the survey instrument (Appendix A).

Based on the literature reviewed and recommendations of the research committee, the online survey instrument was revised to clarify the intention of the study, type of questions, and adding answering options. The feedback from the pre-study led to the revision of the introductory letter and survey instrument design (Appendix E).

The second instrument utilized in the study was an interview protocol developed to conduct structured interviews in order to gain a greater depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrators under the state and federal mandates. The research design for the interviews, including the development of the protocol, was intended to be descriptive of nature; utilizing audio recording, analysis, and interpretation of the Special Education Administrators' perceptions. The interview protocol was developed to guide the questioning of the participants (Appendix K).

An introductory letter was sent to five Special Education Administrators. The letter explained the purpose of interviews and asked if they would participant in an interview to help gain a greater understanding of the research results collected from the online survey (Appendix J). Three administrators responded to the introductory letter, volunteering to participate in the interview. Since these participants initiated interest in the research, they were chosen to participate in the interviews.

An interview protocol guided the questioning for this phase of the research. Six questions were utilized to focus the questioning: (1) Define your current roles and

responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA; (2) Describe how you are currently being evaluated as the Special Education Administrator; (3) Do you believe professional standards are important components in relation to the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator; (4) Do you feel that performance evaluations are inconsistent with the professional standards; (5) What suggestions do you have for improving the evaluation tool for Special Education Administrators; and (6) Are there any other thoughts you would like to share in relation to the Special Education Administrator's roles and responsibilities or evaluation practices? Additional questioning was used to assist with individual interviews to order to gain a greater understanding of the participant's thoughts and concerns.

Pilot Study I

The researcher conducted a pilot of the proposed study with the assistance of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral students. The participants of the pilot study included a representation of Virginia's educational administration personnel. The 14 participants included an Assistant Superintendent, Directors of Instruction, Principals, Coordinators of Testing, and Directors of Special Education. The pilot participants were asked to complete the online survey instrument and then answer specific questions in order to evaluate the validity and reliability of the instrument (Table 6). In addition to answering the pilot study questions, the participants were given an opportunity to make recommendations.

The researcher has identified each question, attempting to provide a detailed analysis of the pilot study participants' responses. As shown below in Table 7, one respondent suggested that the survey introduction was "a bit lengthy" and that the introduction be cut down so that people would take the time to read it. Similarly, two respondents reported that the survey was too long.

Table 6

Pilot Study Questions

1. Is the online survey easy to access?
2. Did the survey instrument use an acceptable method to establish contact with the study population?
3. Is the introduction clearly written?
4. Is the purpose of the study clearly identified?
5. Are the format clear and the presentation of the questions easy to follow?
6. Is the sequence of questions logical?
7. Is the wording of the questions clearly written?
8. Is the space for answers sufficient?
9. Is there a need for additional instructions for participants (e.g., guidelines for 'probing' certain open questions)?

Table 7

Pilot Study Results Summary

Question	Yes Frequency	No Frequency	Yes Percentage	No Percentage	Response
Is the online survey easy to access?	14	0	100	0	A bit long.
Did the survey instrument use an acceptable method to establish contact with the study population?	14	0	100	0	
Is the introduction clearly written?	14	0	100	0	It was a bit lengthy – shorten it or people won't
Is the purpose of the study clearly identified?	14	0	100	0	
Are the format clear and the presentation of the questions easy to follow?	14	0	100	0	The last question had the wrong number in it. #17 was confusing so I did not answer it. The survey was too long. Most administrators would not participate in such a lengthy survey.
Is the sequence of questions logical?	14	0	100	0	
Is the wording of the questions clearly written?	14	0	100	0	Screen was spelled wrong in one question.
Is the space for answers sufficient?	14	0	100	0	
Is there a need for additional instructions for participants (e.g., guidelines for 'probing' certain open questions)?	1	13	7	93	

The pilot study was beneficial in providing clarification of the research instrument. In addition, Appendix F provides a detailed report of individual questions. The overall response to the pilot study questions was positive.

However, due to the concerns of the OTR pilot study participants and dissertation committee, the researcher analyzed the introduction letter and the survey questions for possible item duplication. It was determined that several of the items addressing the standards and the skills and knowledge of the Special Education Administrator could be deleted because of replication. It was also determined that items 6 through 10 of the demographic section could be obtained through the Virginia Department of Education reports. This resulted in a significant decrease in the length of the questionnaire.

During a formal review by the dissertation committee, it was recommended that the researcher conduct a second pilot study consisting of Special Education Administrators in another state. The researcher choose the state of North Carolina because it has a similar comparable student population (average daily attendance) as Virginia. A sampling was collected based on randomly selected Special Education Administrators. A listing of Special Education Administrators was obtained from the North Carolina Department of Education web site. Five Special Education Administrators participated in the pilot study. Of the five participants, 80% hold a doctoral degree.

Pilot Study II

The North Carolina Special Education Administrator pilot study participants were asked to complete an online survey instrument consisting of the self-administered questionnaire and an additional survey examining the research tool. They provided input concerning the survey questions, including the need for clarification and omission or deletion of items that would improve the questionnaire instrument. The North Carolina pilot study participants reported the following data: (1) Agreed or strongly agreed the amount of time required to complete the survey was appropriate; (2) The online survey is easy to access; (3) The survey uses an acceptable method to establish contact with Special Education Administrators; (4) The introduction is clearly written; (5) The purpose of the study is clearly identified; and (6) The overall quality of the survey is good to excellent. The pilot study participants were also asked if there were other questions they believed needed to be addressed in order to answer the research question.

As shown in Appendix H and discussed above, the pilot study participants provided a systematic validation of the online survey instrument. Personal emails were received by the researcher from the North Carolina participants in support of the research and requesting copies of the final analysis of the results.

Method of Analysis

Individual demographic data and the respondents' answers to the survey questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The variables identified by administrators as key components of their evaluation tool were compared to components identified in the research.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to organize and present data in a convenient, useable, and communicable form. George and Mallery (2003) reported that descriptive statistics are created to provide information with reference to the distribution of the variables.

The following section states the research questions, including the method of measurement and the method of analysis. The research study questions were: (1) What do Special Education Administrators perceive as their role and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004; (2) Do Special Education Administrators perceive their evaluation tool as an adequate measure of the current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004; and (3) Does the criteria by which Special Education Administrators are evaluated reflect what the research supports as those components related to roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Data Collection

An introductory letter describing the study and its purpose was emailed to the stratified randomly selected Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The participants were provided with an explanation and purpose of the study, benefits of the study, and any risk that may be involved. The approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was included as an attachment to this email.

In order for the participants to begin the survey they were required to initially read an on-line consent form, which was electronically hyperlinked from the introductory letter. A consent form for participation of the study with acknowledgement of freedom to withdraw was also included. Statements pertaining to confidentiality and anonymity were

formally addressed on the consent form. At the conclusion of the letter, the participants were provided with a hyper-link to the on-line survey.

The on-line survey verified consent from the participants as well by prompting them to "Agree" or "Disagree" to participate in the completion of the survey. By clicking on Agree the participants were automatically taken to the on-line survey. If the participant clicked on Disagree they were returned to their home browser. At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to receive results of the research.

The raw data were collected electronically using the SurveyMonkey. This method saved time. Conducting an online survey through electronic mailing enabled the participants to receive their survey the day it was sent. The allocated time for the completion of the survey was three weeks.

In addition to the online survey, a select number of Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia were asked to participate in case study interviews in order to gather a greater depth of understanding of how Special Education Administrators are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA mandates. Data were collected using an interview guide. The interviews presented a way of examining the participants' perceptions of the Special Education Administrators in relation to how they are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. The interview protocol was validated with the assistance of the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee read and made recommendations for revisions. The committee addressed item clarification and provided recommendations for improving the protocol.

An invitation letter to participate was utilized to conduct the recruitment for the interview participants. Participants were selected based on sampling from the participants of the online survey. The participants were given the chose of the time and location. Interviews were audio taped to assist in an accurate recording of the interviewees' responses. Interviews were scheduled to take between 15 to 30 minutes, as determined by the interviewees' responses and interest. The interviews were recorded if approved by the participant. If the interviewee did not wish to be recorded, the researcher took detailed notes during the interview. The interview data was analyzed in relation to the researched

variables as related to how current Special Education Administrators are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Summary

This chapter focused on identifying the methodology utilized in this study including the purpose of the study, procedures, subjects, instrumentation, and the methods of analysis. The research design included an online survey using both qualitative and quantitative questions in order to produce a more descriptive account to improve the quality and scope of the study. The population for this study was stratified random sample of Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia based on the school divisions' socio-economic status, student population, and the number of students identified with disabilities. The online survey instrument and structured interviews were used to examine the perception of Special Education Administrators in relation to their roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Research findings by scholars in the field were compared to the participants' perceptions of the identified roles and responsibilities.

In addition, the survey instrument's specific questions were developed based on scholarly research and professional standards. Qualitative data analysis identified common themes in relation to current practices for evaluating the special performance evaluation and the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrators in response to accountability under NCLB and IDEA.

Prologue to Chapter Four

Participant Characteristics

Thirty Special Education Administrators from the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in an online survey as part of this study. Their backgrounds vary according to gender, age, salary, years in the educational field and years as an administrator of special education. The demographic information of participants that was collected through the online survey process are present in Figure 1.

Chapter Four

Results

An analysis and discussion of the collected data that examined how current Special Education Administrators are being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004 is presented in this chapter. The chapter commences with a review of the research questions, the description of the participants, and the methods of data collection. Descriptive statistics were utilized to examine current evaluation practices for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, the emergent categories for the responses to the open-ended questions are provided. A discussion of the themes that emerged within the responses is included to increase the understanding of the participants' perceptions. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Review of Research Questions, Participants, and Data Collection

As stated above, this research attempts to examine how current Special Education Administrators for the Commonwealth of Virginia are being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA. The research involved a mixed method that combined quantitative and qualitative research. Data were collected through an online survey questionnaire completed by participating Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected administrators. The over-all guiding questions for this study are: (1) What do Special Education Administrators perceive as their roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004; (2) Do Special Education Administrators perceive their evaluation tool as an adequate measure of the current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004; and (3) Does the criteria by which Special Education

Administrators are evaluated reflect what the research supports as those components related to roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004?

This chapter describes the findings of the research in a form that attempts to describe the Special Education Administrators' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. First, a brief overview of the collected data is provided. Figures are provided to enhance understanding of the results. Then, the major categories are described in detail in order to answer the research questions and provide an in-depth analysis of the participants' perceptions.

The data analysis has been conducted in three phases. Phase One is the analysis of the quantitative data. Descriptive statistical data was used to identify how current Special Education Administrators are being evaluated in the Commonwealth of Virginia in response to NCLB and IDEA 2004 regulations. Phase Two of the data examination is the analysis of the qualitative data. The responses from the open-ended questions of the online survey, in addition to the structured interviews, were analyzed to determine how Special Education Administrators perceive their evaluations in response to their current roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Finally, Phase Three of the data analysis attempts to compare the perceptions of the respondents to the identified roles and responsibilities by scholars in the field special education administration.

Characteristics of School Divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Virginia contains a diversified population in relation to the school division population, socio-economic statutes, and identified students with disabilities. Based on the 2006 school census report, there were 1,220,992 students attending public schools in Virginia. A visual representation of Virginia Department of Education School Divisions is presented in Figure 1.

In 2005, the Virginia Department of Education reported the Triennial School Census (Virginia Department of Education, 2006). This report presents the 2005 summary of student enrollment, based on average daily attendance, for children five to nineteen years of age. Student population per school divisions varied from a low of 663 to the highest at 200,902. These data demonstrate the wide differences in student population per school division.

In order to determine the socio-economic status of the school divisions, the researcher chose to analyze the Virginia Department of Education Report on the Composite Index of Local Ability-To-Pay (Virginia Department of Education, 2006). The socio-economic status of Virginia's school divisions is as diversified as the population. Virginia's Department of Education calculates the local school division's funding based on their ability to pay (ranging from .0001 to 1.000). The school division with the lowest ability-to-pay had a composite index of .1769, while the division with the highest ability-to-pay had a composite index exceeded 1.0000 (capped at .8000 for funding purposes).

Virginia Department of Education's December 1 Child Count was utilized to obtain the sampling of identified children requiring special education services. Based on the 2005 December 1 Child Count Report, there were 175,176 identified students requiring some form of special education services, representing approximately 14% of the student population (Virginia Department of Education, 2006).

Characteristics of Participants

Stratification was utilized to obtain a sample of the 132 Directors of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In order to complete the stratification of Special Education Administrators, participants were chosen from each sub-group: (1) student population, (2) socio-economic status, and (3) number of identified students with disabilities. This resulted in sampling of 60 participants, with 30 participants responding to the research questionnaire resulting in a 50% response rate.

The sample for the online survey included 83% women and 17% men. The respondents varied in age from 36 to older than 55 years, with the largest percentage falling between 46 to 55 years. Salary varied from less than $50,000 to over $100,000, with slight majority (44%) receiving incomes between $75,000 to $100,000 salary range. Four percent had salaries below $50,000, 41% from $50,000 to $75,000, and 11% receiving salaries over $100,000. All participants reported that they had been working in the educational field for 11 or more years, with 90% having more than 15 years experience in education. Questions 1-5 have addressed the characteristics of the participants (Figures Tables 7 to 11 summarizes the frequencies and percentages by categories for survey Questions 1-5.
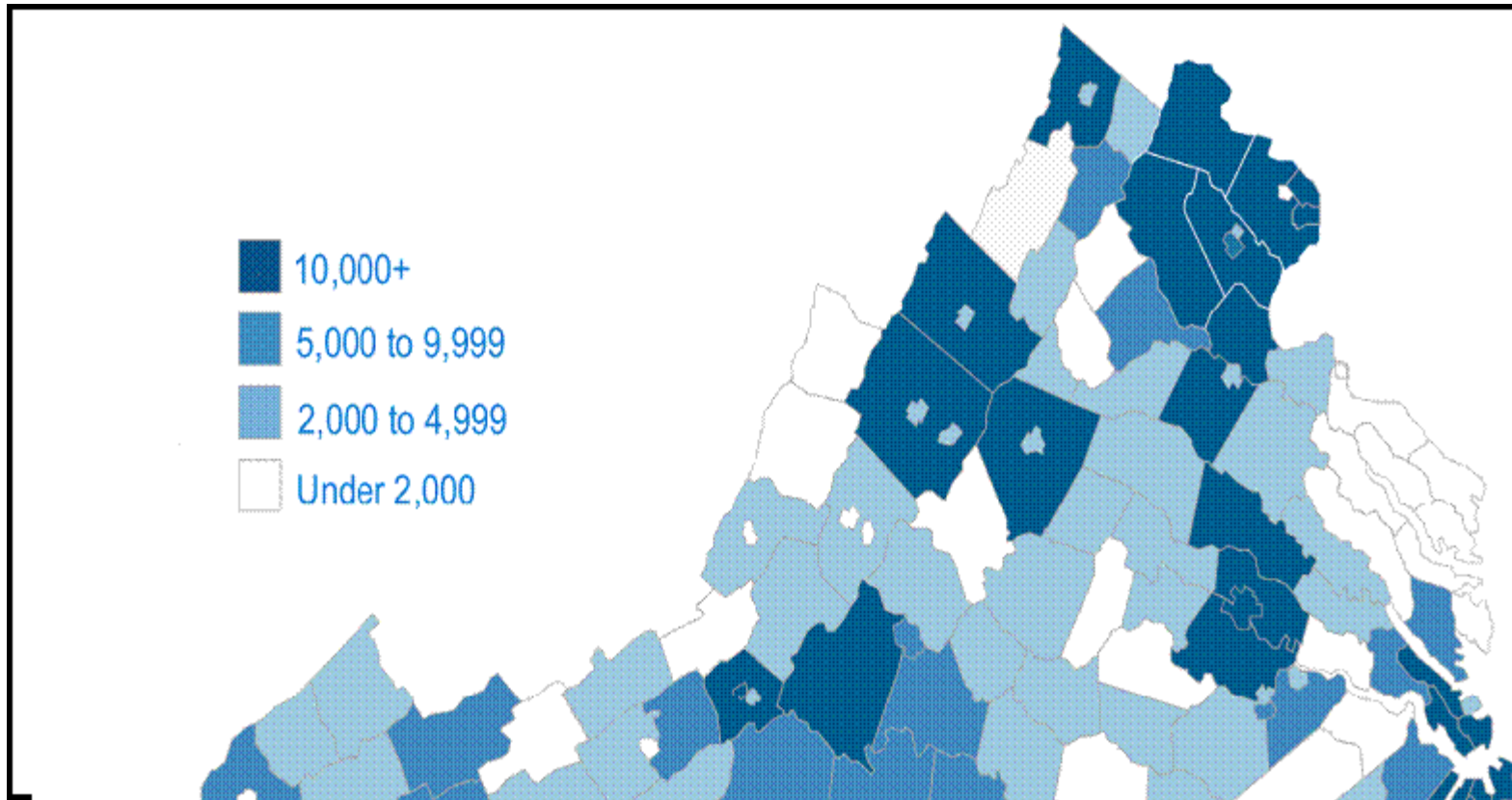
Figure 1. Virginia Department of Education school divisions' student population based on Average Daily Attendance.

The total years as a Special Education Administrator varied tremendously, from one to three years to more than 15 years of experience. Twenty percent reported they had one to three years experience as a Special Education Administrator, 17% from four to six years, 23% from seven to nine yeas, 17% from 10 to 15 years, and 23% with more than 15 years experience. All participants responded to Questions 1 through 5 (Figures 2-6).
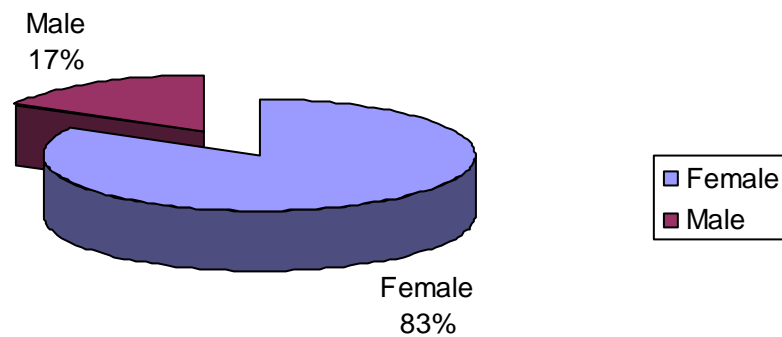
Figure 2. Gender of Special Education Administrator participants
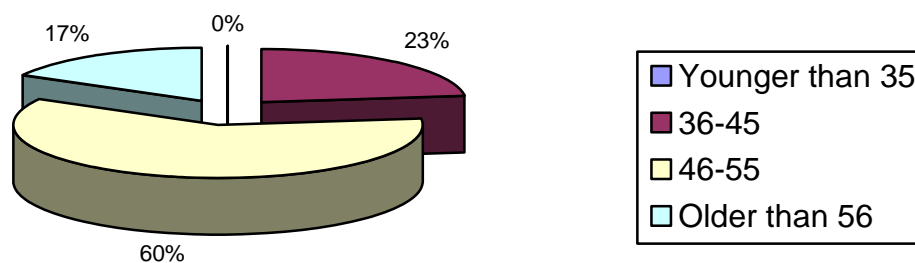
Figure 3. Age of Special Education Administrator participants.

| Less than $50,000 |
| $50,000-$75,000 |
| $75,000-$100,000 |
| More than $100,000 |
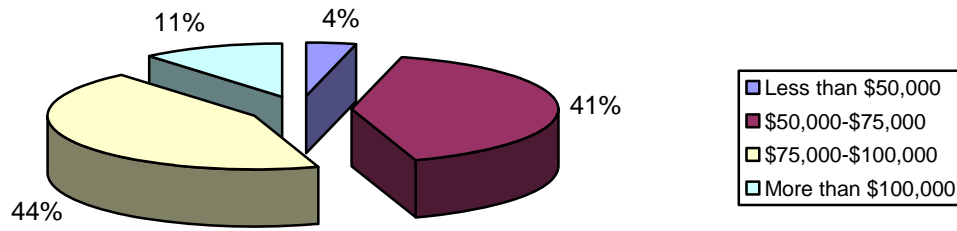
Figure 4.   Salary range of Special Education Administrator participants.

| 1-3 Yrs. |
| 4-6 Yrs. |
| 7-9 Yrs |
| 10-15 Yrs. |
| More than 15 Yrs. |
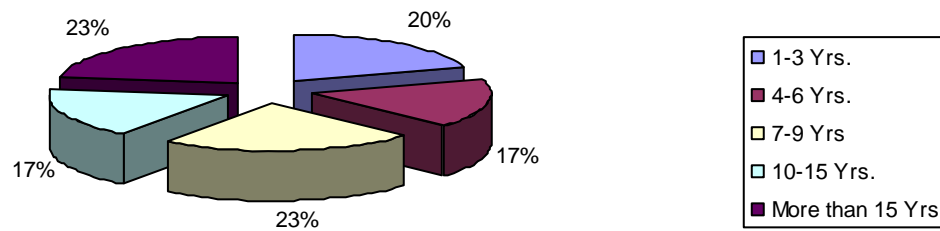
Figure 5.   Number of years participants have worked as a Special Education Administrator.

| 1-4 Yrs. |
| 5-10 Yrs. |
| 11-15 Yrs |
| More than 15 Yrs. |
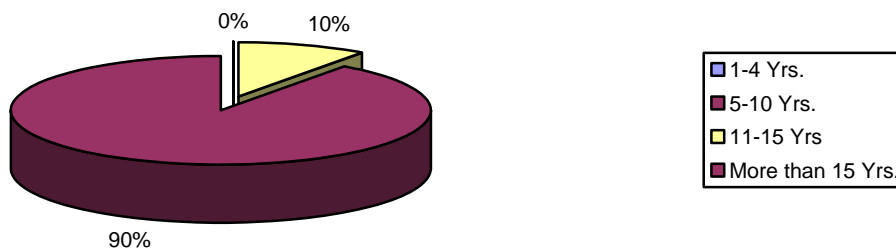
Figure 6.   Number of years Special Education Administrator participants have worked in the field of education.

Results from the Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey

Phase One

Phase one of the research analysis is the results of online Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey quantitative data. Descriptive statistical data were used to identify how current administrators of special education are being evaluated in the Commonwealth of Virginia in response to NCLB and IDEA 2004 regulations.

Items for the survey were formulated from several sources: (1) Johnson's (1998) *Leadership Behaviors and the Special Education Program Management Performance* evaluation tools (Appendix B); (2) knowledge and skills identified by the Council of Exceptional Children for all beginning administrators of special education provided additional content for item development (Appendix C); and (3) review of literature provided additional information on the roles and responsibilities performed by administrators of special education. In addition, the survey instrument was reviewed by professionals from local educational agencies, educational leadership doctoral students, professors from institutions of higher education, and randomly selected Special Education Administrators in North Carolina. Descriptive statistics were utilized to organize and present data in a systematic, convenient, and communicable form. The purpose of Phase One section is to report and analyze each survey question.

Special Education Administrators' Performance Evaluation Tools and Methods

Phase One focuses on the analysis of the survey responses of quantitative items. The first step was to identify the type of evaluation tools currently being utilized to evaluate the performance of Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Participants' responses illustrated that the majority (50%) of Special Education Administrators were being evaluated using a formal evaluation tool, with 13% being evaluated using an informal evaluation tool. Thirty-seven percent reported being evaluated using a combination of formal and informal evaluation methods. The results for the evaluation tool item are given in Figure 7. All participants responded to this question.
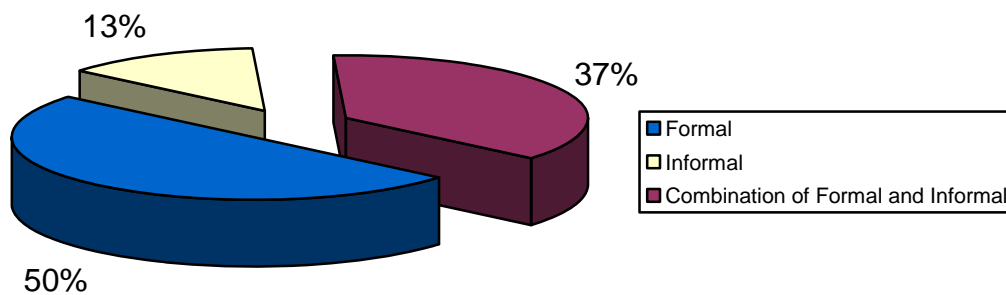
Figure 7. Evaluation models used for Special Education Administrator participants' performance evaluations.

Subsequently, Special Education Administrators reported that the performance evaluation tools utilized were: (1) developed by Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators; (2) represented a formal evaluation tool developed by their local school division; and (3) unknown. The largest majority (60%) of the Special Education Administrators were being evaluated using a formal evaluation tool developed by their local school division. Twenty-three percent reported that they were being evaluated using the Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators, while 17% reported unknown. It was found that no Special Education Administrators were evaluated using a commercially developed evaluation tool. All participants responded to the question. The frequencies and percentage are given in Table 8.

Table 8. *Percentage and frequency of the type of evaluation instruments used for evaluating Special Education Administrator participants*

Instrument	Frequency	Percent
The Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators	7	23
Formal evaluation tool developed by local school division	18	60
Commercially developed evaluation tool used for all school administrators	0	0
Commercially developed evaluation tool developed for Special Education Administrators	0	0
Unknown	5	17
Total	30	100

In addition, the Special Education Administrators identified the following methods utilized for their performance evaluation: (1) performance observations; (2) checklists; (3) rating scales; (4) interviews; and (5) portfolios. The majority (61%) reported that performance observations were utilized as a method for evaluation. Next, 50% reported that an interview method was employed for their performance evaluation. Forty-three percent reported that rating scales were utilized in their evaluation. Checklists were also employed for 29% of the participants. Eighteen percent of the Special Education Administrators reported they were evaluated using portfolios. These results are provided in Figure 8. Ninety-three percent of the respondents answered this question.
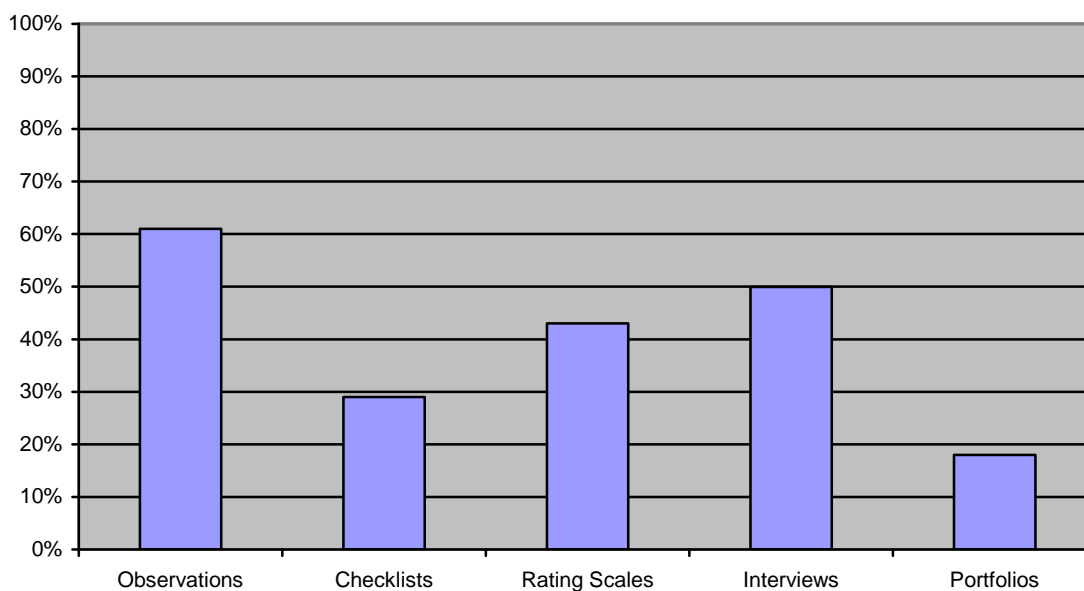
Figure 8.   Methods used in evaluating the Special Education Administrator participants.

Further analysis of the survey questions revealed that the majority (83%) of Special Education Administrators were being evaluated using the same tools and methods as the other administrators within their school district. Meanwhile, 17% reported that different evaluation tools and methods were being utilized in their performance evaluation. All participants responded to the question (Figure 9).

No
17%

Yes
83%
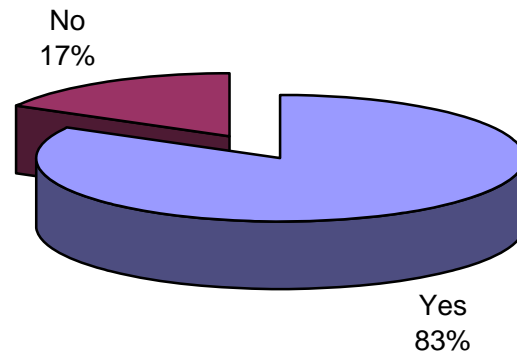
Figure 9. Are Special Education Administrators being evaluated with the same tools and methods as the other administrators within their division?

Professional Standards

With the merging of general and special education programs under NCLB and IDEA 2004, Special Education Administrators now share responsibility for the education of all student, particularly those with disabilities (Osborne, Dimattia, and Curran, 1993). Lashley and Boscardin (2003) suggested the Special Education Administrators have been challenged with new roles and responsibilities as outcome accountability measures intensify under the current federal regulations. Although identifying the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator is difficult since their roles vary according to the school district's structure and size, Osborne, DiMattia and Durran (1993) suggested Special Education Administrators require knowledge and expertise that is both unique and essential to supervising special education programs.

Data Analysis

Currently, many Special Education Administrators are being evaluated on their knowledge and application of professional standards. The Foundations professional standard addresses the following issues: (1) laws and policies for general and special education; (2) theories and philosophies; (3) human resource management; (4) funding; and (5) legal and ethical issues.

One hundred percent of the Special Education Administrators reported that they were evaluated on their knowledge and application in the area of laws and policies. Ninety-two percent reported that their performance evaluation addressed their knowledge and application of human resource management. Eighty-five percent reported that their current evaluation addressed funding, legal, and ethical issues, but only 65% of the participants reported they were being evaluated on issues related to theories and philosophies. Eighty-seven percent of the participants responded to Question 10, with a 90% response on the rating of importance of Foundation roles and responsibilities. The results of the participants' responses regarding the Foundation professional standard roles and responsibilities are given in Figure 10. In addition, the participants reported on the rating of importance on the Foundation standards (Figure 11).
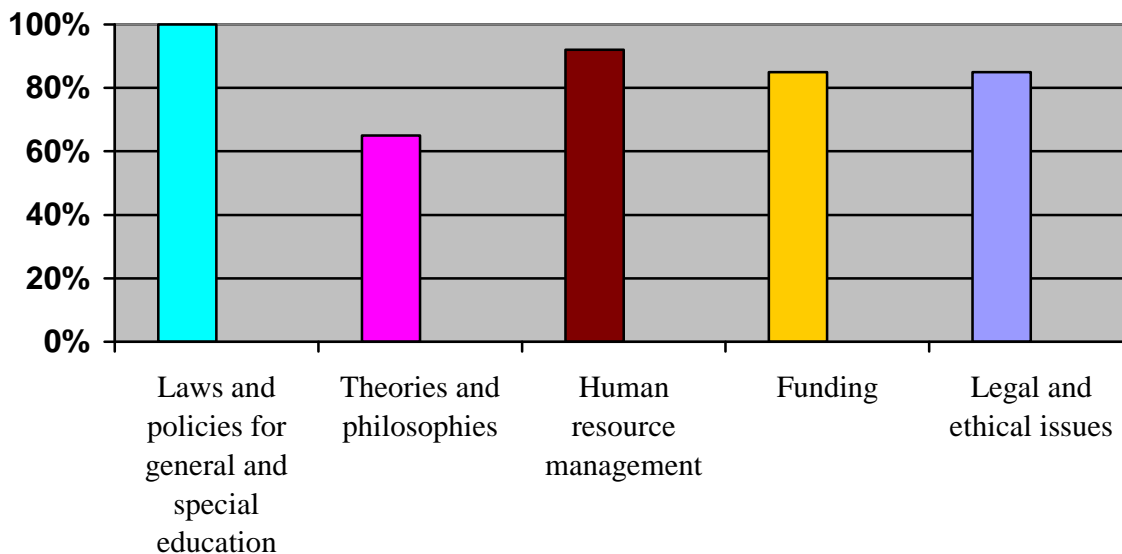
Figure 10. Percentage of Special Education Administrator participants evaluated on the Foundation professional standards.
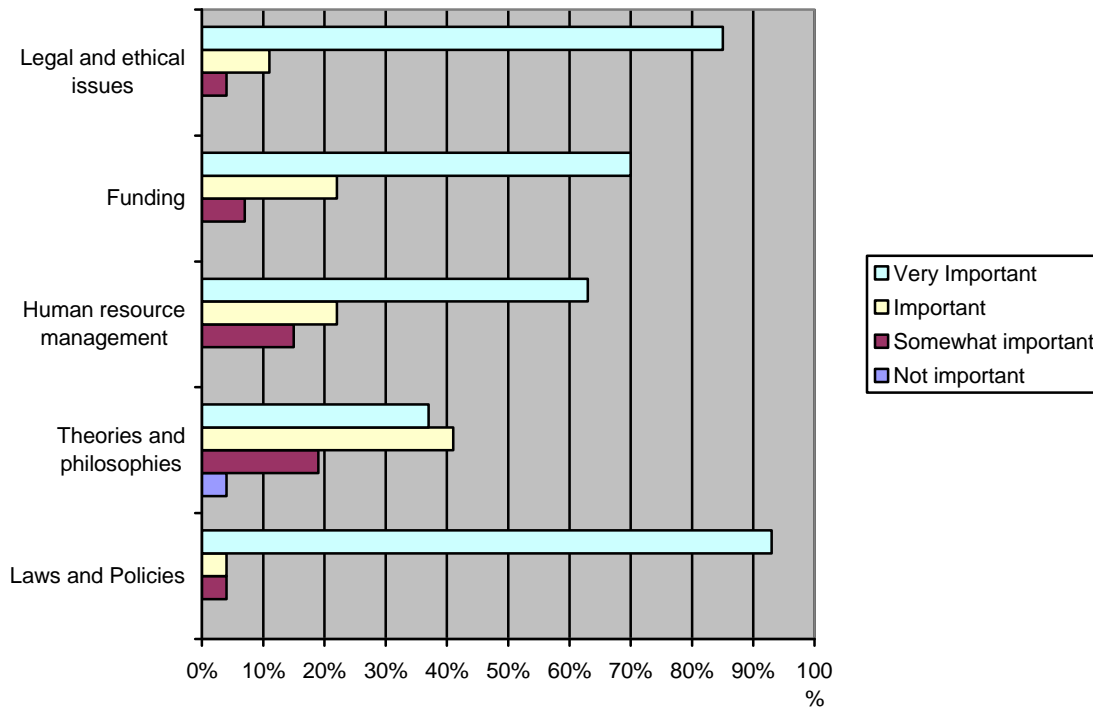
Figure 11. Special Education Administrator participants' rating of importance for the Foundation standards in evaluating their performance.

Secondly, Development and Characteristics of Learners professional standard was identified through the analysis of literature. This professional standard concentrates on the following student issues: (1) human development; (2) principles of learning; and (3) characteristics of individuals with exceptional learning needs and implications for the development of programs and services.

Ninety-six percent of the Special Education Administrators reported that they were currently being evaluated on their knowledge and skills in relation to the Characteristics of Individuals with Exceptional Learning Needs and the implications for the development of programs and services. However, 58% reported that they were being evaluated on their knowledge of principles of learning, with only 28% reported being evaluated on human development. The percentage of participants evaluated in each area and the participants' rating of importance are reported in Figure 11.
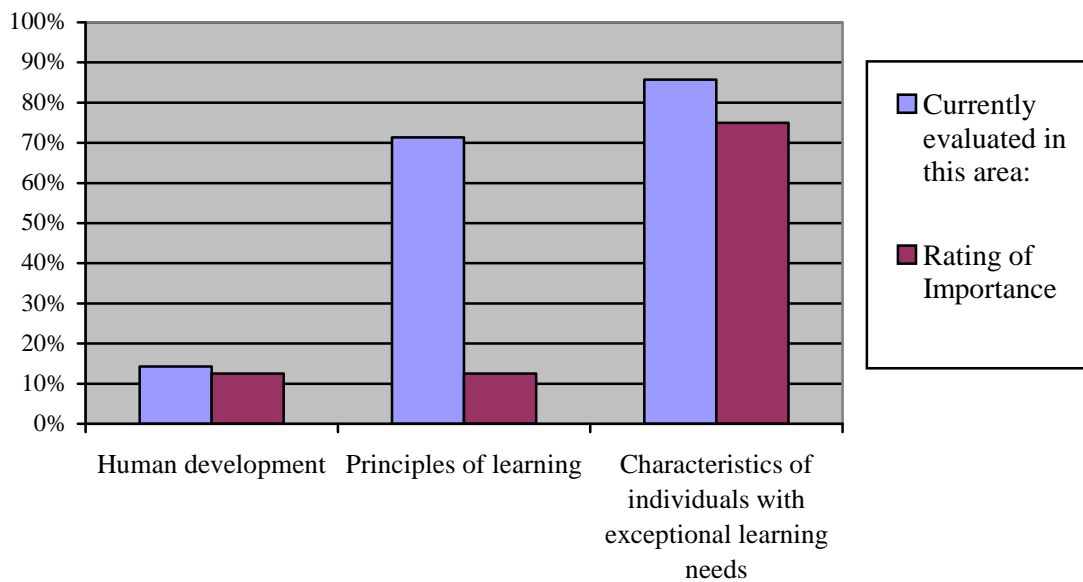
Figure 12. Percentage of Special Education Administrator participants evaluated on Development and Characteristics of Learners professional standards and their rating of importance.

The third professional standard addressed in the study was Instructional Planning. Special Education Administrator participants reported if they were currently being evaluated on their knowledge and application of issues concerning instructional planning. For this study, the Instructional Planning standard focused on eleven issues relating to students with disabilities (Table 9). As illustrated in Table 9, 96% of the participants reported they were currently being evaluated on developing budgets to ensure the efficient and effective allocation of resources. Meanwhile, only 69% of the participants reported they were being evaluated on developing and implementing prevention strategies and programs. Eighty-five percent of the participants confirmed that Instructional Planning was important to very important in the evaluation of their performance as related to their current roles and responsibilities as Special Education Administrators. Ninety percent of the participants responded to this question. Table 9 provides the frequency and percentage for Question 14 on number of respondents currently being evaluated on their knowledge and skills in Instructional Planning. The

results are given for the participants' rating on the importance of the Instruction Planning professional standard in Figure 13.

Table 9. *Special Education Administrators evaluated on their knowledge and application of the Instructional Planning standards.*

Response	Yes Frequency	Yes Percent	No Frequency	No Percent
General curriculum, instruction, and how special education services support access to the general curriculum	22	81	5	19
Developing and implementing a continuum of services that responds to individual educational needs and family characteristics.	22	81	5	19
Designing and implementing professional development and constructive evaluation procedures.	20	77	6	23
Developing and implementing a plan to provide instruction and assistive technologies.	19	70	8	30
Developing collaborative programs that ensure access and participation in the general curriculum	24	89	3	11
Developing and implementing flexible service delivery.	23	85	4	15
Developing and implementing prevention strategies and programs.	25	69	8	31
Developing budgets to ensure efficient and effective allocation of resources	25	96	1	4
Using a variety of technologies to enhance management of resources and programs	19	70	8	30
Developing and implementing discipline policy and procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs.	19	73	7	27
Implementing a range of strategies that promote positive behavior, crisis, intervention and family involvement and support	20	77	6	23
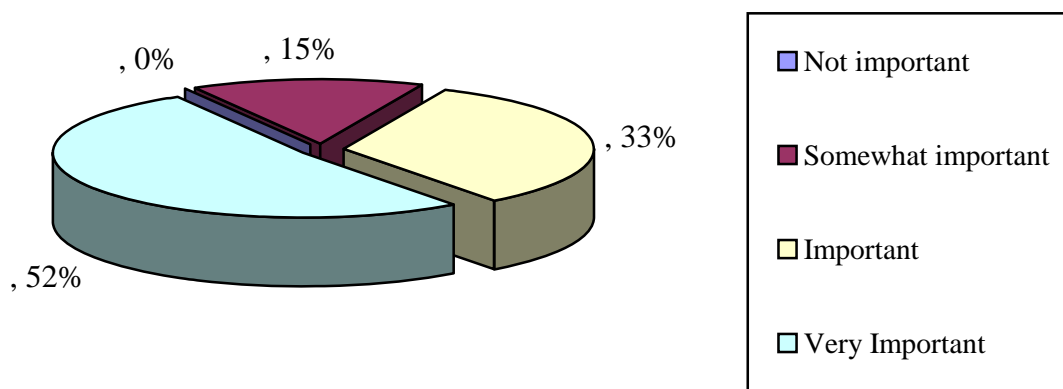
Figure 13.   Special Education Administrator participants' rating of importance of the Instructional Planning standards.

The last professional standard identified was Assessment. This area of focus concentrates on three categories: (1) student participation in the accountability system; (2) implementing procedures for assessment; and (3) ongoing evaluation of programs and practices. Eighty-five percent of the participants reported that they were being evaluated on the implementation of procedures within the accountability system that ensured the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs. Eighty-one percent reported that were evaluated on their skills in developing and implementing ongoing evaluations of special education programs and practices. Whereas only 77% participants believed they were being evaluated for advocating participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs in the accountability systems (Figure 14).

However, what was surprising about this specific data in relation to accountability under NCLB and IDEA was that 4% of the Special Education Administrators rated the Assessment performance standard as not important, with 7% rating the standard as somewhat important and 41% rating the standard as important. While 48% of the Special Education Administrator participants rated Assessment as very important. This represented a diverse range of perceptions of the importance of the Assessment professional standard under the current climate of accountability. Eighty-seven percent of the participants responded to whether they were currently being evaluated on this item,

with 90% responding to the rating of importance for the Assessment professional standard. The participants' response regarding if they are currently being evaluated on their knowledge and application of the Assessment professional standard is illustrated in Figure 14. In addition, the participants rating of importance for the Assessment standards is located in Figure 15.
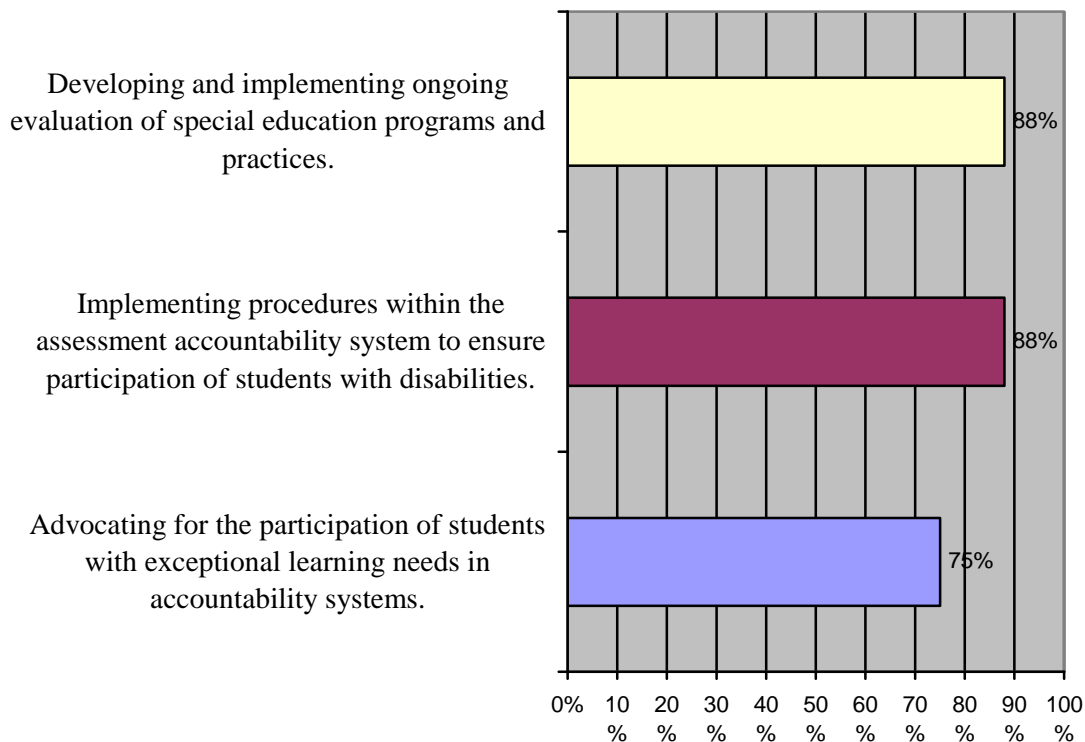
Figure 14.   Percentage of Special Education Administrator participants evaluated on the Assessment standards.
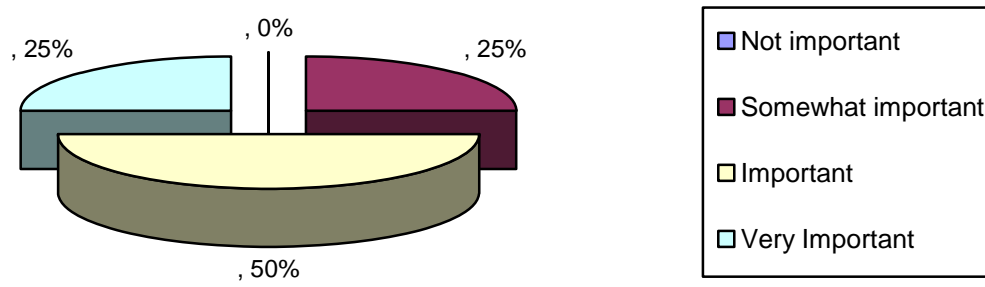
Figure 15. Special Education Administrator participants' rating of importance for the Assessment standards in evaluating their performance.

Phase Two

The second phase of the research examined the qualitative data. The qualitative data included open-ended questions during the online survey and structured interviews. This approach was utilized in an attempt to provide more focus and to ensure that the same general areas of information were collected from each participant. A protocol was developed to guide the questioning during the structured interviews, but allowing for adaptability and a degree of freedom in order to gather the information from the interviewee. Thirty Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the online survey, with three of the administrators participating in the structured interviews. The responses from the open-ended questions of the online survey and interviews were analyzed to determine how Special Education Administrators perceived their evaluations in response to their current roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Current issues affecting Special Education Administrators

As discussed in the previous section, Special Education Administrators perceive that they are being evaluated based on the knowledge and skills identified by scholars in the field. Subsequently, the participants of this research were asked, "Has the state and federal mandates affected your performance evaluation?" Sixty-nine percent reported that state and federal mandates had not affected their evaluation. No Special Education Administrator reported that mandates had affected their performance evaluation. However, 31% briefly describe their concerns in relation to the current mandates.

One Special Education Administrator suggested, "Compliance, accountability, data, SOLs, and AYP are the areas of emphasis" in their current performance evaluation. Whereas another administrator reported, "I am expected to be knowledgeable of the state and federal mandates and to determine the implications for students with disabilities." A different administrator reported that "I'm held accountable for students who do not receive passing grades on assessments."

Meanwhile, another administrator stated, "I am held responsible when schools are not accredited." In addition, a participant suggested that although the mandates had not affected their performance evaluation they believed it would in the future due to "the outcomes of the new indicators for students with disabilities through IDEA 2004."

Finally, one Special Education Administrator specified "There is much more emphasis on the mandates in NCLB as they drive our work. Of course, trying to keep one step ahead of the changes helps me to define personal goals that are part of our evaluation tools."

As supported in this study, accountability is a major focus under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Therefore, Special Education Administrators were asked to briefly explain how they are currently being held accountable for the education of children with disabilities. Over seventy-two percent of the survey participants responded to this open-ended question. An analysis of the qualitative responses revealed that Special Education Administrator participants perceive that they are currently held accountable for numerous responsibilities including such issues as staff development, assessment, provision of student services, and AYP. One administrator stated they were responsible for "Data related to achievement, drop out, graduation rates, attendances, funding deficiency and staffing efficiency, and program and staff development."

However, two central themes were identified from the analysis of the participants' qualitative responses. One of the main themes to be identified through data analysis was issues related to staff development and application, while the other theme identified was student assessment.

One participant reports, "I am responsible for ensuring that policies and regulations are followed by my staff." Another administrator stated, "I am expected to stay current with regulations and laws and to help the teachers and administrators perform within these." The importance of staff training continues to be supported by an administrator who stated "I must provide staff development opportunities for the teachers and administrators regarding accountability."

Meanwhile, Special Education Administrators reported the staff development in relation to assessments. One participant acknowledged:

> I am required to provide continuous in-services for staff on the various assessment options available to students with special needs. The scores of all subgroups including the performance of special education students are analyzed and the data is used throughout the division to make instructional decisions.

Similarly, an administrator reported they were held accountable to ensure the facilitation of "SOL assessment choices for student with disabilities by providing ongoing training to

regular and special educators." To conclude, an administrator maintained they were held accountable to their "assistant superintendent for ensuring that schools have accurate and timely information related to the assessment of students with disabilities and related to instructional practices."

In order to provide an opportunity for the research participants to voice their concerns, they were asked to provide any comments or insights they believed may benefit the performance evaluation of current or future Special Education Administrators. Sixty-two percent of the research participants responded with commentaries.

While one participant reported being evaluated the same way as other "instructional staff" in their school district, another participant responded by stating, "Evaluations need to be in line with evaluations of other administrators in the district." In contrast, an administrator stated:

> It is difficult to evaluate Special Education Administrators in the same manner as other administrators. The same holds true for music and art teachers as compared to general education teachers. There needs to be differentiation in order to adequately assess the performance.

"Evaluations need to be comprehensive –not focused on a particular event, issue, or situation" suggested on Special Education Administrator.

Two participants provided insight on their perception of evaluations in relation to expectations of their job performance. One respondent stated:

> I think Special Education Administrators should be knowledgeable of the CEC standards for special education administrators and can begin to apply them during their own self-assessment process even if the particular standards are not used within their school divisions.

While another participant reported that:

> I like the idea of setting goals for myself along with my superintendent. I think when the superintendent does an observation of my interaction with teachers, students, and other administrators she is able to see that I put into action the goals I have set for myself rather than hearing about what I have done.

Finally, two individuals commented on their concerns. One individual reported that they found the online survey "somewhat frustrating". They explained further by

stating, "While I think your topics are timely and important, what affects my job performance is number of complaints (local and state level) and due process." While another Special Education Administrator remarked on "The testing issue in Virginia seems to be a moving target. New tests are issued and often we do not know how they will be scored until after the evidence has been collected, this makes if hard to meet competencies."

Structured interviews with Special Education Administrators

The topic of the Special Education Administrator performance evaluation is one that appears to be rarely discussed by school administrators, local school boards, and state administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As educators move forward with the mandates of NCLB and IDEA, the researcher has come to the realization that there is considerable variation in local education divisions' methods and procedures for evaluating administrators of special education.

The Virginia State Department of Education has developed guidelines for evaluating school administrators. Currently, the LEAs have the authority to establish their own policies in relation to school administrators' performance evaluations. These varying policies and procedures create an atmosphere that is very difficult for special education administrators in relation to their job performance. In addition, the difference may create additional stress for all administrators involved in conducting evaluations that promote appropriate professional development for Special Education Administrators.

The research design for the interviews was developed in such a method as to gain a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrators in relation to the implementation of NCLB and IDEA; including how they are currently being held accountable for these mandates. Interviews were utilized to obtain the participants' perceptions. The research design for the interviews was intended to be descriptive; utilizing audio recording, analysis, and interpretation of the Special Education Administrators' perceptions. An interview protocol was developed to guide the questioning of the participants (Appendix K).

An introductory letter was sent to five Special Education Administrators. The letter explained the purpose of interviews and asked if they would participant in an interview to help gain a greater understanding of the research results collected from the

online survey (Appendix J). Three administrators responded to the introductory letter, volunteering to participate in the interview. Since these participants initiated interest in the research, they were chosen to participate in the interviews.

An interview protocol guided the questioning for this phase of the research. Six questions were utilized to focus the questioning: (1) Define your current roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA; (2) Describe how you are currently being evaluated as the Special Education Administrator; (3) Do you believe professional standards are important components in relation to the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator; (4) Do you feel that performance evaluations are inconsistent with the professional standards; (5) What suggestions do you have for improving the evaluation tool for Special Education Administrators; and (6) Are there any other thoughts you would like to share in relation to the Special Education Administrator's roles and responsibilities or evaluation practices? Additional questioning was used to assist with individual interviews to order to gain a greater understanding of the participant's thoughts and concerns.

<p align="center">*Results of the Interviews*</p>

Current roles and responsibilities

First, to gather a greater depth of understanding of the position of the Special Education Administrator the participants were asked to define their current roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. One participant report, "I am responsible for the implementation of NCLB in relation to IDEA." Another administrator defined his or her responsibilities in the following manner:

> I have to follow the federal mandates of NCLB and IDEA. In the state of Virginia it is students working toward the SOLs. Virginia Department of Education has come up with new indicators as well, changing the reporting to the federal government.

When a participant was asked to define their roles and responsibilities in more detail, the participant responded, "My responsibility is the implementation of programs in order to meet the state and federal mandates." Another participant also suggested they are responsible for the implementation of NCLB and IDEA. For example they must be knowledgeable of the current mandates, with the ability to understand and interpret the

laws in order to provide the required training necessary for implementation of NCLB and IDEA. The administrator reported that although they were not directly responsible for the implementation of the requirements, such as assessments; it was their responsibility to make sure other school leaders were aware of the current laws and had the appropriate training to implement the requirements.

Evaluation Methods

Next, participants were asked to describe how they are currently being evaluated as the Special Education Administrator. The question was developed in order to assist in identifying how the Special Education Administrators were currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004 mandates. All participants reported that their current performance evaluation tool is the same tool that is utilized for other administrators in the school division. A participant stated, "I am evaluated using a director's evaluation, a generic one for directors. The evaluation tool is the same that is used for other directors in my school division." Likewise, a third participant reported the evaluation for their job was the same methodology used for other non-school based administrators. Their school division had identified broad standards that could be used to address an administrator's specific area of responsibility. Although one participant reported that additional goals were subjectively identified by their direct supervisor and included in the performance evaluation; to their knowledge these goals were not based upon any type of professional standards.

 Professional standards

During the online *Special Education Performance Evaluation Survey,* participants were asked to respond to the importance of professional standards in the field of Special Education Administration; including how they relate to their current roles and responsibilities. During the interview, the participants were asked if they believed professional standards are an important component in relation to the roles and responsibilities of a Special Education Administrator. All participants in the structured interviews stated a definite "Yes." One participant suggested the standards "set the bar" for professionals to adhere to.

In order to solicit more detail on their perceptions of professional standards, the researcher asked the participants to rate the professional standards according to

importance as related to their current roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA. The participants were directed to rate the standards from 1 to 4 according to their perceived importance, 4 being the most important and 1 being the least important. The participants' rating of importance for the professional standards is illustrated in Figure 16.
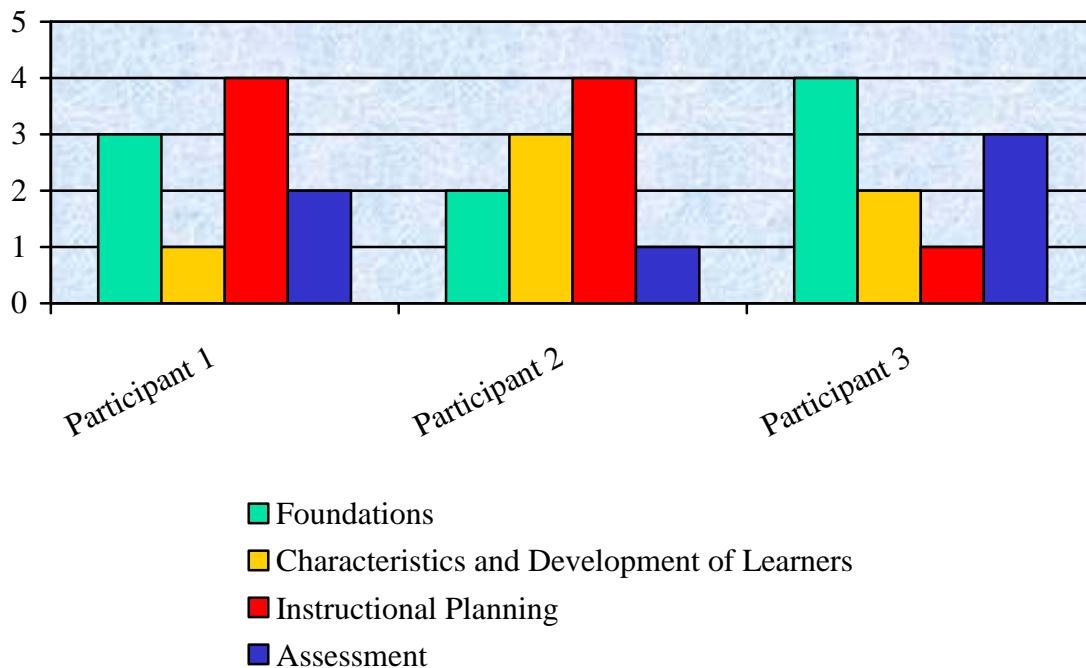
Figure 16. How important do Special Education Administrator participants preceive professional standards in relation to their performance evaluation and the roles and responsibilities in which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004?

In addition to the above responses, a participant provided a more detailed review of the professional standards. While discussing the Foundation standard the participant suggested "the laws and policies for general and special education" was the most important component of the Foundation standard "especially with the changes in IDEA and NCLB." The participant implied that other areas identified under this standard were "mostly ongoing" issues that had to be addressed to support the laws and policies.

Another participant stated that Foundations was "Definitely an important component of professional standards."

Two-thirds of the interview participants rated Instructional Planning as being the most important of all four professional standards.

> More important, and is what we are trying to do and that is really what came about with the change in the law. Which is to provide students with the general curriculum, instruction, and special education services that support access to the general curriculum. The other topics in the instructional planning standard supports students with disabilities in the general curriculum, and their instruction, including how special education services support access to the general curriculum [sic].

This statement was supported by another participant who reported that "Given the benchmarks that NCLB is going to force everyone to meet, it may become an increasingly more important role" in the professional standards.

However, as illustrated in the previous figure, one participant rated Foundations as the most important standard of the four identified standards. The administrator suggested that laws and policies for general and special education, NCLB and IDEA, guided the implementation of all the other standards. Next would be the focus on Assessment for all students, including students with disabilities. The other two standards, Instructional Planning and Development and Characteristics of Learners, would "flow from the Assessment" standard, especially with the focus on accountability under NCLB mandates.

Performance Evaluation

Subsequently, participants were asked if they believed their performance evaluations were inconsistent with the professional standards in the field of Special Education Administrator. Two of the participants reported they considered their evaluations inconsistent with professional standards. One participant reported that they believed the professional standards were an objective view of their roles and responsibilities, whereas their "performance evaluation was subjective." "Yes, my performance evaluation is subjective; it does not touch on some of these areas [identified professional standards]…. The participant implied that although some areas of the

professional standards were addressed in their performance evaluation, they believed "they are subjectively picked" and were not based on their current roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA.

Meanwhile, another participant reported, "The performance evaluation that I am currently evaluated under is generic. It's a generic form that is not specific to my job duties." This participant explained in further detail that an evaluation tool directly related to the professional standards, their current roles and responsibilities would be more beneficial than the generic evaluation tool utilized for all school directors. If an evaluation tool specific to their job "was truly used by the person . . . it would be nice ... and could be used to outline the areas that growth is needed."

One Special Education Administrator stated "I don't think the evaluation methodology" used in the division is inconsistent with professional standards in the field. Having "broad, general standards" consistent with other administrators of the division assisted in the unification of the administrators and programs.

> If there is a belief that there ought to be separate standards. I think that should be the first question, should there be separate standards for administrators of special education. If you do that, then have to almost look at other key positions in school divisions and ask the same question. Should there be separate standards for the finance people, should there be separate standards for the safety people. All those positions are very important and we all have to work interdependently to have services work for students, including students with disabilities. …I don't have the specific answer to that but I think that I'm not sure there is a need for separate evaluations for Special Education Administrators. I do think Special Education Administrators need to possess certain skills and perhaps the standards that you have identified might really represent the skills and knowledge that could be reflected, incorporated into a broader evaluation [sic].

Suggestions for improving performance evaluations

Finally, the researcher asked participants if they had any suggestions for improving the evaluation tool for Special Education Administrators. Several different topics emerged from the question. One participant addressed key issues currently affecting Special Education Administrators.

I think before NCLB general educators and special educators had to work together, but I'm not sure there was an understanding of the programs and what the responsibilities were. I think with the law it has forced the issue. I think there was a total lack of understanding of what the special educator and the special education administrator does because it has always been two separate ways of educating children. So the suggestion I have is for the general and special educators to continue to collaborate, and continue to understand what each other's roles are and that has been brought to the front because of accountability. The more they understand special education, which has always been a separate thing, the better the evaluation tool can become. But it is going to take time. We have had 30 years of two separate things and now we have had just a few years to develop change. We have had parallel roads and all of a sudden, we have intersections [sic].

The researcher initiated a follow-up question from one participant in order to clarify what they perceived as their roles and responsibilities under the currant laws of NCLB and IDEA. The participant included these final thoughts and recommendations.

I think in order for someone to supervise me it is going to take time and experience and walking with me for a while. … [In order] to supervise me doing my job there must be a broad understanding and the two of us working together. By individuals, working together to developing an evaluation tool would be much better – just because of the lack of understanding. I think it works both ways. I think the emphasis for this research is that the laws have forced this issue and it is a good thing. It makes for a stronger and better position. Yes, I think since we are at the beginning of this transition the Special Education Administrator will have to work with the general education administrator in order to develop an appropriate evaluation tool…. Everyone is going to have to work together to address the issues of the Special Education Administrator performance evaluation.

Another participant suggested that an evaluation tool should be made "in line with the duties of my job." Moreover, although their direct supervisor was aware of the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator their performance evaluation

continued to be generic and was not directly related to their specific job responsibilities. The participant concluded the interview by making the following suggestion.

> I think it would be nice for the state to provide some guidance on training for the Special Education Administrator, more than just the couple of days at the beginning of the year…. It would be nice if they had an ongoing course or meetings throughout the year instead of the brief training at the beginning of the year [sic].

However, one participant suggested there were many "vehicles" available to gain knowledge of current laws and practices. Such as the Virginia Council of Administrators for Special Education and other organizations that provide professional development opportunities in the manner of conferences and workshops throughout the year. Although the participant clarified that all divisions are different, and it could be a matter of their specific "resources" within their school division.

> Nonetheless, this participant thinks there is possibly a need within the Commonwealth for more guidance at the state level. The participant contributed an in-depth thought analysis on avenues to improve performance evaluations and professional development for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

> I think one possibility would be to suggest that Virginia Department of Education develop a set of standards for Special Education Administrators. … I do think Special Education Administrators need to possess certain skills and perhaps the standards that you have identified might really represent the skills and knowledge that could be reflected, incorporated into a broader evaluation. …

> One of the ways to go about this is for the Virginia Department of Education to develop a set of expectations for Special Education Administrators and skills that they believe every Special Education Administrator need to have…. School divisions could then decide whether they wanted to create a separate document such as identifying the professional standards similar to something you have done or if they have an identifying listing from the Virginia Department of Education. Then local school divisions could use those as they meet with their Special Education Administrators around the current system that

they use. So that you can kind of consider those as you look at your current evaluation system.

> I do think it is important to set expectations for Special Education Administrators. I think that the Department of Education, through their office of special education would be in a good position to take that on. Since they give guidance to all school divisions and all school divisions look to the Department of Education. If they created a model document or a set of standards, or a set of model skills, that they would like to see Special Education Administrators to work toward, that would be helpful…. Then it could guide those who want to become Special Education Administrators or other administrators to know how to tailor their course work, [or] their own professional development. It could guide the self-assessment process for those who are currently in special education director positions or other administrative positions….

> It would help Virginia Department of Education to provide quite a bit of support for special education directors; and they [Department of Education] have workshops that they provide for new special education directors. So by having a set of skills, recognized skills or standards or characteristics that would help them gear their workshops to make sure they are covering all the key areas or standards or skills.

In addition, this participant stated, "I think the knowledge and skills are important" for individuals. For those individuals that "aspire" to become Special Education Administrators in order for them to identify the "skills they should be trying to build and again for those in the position to know what knowledge and skills they need [in order] to be effective in their role."

> I think that all school divisions tend to work collaboratively with the Virginia Department of Education. If the state department were to issue something, then it gives a common frame, a common language that … could be used throughout the Commonwealth versus each school division trying to create their own skill set.

The participant suggested that the literature on Special Education Administrators roles and responsibilities is "broad." "Rather than each person going through the literature and

calling what they consider to be important roles of the Special Education Administrator", it would more productive if "something could be done through one entity, that other people could access it." The "Council of Exceptional Children is certainly one place to go" for information on the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator, "but I think that the state [should determine what we adopt] in the Commonwealth…." In conclusion, "I think whatever is developed also needs to be broadly and systematically communicated so that everyone knows.... There needs to be efforts to keep that document a living document".

Phase Three

Finally, phase three of the data analysis attempts to compare the perceptions of the respondents to the identified roles and responsibilities by scholar in the field. This section of the analysis focuses on reviewing the identified professional standards in relation to; (1) Foundations; (2) Development and Characteristics of Learners; (3) Instructional Planning; and (4) Assessment; while attempting to analyze the perceptions of the Special Education Administrators in relation to their roles and responsibilities under the current mandates of NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Analyzing the data collected on the professional standards revealed that issues related to the Foundation standard continues to be an essential component of the current roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrators. The participants reported that not only were they being evaluated on their knowledge and application of the laws and policies for general and special education, a 100% of those participants perceived that these skills were very important for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator. The knowledge and skills embedded in the Foundation professional standard is at the core of special education administration. Johnson (1998) suggested that laws and policies as related to the compliance issues is critical in the evaluation of administrators of special education programs.

In addition to the laws and policies, research participants perceived that legal and ethical issues were being addressed in their performance evaluation of current Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As supported by the research participants (85%), Special Education Administrators reported that legal and

ethical issues are very important in the accountability process. Lashley and Boscardin (2003) stated:

> The singular focus on compliance with the law when determining services often excludes questions about social justice. Are the educational decisions being made about students with disabilities moral – ones which everyone can be certain are ethical and just decisions?

In addition, Lashley and Boscardin (2003) suggested that "understanding the ethical and moral foundations" is critical for administrators.

Development and Characteristics of Learners professional standard is also supported by scholars and participants of this research as being an important competent of Special Education Administrators performance evaluations. Ninety-six percent of the participants reported they were being evaluated on their knowledge and skills in relation to the characteristics of exceptional learning needs and implications for the development of programs and services. However, only 81% of the participants perceived this standard to be important to very important in evaluating their performance. Lashley and Boscardin (2003) suggested that two out of three of the highest rated training needs for Special Education Administrators were the evaluation of program effectiveness and quality and the adaptation of curricula and instruction for students.

Subsequently, Special Education Administrator participants reported being evaluated on their knowledge and application of the Instructional Planning professional standard, ranging from 69% to 96% in the different skill areas. The highest percentage was reported in the area of developing budgets, with much less (69%) focus being placed on developing and implementing prevention strategies and programs. Yet, there does appear to be a strong focus on the area of developing collaborative programs (89%) and implementing flexible service delivery (85%) for students with special learning needs (Figure 13).

Finally, the research addresses the Assessment professional standard. Based on the data, participants perceived that they were being evaluated on their knowledge and application for the assessment of students with disabilities. The response ranged from 77% to 85% according to the skill area, with the highest response for implementing procedures for the participation of students with disabilities in the assessment

accountability system (Figure 14). As early as 1992, Lashley was addressing the following assessment issues:

> Increasingly, evaluation of administrative personnel has become tied to accountability systems . . . With increased attention being given to measurable standards of student success, administrators are often evaluated, either formally or informally; through an inspection of available test data and other standardized measures.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain how Special Education Administrators are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. In addition, the researcher has analyzed the data to determine if the Special Education Administrators' evaluation measurements align with professional standards identified in this study. The research involved a review of literature and the collection of data through an online survey of randomly selected participants and a limited number of structured interviews. Thirty Special Education Administrators from the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the study.

Chapter Five is divided into five sections. The first section focuses on professional standards. The second section discusses performance evaluation. The third section reveals the implications of the research, including statements, and conclusions of the research. The fourth section details the limitations of the research and the final section is the summary.

In this chapter, the findings are discussed, along with interpretations based on the analysis of the data. Conclusions are drawn from the research and the implications for Special Education Administrators, researchers, and other stakeholders.

Professional Standards

The emphasis on accountability in relation to NCLB and IDEA 2004 highlights the importance of identifying professional standards in which all Special Education Administrators are responsible. To maximize the quality of performance evaluations for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a paradigm shift will be necessary to change the current practices. With the exception of the Virginia Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators, there does not appear to be any set standards for evaluating the performance of Special Education Administrators under their current roles and responsibilities of NCLB and IDEA 2004. Addressing the administrative needs of children with disabilities is not only an ethical obligation; it is now a fundamental necessity under our current state and federal mandates.

In relation to accountability, one participant suggested Special Education Administrators are held accountable for issues such as "achievement, drop-out rates,

graduation rates, attendance, funding deficiencies and staff efficiencies, and program and staff development." These tasks are in addition to the Special Education Administrators identified professional standards' roles and responsibilities.

The data analysis of the *Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey* revealed participant's perceptions of the knowledge and skills required for their position aligned with the identified professional standards. Research also revealed 100% of participants perceived the listed professional standards as roles and responsibilities in which they are held accountable under the NCLB and IDEA 2004 mandates. In addition, the Special Education Administrators participants believed these professional standards are important components of their performance evaluation (Figure 17).
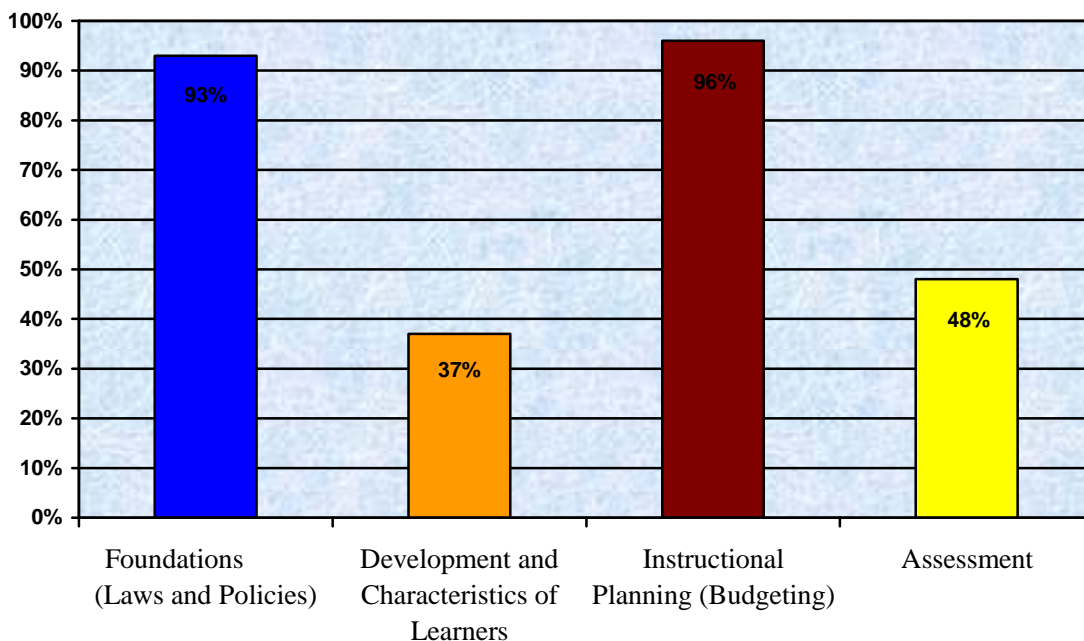
Figure 17. Percentage of Special Education Administrator online survey participants that identified the professional standards as important to very important.

As revealed in Figure 17, the Foundation and Instructional Planning professional standards are scored significantly higher. The research revealed that specific areas within these professional standards are the focus under the current mandates of NCLB and

IDEA 2004. Within the Foundations standard, the issues related to laws and policies held the greatest importance for participants, with budgeting identified as the area of greatest importance in the Instructional Planning standard. In addition, the structured interview Special Education Administrator participants were asked to rate the professional standards rating of importance in regards to the current mandates under NCLB and IDEA 2004.
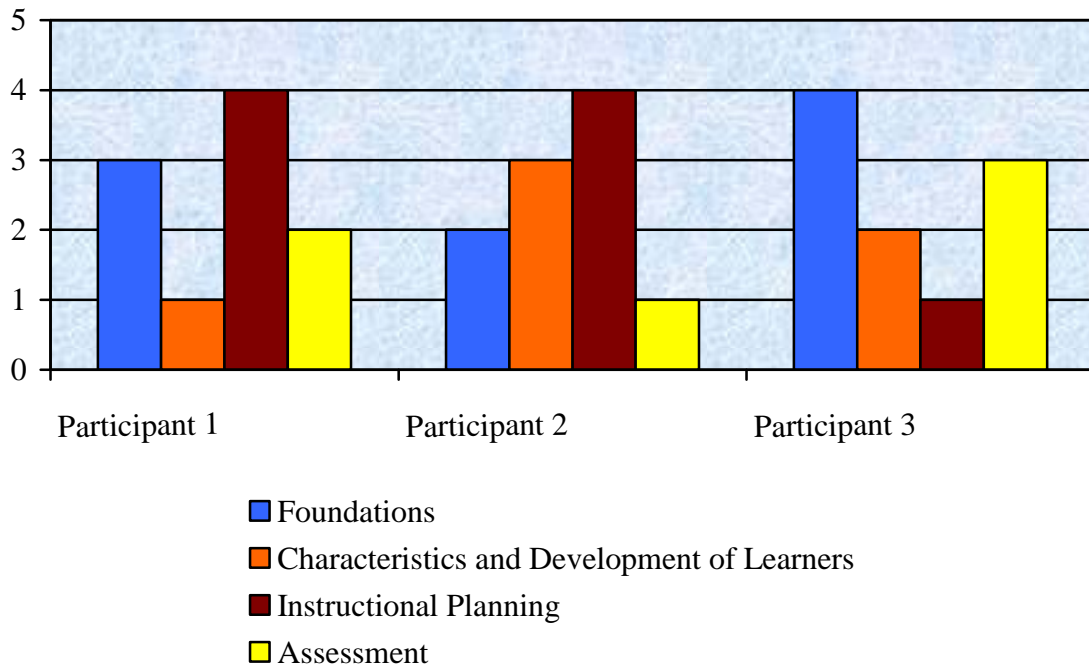
Figure 18. A summary of the Special Education Administrator interview participants' rating of importance concerning the professional standards identified in this study.

In a detailed analysis of the data, the researcher identified areas in which the participants placed less emphasis in relation to their current roles and responsibilities. In the area of Foundations, only 37% of the online survey participants believed knowledge and skills in the area of Theories and Philosophy were very important, and although somewhat higher, only 63% believed Human Resource Management to be very important relative to their current position. In the area of Development and Characteristics of Learners, only 44% of the online survey participants reported they considered this area

very important. Similarly, the data analysis revealed that only 52% of the online participants believed the Instructional Planning professional standard is very important. Finally, only 48% of the Special Education Administrator online participants believed that the Assessment professional standard is very important relative to their current roles and responsibilities. These results are somewhat surprising considering the current climate of accountability, especially with the emphasis now being placed on access to the general curriculum (Instructional Planning) and test scores (Assessment).

In contrast, the qualitative data results reported concerns relating to Instructional Planning and Assessment. As shown in Figure 18 and Appendix I, several participants reported concerns of assessment and instructional planning issues: (1) AYP; (2) SOL standards and assessment; (3) assuring that special education students perform in the general education classroom and curriculum; and (4) instructional strategies.

The current accountability measures will continue to be a key focus regarding the education for students with disabilities. Accountability measures as defined by NCLB and IDEA 2004 include new responsibilities for administrators overseeing the programs for students with disabilities. NCLB substantially increases the testing requirements for all students, requiring the setting of measurable adequate yearly progress objectives. With the Special Education Administrator participants' emphasis on legal issues, policy issues, and budgeting, there appears to be a lack of connection between the current mandates and the administrators' focus.

Meanwhile, the researcher believes that providing a high quality education to our students should be a priority. In order to improve education through our educational leadership, researchers must identify the current roles and responsibilities for Special Education Administrators. In addition, we must determine if the Special Education Administrators' performance evaluations are based on the expectations of their position, including their accountability under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

In support of the professional standards, a Special Education Administrator stated:

I think Special Education Administrators should be knowledgeable of the CEC standards for special education administrators and can begin to apply them during their own self-assessment process even if the particular standards are not used with their school divisions [sic].

This suggestion, along with the additional data obtained in this study, illustrates the need for identifying professional standards appropriate for current and future roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator. Based on an interviewee's report, the CEC is currently working on developing a listing of knowledge and skill sets for Special Education Administrators. Johnson (1998) suggested that as changes occur in the special education programs, and consequently in the expectations of the Special Education Administrator, it is critical to review performance evaluations in relation to the current accountability standards.

Performance Evaluation

The performance evaluation of the Special Education Administrator is an element of the accountability process. As discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two, and supported by this research, Special Education Administrators are tasked with many roles and responsibilities. Herman (1991) suggested that roles and responsibilities critical to an administrator's job should be compared to their actual performance. Lashley (1991) stated that accountability in the leadership of special education is critical as school districts move to inclusive program models and shared administrative responsibilities for students with disabilities. Special Education Administrators have the influence and position to affect the education of all students, especially those with disabilities, but as suggested by Reeves (2004) many administrators lack the positive feedback to improve their professional performance.

The National Leadership Evaluation Study (2004) performed by Reeves included a sample of 510 school administrators in 21 U.S. states. The participants included district superintendents, central office administrators, and principals. Eighty-two percent of the participants found the performance evaluation "to be inconsistent, ambiguous, and counterproductive" and only 54% reported that the "evaluation was based on clear standards." Meanwhile only 47% of the participants reported their evaluation to be sufficiently detailed to help them in their professional development (Reeves, 2004). Based on the quantitative and qualitative responses of the study participants, similar concerns were revealed by the participants.

Fifty percent of the participants reported they were evaluated utilizing a formal evaluation tool, with 13% stating they were evaluated using an informal evaluation tool,

and 34% evaluated using a combination of a formal and an informal evaluation tool. In addition, the results revealed that the majority (60%) were being evaluated using a formal evaluation tool developed by their local school systems, with 23% evaluated using The Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators. The participants' responses indicated that a variety of methods were employed for their performance evaluation: (1) performance observation; (2) interviews; (3) rating scales; (4) checklists; and (5) portfolios.

Seventeen percent of the survey participants reported they did not know what type of evaluation tool is currently utilized to evaluate their performance. A participant stated, "At the present time, I am not being formally evaluated (to my knowledge) but am informally evaluated by the way I handle the duties of the job [sic]." This participant's response reveals the inconsistency in the performance evaluations, and the lack of a systematic, methodological evaluation procedure for the Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Although the research participants perceived they were being evaluated based on clear standards in the field, the research does not support their perceptions. The data from the *Special Education Administrators Performance Evaluation Survey Results* indicates the greater part (83%) of the participants were evaluated using the same tools as that of other central office administrators in their school division. A participant reported,

> Most often, the system is the same as used for other administrators and does not take into consideration the unique duties of the sped director [sic]. A balance in compliance and instruction are always a big part of the job.

Indeed, another participant eloquently stated, "School divisions should take into consideration the very unique position of the special education directors…."

The research identifies limitations in Special Education Administrator's performance evaluation under the current accountability measures of NCLB and IDEA 2004. A participant stated, "Evaluation has changed from procedures to accountability." Although, no participants revealed that state and federal mandates had affected their performance evaluation, one participant suggested these mandates would affect future performance evaluations due to the new student indicators under IDEA 2004.

This research does not evaluate the quality of performance evaluations; however, it does illustrate the lack of standards for evaluating Special Education Administrators under the current state and federal mandates. Based on the results of the study, the researcher questions the ability of Virginia's educational leaders to provide a systematic performance evaluation for Special Education Administrators.

However, it should be noted that research participants perceived they were being evaluated based on professional standards in their field, and their knowledge and application of these standards. A Special Education Administrator participant affirmed:

I have worked hard to stay ahead of the changes and not be so reactive. My evaluation is quite comprehensive, partly because I make it so. I inform my supervisor of my work in all the areas you had in your assessment tool [*Special Education Performance Evaluation Survey*]. So, a good part of my evaluation is "self-inflicted." That is, if I simply did not address many of the mandates myself, my supervisor would have a struggle nailing down where I didn't do so well.

The research suggests that participants perceived they were currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. However, the research shows that the majority of Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia lack the systematic performance evaluation that supports and directs professional improvement. In 1991, Herman suggested that performance evaluations of the Special Education Administrator are an important component of the accountability process. He also reported that identified roles and responsibilities [key tasks] of the administrator are critical in the evaluation process; therefore, they should be compared when evaluating the performance of the Special Education Administrator.

Implications

The data from this research will be beneficial in the development of a systematic, methodological performance evaluation for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition, the information collected in this research will be beneficial to students with disabilities, Special Education Administrators, educational leaders, school boards, and the Virginia Department of Education. The implication of the research continues to focus on the professional standards, and the knowledge and skills,

as identified by the Council for Exceptional Children and scholars. Based on the quantitative and qualitative research data, the researcher concludes there is a great potential for current Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia to actively contribute in the development of a high quality evaluation tool for Special Education Administrators. Additionally, the researcher suggests that Special Education Administrators are an essential component in developing a research based, systematic performance instrument; an evaluation instrument to assist not only our local school leaders to improve the performance of current Special Education Administrators, but to also enable higher education institutes to focus their educational training on the current issues affecting Special Education Administrators.

This discussion sets the context for future research on the roles and responsibilities of Special Education Administrators and their accountability under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Higher education institutes, working collaboratively with current Special Education Administrators at state and local levels, have the ability to generate rigorous research and high-quality practices for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Limitations of Research

The findings of this research have a number of limitations. The stratified sampling of Special Education Administrator participants in the Commonwealth of Virginia results in a potential selection bias. The results of the survey are limited to Virginia's Special Education Administrators and the reader may be unable to generalize for their locality. Future research should be engaged to establish if Special Education Administrators in other localities have similar roles and responsibilities, in which they are being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Therefore, the focus of this research to the Commonwealth of Virginia limits the ability to generalize the conclusions of this study. However, based on the conclusion of the Pilot Study conducted in North Carolina, there is no obvious rationale to think other localities are significantly different.

Another limitation is associated with the response rate of the Special Education Administrator participants. The online research had a response rate of 50%, with a frequency of 60 stratified randomly selected participants. MacElroy (2000) stated that response rates range from 20% to 50% depending on the selected participants' interest in

the topic and the relevance to their needs. Sheehan (2001) studied 31 online survey response rates from 1986-2000 and found that 36.83% was the average response rates. Thus, the response rate of this study exceeds the average response rate obtained from online survey research. The response rate of 50% resulted in responses from approximately 20% of the Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Thirty participants of the 132 Directors of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in this research.

There is the limitation concerning the use of an online survey methodology to gather data. For instance, the findings of the data are directly related to the information provided by the selected Special Education Administrator participants. Some of the information reported may not be very accurate. Given that a limited number of participants skipped items in the survey questionnaire, it appears that some of the participants were not totally concerned or lacked interest in the results of the research.

In summary, Jabbari (2005) reported there continues to be many limitations associated with online survey research (Horn & Tynan, 2001). The data collected may not be a true representation of the population; and security issues may not ensure confidentiality for the participants. The researcher of this study conducted a study that did not allow access to the individual respondent's identity. However, these participants had no way of ensuring the privacy of their responses other than the researchers' statement of confidentiality. In addition to the limitations identified above, there is the problem with computer and Internet failure, user errors, and the programs of individual users may not perform as was anticipated.

Summary

Although there are limitations to this research, the results of the *Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey* and interviews conducted in the Commonwealth of Virginia can be correlated with concerns identified by scholars in the field. In addition, during Pilot Study II conducted with Special Education Administrators in North Carolina similar responses were revealed in the professional standards and evaluation sections of the survey tool. The researcher concludes local and state school administrators could utilize this study, with extreme caution. However, as suggested previously, further research is needed at state and local levels in order to

develop systematic, methodological evaluation procedures for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The study has filled a gap in the research. Previous studies revealed that Special Education Administrators required specific skills in relation to providing educational programming for students with disabilities, but the research had not yet revealed whether the Special Education Administrators were being held accountable under state and federal mandates. Research revealed that Special Education Administrators perceive they are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA; though research concludes that current performance evaluation methodology does not measure the professional standards, including the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator. The conclusions of this study emphasize the importance of examining the performance evaluation procedures for Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Conclusions indicate there is a need for educational leaders, be they state level administrators, local school leaders, or professors of higher education institutes to consider the implications for the improvement of the Special Education Administrators' performance evaluation. This conclusion seems reasonable under the current accountability measures of NCLB and IDEA 2004.

Conclusions suggest that educational leaders must address the inconsistency within the Special Education Administrator's performance evaluation. While some of these administrators may be coping with the new roles and responsibilities required under the current mandates, others appear frustrated with the responsibilities. To illustrate, one research participant stated, "While I think your topics are timely and important, what affects my job performance is number of complaints (local and state level) and due process [sic]." Indeed, Special Education Administrators appear to lack the necessary evaluation tools to conduct self-evaluation and professional development to improve their job performance and the educational programming for students with disabilities.

In conclusion, although there continues to be the question of whether Special Education Administrators should have different evaluation tools than other administrators; there does appear to be a significant agreement that professional standards, possibly in the form of identified knowledge and skills, are an important component of the accountability process.

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Appendix A

Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey

This survey is being conducted under the guidelines established by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. By cooperating, you will help the survey administrators find answers to important questions: however, your participation is strictly voluntary. You should omit any questions that you feel invade your privacy or may be offensive to you. Confidentiality is guaranteed; your name will not be associated with your answers in any public or private report of results. The purpose of this survey is to determine information on the performance evaluation practices for special education administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia and do they measure the current roles and responsibilities by which special education administrators are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. This information could help in the development of appropriate evaluation tool for special education administrators.

Directions: Using your mouse click on the appropriate check box. In the open-ended questions click inside the text box and begin typing, the text will automatically wrap. Once you have completed the survey click on the submit button at the bottom of this survey.

Demographic Information

1. What is your sex?
    a. Male
    b. Female

2. What is your age?
    a. Younger than 35
    b. 36-45
    c. 46-55
    d. Older than 55

3. What is your salary range?
    a. Less than $50,000
    b. $50,000 - $75,000
    c. $75,000 - $100,000
    d. More than $100,000

4. How many years have you been a special education administrator?
    a. 1-3
    b. 4-6
    c. 7-9
    d. 10-15
    e. 15 or more

5. How many years have you been working in the educational field?
   a. 1-4
   b. 5-10
   c. 11-15
   d. More than 156.

6. How many years have you been working in the educational field?
   a. 1-4
   b. 5-10
   c. 11-15
   d. More than 15

7. What percentage of your student body in on free and reduced price lunch?
   a. Less than 5%
   b. 5%-9%
   c. 10%-15%
   d. 15%-20%
   e. 20%-25%
   f. Over 25%

8. What is the size of your school district?
   a. 5,000 students or less
   b. 5,001-10,000 students
   c. 10,001-20,000 students
   d. 20,001-30,000 students
   e. More than 30,000 students

9. How many identified special education students are currently in your district? _____

10. What is the number of schools in your district? _____

11. How many school in your district made Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child
    Left Behind? _____

Performance Evaluation Information

1. At my present job as the administrator of special education, I am evaluated using a:
   a. Formal evaluation tool.
   b. Informal evaluation tool.
   c. combination of formal and informal evaluation methods. I am evaluated using:
   a. The Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators.
   b. A formal evaluation tool developed by local school district.
   c. A commercially developed evaluation tool used for all school administrators.
   d. A commercially developed evaluation tool used specially for administrators of special education.
   e. An unknown evaluation tool.

2. I am evaluated in the following manner: (Check all that apply.)
   a. Performance observations.
   b. Checklists.
   c. Rating Scales.
   d. Interviews.
   e. Portfolios

3. I am being evaluated with the same tools and methods as the other administrators within my school district.
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. Please check all Council of Exceptional Children standards in which you are a currently being evaluated.
   a. Foundations
   b. Development and Characteristics of Learners
   c. Individual Learning
   d. Instructional Strategies
   e. Learning Environments and Social Interactions
   f. Language
   g. Instructional Planning
   h. Assessment
   i. Profession and Ethical Practices
   j. Collaboration

5. Please number the following 1 through 10 in the order that you believe is the most important component for evaluating an administrator of special education.
    a. Foundations
    b. Development and Characteristics of Learners
    c. Individual Learning
    d. Instructional Strategies
    e. Learning Environments and Social Interactions
    f. Language
    g. Instructional Planning
    h. Assessment
    i. Profession and Ethical Practices
    j. Collaboration

6. I am currently being evaluated in the following areas: (Check all that apply.)
    a. Good planning.
    b. Decision-making skills.
    c. Communication skills.
    d. Program evaluation.
    e. Development and supervision of special education programs.
    f. Human resource management.
    g. Planning effective district-wide awareness, screening, assessment, and placement programs.
    h. Planning, organizing, and implementing programs to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected of having disabilities.

7. Please number the following 1 through 10 in the order that you believe is the most important component for evaluating an administrator of special education.
    a. Good planning.
    b. Decision-making skills.
    c. Communication skills.
    d. Program evaluation.
    e. Development and supervision of special education programs.
    f. Human resource management.
    g. Planning effective district-wide awareness, screening, assessment, and placement programs.
    h. Planning, organizing, and implementing programs to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected of having disabilities.

8. I am evaluated on my ability to collaborate and communicate with principals and teachers.
    a. Yes
    b. No

9. I am evaluated on your ability to perform continuing evaluation and review of compliance regulations.
    a. Yes
    b. No

10. Has the state and federal mandates affected your performance evaluation?
    a. Yes
    b. No
If your answer is yes, please briefly explain. _____

11. Accountability is a major focus under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Please briefly explain how you are currently, as the administrator of special education, being held accountable for the education of children with disabilities.

12. Please provide any comments or insights that you feel that might benefit in improving the evaluation of current and future special education administrators.

13. Would you like to receive survey results when they become available?
    a. Yes
    b. No

14. If yes to the question thirteen, then please fill in the text box below.
Email address_____

Appendix B

Leadership Behaviors[1]

Rating Scale: 5 = consistently, 3 = usually, 1 = seldom, 0 = never

The special education administrator:

1. _____Brings concerns and problems to the staff and facilitates collaborative problem solving.

2. _____Participates in group collaborative discussions and shares information necessary for the group to fully participate.

3. _____Accepts decisions made by the staff that may be contrary to the administrator's individual decision.

4. _____Openly discusses his or her vision for the SE program.

5. _____Encourages and facilitates opportunities for staff to share expertise with other staff members.

6. _____Encourages and provides opportunity for staff members to function in leadership roles.

7. _____Provides opportunity and encourages staff to reflect on current practices and offer improvements.

8. _____Views staff members as self-directed professionals who share a professional code of conduct, not as individuals who need managing.

9. _____Meets frequently with staff, both formally and informally, to share ideas and ask "what if".

10. _____Shares the task of budget construction, resource management, and program evaluation with the staff.

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[1] Johnson, L. R. (1998). Performance evaluation of special education administrators: Considerations and recommendations. *NASSP Bulletin*, 82, 24-32.

Appendix C

Special Education Program Management Performance[2]

For each of the 37 competencies listed under the 16 job description tasks, the administrator would compile a portfolio of materials to indicate performance in the competency. This portfolio of material would be reviewed during the administrator/supervisor conference.

Performance Area: Personnel

Job Description Tasks:

1. To initiate administrative leadership with the school principal in developing, supervising, and evaluating the special education staff
2. To act as a liaison to professional personnel and agencies that provides services to the district

Competencies:

The special education administrator will demonstrate:

1. Skill in conducting employment interviews, evaluation of credentials, and checking references.
2. Skill in staff observation and the provision of feedback using the district's supervision and evaluation procedures.
3. Skill in collaboratively developing and negotiating staff professional improvement plans.
4. Skill in distinguishing between effective and ineffective professional practices for the purpose of staff supervision.
5. Knowledge of the district's employment procedures and the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on the process of staff recruitment and retention.

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[2] Johnson, L. R. (1998). Performance evaluation of special education administrators: Considerations and recommendations. *NASSP Bulletin*, 82, 24-32.

Performance Area: Program Leadership

Job Description Tasks:

1. To promote strong advocacy for children with disabilities.
2. To develop and support effective models of collaboration with staff, parents, and agencies.
3. To promote a vision and mission of a unified district team of educators that meet the needs of all students

Competencies:

The special education administrator will demonstrate:

1. Skill in monitoring program plans and activities to ensure that children with disabilities receive appropriate services.
2. Skill in developing and articulating program vision, goals, and objectives.
3. Skill in working collaboratively with other district administrators to achieve district goals.
4. Skill in working collaboratively with staff, parent, and agencies to achieve team consensus and implement student program plans.
5. Skill in organizing program activities and motivating personnel to achieve district goals.
6. Skill in modeling ethical behavior when dealing with professional decisions or conflict.
7. Knowledge of and skill in implementing conflict resolution techniques.
8. Knowledge of team development processes to enhance staff productivity and satisfaction.
9. Skill in constructively engaging district staff to implement changes for program improvement.

Performance Area: Program Development

Job Description Tasks:

1. To conduct assessments of staff and material needs for educational programs and related services.
2. To plan effective awareness, screening, assessment, and placement programs.
3. To prepare program plans, policies, procedures, and budgets.

Competencies:

The special education administrator will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of the local and state requirements for budget preparation.
2. An ability to determine a priority list of the district's needs and develop a plan with a budget to meet these needs.
3. Knowledge of budget development procedures, and the use of technology for compiling, revising, and monitoring budget activities.
4. Skills in presenting budget proposals to various stakeholder groups.

Performance Area: Training and Consultation

Job Description Tasks:

1. To determine training needs and provide training resources.
2. To communicate the content and implications of federal and state laws, regulations, and court decisions.
3. To provide technical assistance for the development of effective models of educational programming and student instruction.

Competencies:

The special education administrator will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of information sources for current research in educational theory and methodology.
2. Skill in determining information and training needs of all district stakeholder groups.
3. Knowledge of effective assessment, instructional, and behavioral methods.
4. Skill in communicating theory and methodology to all stakeholder groups in both formal and informal settings.
5. Skill in implementing collaborative consultation to improve staff effectiveness.
6. Skill in evaluating the effectiveness of training activities.

Performance Area: Public Relations

Job Description Tasks:

1. To disseminate information concerning district programs to interested parties.
2. To undertake strong initiatives for developing positive relationships with parents.
3. To maintain up-to-date information on the local special education program.

Competencies:

The special education administrator will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge about district and community educational resources, program plans and priorities, enrollments, and budget.
2. Skill in informing all stakeholder groups of the district's educational services.
3. Knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the special education administrator.
4. Knowledge of the types of program information needed by each stakeholder group.
5. Knowledge of the various means available for communicating with stakeholder groups.
6. Skill in determining issues and concerns of stakeholder groups about which there is a potential for conflict between school and stakeholder group.

Performance Area: Program Evaluation

Job Description Tasks:

1. To plan and implement a monitoring process to ensure program quality and legal compliance.
2. To prepare local and state special education program reports.

Competencies:

The special education administrator will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of civil rights and special education laws pertaining to the provision of special education services to students with disabilities.
2. Knowledge of laws related to confidentiality of student records.
3. Knowledge of issues and outcomes addressed by due process and legal proceedings.
4. Knowledge of effectiveness indicators for special education programs.
5. Knowledge of state reporting requirements and the submission schedule.
6. Skill in developing a means of monitoring the special education process for quality and compliance.
7. Knowledge of informal conflict resolution, due process, and legal procedures for resolving disputes between parents and the district.

Appendix D

Introduction Letter

Dear Special Education Administrator:

I am conducting this survey in order to obtain your perceptions regarding the special education performance evaluation and your roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004. This survey is in conjunction with a doctoral dissertation research conducted on the relationship between the special education administrators' performance evaluation and their current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

This online survey should take less than ten minutes to complete. Your answers will be anonymous. Responses will be entered into a database along with responses on the same questions from other special education administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I appreciate your time and information provided in the completion of this survey.

Sincerely,
Sandra F. Smith, ED.S.
Doctoral Candidate
Education Leadership and Policy Studies
Virginia Tech

Sandra F. Smith, Ed.S.
21258 Capri Avenue
Abingdon, Virginia 24211

Appendix E

Pilot Study Survey

Dear Special Education Administrator:

I am conducting this survey in order to obtain special education administrators' perceptions on performance evaluation. This survey is in conjunction with a doctoral dissertation research conducted on the relationship between the special education administrators' performance evaluation and their current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

This online survey should take less than ten minutes to complete. Your answers will be anonymous. Responses will be entered into a database along with responses on the same questions from other special education administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I appreciate your time and information provided in the completion of this survey.

Sincerely,
Sandra F. Smith, ED.S.
Doctoral Candidate
Education Leadership and Policy Studies
Virginia Tech

Consent to Participate

This survey is being conducted under the guidelines established by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. By cooperating, you will help the survey administrators find answers to important questions: however, your participation is strictly voluntary. You should omit any questions that you feel invade your privacy or may be offensive to you. Confidentiality is guaranteed; your name will not be associated with your answers in any public or private report of results. The purpose of this survey is to determine information on the performance evaluation practices for special education administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia and do they measure the current roles and responsibilities by which special education administrators are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. This information could help in the development of appropriate evaluation tool for special education administrators.

Directions: Using your mouse click on the appropriate check box. In the open-ended questions click inside the text box and begin typing, the text will automatically wrap. Once you have completed the survey click on the submit button at the bottom of this survey.

Click "Next" to get started with the survey. If you'd like to leave the survey at any time, just click "Exit this survey" in the top right hand corner. Your answers will be saved.

Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

⬤ Male

⬤ Female

2. What is your age?

⬤ Younger than 35

⬤ 36-45

⬤ 46-55

⬤ Older than 55

3. What is your salary range?

⬤ Less than $50,000

⬤ $50,000 - $75,000

⬤ $75,000 - $100,000

⬤ More than $100,000

4. How many years have you been a special education administrator?

⬤ 1-3

⬤ 4-6

⬤ 7-9

⬤ 10-15

⬤ 15 or more

5. How many years have you been working in the educational field?

⬤ 1-4

⬤ 5-10

⬤ 11-15

⬤ More than 15.

6. What percentage of your student body is on free and reduced price lunch?

⬤ Less than 5%

⬤ 5%-9%

⬤ 10%-15%

⬤ 15%-20%

⬤ 20%-25%

⬤ Over 25%

7. What is the size of your school district?

⬤ 5,000 students or less

⬤ 5,001-10,000 students

⬤ 10,001-20,000 students

⬤ 20,001-30,000 students

⬤ More than 30,000 students

8. How many identified special education students are currently in your district?

9. What is the number of schools in your district?

> [text field]

10. How many schools in your district made Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind?

> [text field]

Performance Evaluation Survey

11. At my present job as the administrator of special education, I am evaluated using a:

◉ Formal evaluation tool.

◉ Informal evaluation tool.

◉ Combination of formal and informal evaluation methods.

12. I am evaluated using:

◉ The Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators.

◉ A formal evaluation tool developed by local school district.

◉ A commercially developed evaluation tool used for all school administrators.

◉ A commercially developed evaluation tool used specially for administrators of special education.

◉ Unknown

13. I am evaluated in the following manner: (Check all that apply.)

▢ Performance observations.

▢ Checklists.

▢ Rating Scales.

▢ Interviews.

▢ Portfolios

14. I am being evaluated with the same tools and methods as the other administrators within my school district.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Professional Standards

The following standards have been identified as the knowledge and skill base for special education administrators. These standards focus on ten specific areas of knowledge: (1) Foundations; (2) Development and Characteristics of Learners; (3) Individual Learning; (4) Instructional Strategies; (5) Learning Environments and Social Interactions; (6) Language; (7) Instructional Planning; (8) Assessment; (9) Professional and Ethical Practice; and (10) Collaboration. Questions 16 through 33 will address these standards.

15. Foundations:

I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application of the following issues: (Check all that apply.)

▢ Laws and policies for general and special education.

▢ Theories and philosophies.

▢ Human resource management.

▢ Funding.

▢ Legal and ethical issues.

16. Foundations:
Please rate the Foundation standards according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very important
Laws and policies for general and special education	◉	◉	◉	◉
Theories and philosophies	◉	◉	◉	◉
Theories and philosophies	◉	◉	◉	◉
Funding	◉	◉	◉	◉
Legal and ethical issues	◉	◉	◉	◉

17. Development and Characteristics of Learners:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and skills in human development, principles of learning, and characteristics of exceptional learning needs and implications for development of programs and services.

☐ Human development

☐ Principles of learning

☐ Characteristics of individuals with exceptional learning needs and implications for the development of programs and services.

18. Please rate the Development and Characteristics of Learners standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
⬤	⬤	⬤	⬤

19. Individual Learning:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application of issues concerning individual learning needs and the impact of diversity on educational expectations and programming.

⬤ Yes

⬤ No

20. Please rate the Individual Learning standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
⬤	⬤	⬤	⬤

21. Instructional Strategies:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application of issues concerning instructional strategies.

⬤ Yes

⬤ No

22. Please rate the Instructional Strategies standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
⬤	⬤	⬤	⬤

23. Learning Environments and Social Interactions:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and the implications of the learning environments and social interactions for students with disabilities.

🟢 Yes

🟢 No

24. Please rate the Learning Environments and Social Interactions standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very Important
🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢

25. Language:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge of the language used for identifying and addressing the needs of students with disabilities.

🟢 Yes

🟢 No

26. Please rate the Language standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢

27. Instructional Planning:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application of issues concerning the following instructional planning skills:

	Yes	No
General curriculum, instruction, and how special education services support access to the general curriculum	◯	◯
Developing and implementing a continuum of services that responds to individual educational needs and family characteristics	◯	◯
Designing and implementing professional development and constructive evaluation procedures that are designed to improve instructional content and practices	◯	◯
Developing and implementing a plan to provide instructional and assistive technologies	◯	◯
Developing collaborative programs that ensure that individuals with exceptional learning needs have access to and participate in the general curriculum	◯	◯
Developing and implementing flexible service delivery that addresses the range of needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs	◯	◯
Developing and implementing prevention strategies and programs	◯	◯
Developing budgets to ensure the efficient and effective allocation of resources	◯	◯
Using a variety of technologies to enhance management of resources and programs	◯	◯
Developing and implementing discipline policy and procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs	◯	◯
Implementing a range of strategies that promote positive behavior, crisis intervention and family involvement and support	◯	◯

28. Please rate the Instructional Planning standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
◯	◯	◯	◯

29. Assessment:

I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application for the assessment of students with disabilities.

	Yes	No
Advocating for the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs in accountability systems	◯	◯
Implementing procedures within the assessment accountability system to ensure the participation of individuals with exceptional earning needs	◯	◯
Developing and implementing ongoing evaluations of special education programs and practices	◯	◯

30. Please rate the Assessment standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very Important
◯	◯	◯	◯

31. Professional and Ethical Practice:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application for professional and ethical practices.

◯ Yes

◯ No

32. Please rate the Professional and Ethical Practices standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
◯	◯	◯	◯

33. Collaboration:
I am currently being evaluated on my ability to collaborate.

	Yes	No
Involving parents, family, and community members in educational planning, implementation, and evaluation	◉	◉
Developing and implementing intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptional learning needs	◉	◉
Promoting seamless transitions of individuals with exceptional learning needs across educational and other programs from birth through adulthood	◉	◉
Developing family education and other support programs	◉	◉
Providing ongoing communication with families of individuals with exceptional learning needs	◉	◉
Consulting and collaborating in administrative and instructional settings	◉	◉

34. Please rate the Collaboration standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very Important
◉	◉	◉	◉

Roles and Responsibilities

---

35. I am currently being evaluated in the following areas: (Check all that apply.)

☐ Good planning.

☐ Decision-making skills.

☐ Communication skills.

☐ Program evaluation.

☐ Development and supervision of special education programs.

☐ Human resource management.

☐ Planning effective district-wide awareness, screening, assessment, and placement programs.

☐ Planning, organizing, and implementing programs to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected of having disabilities.

36. Please rate these components for evaluating an administrator of special education.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Good planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
Decision-making skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Program evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Development and supervision of special education programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Human resource management	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planning effective district-wide awareness, screening, assessment, and placement programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planning, organizing, and implementing programs to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected of having disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐

37. I am evaluated on my ability to collaborate and communicate with principals and teachers.

◯ Yes

◯ No

38. I am evaluated on my ability to perform continuing evaluation and review of compliance regulations.

◯ Yes

◯ No

39. Has the state and federal mandates affected your performance evaluation?

🟢 Yes

🟢 No

🟢 If your answer is yes, please briefly explain.

40. Accountability is a major focus under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Please briefly explain how you are currently, as the administrator of special education, being held accountable for the education of children with disabilities.

41. Please provide any comments or insights that you feel may benefit performance evaluation of current and future special education administrators.

42. Would you like to receive survey results when they become available?

🟢 Yes

🟢 No

43. If yes to the question thirteen, then please enter your email address in the following blank.

Thank You

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you have questions or need further information concerning this study you may contact me at sasmith2@vt.edu.

Sandra F. Smith, EdS

Appendix F

Pilot Study I Survey Results

1. Was this online survey easy to access?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	100
No	0	0
Total	14	100

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Recommendations	1	7
No recommendations	13	93
Total	14	100

Recommendations:

A bit long.

2. Was this survey used an acceptable method to establish contact with the study population?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	100
No	0	0
Total	14	100

3. Was the introduction clearly written?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	100
No	0	0
Total	14	100

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Recommendations	1	7
No recommendations	13	93
Total	14	100

Recommendations:

It was a bit lengthy – shorten it or people won't take the time to read it.

4. Was the purpose of the study clearly identified?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	100
No	0	0
Total	14	100

5. Was the format is clear and the presentations of the questions easy to follow?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	100
No	0	0
Total	14	100

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Recommendations	3	21
No recommendations	11	79
Total	14	100

Recommendations:

Last question had wrong number.

Number 17 was confusing so I did not answer it.

The survey is too long. Most administrators would not participate in such a lengthy survey.

6. Was the sequence of the question in a logical order?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	100
No	0	0
Total	14	100

7. Was the wording of the questions is clearly written?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	100
No	0	0
Total	13	100

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Recommendations	2	14
No recommendations	12	86
Total	14	100

Recommendations:

Screen was spelled wrong in one question.

See previous comment.

8. Was the space of the questions sufficient?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	100
No	0	0
Total	14	100

9. Is there a need for additional instructions for participants (e.g., guidelines for 'probing' certain open questions)?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	7
No	13	93
Total	14	100

Appendix G

Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey

Dear Special Education Administrator:

I am conducting this survey in order to obtain special education administrators' perceptions on performance evaluation. This survey is in conjunction with a doctoral dissertation research conducted on the relationship between the special education administrators' performance evaluation and their current roles and responsibilities by which they are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004.

This online survey should take less than ten minutes to complete. Your answers will be anonymous. Responses will be entered into a database along with responses on the same questions from other special education administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

I appreciate your time and information provided in the completion of this survey.

Sincerely,
Sandra F. Smith, ED.S.
Doctoral Candidate
Education Leadership and Policy Studies
Virginia Tech

Consent to Participate

This survey is being conducted under the guidelines established by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. By cooperating, you will help the survey administrators find answers to important questions: however, your participation is strictly voluntary. You should omit any questions that you feel invade your privacy or may be offensive to you. Confidentiality is guaranteed; your name will not be associated with your answers in any public or private report of results. The purpose of this survey is to determine information on the performance evaluation practices for special education administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia and do they measure the current roles and responsibilities by which special education administrators are held accountable under NCLB and IDEA 2004. This information could help in the development of appropriate evaluation tool for special education administrators.

Directions: Using your mouse click on the appropriate check box. In the open-ended questions click inside the text box and begin typing, the text will automatically wrap. Once you have completed the survey click on the submit button at the bottom of this survey.

Click "Next" to get started with the survey. If you'd like to leave the survey at any time, just click "Exit this survey" in the top right hand corner. Your answers will be saved.

Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

🟢 Male

🟢 Female

2. What is your age?

🟢 Younger than 35

🟢 36-45

🟢 46-55

🟢 Older than 55

3. What is your salary range?

◯ Less than $50,000

◯ $50,000 - $75,000

◯ $75,000 - $100,000

◯ More than $100,000

4. How many years have you been a special education administrator?

◯ 1-3

◯ 4-6

◯ 7-9

◯ 10-15

◯ 15 or more

5. How many years have you been working in the educational field?

◯ 1-4

◯ 5-10

◯ 11-15

◯ More than 15.

Performance Evaluation Survey

6. At my present job as the administrator of special education, I am evaluated using a:

🔘 Formal evaluation tool.

🔘 Informal evaluation tool.

🔘 Combination of formal and informal evaluation methods.

7. I am evaluated using:

🔘 The Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators.

🔘 A formal evaluation tool developed by local school district.

🔘 A commercially developed evaluation tool used for all school administrators.

🔘 A commercially developed evaluation tool used specially for administrators of special education.

🔘 Unknown

8. I am evaluated in the following manner: (Check all that apply.)

☐ Performance observations.

☐ Checklists.

☐ Rating Scales.

☐ Interviews.

☐ Portfolios

9. I am being evaluated with the same tools and methods as the other administrators within my school district.

○ Yes

○ No

Professional Standards

The following standards have been identified as the knowledge and skill base for special education administrators.

10. Foundations:

I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application of the following issues: (Check all that apply.)

☐ Laws and policies for general and special education.

☐ Theories and philosophies.

☐ Human resource management.

☐ Funding.

☐ Legal and ethical issues.

11. Foundations:

Please rate the Foundation standards according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very Important
Laws and policies for general and special education	◉	◉	◉	◉
Theories and philosophies	◉	◉	◉	◉
Human resource management	◉	◉	◉	◉
Funding	◉	◉	◉	◉

12. Development and Characteristics of Learners:

I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and skills in human development, principles of learning, and characteristics of exceptional learning needs and implications for development of programs and services.

▢ Human development

▢ Principles of learning

▢ Characteristics of individuals with exceptional learning needs and implications for the development of programs and services.

13. Please rate the Development and Characteristics of Learners standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
◔	◔	◔	◔

14. Instructional Planning:

I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application of issues concerning the following instructional planning skills:

	Yes	No
General curriculum, instruction, and how special education services support access to the general curriculum	◔	◔
Developing and implementing a continuum of services that responds to individual educational needs and family characteristics	◔	◔
Designing and implementing professional development and constructive evaluation procedures that are designed to improve instructional content and practices	◔	◔
Developing and implementing a plan to provide instructional and assistive technologies	◔	◔
Developing collaborative programs that ensure that individuals with exceptional learning needs have access to and participate in the general curriculum	◔	◔
Developing and implementing flexible service delivery that addresses the range of needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs	◔	◔
Developing and implementing prevention strategies and programs	◔	◔
Developing budgets to ensure the efficient and effective allocation of resources	◔	◔
Using a variety of technologies to enhance management of resources and programs	◔	◔
Developing and implementing discipline policy and procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs	◔	◔
Implementing a range of strategies that promote positive behavior, crisis intervention and family involvement and support	◔	◔

15. Please rate the Instructional Planning standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
⬤	⬤	⬤	⬤

16. Assessment:
I am currently being evaluated on my knowledge and application for the assessment of students with disabilities.

	Yes	No
Advocating for the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs in accountability systems	⬤	⬤
Implementing procedures within the assessment accountability system to ensure the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs	⬤	⬤
Developing and implementing ongoing evaluations of special education programs and practices	⬤	⬤

17. Please rate the Assessment standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very Important
⬤	⬤	⬤	⬤

Current Issues Affecting the Special Education Administrator

18. Has the state and federal mandates affected your performance evaluation?

🟢 Yes

🟢 No

🟢 If your answer is yes, please briefly explain.

```
[                    ▲ ]
[                      ]
[                      ]
[                    ▼ ]
```

19. Accountability is a major focus under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Please briefly explain how you are currently, as the administrator of special education, being held accountable for the education of children with disabilities.

```
[                    ▲ ]
[                      ]
[                      ]
[                    ▼ ]
```

20. Please provide any comments or insights that you feel may benefit performance evaluation of current and future special education administrators.

```
[                    ▲ ]
[                      ]
[                      ]
[                    ▼ ]
```

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you have questions or would like to receive the survey results when they become available you may contact me at sasmith2@vt.edu.

Sandra F. Smith, EdS

Appendix H

Pilot Study II Results

Participants Reactions

1. Was the amount of time to complete the survey appropriate?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	60
Agree	2	40
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	5	100

2. Was this online survey easy to access?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No	0	0
Recommendations	0	0
Totals`	5	100

3. Did this survey use an acceptable method to establish contact with Special Education Administrators?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No	0	0
Other	0	0
Totals	5	100

4. Was the introduction clearly written?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No	0	0
Recommendations	0	0
Totals	5	100

5. Was the purpose of the study was clearly identified?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No	0	0
Recommendations	0	0
Totals	5	100

6. Please rate the overall quality of this survey.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	2	40
Very good	2	40
Good	1	20
Fair	0	0
Poor	0	0
Recommendations	0	0
Totals	5	100

7. What other questions do you believe need to be addressed in order to answer the research questions?

Recommendations:

How often are you evaluated?

8. Are there questions that need to be deleted from this survey?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0
No	4	80
Skipped question	1	20
Totals	5	100

9. What would you recommend to improve this survey?

Participant	Frequency	Percentage
Response	1	20
No response	4	80
Totals	5	100

Recommendation:

I think it was fine as is.

Appendix I

Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey Results

Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	5	17
Female	25	83
Total	30	100

2. What is your age?

Age	Frequency	Percent
Younger than 35	0	0
36-45	7	23
46-55	18	60
Older than 55	5	17
Total	30	100

3. What is your salary range?

Salary	Frequency	Percent
Less than $50,000	1	4
$50,000 to $75,000	11	41
$75,000 to $100,000	12	44
More than $100,000	3	11
Total	30	100

4. How many years have you been a Special Education Administrator?

Year	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	6	20
4 to 6	5	17
7 to 9	7	23
10 to 15	5	17
15 or more	7	23
Total	30	100

5. How many years have you been working in the educational field?

Year	Frequency	Percent
1 to 4	0	0
5 to 10	0	0
11 to 15	3	10
More than 15	27	90
Total	30	100

Performance Evaluation

6. At your present job as the Special Education Administrator, what model is being utilized to evaluate your performance?

Model	Frequency	Percent
Formal evaluation tool	15	50
Informal evaluation tool	4	13
Combination of formal and informal evaluation tool	11	37
Total	30	100

7. At your present job as the Special Education Administrator, what instrument is being utilized to evaluate your performance?

Instrument	Frequency	Percent
The Virginia Department of Education Guidelines for Evaluating School Administrators	7	23
Formal evaluation tool developed by local school division	18	60
Commercially developed evaluation tool used for all school administrators	0	0
Commercially developed evaluation tool developed for Special Education Administrators	0	0
Unknown	5	17
Total	30	100

8. At your present job as the Special Education Administrator, what method is being utilized to evaluate your performance?

Method	Frequency	Percent
Performance observations	17	61
Checklists	8	29
Rating scales	12	43
Interviews	14	50
Portfolios	5	18
Total	56	N/A

9. Are you currently being evaluated using the same tools and methods as the other administrators within your school district?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	83
No	5	17
Total	30	100

Professional Standards

Foundations

10. Are you currently being evaluated on your knowledge and application of the following issues?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Laws and policies for general and special education	26	100
Theories and philosophies	17	65
Human resource management	24	92
Funding	22	85
Legal and ethical issues	22	85
Total	111	N/A

11. Please rate the Foundation standards according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator.

Roles and responsibilities	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Laws and policies for general and special education	0 (0)	4 (1)	4 (1)	93 (25)
Theories and philosophies	4 (1)	19 (5)	41 (11)	37 (10)
Human resource management	0 (0)	15 (4)	22 (6)	63 (17)
Funding	0 (0)	7 (2)	22 (6)	70 (19)
Legal and ethical issues	0 (0)	4 (1)	11 (3)	85 (23)

Development and Characteristics of Learners

12. Are you currently being evaluated on your knowledge and skills in the following areas in human development, principles of learning, and characteristics of exceptional learning needs and the implications for the development of programs and services?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Human development	7	29
Principles of learning	14	58
Characteristics of individual learning needs and implication for programs and services	23	96
Respondents that skipped this question	6	20
Totals	50	N/A

13. Please rate the Development and Characteristics of Learners standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the special education administrator.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not important	2	7
Somewhat important	3	11
Important	10	37
Very Important	12	44
Total	27	100

Instructional Planning

14. Are you currently being evaluated on your knowledge and application of issues concerning the following Instructional planning skills?

Response	*Yes Frequency*	*Yes Percentage*	*No Frequency*	*No Percentage*
General curriculum, instruction, and how special education services support access to the general curriculum.	22	81	5	19
Developing and implementing a continuum of services that responds to individual educational needs and family characteristics.	22	81	5	19
Designing and implementing professional development and constructive evaluation procedures.	20	77	6	23
Developing and implementing a plan to provide instruction and assistive technologies.	19	70	8	30
Developing collaborative programs that ensure access and participation in the general curriculum.	24	89	3	11
Developing and implementing flexible service delivery.	23	85	4	15
Developing and implementing prevention strategies and programs.	25	69	8	31
Developing budgets to ensure efficient and effective allocation of resources.	25	96	1	4
Using a variety of technologies to enhance management of resources and programs.	19	70	8	30
Developing and implementing discipline policy and procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs.	19	73	7	27
Implementing a range of strategies that promote positive behavior, crisis, intervention and family involvement and	20	77	6	23

support.

15. Please rate the Instruction Planning standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not important	0	0
Somewhat important	4	15
Important	9	33
Very Important	14	52
Respondents skipped question	3	10
Total	30	100

Assessment

16. Are you currently being evaluated on your knowledge and application for the assessment of students with disabilities?

Response	Yes Frequency	Yes Percentage	No Frequency	No Percentage
Advocating for the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs in accountability systems.	20	77	6	23
Implementing procedures within the assessment accountability system to ensure participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs.	22	85	4	15
Developing and implementing ongoing evaluations of special education programs and practices.	21	81	5	19

17. Please rate the Assessment standard according to the importance for evaluating the performance and the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Administrator.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not important	1	4
Somewhat important	2	7
Important	11	41
Very Important	13	48
Total	27	100

Current Issues Affecting the Special Education Administrator

18. Has the state and federal mandates affected your performance evaluation?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	0	0
No	18	69
Written Response	8	31
Total	26	100

Participant Responses:

It will be in the future w/ the outcomes of the new indicators for students w/disabilities through IDEA 2004.

Has to take into consideration minority/disproportionality issues, ESL learners.

I am held responsible when schools are not accredited.

Compliance, accountability, data, SOL, and AYP are the areas of emphasis.

Evaluation has changed from procedures to accountability.

I am expected to be knowledge of the state and federal mandates and to determine the implications for students with disabilities.

I'm held accountable for students who do not receive passing grades on assessments.

There is much more emphasis on the mandates in NCLB as they drive our work. Of course, trying to keep to keep one step ahead of the changes helps to define personal goals

that are part of our evaluation tool.

19. Accountability is a major focus under NCLB and IDEA 2004. Please briefly explain how you are currently, as the Special Education Administrator, being held accountable for the education of children with disabilities.

	Frequency	*Percent*
Respondents	22	73
No Response	8	27
Total	30	100

Participant Responses:

Through improved achievement for students w/ disab. as measured on state assessment. Ensuring compliance w/ federal and state mandates. Through positive and improved post-secondary outcomes for students w/ disab.

Looking at how we identify students with disabilities in particular SLD and the implementation of RTI; also the overall percentage of students in special education division wide. Highly qualified criteria has also impacted the provision of services and hiring qualified individuals.

Help to facilitate SOL assessment choices for students with disabilities by providing ongoing training to regular and special educators.

Responsible for reporting the VDOE indicators for this school division.

We must ensure that the annual IEP goals are aligned with the SOL standards. Emphasis is placed on the commonalities of IDEIA and NCLB.

When SWD's do not perform at the standard necessary to make cut off scores, then attention is focused on the why. I have little direct accountability for this but am expected to work with schools and staff administration to address the issues.

I am held accountable when schools do not make AYP.

I am responsible for ensuring that policies and regulations are followed by my staff. All children must take state wide testing and are part of the agencies accountability process.

Assisting in the provision of services to assure that special education students learn and perform in the general education curriculum

AYP scores, programming, professional development, instructional strategies, collaboration

I am expected to stay current with regulations and laws and to help the teachers and

administrators perform within these

In the evaluation process used by my division, this is unclear. I assume it is important because I believe it is important.

I am required to provide continuous in-services for staff on the various assessment options available to students with special needs. The scores of all subgroups including the performance of special education students is analyze and the data is used throughout the division to make instructional decisions.

I am held accountable for the AYP scores at the end of the year.

I am held accountable by my assistant superintendent for ensuring that schools have accurate and timely information related to the assessment of students with disabilities and related to instructional practices.

Monthly leadership team meetings (including the superintendent) to discuss how schools are meeting the NCLB and IDEA mandates. I am asked to share information regarding goals and objectives the special education staff has accomplished toward the numerous initiatives we have in place.

I must provide staff development opportunities for the teachers and administration regarding accountability

Accountability is very important. Thankfully, the participation of my students with disabilities in the testing program actually helped some of the schools as far as the pass rate goes. Other directors in neighboring counties were not as fortunate, and their jobs may be on the line.

Same as No. 18 I am accountable for everyone knowing and understanding NCLB and IDEA 2004

I am help accountable for all the mandates. My role is that of a partner with each principal. If they are hurt by their performance in any mandated area - I share that feedback. This also helps establish our work together, always looking ahead.

I have specific goals and targets in my evaluation which relate to the SPP indicators.

20. Please provide any comments or insights that you feel may benefit performance evaluation of current and future Special Education Administrators.

	Frequency	*Percent*
Respondents	18	60
No Response	12	40
Total	30	100

Participant Responses:

The published data of students w/ disab outcomes as measured by the 20 indicators will greatly impact the evaluation of the special education director in the future. These indicators also include a parent satisfaction survey...although the parents who respond will not likely provide positive input.

Oftentimes the percentage of students in special education programs does not directly reflect the lack of intervention strategies; some areas/students characteristically present more challenges and learning opportunities for students; speech language is unfairly considered a primary disability which will also inflate percentages.

School divisions should take into consideration the very unique position of sped directors; they are usually sole individuals in their own class; do not have the support as principals, teachers do as members of a team.

There has to be a separate performance evaluation format for people working in special education.

Good luck!

Most often the system is the same as used for other administrators and does not take into consideration the unique duties of the sped director. A balance in compliance and instruction are always a big part of the job.

The testing issue in Virginia seems to be a moving target. New tests are issued and often we do not know how they will be scored until after the evidence has been collected this makes it hard to meet the competencies.

Evaluations need to be in line with evaluations of other administrators in the district.

Evaluation needs to be comprehensive -- not focused on a particular event, issue or situation

At the present time, I am not being formally evaluated (to my knowledge) but am informally evaluated by the way I handle the duties of the job.

I made assumptions on all the factors you presented. I am evaluated with the same tool as all the rest of the Instructional Staff.

I like the idea of setting goals for myself along with my superintendent. I think then when the superintendent does an observation of my interaction with teachers, students, and other administrators she is able to see that I put into action the goals I have set for myself rather than by hearing about what I have done.

I found this survey somewhat frustrating. While I think your topics are timely and important, what affects my job performance is number of complaints (local and state level) and due process.

I think special education administrators should be knowledgeable of the CEC standards for special education administrators and can begin to apply them during their own self assessment process even if the particular standards are not used within their school division.

It is difficult to evaluate SpEd Administrators in the same manner as other administrators. The same holds true for music/art as compared to general ed. teachers. There needs to be differentiation in order to adequately assess the performance.

Understand that they can't do everything.

I have worked hard to stay ahead of the changes and not be so reactive. My evaluation is quite comprehensive, partly because I make it so. I inform my supervisor of my work in all the areas you had in your assessment tool. So, a good part of my evaluation is "self-inflicted". That is, if I simply did not address many of the mandates myself, my supervisor would have a struggle nailing down where I didn't do so well.

I appreciate having a formal evaluation process which can be used by all administrators and adapted to the specific administrative job responsibilities.

The respondents identified in the above listings are reported in a sequence according to the time of response.

Appendix J

Letters to Special Education Administrators Soliciting Participants

February 2, 2007

Dear Special Education Administrator,

Thank you for your help last November in completing the online survey, *Special Education Administrator Performance Evaluation Survey.*

To gather a greater depth of understanding of how Special Education Administrators are currently being held accountable under NCLB and IDEA mandates, I will be extending my research work started through the online survey. This will be done using interviews of Special Education Administrators, as well as analyzing the transcribed documents. In the next few weeks, I will be contacting a small selection of Special Education Administrators in the Commonwealth of Virginia to explain the proposed research in more detail and to secure participation in the study.

I encourage you to contact me if you have questions about the research or would be interested in participating in my dissertation research.

Sincerely,
Sandra F. Smith, EdS
21258 Capri Avenue
Abingdon, VA 24211
Sasmith2@vt.edu

Appendix K

Interview Protocol

Date: Time:
Interviewee:
Location of Interview:
Demographics:
Years in education:
Years as a Special Education Administrator:
Article I.   Suggested initiated questions to guide interview
1. Define your current roles and responsibilities under NCLB and IDEA 2004.
2. Describe how you are currently being evaluated as the Special Education Administrator?
3. Do you believe professional standards are important components in relation to the roles and responsibilities for Special Education Administrators? Please explain. (Provide interviewee with a list of the professional standards identified in the Special Education Administrators Performance Evaluation Survey.)
4. Do you feel that performance evaluations are inconsistent with the professional standards? Please explain.
5. What suggestions do you have for improving the evaluation tool for Special Education Administrators?
6. Are there any other thoughts you would like to share in relation to the Special Education Administrator's roles and responsibilities or evaluation practices?

Professional Standards Identified in the Special Education Administrators
Performance Evaluation Survey

Foundations:
1. Laws and policies for general and special education
2. Theories and philosophies
3. Human resource management
4. Funding
5. Legal and ethical issues

Development and Characteristics of Learners:
1. Human development
2. Principles of learning
3. Characteristics of exceptional learners and implications for the development of programs and services

Instructional Planning:
1. General curriculum, instruction, and how special education services support access to the general curriculum
2. Developing and implementing a continuum of services that responds to individual educational needs and family characteristics
3. Designing and implementing professional development and constructive evaluation procedures that are designed to improve instructional content and practices
4. Developing and implementing a plan to provide instructional and assistive technologies
5. Developing collaborative programs that ensure that individuals with exceptional learning needs have access to and participate in the general curriculum
6. Developing and implementing flexible service delivery that addresses the range of needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs
7. Developing and implementing prevention strategies and programs
8. Developing budgets to ensure the efficient and effective allocation of resources
9. Using a variety of technologies to enhance management of resources and programs
10. Developing and implementing discipline policy and procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs
11. Implementing a range of strategies that promote positive behavior, crisis intervention and family involvement and support

Assessment:
1. Advocating for the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs in accountability systems
2. Implementing procedures within the assessment accountability system to ensure the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs
3. Developing and implementing ongoing evaluations of special education programs and practices