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An Analysis of Role Responsibilities of Selected Elementary School Principals in the Delivery of Special Education Services

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AN ANALYSIS OF ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF SELECTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN THE DELIVERY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

by

Dorothea Rinella Fitzgerald

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

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1985

ABSTRACT

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AN ANALYSIS OF ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF SELECTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
IN THE DELIVERY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe actual role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools. This study focused on three major areas, the referral process, the individual educational program, and the process of placement in the least restrictive environment.

Data were obtained from seventy-seven surveys and from ten on-site interviews with principals who had previously completed the survey and met the two limitations of having three or more years experience as principals of the school and had more than three high incidence, district level special education programs operating within their buildings.

The principals in this study appeared not only aware of a special education referral process but were also able to describe specific role responsibilities during the process. All administrators interviewed utilized written referral forms and more than half presented formalized procedures for the referral of students to special education programs.

All of the principals interviewed appeared, not only aware of the procedures involved in developing a student's individualized educational program, but also were able to describe specific role responsibilities.

Eighty percent of the principals displayed an appropriate awareness of the concept of least restrictive environment. Once the term "mainstream" was utilized, all of the principals freely described their role responsibilities.

This study concludes that elementary principals do appear to include responsibilities for the referral process, the student's individualized educational program and the process of mainstreaming students into their least restrictive environment as part of their total role responsibility.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. Melvin P. Heller, dissertation advisor and committee chairman, not only for his advice and patience during all phases of this study but also for his encouragement throughout the doctoral program. Gratitude is additionally expressed to Dr. Max A. Bailey and to Dr. Elizabeth A. Hebert for their valuable assistance as members of the dissertation committee and for their interest and genuine concern for this writer.

While they remain anonymous, the administrators in this study deserve credit for their contributions. Special thanks goes to those principals who generously shared their time during the interview portion of this study.

The support of the South Suburban Study Group was essential for the completion of the project. Additionally, thanks is extended to Holly Covic, Mary Ann Helmold, Judith Johnstone, Annette Roos, Colleen Stano and Marcia Zmuda for their gentle prodding and belief in this writer throughout this entire endeavor.

Above all, the author wishes to thank her parents Antoinette and Anthony Rinella for their love and support so unselfishly given throughout her entire educational pursuit.

Special thanks to Edward John Fitzgerald for patiently sacrificing his time with his mother so that her educational goal might be realized.

Finally, the author thanks her husband Ed, whose love and encouragement made the entire quest possible. Such a great man he is, that he will give away all credit for this work, yet, share equally in the joy of its accomplishment.

VITA

The author, Dorothea Elizabeth Rinella Fitzgerald, daughter of Antoinette and Anthony Rinella, was born March 18, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois.

She attended St. Philip Neri elementary school and graduated from Aquinas Dominican High School in 1964. Entering Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa she completed requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1968. She received the degree of Master of Arts in Special Education in 1973 from DePaul University.

Since September of 1968 the author has been employed by School District 148, Dolton, Illinois where she served as an intermediate classroom teacher. Her teaching experiences also include resource learning disabilities and preschool special education. In 1980 she was appointed district special education supervisor. In 1983 she was awarded the position of assistant principal and continues to serve in this capacity at 148's Lincoln School.

The author is married to Edward John Fitzgerald and has a son Edward John III.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On November 29, 1975, President Ford signed The Education For All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142, guaranteeing a free and appropriate education to all handicapped children. The requirements of Public Law 94-142 call for the school building principal, by virtue of his leadership role, to emerge as a key figure in the planning and implementation of special education services within the building.¹ In 1979 it was estimated that principals were spending approximately 14.6 percent of their time on special education administrative duties.² By 1981 the building principal was expected to administer all special education services that take place within the assigned attendance center.³

In the State of Illinois, the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education focus on the building principal as the facilitator involved in the functioning of special education programs as an integral part of the school program. It is the principal who is responsible for the quality of educational services

¹ Reed Payne and Charles Murray, "Principals' Attitudes Toward Integration of the Handicapped," Exceptional Children, (October, 1974), p. 123.

² David E. Raske, "The Role of General School Administrators Responsible for Special Education Programs," Exceptional Children, (May, 1979), p. 645.

³ Donald L. Robson, "Administering Educational Services for the Handicapped: Role Expectations and Perceptions," Exceptional Children, (February, 1981), p. 378.

provided to each and every student in the school as well as with the total management of the school.

This study was designed to identify and describe role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools. This process of identifying and describing special education role responsibilities concentrates on three major areas that have impact upon the school's organization and operation.

The first major area of concentration is the referral process. Principals assume a high level of responsibility for the processing of referrals of students with suspected handicapping conditions. The referral process is usually the first step to mobilizing the special education service system. Therefore, concentration on the principal's role in the referral process is a major area in this study.

Public Law 94-142 mandates an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each identified handicapped child before special education services or placements may occur. The concept of providing educational opportunities and experiences for individual learners according to the unique abilities and needs of each is not new to education. As early as 1937, John Dewey was proclaiming that each child should be seen as, "Equally an individual and entitled to equal opportunity of development of his own capacities, be they large or small in range..."⁴ Concerns over the needs of the individual versus class instruction have been a focal point in educational philosophy and practice for many years, but the language of PL 94-142 takes this question out of the area of speculation for the

⁴ John Dewey, "Democracy and Educational Administration," School and Society, (April, 1937), pp. 458-59.

education of handicapped children. The IEP is mandated and must be formulated on an individual basis. Therefore, concentration on the principal's role in the Individualized Education Plan is the second area of identification in this study.

The third area of concentration in this study is the principal's role in the least restrictive environment concept in the placement of handicapped children. Prior to the passage of PL 94-142 most handicapped children were serviced in full-time self-contained classes and not all buildings housed such pupils. The concept of least restrictive environment, while not eliminating full-time classes, intends that as many handicapped students as possible be served in regular buildings and in contact with nonhandicapped peers. Implementation of this concept involves the building principal. Therefore, the principal's role in the concept of least restrictive environment is the third specific area in this study.⁵

During the process of identifying and describing special education role responsibilities focusing specifically on the areas of the referral process, the individualized education plan, and the concept of least restrictive environment this study analyzed the following:

1. The principal's awareness and ability to identify verbally the three specific areas of concentration.
2. The principal's ability to describe specific role responsibilities within the three areas of concentration.

⁵ William H. Roe and Thelbert L. Drake, The Principalship (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), pp. 207-208.

3. The principal's ability to present formal procedures for each of the three areas of concentration.

Need for the Study

In the educational ferment of the past decade, perhaps no other identifiable element of public education has experienced changes as far-reaching and significant as educational programming for the handicapped. Perhaps the foremost change has been the articulation and establishment of the right to education for all handicapped children through public schools.⁶

Public Law 94-142 applies to all handicapped children who require special education and related services, ages three to twenty-one inclusive. Special education is a part of regular education and not a separate entity.⁷ While the basic policy statements regarding the implementation of PL 94-142 are formulated by local boards of education, the fulfillment of the mandate occurs at the building level. This means that the principal must be prepared to work toward the development of delivery systems of special education services for handicapped students in the building.⁸ The principal is the one official leader at the local school level who is primarily concerned with the overall goals of the school. By virtue of the leadership role, the principal must be consid-

⁶ Ibid., pp. 205-206.

⁷ A. Edward Blackhurst and William H. Berdine, An Introduction to Special Education (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), p. 3.

⁸ John T. Lovell and Kimball Wiles, Supervision for Better Schools (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1983), p. 240.

ered a key person. It is the principal who is in the position to provide needed administrative support and to ensure program success. The principal's attitudes can either enhance or diminish the atmosphere within the building. However, regardless of personal preference, it is the principal's responsibility to support in a positive manner the law of our land.

There are numerous references in the literature to the legal requirements of PL 94-142 which provide building principals with guidelines for the implementation of special educational services (Cochran and Westling, 1977; Ballard and Zettel, 1978; Oaks, 1979; Rebore, 1979). Additionally, these mandates for principals have stimulated research seeking to determine role responsibilities of principals charged with the delivery of special education services (Leitz and Kaiser, 1979; Nevin, 1979). Results of these efforts indicate agreement about a group of responsibilities that are to be implemented by building principals (Nevin, 1979; Robson, 1981). The majority of these studies, however, have placed a heavy emphasis on the development of the role responsibilities by utilizing an interpretation of the law, by requesting expert panel review, or by distributing questionnaires that list a set of predetermined role responsibilities. Although these research efforts have identified role responsibilities thought to be necessary for building principals, they have failed to reveal the actual responsibilities carried out by principals as they deliver special education services within their own schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools. Three specific areas of concentration in this study are the principal's role responsibilities in the referral process, the individualized education plan, and the process of placement in the least restrictive environment.

Principals were used as key informants and the following were specifically noted during the interview portion of this study:

1. Each principal's awareness and ability to identify verbally the three specific areas of concentration.
2. Each principal's ability to describe specific role responsibilities within the three areas of concentration.
3. Each principal's ability to present formal procedures for each of the three specific areas of concentration.

Once role responsibilities of elementary principals were identified and described, they were analyzed. During the process of analysis this study focused on similarities, differences, and patterns of role responsibilities of the elementary principals as they facilitate the delivery of special education services within their schools. The analysis was used to develop recommendations for the management of special education programs in order to maximize operational efficiency and to promote quality education for all students.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms used in this study are defined below:

Special Education - Individually planned instruction designed to respond to the unique characteristics of children who have needs that cannot be met by the standard school curriculum.⁹

Incidence - The estimated number of people in a population who exhibit a given characteristic at some point during their lives. High incidence special education programs in public elementary schools provide services for pupils identified as mildly or moderately handicapped. High incidence indicates that the handicapping conditions appear more frequently within the population, as opposed to low incidence, categorized as severely or profoundly handicapped, appearing with less frequency in the population.¹⁰

Referral - A formal procedure, established by the local school district, by which a case study evaluation may be requested.¹¹

Individual Education Program (IEP) - A written statement for an exceptional child that provides at least a statement of: the child's present level of educational performance; annual goals and short-term instructional objectives; specific special education and related services; the extent of participation in the regular education program; the projected dates for initiation of services; anticipated duration of ser-

⁹ Blackhurst and Berdine, Special Education, p. 48.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹ Illinois Office of Education, State Board of Education, Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education, State Board of Education, Illinois Office of Education, Springfield, Illinois, 1979, p. 5.

vices; appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures; and a schedule for annual determination of short-term objectives.¹²

Least Restrictive Environment - To the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children are educated with non-handicapped children. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap requires that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.¹³

Limitations of the Study

The following are limitations of the present study:

1. The area of the study is limited to the public elementary schools in the South Area of Cook County, Illinois, as defined by Richard J. Martwick, Superintendent of the Educational Service Region of Cook County, Illinois, in the "Directory of Suburban Public Schools."
2. The interview portion of the study is limited to elementary public school principals who have three or more district level special education programs operating within their buildings.
3. The interview portion of the study is limited to elementary public school principals who have

¹² Ibid., p. 3.

¹³ Ibid.

a minimum of three years experience as principal of their specific school.

4. The study is limited to district level special education programs currently operating in the school.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to analyze the role responsibilities of elementary school principals in their delivery of special education services. The review of literature begins with an analysis of the role of the principal by referring to the Social Systems Theory of Jacob Getzels and Egon Guba.

Role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services cannot be viewed in isolation, but rather must be viewed as an integral part of the total role of the principal. The literature review therefore proceeds to the role of the principal responsible for special education. Role responsibilities for special education in this study focus on three areas of concentration. The three areas of concentration reviewed include the referral process, the individual education program, and the principle of least restrictive environment.

The Role of the Elementary School Principal

The term "role" has many definitions. Neiman and Hughes, in a review of the literature in 1951, found the term "role" used in more than a dozen different ways.¹

¹ L. J. Neiman and J. W. Hughes, "The Problem of the Concept of Roles, A Re-Survey of the Literature," Social Forces, 30 (December, 1951), pp. 141-149.

Getzels, Lipham and Campbell (1968) generalize the many definitions of "role" into three categories of usage. The first category relates to personality development, referring to the learning of certain roles or aspects of roles. The second definition relates to society as a whole regarding role as synonymous with patterns of observed behavior. The third definition of role relates to specific groups or institutions in a social system. It is the third definition of role that is used for the analysis of principals' behavior in this study.²

All social systems have certain functions that have to be carried out in certain ways. These functions may be said to have become "institutionalized," and the agencies established to carry out these institutionalized functions for the social system as a whole may be termed "institutions."³ For example, the function of the institution of the elementary school is to educate.

An important part of the institution is the role. In 1936, Ralph Linton stated that roles are "dynamic aspects" of the positions, offices, and statutes within an institution and roles define the behavior of the role incumbents. In the elementary school, these incumbents include the principal.⁴

² Jacob W. Getzels, James M. Lipham, and Roald F. Campbell, "Educational Administration as a Social Process," Theory, Research, Practice, (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 59-60.

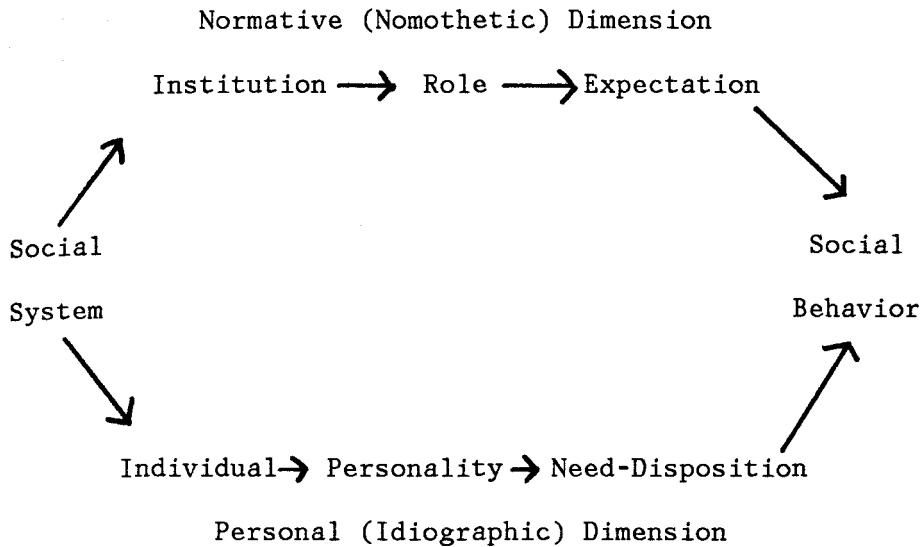
³ Roald F. Campbell, John E. Corbally, Jr., and John A. Ramseyer, Introduction to Educational Administration (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966), p. 191.

⁴ Ralph Linton, The Study of Man (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936), p. 14.

Roles are defined in terms of role expectations. A role has certain normative obligations and responsibilities, which may be termed "role expectations," and when the role incumbent puts these obligations and responsibilities into effect, he is said to be performing his role.

The role of the elementary principal was analyzed by referring to the Social System Theory of Jacob Getzels and Egon Guba. The Social System Theory presents administration as a hierarchy of superordinate-subordinate relationships. This hierarchy of relationships provides the framework for the allocation and integration of roles and facilities needed to accomplish the goals of the social system or of the elementary school. Within the social system there are two classes of interacting phenomena. The one class constitutes the normative or nomothetic dimension. The nomothetic aspect includes the institution, the role, and the expectations. The nomothetic dimension is the sociological dimension. The other class constitutes the personal or idiographic dimension. The idiographic aspect includes the individual, the personality and the need disposition. The idiographic dimension is the psychological dimension.⁵

⁵ Richard W. Saxe, Educational Administration Today: An Introduction (Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1980), pp. 150-152.



Each term in the model above is the analytic unit for the preceding term.

The normative dimension, shown at the top of the diagram, consists of the institution (the elementary school), the role, and the role expectations. The social system is defined by its institutions, each institution is defined by the expectations attached to it. Similarly, the idiographic dimension, shown at the bottom of the diagram, consists of the individual (the principal), the personality, and the need disposition.

Each act is conceived as deriving simultaneously from the normative and the idiographic dimensions. Performance in a social system is a function of the interaction between role and personality. A social act may be understood as resulting from the individual's attempts to cope with an environment composed of patterns of expectations for his behavior in ways consistent with his own pattern of needs and disposi-

tions.⁶ Simply stated, an individual brings to his role his own needs and unique manner. In order to be highly congruent, the individual must have both the nomothetic, institutional, and the idiographic, personal, dimensions operating with minimal area of conflict. When this occurs, there is a high rate of productivity.

The Role of the Elementary Principal Responsible for
Special Education

Role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education cannot be viewed in isolation, but rather must be viewed as an intergral part of the total role of the principal.

The School Code of Illinois defines the principal's legal role under the superintendent's duties in Section 10-21.4a as follows:

10-21.4a. Principals - Duties

10-21.4a. Principals - Duties. To employ principals who hold valid supervisory or administrative certificates who shall supervise the operation of attendance centers as the board shall determine necessary.

The principal shall assume administrative responsibilities and instructional leadership, under the supervision of the superintendent, and in accordance with reasonable rules and regulations of the board, for the planning, operation and evaluation of the educational program of the attendance area to which he is assigned.

The principal shall submit recommendations to the superintendent concerning the appointment, retention, promotion and assignment of all personnel assigned to the attendance center.⁷

It is the principal who assumes administrative responsibilities and instructional leadership for planning, operation, and evaluation of the educational program of the attendance area to which he is assigned.

⁶ Saxe, Educational Administration Today: An Introduction, p. 153.

⁷ Illinois Association of School Boards, The School Code of Illinois, (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1983), p. 56.

The principal is responsible for the quality of education for each child in the school. Most people believe that the principal is the most influential and powerful person in a school. This view of the principal is well stated in a report of a select committee of the United States Senate.

In many ways, the school principal is the most important and influential person in any school. He is the person responsible for all activities that occur in and around the school building. It is the principal's leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. The principal is the main link between the community and the school and the way he performs in that capacity largely determines the attitudes of parents and students about the school. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place, if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching, if students are performing to the best of their ability, one can almost point to the principal's leadership as the key to success.⁸

The dictionary definitions of the term "principal" support the position that the building principal is the key to success. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language lists the following definitions: "1. The head of a school; 2. A main participant; 3. A leading person as in a play."⁹ The Random House Dictionary of the English Language states that when "principal" is used as an adjective it means, "first or highest in rank, importance, value, etc.; chief."¹⁰

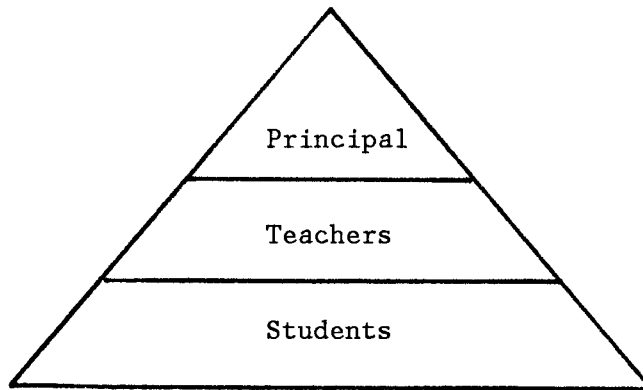
⁸ U. S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, "Revitalizing the Role of the School Principal," Part VI, Chapter 24, Section B, in Toward Educational Opportunity, 92d Congress 2d Session. Senate Report 92-0000, pp. 305-307.

⁹ Peter Davies, ed., "Educational Administration Today: An Introduction," The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Dell, 1969), p. 674.

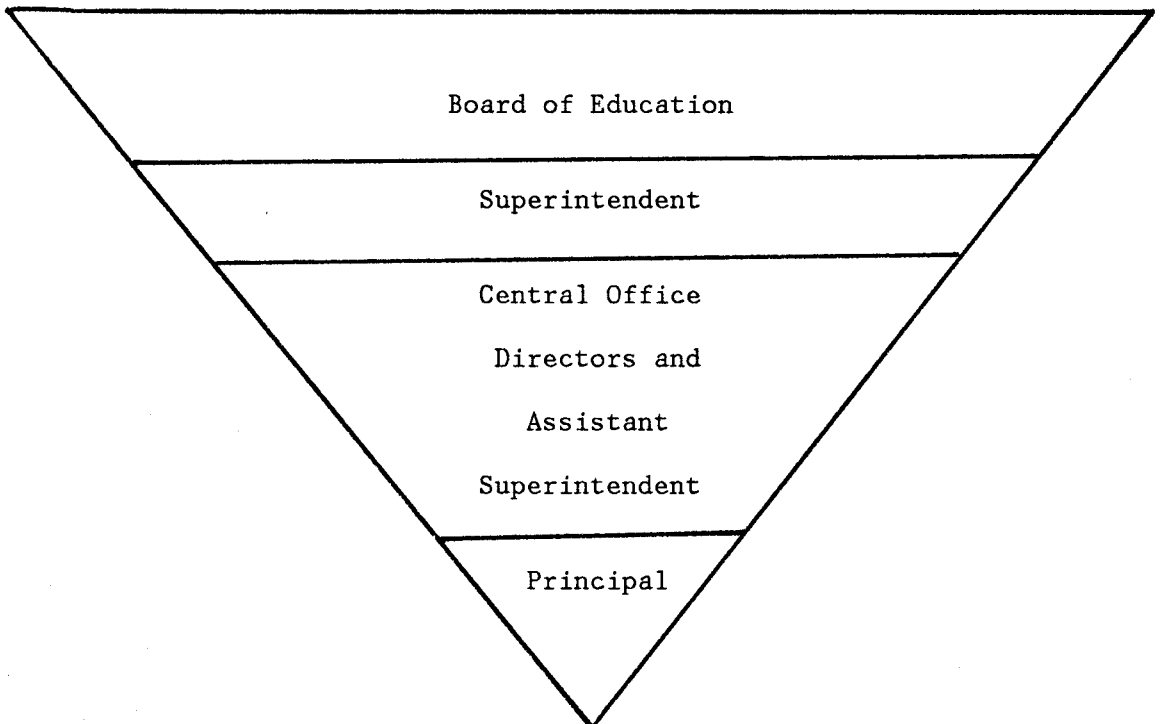
¹⁰ Jess Stein, and Lawrence Urdang, eds., "Educational Administration Today: An Introduction," The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 1,104.

This modern definition of the school principal relates to the history of the usage of the word "principal" in America. The first principal was a lead master or chief teacher. Over time, the term principal teacher was shortened to principal, and the adjective became a noun.

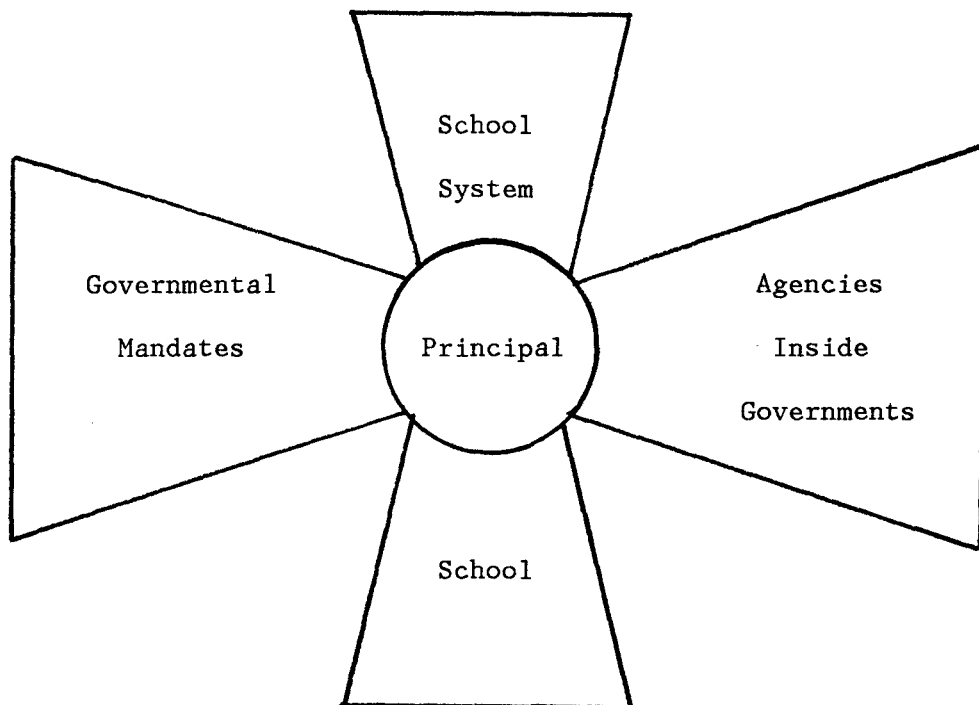
In 1977, Stephen Bailey, lecturing to the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration, schematically represented the principal as chief, utilizing a pyramid.



In addition, Bailey inverted a pyramid indicating that, when combined with the original pyramid, a more realistic concept of the principal emerges as "the person in the middle."



To complete the schematic representations of the principal, Bailey's iron cross is presented.¹¹



The iron cross is constructed by adding two additional pyramids to the first two presented. One of these additional pyramids represents interest or pressure groups, such as the American Legion, parents, sport club boosters, the media. The fourth pyramid represents governmental mandates, such as PL 94-142. This overall schematic representation only begins to describe the many channels by which pressure is exerted on the elementary school principal.¹²

¹¹ Saxe, Educational Administration Today: An Introduction, p. 196.

¹² Ibid., p. 197.

Since the adoption of PL 94-142, "The Education of All Handicapped Children Act" in 1975, additional pressure has been exerted on the elementary principal's role to include the implementation of special education services. With the principal as the instructional leader of the school, the principal's leadership often determines the success or failure of school programs. PL 94-142 mandates additional programs being added to the school's curriculum, therefore, expanding the principal's role.

A study of the role perceptions of those persons primarily involved and responsible for the delivery of services to meet the educational needs of handicapped students was completed at Purdue University in 1981 by Donald Robson. The intent of Robson's study was to examine the administrative role behavior of service deliverers. The primary target roles considered were elementary school principals and directors of special education. The perceptions of these role incumbents about their respective responsibilities in delivering educational services to special needs and handicapped learners were compared with the expectations held by other members of their role set, including regular and special class teachers as well as superintendents.

Usable responses were received from 18 superordinates, 20 directors of special education, 25 elementary principals, 95 regular classroom teachers, and 70 special education class teachers. Directors, principals, and special class teachers all ascribed greater responsibility for pupil concerns to the building principal. Only regular classroom teachers expected greater director than principal responsibility in dealing with handicapped students.

Results involving personnel concerns also indicated significant contrasts between the role perceptions and expectations of principals, directors, and special class teachers from those of regular class teachers. Principals, directors and special education teachers all gave the building principal greater personnel responsibilities than did the regular classroom teachers. Regular classroom teachers ascribed greater special education personnel responsibilities to directors.

In terms of specific role expectations and perceived functions, the elementary principal, according to Robson's study, is expected to take major responsibility in direct service to pupils and in all supervisory and evaluation aspects of personnel administration. All that takes place within the school building is generally conceded to be the major responsibility of the principal. Results of Robson's study indicate that internal operational functions are perceived by all members of the role set, except regular classroom teachers, to be almost the exclusive province of the principal. Organizational maintenance of special education functions and extra-building activities are seen universally as minor functions of the principal.

Results of Robson's study suggest that for elementary principals to avoid the role conflicts that come from expectations which they are not able to meet, they must either consider sharing responsibilities or they must ultimately equip themselves to assume them.¹³

¹³ Robson, "Administering Educational Services for the Handicapped: Role Expectations and Perceptions," pp. 377-378.

As E. Keller (1977) explains, "although the 'what' and the 'who' of PL 94-142 are defined by law and by rule, the 'how' is left to the local school district and in particular to the local district's building principal."¹⁴

J. R. Welsch (1980) analyzed the demands and impact of PL 94-142 on building level administrators and concluded that PL 94-142 had a significant impact on the job of the building level administrator, including the necessity to neglect some important responsibilities because of the demands of the law.¹⁵

As cited by David Raske in 1979, 14.6 percent of the general school administrator's time was being allocated to the performance of special education administrative duties. In contrast, approved directors of special education naturally spend 100 percent of their administrative role to working on special education duties.¹⁶ It is interesting to note from Raske's study that the administration of special education programs, whether provided by approved directors of special education or by general school administrators, did not vary significantly by design but more in the amount of time expended in accomplishing the administrative tasks. The major difference between the role performed by general school administrators responsible for special education programs and that performed by approved directors of special education lies in the

¹⁴ E. Keller, "Principal Issues in PL 94-142," The National Elementary Principal, (1977), p. 80.

¹⁵ J. R. Welsch, "The Impact of PL 94-142 - The Education of All Handicapped Children Act - On the Job of Building Level School Administrators," (1980), p. 111.

¹⁶ Raske, "The Role of General School Administrators Responsible for Special Education Programs," p. 645.

amount of time allocated to fulfilling the duties.

Penny Alicia Ware-Ashby in a study completed in 1980 identified tasks performed by urban elementary principals and noted changes in those tasks and the effects of those changes on the principal's task performance emphasizing changes and effects brought about by PL 94-142. The findings of Ware-Ashby's study concluded that a majority of principals perceived that an important change in their task was caused by increased paperwork as a result of the mandates of PL 94-142.¹⁷

The role of the principal extends far beyond an increase in paperwork as indicated by The National Association of State Directors of Special Education who attempted to define the role of the building principal. "The primary role of the building principal in exceptional education is to ensure the effective and complete provision of necessary and appropriate services to handicapped children in school." Specific responsibilities were to:¹⁸

1. Coordinate and administer special education services in the school.
2. Supervise educational personnel servicing handicapped children in the school.
3. Designate and implement educational programs for handicapped children in the school, in

¹⁷ Penny Alicia Ware-Ashby, "Perceptions of Urban Elementary Principals on Changes in the Urban Elementary Principalship and Effects of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142) on the Tasks they Perform," (Dissertation, University of Colorado, 1980), p. 143.

¹⁸ The National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Child Study Team Placement Training Manual, (Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1976), pp. 37-39.

accordance with approved policies, procedures, and guidelines of the Local Education Agency and of the State Department of Education.

4. Promote attitudes of school personnel and parents that encourage the acceptance and inclusion of handicapped children in regular classes and with regular students.
5. Receive referrals of students with suspected handicapping conditions from teachers, parents, and others.
6. Arrange for evaluation for those students recommended for evaluation as a result of a screening procedure.
7. Supervise the maintenance of child records at the school level and protect the confidentiality of those records.
8. Receive teacher requests for assistance and provide or arrange for specialized assistance.
9. Implement due process procedures.
10. Plan for special education programs in the school and make budget recommendations to the superintendent.
11. Participate in the local education agency's plan for special education services.

The Council for Exceptional Children published a "Special Education Administrative Policies Manual" that defined twenty-seven key oper-

ational and decision-making tasks in special education. This policy manual delegated the primary and support levels of responsibility for tasks to one or more of eleven "Special Education Personnel" which included the building principal. Building principals were delegated a primary role in nine operational and decision-making tasks and a support role in twelve other tasks.¹⁹

A study completed by Lietz and Kaiser in 1979 investigated the ideal and real influence of building principals in the twenty-seven key tasks identified by the Council for Exceptional Children. Results of the study revealed significant differences between what administrators perceive as an ideal state and the real state of their decision-making responsibilities. The school administrators in Lietz and Kaiser's study desired an increase in their total decision-making responsibilities beyond current levels.²⁰

The principal's role in special education has become a major responsibility of the total role of the principal. Vergason, et al (1975) summarized the principal's responsibility by stating that the building administrator is responsible for the entire program in the school building, "the principal must maintain administrative authority over the day-to-day functions of all staff within the building in order to have a coordinated, integrated program."²¹

¹⁹ The Council for Exceptional Children, Special Education Administrative Policies Manual, (Reston, Virginia: The Association, 1977), pp. 46-47.

²⁰ J. Lietz and J. Kaiser, "The Principal's Role in Administering Programs for Exceptional Children," Education, (1979), pp. 31-40.

²¹ G. A. Vergason, F. Smith, T. Vinton, and K. E. Wyatt, "Questions for Administrators," Theory Into Practice, (1975), p. 104.

Implementation of the Elementary Principal's
Special Education Role Responsibilities

The review of literature concerning the principal's implementation of role responsibilities in special education focuses on the following three areas of concentration: the referral process; the individual educational program; and the principle of least restrictive environment. Implementation of PL 94-142 begins with the identification of students in need of special educational servicing.

In 1976, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and in 1977, The Council for Exceptional Children listed the referral process for students with suspected handicapping conditions as a major responsibility of the building principal. R. W. Rebores (1979) reports that strong leadership is necessary if PL 94-142 is to be effectively implemented. Principals can either enhance or diminish the atmosphere within the school building by their attitudes toward the referring of students for special services. Rebores continues by stating that the principal's mannerisms and off-the-cuff statements can demonstrate the support or lack of support for the referral process. Rebores stressed that the principal has the responsibility to wholeheartedly support in a positive manner the law of our land regardless of personal preference.²²

J. Shrybman and G. Matsoukas (1981) stress that every effort should be made by the building principal to involve parents in the identification process. For example, Shrybman and Matsoukas explain that

²² R. W. Rebores, "Public Law 94-142 and the Building Principal," NASSP Bulletin, (1979), p. 27.

the principal should recommend to the professional members of the school that they communicate student concerns openly with parents, avoiding educational jargon. In some cases, communication might have to go beyond telephone conversations and mail correspondence.²³ Turnbull and Turnbull explain that a home visit at a time convenient to the parents might be necessary at times. In some cases the services of someone who speaks the primary language of the home might be warranted.²⁴ Whatever it takes, it is the principal's responsibility to help parents understand their rights and their child's rights in the referral process for special education services.

Beseler (1981) agrees that principals greatly influence the attitudes of parents of handicapped children toward the schools. The attitudes parents develop toward the school system in general and special education in particular depend to a large extent on their first contacts with principals during the initial referral process.²⁵

Communication is the key to involving parents effectively in educational planning. Principals must recognize and meet the parents' need to be completely informed about their child's education; about the school's proposed actions for meeting their child's educational needs; and about their rights and the rights of their child in relation to the educational planning process.

²³ J. Shrybman and G. Matsoukas, "The Principal and the Special Education Hearing," Principal, (1981), p. 30.

²⁴ H. R. Turnbull and A. P. Turnbull, Free Appropriate Public Education Law and Implementation, (Denver, London: Love Publishing Company, 1979), p. 85.

²⁵ Yvonne M. Beseler, "The Principal and Parents of the Handicapped," Principal, (November, 1981), p. 39.

Lietz and Kaiser (1979) state that in most school systems referrals are processed through the building principal, and the decision for a child to be evaluated is often an administrative one.²⁶ Processing referrals allows building principals to exert a certain amount of control over the procedure. According to Lietz and Kaiser, principals are able to control the referral process by assuming various roles, which include the following:²⁷

1. Consultant, with respect to the availability of services.
2. Counselor, with respect to the benefits of services.
3. Supervisor of school records, which include physical possession and dissemination of key information.
4. Liaison agent which includes the possession, dissemination, and collection of referral forms.
5. Programmer, which includes the determination of what services the child receives and when the child will be staffed.

Since referrals typically originate with classroom teachers' recommendations to building principals, the information and recommendations given to teachers by principals may appreciably influence their school's

²⁶ Lietz and Kaiser, "The Principal's Role in Administering Programs for Exceptional Children," p. 35.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

referral level.

PL 94-142 mandates that educational services be documented and evaluated in terms of degree of implementation and effectiveness. Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) are one of those mandated components, and also are one of the criteria by which the educational services are described, monitored, and judged. Burrello and Sage (1979) state that the IEP process is a significant organizational intervention that provides the basis of building level planning.²⁸ As the building instructional leader, the building administrator uses this planning process to assess and match learning needs of children to building resources. Annual reviews of accomplishments measured against individual educational plans provide the basis for gauging the following year's needs for building resources. Burrello and Sage suggest that the building principal analyze the IEP process to evaluate methods of service delivery that were most effective. The building administrator assuming the responsibility for the IEP process asserts leadership within the school through the planning and coordinating of the building's resources.²⁹

Beseler (1981) states that principals influence the attitudes of parents of handicapped children toward the school, particularly as they work through the IEP process. Parents must have sufficient information on which to base their decisions.³⁰ Parents who must have information translated into their primary language must be considered. Provisions

²⁸ L. C. Burrello, and D. D. Sage, Leadership and Changes in Special Education, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), p. 224.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Yvonne Beseler, "The Principal and Parents of the Handicapped," Principal, (November, 1981), p. 39.

must be made for parents who are deaf or have other communication disorders.³¹ According to Beseler, it is the principal who has the responsibility within the school to expend the extra effort to ensure that all parents are adequately informed and understand what is going on during the IEP process.

A study completed by David Raske (1979) examined the tasks performed by general school administrators responsible for special education programs and those performed by approved directors of special education. Results of Raske's study identified 14.6 percent of the general school administrator's time as being allocated to the performance of special education administrative duties.³²

Results of Raske's study indicate that the administration of special education programs, whether provided by approved directors of special education or by general school administrators, does not vary significantly by design but more in the amount of time expended in accomplishing the tasks. The major difference between the role performed by general school administrators responsible for special education programs and that performed by approved directors of special education lies in the amount of time allocated to fulfilling the duties. The general school administrators allocated 14.6 percent of their administrative role to special education. In contrast, approved directors of special education allocated nearly 100 percent of their administrative role to accomplishing special education duties.

³¹ Turnbull and Turnbull, Free Appropriate Public Education Law and Implementation, p. 118.

³² Raske, "The Role of General School Administrators Responsible for Special Education Programs," p. 646.

Raske listed the percent of time spent by general education administrators on specific special education administrative duties. Participating in individual educational planning meetings ranked as the most time consuming duty.³³

Implementation of the requirements for least restrictive appropriate placement, also known as "mainstreaming," is largely the responsibility of the local educational agency.³⁴ Payne and Murray identified the school building principal, by virtue of his leadership role, as the key to mainstreaming success.³⁵

Payne and Murray (1974) examined the attitudes of elementary building principals toward the placement of the handicapped child into the regular classroom setting.³⁶ The results of Payne and Murray's study indicated that if principals were supportive of the integration of the handicapped child, then as educational leaders they could help insure the success of an integrative program. On the other hand, if the principals were nonsupportive, the chances of developing an integrative program were diminished correspondingly.

David (1981) developed the "Principals' Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming and Related Training" (PATMAT) and studied public school principals' attitudes toward special education issues. An analysis of the

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Turnbull and Turnbull, Free Appropriate Public Education Law and Implementation, p. 148.

³⁵ A. P. Turnbull and J. B. Schultz, Mainstreaming Handicapped Students, A Guide for the Classroom Teacher (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1979), p. 68.

³⁶ R. Payne and C. Murray, "Principals' Attitudes Toward Integration of the Handicapped," Exceptional Children, (October, 1974), p. 123.

subjects' responses reveals that a combination of regular and special class placement was viewed as "most effective" in this study. Based upon an analysis of the results of this investigation it would appear that building principals generally view regular class placement, at least on a part-time basis, to be an effective educational environment for mildly and moderately handicapped pupils.

David considered the results of his study optimistic fostering hope for special educators and parents of handicapped children who may be concerned with providing such pupils with an appropriate educational program in the least restrictive environment. David suggested additional investigations of this type aimed at effective programming for handicapped pupils including the views of public school principals in the process.³⁷

Ralph Cline's study, completed in 1981, supports David's conclusions of optimism. Cline evaluated the attitudes and knowledge of principals who would be accepting mainstreamed students and found that the attitudes of principals toward exceptional children was favorable. Principals indicated that they would place certain categories of handicapped students nearer the mainstream than would experts. Cline stated that since the principal is the school's gatekeeper, mainstreaming has a more positive chance of success if the principal is knowledgeable concerning the educational needs of the children to be managed.³⁸

³⁷ W. E. David, "Principals' Attitude Toward Placement of Mildly and Moderately Handicapped Pupils," Journal for Special Educators, (Spring, 1981), p. 269.

³⁸ Ralph Cline, "Principals' Attitudes and Knowledge About Handicapped Children," Exceptional Children, (October, 1981), p. 174.

Sivage (1982) conducted a study to identify organizational variables that correlate with effective mainstreaming implementation. Sivage concluded that effective mainstreaming programs occur in schools where principals are seen as advocates of the program. Advocates were thought to defend the integrity of the program, recruit supportive members, and secure resources. The advocacy measure was a composite of principal's self-ratings and special educator's ratings of the principal on knowledge and attitudes regarding the handicapped, participation in IEP meetings and special education programs, and support of mainstreaming.

Sivage's study concludes that successful implementation of mainstreaming depends on a more system-wide approach that involves the whole school, from principal to teachers. Good communication networks, clearly stated and understood goals and a well-trained staff were essential to building a total, overall view of mainstreaming. Also important to successful programs were supportive principals who were active advocates of mainstreaming.³⁹

Another study supporting the relationship between principals' attitudes and program success was completed by McGuire in 1973. Results revealed that a correlation existed between the attitudes of principals toward handicapped students and the quality of educational programs.⁴⁰

³⁹ C. R. Sivage, "Implementing Public Law 94-142: A Case for Organizational Readiness," Journal for Special Educators, (Winter, 1982), p. 30.

⁴⁰ D. J. McGuire, "An Analytical Survey of the Attitudes of School Administrators and Teachers of Educable Mentally Retarded Children and the Quality of Educational Programs Provided for Educable Mentally Retarded Children Within Selected School Districts in New York State," (Dissertation Abstracts, 1973), p. 2226.

Vargason, Smith and Wyatt (1974) stated that the entire program of instruction within a given school, including special education programs, is the responsibility of the building principal. Consequently, the principal must be supportive of the special education program in order for it to adequately facilitate the education of handicapped children.⁴¹

Functioning at the building level, the principal is in the critical position to provide needed administrative support for successful mainstreaming practices.⁴² By virtue of strong leadership, the principal can provide salient input toward developing, planning and implementing mainstream programs.⁴³ If the principal is committed to the concept of mainstreaming, other staff members will work to help make it successful.

Summary

The literature review presented the role of the elementary principal by referring to Getzel's and Guba's Social System Theory. To be productive, according to Getzels and Guba, the principal must have both the institutional (nomothetic) and the personal (idiographic) dimensions of each act operating with a minimal area of conflict.

⁴¹ G. A. Vargason, F. V. Smith, and K. E. Wyatt, "Questions for Administrators about Special Education," Theory Into Practice, (1974), p. 102.

⁴² P. V. Cochrane and D. L. Westling, "The Principal and Mainstreaming: Ten Suggestions for Success," Educational Leadership, (April, 1977), p. 506.

⁴³ K. M. McCoy, "Interest, Leadership, and Implementation: Views on the Role of the Mainstream Principal," Education, (Winter, 1981), p. 167.



Responsibilities for special education have been viewed by researchers as an integral part of the total role of the principal. Special education role responsibilities thereby exert pressures on the nomothetic dimension of the principal. Additional literature reviewed supported relationships between the principal's own attitudes and program success. Attitudes exert pressures on the idiographic dimension of the principal. Principals must therefore attempt to cope with an environment composed of patterns of expectations for their behaviors in ways consistent with their own patterns of needs and dispositions. To avoid conflicts that may come from expectations which may be unable to be met it is suggested in the literature that principals either share responsibilities or equip themselves with the necessary information to assume responsibilities. Regardless of preference, however, the literature stressed that it is the building principal's responsibility to support special education because, due to Public Law 94-142, special education is now a part of the law of our land.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The review of related literature and research reported in Chapter II indicated that there was a need for more research involving the actual responsibilities carried out by elementary principals in the delivery of special education services. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe actual role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools. Three specific aspects of special education were concentrated on during this study. The three areas of concentration were the principal's role in the referral process, the individual educational program, and the process of placement in the least restrictive environment.

Within the process of identifying and describing special education role responsibilities the following observations were noted and are detailed in Chapter IV:

1. The principal's awareness and ability to identify verbally the three areas of concentration.
2. The principal's ability to describe specific role responsibilities within the three areas of concentration.
3. The principal's ability to present formal procedures for each of the three areas of concentration.

The analysis section of this study focuses on similarities, differences, strengths, weaknesses and patterns of role responsibilities of the elementary principals as they deliver special education services within their schools.

Selection of the Population

Survey

The population selected for the survey portion of this study included all of the elementary school principals from the South Suburban Area Public Schools in Cook County, Illinois. There were one hundred and thirty-three (133) such elementary principals from the thirty-three (33) South Suburban public school districts. The thirty-three elementary districts located in the South Suburban Area of Cook County, Illinois, provide a diverse cross-section of district level special education programs to which the principal is responsible. Students may be found at all elementary levels in any of the following high incidence special education programs: resource learning disabilities; resource speech and language disorders; resource behavior disorders; self-contained early childhood; self-contained learning disabilities; self-contained behavior disorders; self-contained educably mentally handicapped.

District names and addresses were secured from the Directory of Suburban Public Schools, published by the Educational Service Region of Cook County, Illinois. Those elementary districts contacted may be found in Appendix A.

Letters requesting permission to contact the elementary principals within each district were mailed to the thirty-three district Superin-

tendents (see Appendix B). Enclosed in each Superintendent's letter was an addressed and stamped return postcard requesting a checkmark on the appropriate line either granting consent to contact principals within the district or not giving consent (see Appendix C). A letter of endorsement from the Director of Special Education of the researcher's district was also enclosed in each Superintendent's mailing (see Appendix D).

The thirty-three elementary districts are serviced by three Special Education cooperative units. Information letters were mailed to each of the three cooperative Directors of Special Education so that they were made aware of the research being conducted (see Appendices E, F, and G).

After the initial letters were mailed to the district Superintendents, follow-up letters were sent to those Superintendents who had not responded (see Appendix H). Upon receipt of the district Superintendent's postcard granting consent, cover letters, survey instruments and return self-addressed, stamped envelopes were mailed to the elementary principals within the boundaries of the local school district (see Appendices I and J). The mailing was designed so that the building principals would remain anonymous.

The survey instrument was organized into two sections. The first section of the survey contained responses that would lead to the two limitations for future interviews. The first limitation involved the number of years the respondent had been principal of that particular elementary school. The interview portion of the study was limited to principals who had a minimum of three years experience as principal of their specific school.

The second limitation of the study involved the number of district level special education programs currently operating within the school. Principals were requested to mark any of the following high incidence special education, district level programs currently operating within their schools:

- Resource Learning Disabilities;
- Resource Speech and Language;
- Resource Behavior Disordered;
- Self-contained Early Childhood;
- Self-contained Learning Disabilities;
- Self-contained Behavior Disordered;
- Self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped.

Respondents were asked to place the appropriate number of marks, one for each program, if there were two or three programs of the same category operating within their schools. The interview portion of the study was limited to principals who had three or more high incidence, district level special education programs operating within their buildings and, as previously stated, who had a minimum of three years experience as principal of the school.

Additionally, section one of the survey instrument was concerned with administrative tasks involving the servicing of students within the school who may require special education. The principals were asked to rate certain activities according to their importance in their current setting. The administrative tasks focused on the following three areas of concentration in this study: the referral; the individual educational program; and the principle of least restrictive environment.

Section two of the survey instrument requested background information regarding the principal's highest level of professional preparation and course work completed in the area of special education as well as demographic variables.

After the initial letter, survey instrument and response envelope were mailed, follow-up letters including copies of the original survey and return stamped envelopes were sent to the principals who had not responded (see Appendix K).

Interview

Upon receipt of the completed survey instruments ten elementary principals were randomly selected from those principals who had three or more district level special education programs operating within their buildings and had a minimum of three years experience as principal of the school.

In order to carry out the purposes of the study, it was decided, after a preliminary review of the literature and discussions with advisors and professionals within the field of educational administration, that the face-to-face interview was probably the best method of further data collection. The interview technique was considered to permit greater depth and to allow the investigator to probe in questioning to obtain more complete data. The interview also afforded the opportunity of checking and assuring the effectiveness of communication between the respondent and the interviewer during each interview. To reduce the likelihood of subjectivity and personal bias confounding the results, the following measures were taken. First, the interview was scheduled so

that ample time was allowed at the beginning to establish some rapport with the subject and to assure the respondent that the information collected would be treated confidentially and would be used for no purpose other than to answer the research questions and to formulate recommendations for future special education servicing. Second, each subject was given a copy of the list of items to be used as lead questions during the interview (see Appendix L). The procedure of allowing respondents to have the list of questions allowed the subjects the assurance that there was no agenda for the interview other than what had been previously communicated.

The interviews were held in the principal's office in all ten cases. This location was chosen in order to afford the respondents maximum comfort. Further, this setting would enable each subject to recall as many aspects of the role of the principal as possible, since reminders of what the role entails abound in the principal's office.

Content Validity

Content validity of the survey and of the interview questions was determined by the technique referred to as validation by experts.¹ For this purpose, a panel of ten judges, composed of special education directors and supervisors, regular education principals and university professors of educational administration and special education were used. The panel of judges critiqued the survey instrument and the interview questions noting unclear wording and ambiguities. Suggestions were made regarding the need for clarification of directions to sharpen

¹ Debold B. Van Dolen and William Meyer, Understanding Educational Research: An Introduction (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1962), p. 66.

the meaning and intent. Revisions were made on the survey to include demographic variables. The judges' opinions were that the survey would be used to obtain information as well as to limit the population to those principals who had a minimum of three years experience as principal of the school and had three or more high incidence, district level special education programs operating within the building.

Pilot Interview

A pilot interview was conducted to practice the interview technique and to develop probes which would lead to more comprehensive information. The principal selected for the pilot interview met the two qualifications of having three years experience as principal of the school and had more than three high incidence, district level special education programs operating within the building.

The interview session began with a tour of the building which allowed the investigator to develop the necessary rapport required for the formal interview. It became obvious during the session that the interviewer's role became that of a student; the principal was relaying everything that the investigator needed to know about role responsibilities. This format allowed the investigator to practice the interview technique in depth.

Probes are recommended by Murphy to dig for details and understanding.² During the pilot interview, the investigator asked for clarification, requested elaboration, provided encouragement, and utilized silent probes to allow reflection.

² J. T. Murphy, Getting the Facts: A Fieldwork Guide for Evaluators and Policy Analysts (Santa Monica, California: Goodyear, 1980), p. 143.

The probes that were practiced during the pilot interview resulted from the context of the interview, but the practiced techniques were utilized in the subsequent interview sessions.

The pilot informant was asked to provide feedback regarding the interview session. In doing so the principal stated:

Besides spending a great deal more time in the school, I don't know how else you would get reliable information. The only other way you might find out the principal's real role would be to tie into one for about four to six weeks and follow him...the interview is more realistic and better than a questionnaire because you get more side comments. People usually won't take the time to make notes or comments on responses to written questionnaires.

The pilot interview provided the opportunity to practice the interview technique. The interview and the preliminary analysis by the panel of judges confirmed that the interview method of data collection would allow for a detailed account of role responsibilities for servicing special education in a suburban public school.

On-Site Interviews

Each of the ten principals selected for the interview portion of the study was contacted by telephone to schedule sessions at convenient times for the subjects. The investigator arrived at each site at least one-half hour before the scheduled meeting.

The data collected during the survey and interview portions of this study are detailed and analyzed in Chapter IV. The overview of the study, conclusions derived from the findings of the investigations and recommendations for future studies are reported in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools. This process of identifying and describing special education role responsibilities focused on three major areas, the referral process, the individual educational plan, and the concept of least restrictive environment.

Chapter IV presents a summary and analysis of the data collected from seventy-seven (77) completed surveys and from ten (10) on-site interviews with elementary principals who had previously completed the survey, met the two limitations of having three or more years experience as principals of the school, and had more than three high incidence, district level special education programs operating within their buildings, and were willing to provide additional in-depth information. The final chapter, Chapter V, presents a summary statement along with conclusions and recommendations.

The population selected for this study included all of the elementary school principals servicing the public schools in the South Suburban Area of Cook County, Illinois. Elementary district names and addresses were obtained from the Directory of Suburban Public Schools published by the Educational Service Region of Cook County, Illinois. Letters requesting permission to contact the elementary principals

within each district as well as return response postcards were mailed to the thirty-three district Superintendents. Twenty-two response cards were returned after the initial mailing. Of those twenty-two responses, nineteen Superintendents consented and three declined. Eleven Superintendents who did not reply to the first mailing were sent a follow-up correspondence. This second mailing resulted in three additional affirmative responses and two negative replies. A total of twenty-seven Superintendents responded to the request to survey principals within their school districts. These twenty-seven Superintendents represented eighty-two percent of the total number of Superintendents contacted. Eighty-one percent of those responding gave consent to survey principals within their school districts.

Survey Instrument

A two-part survey was mailed to ninety-six principals from the twenty-two consenting elementary school districts. The initial return of sixty-seven completed surveys was followed by a second request that elicited the return of ten additional surveys. The survey return rate was eighty percent.

The survey instrument was organized into two sections. The first section requested information regarding the principals' present assignments. Section two was related to demographic characteristics of the principals.

Questions raised in the first section of the survey were related to each principal's current administrative responsibility. A summary and analysis of the responses to the items in section one of the survey follow.

Although all seventy-seven principals surveyed serviced elementary schools, the buildings were not equally divided by grades. The first question dealt with grade distribution. Thirty of the seventy-seven respondents were principals of K-6 schools. The distribution of grades serviced is presented in table 1.

TABLE 1

Distribution Of Grades Serviced By Elementary Principals

GRADES	NUMBER
K-8	6
EC-5	12
K-3	2
K-6	30
1-4	5
4-6	3
5-8	6
6-8	6
7-8	7

An analysis of the distribution of grades services by the elementary principals reveals that thirty-nine percent, thirty principals administer K-6 schools. The remaining forty-seven principals serviced schools that ranged from K-8 to grades 7-8. It would appear that elementary districts in the South Suburban area of Cook County, Illinois, organize school grades dependent upon individual district needs.

Student enrollment of the schools surveyed was broken into four categories. Thirty principals serviced schools whose enrollment ranged between 125 and 300. Twenty-six schools had student populations that ranged between 301 and 450. Thirteen school populations ranged between 451 and 600 and eight schools had populations greater than 601. Seventy-three percent of those principals surveyed serviced schools whose enrollments were less than 450 students.

The next two responses in section one of the survey instrument would lead to the two limitations for follow-up interviews. The first limitation required the principal's present assignment to have remained the same for three or more years. Sixty-one of the seventy-seven respondents or seventy-nine percent had three or more years in their present administrative assignments.

An analysis of the data identifying the number of years principals remained at their current assignments revealed that while sixty-one principals had three or more years in their present administrative positions, twenty-five of those principals had ten years or more at their current schools. Almost one-third of the principals surveyed remained in their current administrative positions for ten years or more. Eleven principals remained in their present position for fifteen years or more and three principals had served at the same school for more than twenty years. It appears that the turn-over rate for elementary principals in the South Suburban area of Cook County, Illinois, is not high.

The second limitation required three or more high incidence, district level, special education programs operating within the school. Sixty-eight of the seventy-seven respondents or eighty-eight percent of those principals surveyed had three or more high incidence, district level, special education programs currently operating within their buildings.

Further analysis of the data regarding the number of special education classes revealed that forty-seven principals serviced more than three high incidence, district level, special education programs within their schools. Two principals reported nine special education programs,

one reported ten programs. The highest number serviced was reported as twelve programs. Every administrator surveyed reported two or more high incidence, district level, special education programs currently operating within their schools. The implications of these findings clearly support the position that the servicing of special education students is indeed a part of the total role responsibility of the elementary school principal.

No relationship existed between the number of years a principal serviced a school and the number of special education programs currently operating in the building. Nine first year principals reported four, five and six special education programs. One principal with fourteen years in the present position reported two existing special education programs. Regardless of the number of years a principal serviced a particular school, special education needs must be considered as part of the principal's total role responsibility.

Fifty-two principals or 66.5 percent of the principals surveyed met both qualifications of having three or more years in their present administrative assignment and had three or more high incidence, district level, special education programs operating within their schools and were thereby eligible for follow-up interviews.

The final question in section one of the survey addressed administrative tasks that represented areas of responsibility for servicing students within the school who may require special education. The tasks may or may not have represented a problem for the building principal. Responses to the items were indicated on a five point scale as follows:

Severe Problem - indicates that the task causes severe
problems (very high) for an administrator.

(4 points)

Considerable Problem - indicates that the task causes considerable problems (high) for an administrator.

(3 points)

Moderate Problem - indicates that the task causes some problems (moderate) for an administrator.

(2 points)

Not A Problem - indicates that the task does not produce any problems for an administrator.

(1 point)

Not Applicable - indicates that the task does not pertain to the current administrative assignment.

(0 points)

All administrative task items were tabulated and given a mean score. (Mean = Responses x Frequency giving a total, divided by "n" where "n" equals the total number of applicable responses.) The means were then placed in rank order from severe problem to not a problem. The data contained in table 2 represent the results of the administrative tasks surveyed in this study.

The administrative task of providing in-service (item 7) rated the highest mean score of 1.833 and, therefore, ranked number one as the task that produced the largest problem area of responsibility for principals servicing students who may require special education.

One explanation for the high ranking of providing in-service may be found in David Raske's (1979) research. Raske ranked the percent of

TABLE 2

Frequency, Mean and Ranking of Administrative Tasks

TASK	FREQUENCY					MEAN	RANK
	4	3	2	1	NA		
1. Initiating and/or reviewing referrals for special education programs	1	2	19	55	0	1.338	8
2. Involving parents in assessment and educational planning decisions that affect their child	3	8	24	41	1	1.645	3
3. Assisting in the process of student referred for special education	1	2	18	55	1	1.328	9
4. Participating in the Individual Educational Program (IEP) meetings	2	3	29	42	1	1.539	4
5. Scheduling services for special education students	1	7	17	49	3	1.459	5
6. Facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment	1	5	19	47	5	1.444	6
7. Providing inservice education for regular teachers regarding special education	1	10	37	24	5	1.833	1

	TASK	FREQUENCY					MEAN	RANK
		4	3	2	1	NA		
8.	Maintaining an adequate amount of time for special education needs	3	9	28	36	1	1.724	2
9.	Maintaining a positive attitude concerning the value of special education programs	1	5	15	56	0	1.364	7

time general education administrators spent on special education administrative duties. General administrators ranked providing in-service as fifteenth out of fifteen duties performed which represented 1.4 percent of their time.¹ With fourteen other special education duties reported as utilizing more time than in-service one may begin to understand why providing in-service scored as producing the greatest problem area of responsibility.

Another explanation for the high ranking of providing in-service may be found in the fact that 66.5 percent of those administrators surveyed reported having no course work related to exceptional children. The lack of educational background in special education may explain the problem area with regard to in-servicing.

¹ Raske, "The Role of General School Administrators Responsible for Special Education Programs," pp. 645-646.

Maintaining an adequate amount of time for special education needs (item 9) ranked as the second administrative problem area for elementary principals. A comparison of these results with the results of Raske's (1979) study reveals similar findings. Raske's study identified fifteen duties that were performed in various degrees by general school administrators and by directors of special education. While general school administrators responsible for special education programs identified 14.6 percent of their time as being allocated to the performance of special education administrative duties, approved directors of special education allocated 100 percent of their administrative roles to accomplishing special education duties. One would expect directors of special education to spend 100 percent of their time on special education duties. General school administrators should not be expected to spend as much time on special education duties as directors of special education. And yet, as the special education related duties required by PL 94-142 continue to necessitate more and more of general school administrators' time, they must continue to readjust the amount of time that they spend on their general education administrative duties.²

An analysis of the administrative tasks involved in the three major areas of concentration for this study revealed that initiating and/or reviewing referrals for special education programs (item 1) received the second lowest mean score of 1.338. All seventy-seven elementary principals responded to item one with some point value. None of the principals indicated that initiating and/or reviewing referrals was "not applicable" to their present assignment. Although the Rules and

² Ibid.

Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois do define the referral as a formal procedure, there is no statement requiring the principal's review of referrals. The fact that one hundred percent of the administrators indicated some type of interaction with the referral process reveals that principals in this study do consider the referral as an area within their role responsibility. These results are consistent with the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and The Council for Exceptional Children because both organizations listed the referral process of students with suspected handicapping conditions as major responsibilities of the building principal.

The second major area of concentration in this study dealt with the principal's role in the individualized educational plan for the special education student. Results of item 4 indicate the principal's participation in the Individual Educational Program (IEP) meetings. Principals ranked their involvement in IEP meetings as fourth with a mean score of 1.539. One respondent indicated that participation in IEP meetings was "not applicable" to the present assignment.

The IEP is a mandated component of Public Law 94-142 and failure to provide appropriate and adequate education to students requiring special education has severe legal consequences, it would therefore behoove the building principal to routinely attend IEP meetings.

The third major area of concentration in this study dealt with the principal's role as the facilitator of the principle of least restrictive environment. Item 6 presented the principals the task of facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment, commonly

referred to as mainstreaming. The principals in this study ranked their involvement in the principle of least restrictive environment as sixth with a mean score of 1.444. Five of the seventy-seven respondents indicated that facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment was "not applicable" to their present assignment. Since the entire program of instruction within a given school is the responsibility of the principal, including special education programs, the response "not applicable" from five administrators was questioned. Reviewing the survey results revealed that the classes listed by principals marking "not applicable" to item 6 consisted of early childhood or preschool age children. Although these students may not be mainstreamed into academic areas, they are being educated in the same school as nonhandicapped children. Possibly the confusion lies in the general usage of the term mainstreaming as the academic integration of handicapped children with nonhandicapped students and not the least restrictive environment definition listed in PL 94-142.

The fact that forty-seven of the principals surveyed in this study reported that facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment was not a problem may be attributed to the attitudes of those principals surveyed. Payne and Murray's (1974) research on principal's attitude toward the integration of the handicapped revealed that if principals were supportive of the integration of the handicapped child, then as educational leaders, they could help insure the success of an integrative program.³

³ Payne and Murray, "Principals' Attitudes Toward Integration of the Handicapped," p. 124.

Item ten provided for the inclusion of additional special education responsibilities not listed in the survey. Eleven principals responded by writing in comments. The responses were summarized as follows:

Five principals specifically stated that the amount of time needed to provide special education servicing was demanding. Two of the five administrators referred to the amount of time involved in the paperwork related to special education.

Four principals indicated that dealing with the discipline problems of special education students within the building caused a problem area.

One administrator stated that parental education and involvement continued to be a difficult area of responsibility.

One principal indicated a problem area was that of maintaining respect and cooperation between special education staff and the regular staff members.

Questions raised in the second section of the survey instrument were related to the demographic characteristics of the principals. A summary of the responses to the items regarding background information of the principals surveyed follows.

The educational background of those principals included in the study indicated that seven held doctorate degrees and eight were doctoral candidates. Nineteen principals held certificates of advanced study and forty-three held master's degrees.

Principals were requested to list courses completed in the area of special education. The fact that 66.5 percent of the principals sur-

veyed had no course work which could be identified as related to exceptional child education is consistent with the research completed by Bullock (1970). Bullock examined the academic credentials of ninety-two elementary school administrators looking for coursework in exceptional child education. The data revealed that 65 percent of the elementary administrators had had no course work which could be identified as related to exceptional child education. Twenty-three percent had taken one course, 8 percent had taken two courses, and only 4 percent had taken three or more courses in the area.⁴

Bullock's findings are similar to the findings reported by the elementary principals in this study. An analysis of the data indicated that elementary school administrators lack specialized training related to exceptional child education. Results of a study by Davis (1980) support the reality that principals who are currently being required to assume responsibilities for the education of handicapped children do not have a high degree of formal special education training. Davis investigated the degree of formal special education training of 345 principals. The results reveal that 51.9 percent of those administrators surveyed had no coursework in the area of special education.⁵

The administrators' years in educational administration and frequencies are indicated in table 3.

⁴ Bullock, "An Inquiry into the Special Education Training of Elementary School Administrators," p. 771.

⁵ William E. Davis, "An Analysis of Principals' Formal Training in Special Education," Education, (Fall, 1980), pp. 90-94.

TABLE 3

Years of Experience of the Administrators

YEARS	IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
1 - 9	28
10 - 15	26
16 - 20	15
21 - 30	7
31 and over	1 (N = 77)

The sex of the seventy-seven principals was reported as fifty-two males and twenty-five females. The distribution of ages is presented in table 4.

TABLE 4

Distribution of Ages of Elementary Principals

AGE	NUMBER
30 - 35	5
36 - 40	22
41 - 45	14
46 - 50	11
51 - 55	14
56 and over	11 (N = 77)

The final survey item requested the marital status of the elementary principals. Twelve indicated that they were single, fifty-nine stated that they were married. Four principals indicated that their marital status was divorced and two stated that they were widowed.

Interview

Public Law 94-142 calls for building principals, by virtue of their leadership roles, to emerge as key figures in the planning and implementation of special education services within the building. Section 3.09 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois focuses on the building principal as the facilitator involved in the functioning of special education programs as an integral part of the school program. It is the principal who is responsible for the quality of educational services provided to each and every student in the school as well as with the total management of the school.

Interviewing principals was the research technique employed as the major vehicle for the collection of primary data. The interview schedule was developed after reviewing the research and polling experts in the field. The investigation concluded that in order to achieve a representative sample from the seventy-seven principals for an in-depth interview, between ten and fifteen percent would be necessary. Consequently, ten principals or thirteen percent, were randomly selected to participate in the research. All ten principals met the two qualifications of having a minimum of three years experience as principal of their specific school and had three or more high incidence, district level, special education programs currently operating within their buildings. All ten principals agreed to participate in the interview portion of the study. The interviews took place during February, March and April, 1984 and ranged in length from forty-five minutes to one and one-half hours.

The interview summaries were grouped according to the principal's role responsibilities in the three major areas of concentration for this study, the referral, the individual educational plan, and the process of placement in the least restrictive environment.

Within the process of identifying and describing special education role responsibilities, the following were noted:

1. The principal's awareness and ability to identify verbally the three major areas of concentration.
2. The principal's ability to describe specific role responsibilities within each major area.
3. The principal's ability to present formal procedures of each of the three areas of concentration.

Referral Process

The first major area of concentration encompasses the principal's role responsibilities for students referred to special education when regular education procedures do not adequately meet the student's needs. Section 1.08 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois defines the referral as a formal procedure, by which a case study evaluation may be requested. The referral must be written and is used to determine the child's need for special education and related services.

Research Question One

"How would a student in your school be referred for special education services?"

All ten principals interviewed began responding to question one as soon as it was presented, requesting no need for clarification. Therefore all ten respondents appeared aware of the term "referral." Although responsibilities varied, all ten principals were able to describe their role responsibilities within the referral process. Six of the ten administrators opened the discussion by stating that the child's classroom teacher generally initiated the referral process by first talking to the building principal.

Principal A referred to the initial conversation between the classroom teacher and the principal as "the talking stage." He stated specifically that, "Before the referral is completed by the teacher, we talk. Naturally, the teacher has had some type of conference with the parents about concerns."

It is the teacher, in Principal A's building, who obtains and completes the referral form, contacts the parents of the child and returns the completed paperwork to the principal. Once completed, Principal A stated that, "the referral goes to 'Special Services' and then at the Friday meeting where a group of multidisciplinary professionals are gathered, they discuss the referral and decide how best to implement." Although Principal A was able to give the researcher a blank referral form, there was neither presentation nor any indication of any written procedure for the referral of students at this school.

Principal B distinguished between a student referred by the kindergarten teacher and a student referred by a teacher in an upper grade. The term "screen" was used when Principal B referred to the kindergarten student.

The classroom teacher concerned about an older child would first talk to Principal B who stated that he would then make his own observations before reconvening with the teacher. Once Principal B agreed with the initiation of a referral, he stated that together they fill out a "Pupil Personnel Referral" form. Principal B stated that the teacher would be responsible for contacting the parent. Principal B concluded by handing the researcher a copy of a district Pupil Personnel Referral form. The bottom of page two of this referral indicated that the principal forwarded the completed form to the Director of Special Education. Principal B was the only one of the ten respondents who referred to the screening of kindergarten students. When questioned specifically about the kindergarten screening, Principal B stated that the Special Education staff took care of that procedure.

Principal E opened his response by explaining the list of district procedures available for referring a regular education student. "The first procedure," stated Principal E, "is that the teacher brings the child to the principal's attention, assuming she has already tried some remediation techniques in the classroom." Principal E continued to define the procedure by stating that step two involved the learning disabilities teacher who administered an auditory and a visual perception test. "Of course," explained Principal E, "I have already telephoned the student's parents to make them aware of the concerns. I then follow-up by obtaining written parental permission." Principal E continued by discussing the "team involvement." After clarification was requested, Principal E explained that he chaired the team which included the classroom teacher, the learning disabilities teacher, the speech and

language teacher, the social worker, and the school nurse. The team meets after parental permission has been received and the results of the auditory and visual perception tests were completed to discuss the need for a formalized referral for a full case study. At that point, Principal E handed the researcher an outline identifying specific steps towards a formal referral.

Principal F stated that the initial referral would be started by the teacher.

The teacher notices something that he or she considers to be an instructional problem, be it behavior, be it slow learning, be it something coming from the home, anything that may impede the learning process. The classroom teacher starts the process by conferring with the counselor who brings the matter to the attention of the parent. The problem may be solved simply by a change in the child's schedule, teacher, homework patterns. So the referrals are not automatic when a teacher notices a problem. Once the counselor and the parent confer and agree, then the teacher may initiate the paperwork. The counselor guides the paperwork until it reaches my desk and then I turn it over to the Director of Special Education.

Principal H stated that a referral may come from the teacher, the principal or the parent. She continued by explaining the process that she set up with her staff.

Once concern has been expressed to me, I initiate a 'blue referral,' this referral is for building purposes only. Upon completion, we sit at my round table over there and we discuss the student's strengths and weaknesses.

When asked who was included at the round table discussion, Principal H responded, "the teacher, social worker, parent and, of course, myself." Principal H continued,

We brainstorm at this point and suggest strategies and available options. Then we meet again in four weeks. During the four weeks, suggested strategies are attempted by the classroom teacher and the parent begins to better understand the child's situation at school. The outcome of the second meeting may result in the initiation of a formal referral. If the referral is warranted, I obtain parental permission at this second meeting and request that all staff present

give input on the district referral form. The completed form is then processed by the psychologist.

Principal J reported that she takes time to set up a specific conference with any teacher concerned about a student who may require special education services. If, at the conclusion of the conference, she and the teacher agree, she suggests that the teacher complete a referral. A blank form was handed across the desk to the researcher. Principal J contacts the parents to request testing and follows up the phone conference with a formal letter requesting parental signatures indicating consent to begin the process. Once the teacher has completed the referral, Principal J reviews it, adds any background information she may have, signs it and turns it over to the special education staff.

Principals C, D, G, and I referred specifically to a "pre-referral" form involving responsibilities beyond communication. All four respondents were asked to distinguish between the pre-referral and the referral for special education.

Principal C presented the researcher two forms. "Pre-referral" was typed at the top of a two page checklist. "Referral" was typed at the top of a three page fill-in form. At a building meeting scheduled for the first Thursday of every month, teachers may bring the completed "pre-referral" to discuss concerns. When asked about the attendance at these meetings, Principal C stated that the learning disabilities and speech teachers attend each meeting as well as the social worker and special education coordinator. Although Principal C stated that he tried to attend each meeting, it was the special education coordinator who "took notes and decided whether the battery of tests should be

given." Classroom teachers attend the meetings whenever they would like to discuss a child. Once the special education coordinator makes the decision to test the student, the referral form is completed and the teacher contacts the parents. The teacher then informs the principal's secretary, who mails out the appropriate letter to be signed by the parents. Principal C stated that he becomes involved only when parents don't agree with the decision to test, otherwise, he stated, "the procedure runs smoothly."

A "pre-referral packet" was presented by Principal D. This packet remains readily available for any teacher who may consider referring a student for special education. The "pre-referral packet" consisted of a folder containing teaching strategies at all grade levels and in all academic subject areas. Written suggestions for the classroom management of students with behavioral concerns and a student activity checklist were also included. In addition, the teacher was to complete a one page form indicating scores on previous achievement tests. Principal D stated that he considered this the "investigative stage."

Principal D continued by describing the secondary stage which began when the teacher returned the completed test scores to the principal. The principal stated that at this point he would confer with the teacher to determine whether a gap existed between the student's learning potential and learning achievement. Once Principal D determined that a problem existed, he would have the teacher complete "a referral." Principal D stated that he would make parental contacts. At the conclusion of the interview, Principal D opened a file drawer next to his desk and displayed a multi-colored district procedure manual that had been compiled by the special education staff of Principal D's district.

Principal G explained the "pre-referral" as follows:

The classroom teachers all have pre-referral forms. Once a teacher talks to me about a student, I request that the teacher complete the pre-referral. The pre-referral includes statements regarding the child's strengths and weaknesses and the ways the teacher has attempted to remediate any deficiencies. After the pre-referral is turned in to me, I schedule a student-support staff meeting. We're talking about a team, a multidisciplinary team of social worker, classroom teacher, learning disabilities teacher, speech therapist, nurse and myself.

After assessing the pre-referral, Principal G mails home a letter to the parents explaining that people who know the child at school have met and discussed the child's progress and have made recommendations to refer the child to the special education staff for testing. The parents then sign for permission to test. Principal G commented that parents frequently call him after they have received the letter. Principal G stated that he reassures parents that testing may help the teachers learn how to better instruct the child. Most parents tend to agree during the phone conversation. If the parents do not agree, Principal G invites them to school for a second student-support staff meeting. After parental consent has been granted, Principal G forwards a more detailed referral form to the members of the multidisciplinary team. Upon completion, the referral is directed to the special education department.

Principal I began by stating that generally teachers or parents request help for their child, however, she stated, "there are occasions when I may tap people on shoulders and say refer him, or I will refer him myself." When asked about the procedure, Principal I handed me a district special education procedure booklet and asked me to turn to page 6 while she discussed the "pre-referral." Principal I continued,

"The teacher usually completes the pre-referral which asks for the student's school history, academics, behavior, attendance, achievement test scores and current level of functioning in the classroom." Upon completion of the pre-referral, the teacher and Principal I discuss the student's needs. At this point, if Principal I agrees that testing is warranted, she phones the parents, stating that she attempts to make telephone contact with the teacher present. Once parents concur with the principal and teacher, Principal I hands the teacher the "referral." Principal I explained that the original pre-referral is then stapled to the actual referral form.

Teachers usually complete the referral in a day or two, reported Principal I. The referral is turned in to Principal I, who then forwards it to the school nurse for a vision and hearing check. The nurse adds her test results and then passes the referral to the district coordinator of special education. Principal I concluded by stating that the signed parental permission form was also stapled to the referral before it left her office.

Summary of Referral Process

Although only Principals C, D, G, and I referred specifically to a "pre-referral" procedure, the "blue referral" presented by Principal H also included activities prior to actual involvement in special education services. While neither PL 94-142 nor the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois specifically mention pre-referral responsibilities, half of the principals surveyed did encourage intervention prior to a formal special education referral.

The pre-referral process may include a team meeting of individuals who suggest interventions to assist academic or social progress. A variety of attempts may be used to help students before any special education testing is warranted. Not all students who are involved in pre-referral activities are referred for special education. It is possible that the student's needs may be met during the pre-referral phase.

Once warranted, the formalized referral procedure for special education evaluation begins. All ten principals surveyed specified that a written referral form would be completed on the concerned student. Generally, the first step in the referral process requires that a student be referred by parents, teachers or other school personnel. Section 1.01 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education specifically states that parents must be informed, must understand and must grant voluntary consent to carry out a special education evaluation. Six of the principals surveyed accepted the responsibility of informing parents and obtaining voluntary parental consent. Three principals relied on the classroom teacher to obtain parental consent and one principal delegated the responsibility for parental contact to the school counselor.

Table 5 summarizes the principals' awareness of the referral process, the principals' ability to describe specific role responsibilities, the principals' ability to produce a referral form and the principals' ability to produce a formal procedure for the referral process.

Table 6 presents a summary of the major role responsibilities of those principals reporting on the referral process.

TABLE 5

Involvement of Principals in the Referral Process

PRINCIPALS INVOLVEMENT	PRINCIPALS
1. Awareness of the referral process.	All principals
2. Ability to describe role responsibilities during the referral process.	All principals
3. Presentation of a formalized referral form.	All principals
4. Ability to produce a formal procedure for the referral of students to special education services.	Principals A, B, D, E, G, I

TABLE 6

Role Responsibilities During the Referral Process

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSIBILITY	PRINCIPAL(S)
1. Communicates with teacher.	A, B, D, E, G, H, I, J
2. Holds and disseminates referral forms.	A, B, E, H, I, J
3. Makes independent observations.	B
4. Comments on the referral forms.	B, E, H, J
5. Obtains parental consent.	D, E, G, H, I, J
6. Specified communication with parents when disagreements arose.	C, G
7. Forwards completed referral to special education personnel.	A, B, E, F, G, H, J

Analysis of Referral Process

Principals appropriately assume a high level of responsibility for the processing of referrals of students with suspected handicapping conditions. Six out of the ten principals interviewed maintained actual possession of the referral forms. When a concern arose about a student, the teacher, in all but two cases, reported directly to the principal.

The results of this study appear consistent with results presented by Lietz and Kaiser in 1979. Lietz and Kaiser described the principal as the gatekeeper. The principals' gatekeeping functions in special

education included the dissemination and the collection of referral forms. The referral usually originates with the classroom teacher's recommendation to the building principal, therefore the information and recommendations given to teachers by principals may influence their school's number of referrals. Although the teacher was usually the referring agent in this study Principals H and I reported that parents also initiated referrals and Principal I stressed that, in some cases, she herself initiated a referral.

Five principals described procedures that involved a pre-referral. It appeared that the pre-referral intervention was encouraged to assure that all building level alternatives had been explored before proceeding to the formalized referral for special education services.

Communication between the teacher and the principal was stressed by eight of the ten principals interviewed. Principal A specifically referred to a "talking stage" to inform the principal of concerns and to discuss the initiation of a referral. Principal B's involvement went beyond communication to actual classroom observation of the student in question. Communication as a means of identifying a gap between student learning potential and achievement was the emphasis of Principal D's encounter with the teacher. Principals E, G, and I also emphasized communication as part of the initiation of a student referral. Principals C and H both extended the initial communication to involve several staff members. Principal H appeared highly involved in the "round table discussion" of the "blue referral." In contrast, Principal C stated that he "tried to attend each meeting, however, it was the special education coordinator who took notes and made the decisions." Principal F was the

only administrator surveyed who did not enter the referral process until the completed paperwork reached his desk. Principal F delegated the school counselor to communicate with the teacher and to make the parental contacts. Once the referral reached Principal F's desk, there was no mention of administrative intervention other than to turn the completed referral over to the district director of special education.

Section 1.01 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education specifically refers to written voluntary parental consent regarding special education procedures. Seven of the ten principals considered parental consent their responsibility. Three principals relied on the teacher to obtain parental consent and one administrator delegated parental contact to the school counselor.

The attitudes parents develop toward the school system in general and special education in particular depend to a large extent on their first contacts with the school. Therefore it may behoove the building principal to make a personal effort to keep parents informed about their child's educational strengths and weaknesses. The time involved in obtaining parental consent may become the principal's greatest investment in developing positive parental attitudes. In turn, the attitudes that parents form influence their child's feelings about school. Parental attitudes are, therefore, important contributing factors in the success of services developed for their child.

Although the Rules and Regulations specify that the building principal shall facilitate the functioning of special education instruction and resource programs and related services as an integral part of the

school program, there is no statement regarding direct input from the principal during the referral process. Eighty percent of the principals in this study evidenced leadership role responsibilities for the referral process.

Leadership was evidenced as four of the principals extended their role responsibilities to include direct input on the referral form. One of the four administrators made his own observations of the student in need before commenting on the referral form. Another example of administrative leadership may be witnessed during the building team meetings. Three of the principals stated that it was their responsibility to schedule and to "chair" these discussions.

Principals who schedule and lead team meetings within the building tend to evidence support for special education programs by these actions. Positive attitudes and supportive behaviors of principals toward programs for the handicapped may often be emulated by the teachers in the building. If the principals have positive attitudes toward exceptional children then the teachers may also reflect positive attitudes.

Individualized Educational Program

The second major area of concentration encompasses the principal's role responsibilities in each student's individualized educational program (IEP). Section 1.02 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois defines the individualized educational program as a written statement for an exceptional child that provides at least a statement of:

the child's present level of educational performance; annual goals and short-term instructional objectives; specific special education and related services; the extent of participation in the regular education program; the projected dates for initiation of services; anticipated duration of services; appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures; and a schedule for annual determination of short-term objectives.

The implementation phase of the IEP includes activities to ensure that the IEP is being carried out. The annual case review is a required meeting for the purpose of reviewing the IEP, updating it, and recommending necessary changes in programs and services.

Research Question Two

"Once a student is recommended for special education services, how is the individualized educational program developed?"

Nine of the ten principals interviewed were able to immediately respond to research question two regarding the individualized educational program (IEP). Although Principal C appeared aware of the procedures involved in writing and developing an IEP, he did not have a clear understanding of the meaning of the IEP. The lack of understanding was expressed in Principal C's first response, "the teacher does the writing out of all the, well in coordination with the learning disabilities teacher who goes over the disabilities and what-have-you, then the teacher writes the list of IEP's." Principal C was aware that the special education teacher and the regular classroom teacher conferred. He also was aware that the special education teacher and the regular class-

room teacher completed the actual writing of a form. The confusion appeared in the definition of the term IEP. Principal C indicated that the IEP may be written up in a list format.

All of the other nine principals responded appropriately to question two and appeared to understand not only the term IEP, but also the procedures involved in initiating the IEP process.

Principal A was explicit in his description of the IEP. For example, Principal A stated, "the IEP is developed by the specialist in the field affected. For instance, if the student was diagnosed as L.D., the learning disabilities teacher prepares the pages of the IEP, if the child had a speech disability, the speech therapist writes the IEP." Principal A continued by explaining that the IEP contained the current and previous test results, the goals and objectives for the student, as well as the projected date for initiation of services.

Once the IEP form was prepared, the parents, classroom teacher, special education teacher and Principal A would meet to discuss the proposed plan. "During the meeting, the parents always have the opportunity to add or change any statements on the IEP," added Principal A. When asked whether or not the special education director attends the meetings, Principal A responded, "usually, however, I conduct the meeting whenever he cannot be here and I review the rights of the parents and file the completed IEP.

Principal B explained that the IEP was "an educational plan developed by the teacher who will service the student." Principal B continued,

Since the parents are fully aware that their child has been tested, they are usually anxious to hear the test results. Often, if a rec-

ommendation involves self-contained placement, I invite the parents in to school to observe the various special education programs prior to the IEP meeting. This allows the parents time to ask questions and to better understand the needs of their child.

Although Principal B stated that the district director of special education scheduled and conducted the IEP meetings, Principal B was, nevertheless present at every meeting. Principal B also stated that the IEP's were maintained in each student's cumulative folder. Principal B concluded by stating that he enjoyed his "in-depth involvement" with the special education students in his building. "I should get to know all of my students as I do the handicapped ones," replied Principal B.

Although Principal C appeared unable to appropriately explain the IEP format, he did state that he tried to attend as many of the meetings as possible. "We're fortunate to have a special education coordinator and she is always at every meeting," reported Principal C. "She goes over the papers with the parents, she explains about their rights and she enters the forms into the student's file."

Principal D reported that he completed page 1 which consisted of the student's identifying information and a statement of the specific special education and related services to be provided to the child, the extent to which the child may be able to participate in regular educational programs and the projected dates for initiation and the anticipated duration of services. Additionally, Principal D reported taking the responsibility for completing page 3 of the IEP form which included the child's present level of educational performance.

Principal D stated that he not only attends all of the IEP meetings, he conducts the meetings so that he may communicate directly with

the parents. "Open communication becomes essential," explained Principal D. "When a parent is completely informed of his and his child's rights and is free to ask questions, many fears become allayed."

When asked about specific district procedures, Principal D reopened the file drawer next to his desk and again pointed to the multi-colored procedure manual he made the researcher aware of during the first portion of the interview. The procedure manual indicated that one copy of each student's IEP was given to the parents, one to the teacher working with the student and one to the building principal. Principal D stated that his copy remained in the cumulative record file in his office.

The student's IEP is formulated during the multidisciplinary conference, reported Principal E. "Yes, of course, the parents are in attendance," stated Principal E. "Student and parents rights are explicitly outlined and the IEP is written with the cooperation of the parent." Principal E continued, "We are all in this together, we all want to help educate children, we want to meet the needs of every child."

When asked whether Principal E considered himself a member of the multidisciplinary team, he responded as follows:

Oh yes, I consider myself to be an active participant in the multidisciplinary conferences. I attend every conference, I also try to attend every annual review. We've had special ed. for a lot of years here. I have ten special ed. classes. I think I enjoy attending these conferences and I've learned much more about the whole process. I think I've gotten many insights over the years. I think I can help teachers, especially younger teachers who haven't dealt with parents as long as I have in terms of their understanding what we're trying to accomplish. So I think I add a lot to the meetings in the sense of knowing parents and how to present the material, details on how the programs are set up, their rights as parents. I have seen the special ed. programs produce, I can tell

parents how their child may respond in the setting and what they may achieve in the future.

Principal E presented the researcher a blank IEP form as well as an outline listing steps taken to complete the IEP process. This outline appeared to be a continuation of the first procedure Principal E referred to during his explanation of the referral process. The final step on the outline detailed the dissemination of copies of the IEP to parents, special education personnel and to the principal.

A "student-staff resource corps" develops the IEP in Principal F's school. Members of the student-staff resource corps include the teacher, counselor, nurse, psychologist, parents and principal. Principal F explained as follows:

The IEP is written by the corps; the information generated through the referral, testing and diagnosis process, plus the child's academic and social-emotional status and the prescription of how the student will be helped are all written on the IEP at the time the corps meets. The primary responsibility of the writing of the IEP belongs to the district director of special education. He takes care of scheduling the meeting and he sits at the head of the table during the meeting. He has parent hand-outs he gives to each parent regarding their rights. Of course, I sign the IEP and take a copy back for my office.

"Once testing is completed, reported Principal G, "I schedule the second student-support staff meeting." Principal G explained as follows:

The parent attends the second meeting as well as all of those personnel previously mentioned (social worker, classroom teacher, learning disabilities teacher, speech therapist, nurse, principal). Each professional carefully describes the child's strengths and weaknesses and a recommendation is made to better meet the child's needs. The parent gives input, asks questions, generally reacts to the recommendations. If the consensus agrees and the child will receive special education, then the IEP is written. At least one goal is established right then. It is at this point that I read the parents their rights, they have the opportunity to waive the ten day waiting period, I give them a copy of the Rules and Regulations and a copy of the developed IEP.

When asked to see a copy of the IEP, Principal G walked to a file and pulled out a student's folder which contained a completed IEP. The color of the student's IEP was pink. Principal G mentioned that the pink copies were for the cumulative records, the blue copies went to the special education office and the white copies were kept by the parents. Principal G then handed me a notebook which he described as his guide for special education. The notebook contained procedures not only for the IEP process, but also for the pre-referral, referral, annual reviews, mainstreaming and due process.

The district referral completed at Principal H's second "round table" meeting requested testing by special education personnel. The results of these tests are explained at a third meeting which includes the teacher, social worker, parents, principal and special education staff members. If the recommendations include special education, then Principal H discusses the IEP process with the parents. Principal H stated that by this stage of the process, most parents are quite open to any type of help for their child. With the parents in agreement Principal H then supervises the formation of the IEP in cooperation with all of the present staff and the parents. Principal H stated further that the parents' rights are explained and the placement procedures, including the date of initiation, are discussed. Parents receive a copy of the completed program and a copy of their rights as well as a projected date for the review of the goals and objectives presented for their child.

Upon completing of the testing by the special education department, Principal I invites the parents to school to discuss their child's

needs. Present during the conference are the parents, classroom teacher, special education diagnostician and the principal. "Generally," reported Principal I, "the parents want assistance because their child is often in serious need." Principal I continued by stating, "once the group agrees that the child requires servicing by the special education staff, the IEP is developed so that the parent is fully aware of the changes in the child's school setting." Principal I explained that the special education personnel were responsible for writing the child's test scores and for presenting goals and objectives for the child. Principal I stated that she becomes the facilitator in terms of making sure the IEP is completed properly and that the group follows the law in terms of the rights of the parents involved. Principal I reported that she, as well as everyone else in attendance at the meeting, signed the IEP. The parents, the special education department and the principal leave the meeting with copies of the completed IEP.

The psychologist in Principal J's district forwards copies of the completed testing report to the classroom teacher and to the principal. After the report has been read, Principal J observes the child in the regular classroom. The psychologist schedules the meeting with the parents and includes the principal, classroom teacher and special education teachers who may become involved in the servicing of the student. During the meeting, held in the principal's office, the psychologist reviews the testing report and makes specific recommendations. Once the psychologist completes his presentation and presents his recommendations, Principal J reported that she takes over the meeting by explaining the details of the recommended servicing and the rights pertaining

to parents. With the parents' questions answered, stated Principal J, the IEP process begins. The psychologist fills in the test results, the teacher completes the current levels of functioning and the special education teacher defines the goals and objectives. "During the actual writing process," explained Principal J, "I have assured the parents that they may stop at any point and give input or ask questions and also that upon completion they will obtain their own copy of everything presented during the meeting."

A blank IEP, as well as a "Special Education Directory of Procedures," was presented to the researcher by Principal J. In addition, Principal J informed the researcher that all of the completed IEP's were kept inside of each student's folder in the principal's office ready for updating during the annual review. Principal J concluded by reporting that she attends all of the intake meetings as well as all of the annual reviews. "After all," stated Principal J, "I better get involved if I'm the one responsible for seeing to it that the students are getting what we say they're getting."

Summary of the IEP

Ninety percent of the principals interviewed reported an ability to express the meaning of an individualized educational program. Although one administrator appeared unaware of the definition of an IEP, that same administrator was able to describe the process involved in preparing the forms.

All of the principals in this study were able to present the researcher with formalized paperwork that represented the IEP form and 80 percent referred to specific procedures for processing the IEP.

Table 7 summarizes the principals' involvement in the individualized educational program. Involvement ranged from the administrators' ability to clearly express the meaning of the IEP to the administrators' awareness of the IEP process and to their ability to describe procedural role responsibilities. In addition, principals' ability to present the IEP form, as well as their ability to display a formal procedure for the IEP process, was noted.

Table 8 presents a summary of the major role responsibilities of those principals reporting on the process of developing a student's individualized educational program.

TABLE 7

Involvement of the Principals in the IEP

PRINCIPALS' INVOLVEMENT	PRINCIPALS
1. Ability to clearly express the meaning of an IEP.	A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
2. Awareness of the IEP process.	All principals
3. Ability to describe role responsibilities during the IEP process.	All principals
4. Presentation of an IEP form.	All principals
5. Ability to display a formal procedure for the IEP process.	A, B, D, E, G, H, I, J

TABLE 8

Role Responsibilities of Principals Regarding the IEP

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSIBILITY	PRINCIPAL (S)
1. Participates in writing the IEP.	D, E, F, G, H, J
2. Conducts IEP meetings.	A, D, E, G, H, I, J
3. Explains parental rights during IEP meetings.	A, D, E, G, H, I, J,
4. Attends all IEP meetings.	A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J,
5. Attends some of the IEP meetings.	C
6. Has access to a copy of students' IEP's.	All Principals

Analysis of the IEP

One of the most important provisions of PL 94-142 requires that an individual educational program be developed for each child receiving special education services. The IEP is the foundation on which the child's education is built. The Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois describe the IEP as a written statement for an exceptional child.

Burrello and Sage (1979)⁶ suggest that the building administrator assume the responsibility for the IEP process thereby asserting leadership within the school through the planning and coordinating of the

⁶ L. C. Burrello and D. D. Sage, Leadership and Changes in Special Education, p. 224.

building's resources. Ninety percent of the principals in this study attended all of the IEP meetings held at their schools. Seventy percent of those interviewed actually conducted the IEP meetings. Only one principal relied on a special education coordinator to supervise IEP meetings.

Although the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois do not specify the principal's involvement in the writing of the IEP, six of the ten administrators reported active participation in the writing of the IEP.

Administrative leadership for the IEP process was demonstrated by eight of the ten principals interviewed. Principals A, D, E, G, H, I, and J all reported supervising or conducting the IEP meetings at their schools. Principal I saw herself as, "a facilitator in terms of making sure the IEP was completed properly and that the law regarding parental rights was adhered to. Principal J stated that she was, "responsible for seeing to it that the students were getting what we say they're getting."

Another example of the administrative leadership was displayed by Principal B. Principal B took the initiative and the time to invite parents to school to observe special education programs prior to the IEP meetings.

Yvonne Beseler (1981) in The Principal and Parents of the Handicapped⁷ states that communication is the key to involving parents effectively in educational planning. Parents need sufficient information on

⁷ Beseler, "The Principal and Parents of the Handicapped," p. 40.

which to base knowledgeable decisions about matters that have serious consequences for their child. Communication was stressed by eight of the ten administrators in this study. Principals reported that their role responsibilities included not only answering questions for parents but also presenting parental rights and explaining special education programs and procedures.

Three of the principals in this study specifically stated that, in addition to attending the IEP meetings, they attended students' annual reviews. Although the participatory responses of these administrators requires a large amount of time, these principals appear to view education as a team effort. Attendance at the IEP meetings and at the annual reviews implies effort and cooperation.

Least Restrictive Environment

The activities in the third major area of concentration in this study depict the principal's role responsibility of ensuring that special education students are placed in an environment with nonhandicapped peers whenever possible. Commonly, the term mainstreaming is used as an application to least restrictive environment. Section 1.05 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois defines least restrictive environment as follows:

To the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children are educated with nonhandicapped children. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap requires that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

To meet federal guidelines, school districts usually offer a range of alternative educational settings. The range may include the following:

1. The regular classroom.
2. The regular classroom with itinerant instruction.
3. A self-contained classroom in a neighborhood school which has nonhandicapped students and has the availability of mainstreaming when appropriate.
4. A special school setting in as close as possible proximity to the child's home.
5. A nonschool setting such as a home, hospital or institution.

Functioning at the building level, the principal usually becomes involved in the mainstreaming concept of the principle of least restrictive environment.

Research Question Three

"After a student is placed into a special education program, how is the principle of least restrictive environment implemented?"

Eighty percent of the principals in this study communicated a basic awareness and understanding of the principle of least restrictive environment. All of the principals in the study responded appropriately once the term "mainstream" entered into the conversation. All of the principals in the study provided information regarding their role responsibilities during the mainstreaming process.

Principal A was one of the two principals in this study who paused before responding to question three. Once the researcher used the term "mainstream," Principal A answered readily. Principal A reported that the teachers in his building often present resistance to receiving a special education student into the regular class. "Often I find myself reminding the regular teacher that there's a law about mainstreaming," reported Principal A. Continuing, Principal A stated, "the special education teachers usually talk to me when a child is ready to be mainstreamed and then I speak to the classroom teacher." Principal A reported that when everything goes smoothly he doesn't hear about it, however, "if there are rough spots, for example, if the child is not able to keep up with the class," stated Principal A, "the teacher runs right to me." When asked about procedures for monitoring mainstreaming, Principal A responded, "I monitor when the special education child can't cut it and then I put him back in his own class. The procedures are what I say, the teachers get the message, they understand, I'm the principal, they better."

Principal B explained that the very fact that special education was in his building was less restrictive than if the classes were at a special school. Principal B stated that he tried explaining that concept to his staff at a faculty meeting. Principal B then proceeded to relate his mainstreaming procedures as follows:

Normally, what happens when a child is doing very well and the special education teacher feels that he could work independently and would be able to keep up with a regular class, the special education teacher will approach the principal to ask permission to mainstream. She and the principal discuss the student's needs and the principal looks at the master schedule. Then the principal approaches the regular teacher. Once the placement has been accepted by the regular teacher, the special education teacher notifies the parents of the child.

Principal B emphasized throughout his description that his approach to the regular teacher always presented how well the student was currently performing in a particular area. He also stated that there were alternatives whenever the student appeared unable to maintain his level of functioning and insisted that he be kept informed of progress.

Principal C was the second principal unable to respond to the least restrictive environment section of the interview. Appearing confused, Principal C responded, "the special education coordinator handles that." After the researcher mentioned "mainstreaming," Principal C reported that the special education teacher talks to the classroom teacher and, "they set up a time and work out a program."

During Principal D's discussion of the IEP process, he had referred to the least restrictive environment code on the IEP form. Principal D explained,

The least restrictive alternative applies to each student's unique educational needs, not necessarily being met in a regular classroom, the mainstream process begins when students are placed in a more restrictive setting, say a self-contained program and then become appropriately scheduled for a strength area in a regular classroom.

Principal D saw his role as that of an instructional leader in the building and, therefore stated, "I have set up a process, it is my responsibility to set up the process and a climate to allow facilitation." Principal D continued,

Informal communication takes place after a formal climate has been set and people know exactly what's expected of them in the building. The principal should not place a child into a classroom, placement is the practitioner's responsibility, my responsibility is to set up the procedure in a supportive climate and allow the process to occur. The special education teachers keep me well informed and I monitor all placements, I observe and I scan report card grades quarterly.

Only one principal in this study presented a written procedure for mainstreaming students in the building, Principal E. In addition to a written procedure, Principal E handed the researcher a "mainstream form" which special education teachers complete in triplicate and forward to the principal. Upon receipt of the completed form, the principal and the special education teacher formally meet and the principal initials the mainstream form. At a later date the principal selects and meets with the receiving teacher. The receiving teacher obtains one copy of the mainstream form, the principal keeps the second copy and his office mails the third copy home to update the parents.

Part of Principal E's mainstream process included substitute procedures. "The substitute list is posted in the office, the special education teacher checks the list daily and either withholds mainstreamed students that day or, in the case of behavior problems, asks the aide to accompany the student," reported Principal E.

Principal E stressed feedback as he stated, "I insist that the special education teachers do a lot of follow-up on their own in addition to the monitoring that I do." In Principal E's opinion, the special education teacher should make a point of making contact once or twice each week. He believes that if the regular education teacher works with the child, she deserves warm feedback about the fact that she is doing some special things. "When she hears positive comments about how well the student may have adjusted or how well the student likes the class," stated Principal E, "the teacher works even harder." Principal E continued, "The next time a student appears ready for a mainstream class, there will be less reluctance because the teacher already knows

that the child deserves the class and the special education teacher cooperates positively."

Principal F expressed an awareness of the concept of least restrictive environment and then appeared quite eager to relate a story about mainstreaming. Principal F progressed as follows:

I have one self-contained L.D. student, he's about twelve years old, his disability is not in reading. Would you believe he's mainstreamed into my Great Books Program? One day I observed him reading and discussing interpretively 'Langston Hughes,' a special education student mainstreamed into a gifted class, and that's going on right now.

Principal F further stated,

I say to my special education teachers all the time, do not isolate your children just because they have a disability in one or two areas. They may be talented in other areas. Where they have talents, let them display them and feel proud. In the final analysis, they will have to live in our democratic country and perform like anybody else, so why not start here in school?

The mainstream procedure that Principal F explained initiated when the special education teacher notified the principal of a child's readiness to begin a class. The principal scheduled a meeting and together the special education teacher, the receiving teacher and the principal made the decisions. Once the arrangements had been completed, the principal scheduled a second meeting, this time including the parents. The agenda for the second meeting included the revision of the student's IEP.

Principal G reported that he attempted to stay a year ahead of the needs of mainstreaming in his building. "Upon completion of the annual reviews last spring," explained Principal G, "I requested an itemized list of all of the mainstreaming needs written on the students' IEPs." Principal G continued:

I make out a school schedule and decide where the student's needs will be best met. Then I make initial contact with all of the receiving teachers and then tell the special education teachers to follow-up with more details. I count each special education student when I plan for classroom size for September. This way I try not to over burden any one teacher.

The success of Principal G's mainstreaming procedures appears particularly dependent on his leadership role. As stated by Principal G,

I know that I try to protect my regular education teachers from large class sizes and they appreciate that and I also know that I try to place special education students in the most appropriate least restrictive settings and the special education teachers appreciate that, therefore everyone feels good about the placements, and in the long run, the kids benefit the most.

In Principal H's school, all of the self-contained students are mainstreamed for music and art and the information has already been written on each student's intake IEP. Whenever additional classes become appropriate, the special education teachers notify Principal H. Principal H stated that she becomes very much involved in all of the decisions relating to mainstreaming. "Mainstreaming is an important process," stated Principal H, "although it is quite time consuming, there may be greater problems to work out in I weren't directly involved."

Once Principal H has been made aware of the fact that a student may be ready to be mainstreamed for an academic subject, she sits down and analyzes the options available, makes the decision and schedules a meeting to update the student's IEP. "This IEP meeting," reported Principal H, "includes the parents, special education teacher, receiving teacher and myself."

Principal I's definition of least restrictive environment was to provide the most appropriate education for every student in the least

restrictive setting. Principal I stated that in previous years she had been much more formal regarding the mainstreaming procedures. "I found that my staff worked better informally," explained Principal I. Continuing, she stated, "The special education teacher talks the situation over with me and together we discuss class availability." The special education teacher contacts the regular education teacher. Principal I concluded,

I try to keep the process low key. They all seem to cooperate more when I make an honest effort to hold down the amount of formal meetings required and, besides they all keep me informed. I know what's going on and they know they have my support.

Principal J appeared to have a clear understanding of the concepts of least restrictive environment and mainstreaming. The special education teacher in Principal J's school initiates the mainstreaming process by informing the principal of a student's readiness. Principal J selects an appropriate setting based on the background information discussed with the special education teacher. Principal J explained that she contacts the classroom teacher and the parents of the student. "Most teachers are cooperative, they understand the importance of a positive mainstreaming experience for their students," stated Principal J. "Naturally," Principal J concluded, "I observe all of the students' progress and try to commend positive experiences."

Summary of Least Restrictive Environment

Eight of the ten principals interviewed in this study were able to readily respond to question number three regarding the principle of least restrictive environment. Once the term "mainstream" was substi-

tuted for "least restrictive environment," all ten principals were able to provide information regarding their individual role responsibilities within the process of placing students who may require special education.

Only one of the ten principals interviewed presented a written procedure for mainstreaming students in the school. In addition, to the written procedure, this same principal utilized a specific form for mainstreaming students. The mainstreaming form further formalized the mainstreaming process in the school. Table 9 summarizes the principals' involvement regarding the concept of least restrictive environment.

Table 10 summarizes the major role responsibilities of elementary principals during the facilitation of the principle of least restrictive environment.

TABLE 9

Involvement in the Least Restrictive Environment

PRINCIPALS' INVOLVEMENT	PRINCIPAL(S)
1. Awareness of least restrictive environment.	B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
2. Ability to respond appropriately to the term "mainstream."	All principals
3. Ability to describe role responsibilities during the process of mainstreaming.	All principals
4. Indication of a verbal procedure for mainstreaming.	A, B, C, D, F, H, I, J
5. Presentation of a written procedure for the process of mainstreaming.	E

TABLE 10

Role Responsibilities During Least Restrictive Environment

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSIBILITIES	PRINCIPALS
1. Communicates with special education teacher prior to the initiation of mainstreaming.	A, B, E, F, G, H, I, J
2. Schedules mainstream classes for special education students.	B, E, F, G, H, I, J
3. Informs regular education teachers regarding the student to be mainstreamed.	A, B, E, F, G, H, I, J
4. Monitors mainstreaming process beyond placement procedures.	A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
5. Appears to provide administrative support to the mainstream program.	B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J

Analysis of Least Restrictive Environment

With the passage of PL 94-142 there are no longer questions concerning the advent of mainstreaming as it provides the least restrictive environment. Mainstreaming refers to that portion of the least restrictive environment clause that provides for the education of an eligible exceptional child with normal peers based on an ongoing, individually determined educational planning and programming process. Functioning at the regular neighborhood school level, the principal is in the critical position to provide needed administrative support for successful mainstreaming practices.

Eighty percent of the principals in this study appeared to provide administrative support to the special education teachers and to the regular teachers in their schools. Analysis of the data revealed that those principals providing administrative support also displayed an appropriate awareness of the concept of least restrictive environment.

While eighty percent of the principals in this study responded to the term least restrictive environment, all of the principals not only spoke freely once "mainstreaming" was referred to, but also described administrative role responsibilities during the mainstreaming process.

Leadership styles became apparent during the principals' descriptions of their role responsibilities during the mainstreaming process. For example, Principals F and I encouraged participatory decision making regarding the scheduling of the exceptional students, indicating a more democratic style. Principals A, B, E, G, H, and J assigned special education placements indicating more of an authoritarian style. Although

Principal D stated that he, "allowed the process to occur," he reported that he organized the procedure and supported a climate which encouraged the process. Principal D instructed both the special education and regular teachers and informed the staff that he would routinely monitor the process. Only then did Principal D "allow the process to occur." Although Principal D demonstrated professional respect by allowing the special education and regular teachers the ability to work toward mutually agreeable programs, he defined the procedure and monitored progress.

Principal C's description of the mainstreaming process in his school indicated a passive role, depending greatly upon the special education coordinator. Principal C demonstrated a laissez-faire leadership style. Teachers in Principal C's school may tend to bypass the principal, turning to the special education coordinator for support.

Monitoring mainstreamed special education students was described as a routine responsibility for nine of the ten principals in this study. The degree to which the administrators monitored the mainstreaming process varied. Principal E not only monitored the classes himself, but also insisted that the special education teachers provide "warm feedback" on a consistent basis to regular teachers. Principal D expected feedback from his teachers in addition to his own observations and scanning of student report cards. In contrast, Principal A relied solely on comments made by the regular education staff. Rather than discussing alternatives whenever a student appeared unable to maintain his level of functioning as reported by Principal B, Principal A suggested "putting the student back in his own class." Principal A's atti-

tude appears to lack respect for the students, as well as for the special education teachers involved.

While Principal A appeared to ignore the children's feelings and their emotional development, Principal F emphasized positive self concepts. Principal F stated that he encourages the display of talents. Principal F focused on the fact that all of the children in his school, regular and exceptional students, will live in a democratic country and perform like anybody else, "so," Principal F stated, "why not start here in school?"

Summary Analysis of the Three Major Areas

In reviewing the data analyzed in this study, some generalizations, summary analyses, and speculations can be made.

Regarding the data related to the elementary principal's role in the process of referring students who may need special education servicing, all ten principals interviewed, as well as all of the surveyed administrators in this study, responded to the reviewing of referrals as applicable to their current assignments. The fact that all of the elementary principals in this study indicated some type of administrative intervention into the referring of students to special education programs reveals that principals in this study do consider the referral process as an area within their role responsibility. The results of this study are consistent with the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and with The Council for Exceptional Children, because both organizations list the process of referring students with suspected handicapping conditions as responsibilities of building prin-

cipals. The data from the interview portion of the study confirmed that not only were principals aware of the referral process, they were all able to describe role responsibilities during the referral process. In addition, all ten administrators presented the researcher a formalized referral form. Six of the principals displayed written procedures for the referral of students for special education services.

Half of the principals responding during the interview portion of this study described procedures that involved a "pre-referral." From the explanations presented by the building administrators, it appeared that the pre-referral intervention was encouraged to assure that all possible alternatives had been explored at the building level prior to proceeding to the formalized referral for special education services. In the review of literature, Vergason, et al, summarized the principal's responsibility by stating that the building administrator was responsible for the entire program in the school. The pre-referral intervention may imply that the principal may be concerned about the number of students entering special education programs. Once the special education population for a specific program reaches the maximum number allowed by the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois, the administrator faces additional problems. The pre-referral appears to be one attempt at prevention. The data obtained regarding the pre-referral intervention confirms Lietz and Kaiser's statement that "principals are able to somewhat control the referral process." Processing referrals by the building administrator may imply the prioritizing of teachers' requests for referrals which may afford the principal the power to exert some control over the entire procedure.

Seven major role responsibilities regarding the referral process were described by the principals in this study. Communicating with the classroom teachers was the first responsibility presented by eight administrators. Since referrals typically originate with the teachers' recommendations, communication with classroom teachers appeared appropriately high.

Six principals stated that their responsibilities included the dissemination of the formal referral paperwork. Lietz and Kaiser (1979) describe the possession and dissemination of referral forms as the "liaison" role of the building principal. Processing referrals allows the principal to exert considerable control over teachers requesting referral forms. For example, the principal may suggest alternative teaching strategies rather than a referral for special education.

Only one principal in this study reported making independent observations of the students being referred for special education services. Independent observations require additional time on the part of the administrator. Maintaining enough time for special education needs ranked as the second highest administrative problem area for elementary principals surveyed. It is surprising therefore that even one administrator reported the observation of students referred for special education as a part of his responsibility. Four principals specified that they commented on the student's referral form. It was not surprising that one of those four administrators was the one who had sufficient time to observe the student being referred. Principals E and H reported that completing the referral was the result of a "team effort." Since the principal was a member of the team, it stands to reason that input

from the principal would be considered a part of the total role responsibility. Principal J's responsibility included adding background information on the student to the completed referral form. Although four principals believed that their roles included commenting on the referral forms, further analysis revealed that their roles were minimal and not one of their major responsibilities.

Obtaining parental consent was reported as a responsibility of sixty percent of the principals interviewed in this study. Inasmuch as the literature review emphasized communication as the key to involving parents effectively in educational planning, it was surprising to note that some of the principals delegated parental communication to other staff members. The data in this study indicated that three principals relied on their teachers to inform parents of the initiation of a referral and one principal delegated the responsibility to a counselor. Principal C reported that he entered into communication with parents when disagreements arose. Principal G described his responsibility as, not only obtaining parental consent, but also communicating with parents when disagreements arose. Although only two principals actually stated that their responsibilities included parental communication when disagreements occurred, it would appear that because special education is a part of the principal's total role responsibility, the principal would ultimately become involved with dissenting parents.

The seventh role responsibility reported by the principals in this study was the forwarding of completed referrals to the special education personnel. Once again, speculation may be made regarding the administrator's responsibility for forwarding referrals to be processed by spe-

cial education personnel. A certain amount of control over the referral process may be exercised by the building principal during the forwarding of referrals to the special education department. For example, one referral may be turned into the special education department before another, depending upon the principal's specific needs at that time.

The data related to the elementary principal's role responsibilities regarding each student's individualized educational program revealed that ninety percent of the administrators interviewed in this study became actively involved in the IEP process. Only one principal reported attending "some of the IEP meetings" as opposed to being in attendance at all of the IEP meetings. Data analysis revealed that the one principal reporting inconsistent IEP meeting attendance relied on the district special education coordinator to assume responsibility for special education. Further analysis revealed that this same principal was the only one of the ten respondents to rate all nine special education administrative tasks on the survey instrument with a response of "one," indicating that each task was "not a problem." Perhaps the reliance on the district special education coordinator accounted for the low ranking of the survey task items. Speculation may be made regarding this principal's low level of responsibility for special education in his school. Has the principal's level of involvement decreased due to the special education coordinator's participation, or has the coordinator been forced to assume responsibility due to the administrator's lack of involvement? It was not surprising that Principal C was the only administrator unable to clearly express the meaning of the IEP, since he was the only one reporting non-involvement in all of the IEP meetings.

All of the principals in this study were able to present forms utilized in their schools during the implementation of a student's individualized educational program. Eight of the administrators specifically referred to formalized procedures for the IEP process in their schools. The implications of the results of this data infer that the majority of principals in this study comply with the mandate regarding an IEP for every special education student in their schools. Since non-compliance with the federal mandate results in serious consequences, the monitoring process employed by the State of Illinois regarding those districts where IEP procedures were not displayed may need to be questioned.

Four major role responsibilities were reported by the principals in this study, in addition to being in attendance at IEP meetings. Six administrators reported participation in the writing of the IEP. Analysis of the data revealed that all six principals considered themselves active members of the team involved in the formation of the IEP. Regardless of the terms, i.e. multidisciplinary team, student-staff resource corps, the concept implied shared decision making powers regarding the educational plan of the special education student.

Leadership was displayed by seven of the principals in this study when they reported that one of their major role responsibilities included the "chairing" of the IEP meetings. Those administrators assuming responsibilities for the IEP process may be regarded as either supportive of the special education program in the school or may be aware of the compliance obligations necessitated by the law.

Communication surfaced again as a role responsibility described by seven principals, this time with regard to the IEP process. As the primary spokesperson for the school, communication was appropriately reported as a major responsibility of the building administrator.

Data regarding the principal's responsibility to maintain copies of students' IEPs resulted in the final duty reported by building administrators in this study. This data confirmed a second of Lietz and Kaiser's descriptors of the principal as, "the supervisor of records."

Data related to the principle of least restrictive environment revealed that eighty percent of the principals in this study were aware of the concept of least restrictive environment. Once the term "mainstreaming" was used as an application of the least restrictive environment, all ten principals were able to respond appropriately. Although the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois does not use the term "mainstream," a majority of the literature regarding least restrictive alternatives does utilize only the term mainstream. Therefore, it appears, that the literature that reviews the range of least restrictive alternatives assumes that all readers comprehend the appropriate usage of the terms.

All ten principals interviewed reported procedures involved in the mainstreaming process. Principal E was the only administrator able to provide a written procedure for mainstreaming students in the building. The nine remaining principals related verbal mainstreaming procedures utilized in their schools.

Analyzing specific role responsibilities reported by the principals during the interview portion of this study revealed five major areas. Communication was reported by eight principals to be the initial step in the mainstreaming process. Similar to the previously stated referral process, the initiation of the mainstreaming procedure, on the most part, required an administrative decision thereby allowing the building principal considerable control. For example, the principal may agree or disagree with a student's readiness to be mainstreamed.

Control surfaced again as seven principals scheduled the mainstream classes for the special education students in their buildings. Scheduling included not only the selection of the time the student would participate in a class, but also the decision regarding the teacher receiving the special education student. In addition to scheduling students, eight building administrators accepted the responsibility of informing the regular education teachers of the incoming special education student. By taking the leadership role, not only scheduling but also informing those teachers involved, the building principal must be considered a key to the mainstreaming process.

If principals appear supportive of the integration of the special education students, then they will usually communicate support and encouragement to the receiving teachers. On the other hand, if principals appear nonsupportive, the chances of a positive experience diminish correspondingly. A principal's mannerisms or off-the-cuff statements may demonstrate the support or lack of support for any given program. However, regardless of personal preference, it remains the principal's role responsibility as the school leader to wholeheartedly support in a positive manner the law of the land.

Monitoring the mainstreaming process beyond the initial placement procedures was regarded as a major role responsibility for nine out the ten principals interviewed. The degree to which the administrators monitored the mainstreaming process varied. Some principals appeared to view mainstreaming as no different from making other building programs work. If the success of any school program depends, to a great extent, on the building principal, then the success of the mainstreaming program also relies heavily on the building principal.

Data from the interviews supported Sivage's (1982) research regarding effective mainstreaming programs. Eight of the ten interviewed principals regarded providing administrative support to the mainstream program as a role responsibility. Sivage's study concluded that effective mainstreaming programs occur in schools where principals are viewed as advocates of the program. Advocates, according to Sivage, were thought to support mainstreaming by participating in active communication networks and by defending the program, seeking to recruit support from all members involved. Sivage's study concluded that successful implementation of mainstreaming depended on a system-wide approach that involved the whole school, from the principal to teachers. McGuire's (1973) study confirms Sivage's conclusion by revealing that a significant correlation existed between the attitudes of building principals toward handicapped students and the quality of educational programs. Since the entire program of instruction within a given school is the responsibility of the building principal, the special education program, including the facilitation of mainstreaming, relies on the leadership provided by the principal. If the principal is committed to the

concept of mainstreaming, other staff members will work to help make it successful.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations. In addition, recommendations for further research are presented.

Summary Of The Study

This study was designed to identify and describe role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools. The study focused on the principal's role in three major areas of concentration that have impact upon the school's organization and operation. The three areas of concentration were as follows:

1. The principal's role in the process of referring students who may need special education servicing.
2. The principal's role in the implementation of the special education student's individualized educational program.
3. The principal's role in the facilitation of the principle of least restrictive environment.

Within the process of identifying and describing the principal's role responsibilities, the following observations were noted:

1. The principal's awareness and ability to identify verbally the three major areas of concentration.

2. The principal's ability to describe specific role responsibilities within the three areas of concentration.
3. The principal's ability to present formal procedures for each of the three areas of concentration.

A two-part survey instrument was obtained from seventy-seven principals who service public elementary schools in the South Suburban Area of Cook County, Illinois. Ten principals were randomly selected for follow-up interviews from the fifty-two eligible principals who had three or more years in their present administrative assignment and had three or more high incidence, district level, special education programs operating within their schools. The following is a discussion of the major findings of this study listed under each of the three areas of concentration.

Referral Process

All of the principals surveyed indicated some type of interaction with the process of referring students who may require special education intervention. The principals in this study do consider the referral as an area within their total role responsibility. These results are consistent with the National Association of State Directors of Education and The Council for Exceptional Children because both organizations listed the referral process of students with suspected handicapping conditions as major responsibilities of the building principal.

All of the principals interviewed in this study were, not only aware of a referral process for students who may require special education intervention, but all were able to describe their role responsibilities during the referral process.

Five of the ten principals interviewed in this study described pre-referral procedures prior to the initiation of the formalized referral process. Regardless of whether the process began with a pre-referral or with a formal referral, the building principal typically received the initial communication from the classroom teacher.

Upon completion of the initial stage of the referral process all ten administrators interviewed utilized written referral forms to inform the appropriate special education personnel. All ten principals displayed ready access to referral forms. Six administrators controlled the dissemination of these referral forms. In addition, more than half of the administrators were able to present formalized procedures for the referral of students to special education programs.

Four principals reported that their role responsibilities included commenting on the actual referral forms. One administrator, in addition to commenting, reported that his role included independent observations of students who were referred for special education programs within his building.

Obtaining parental consent to process a referral for special education was reported as a role responsibility of sixty percent of the principals. The final role descriptor presented by the administrators in this study was the forwarding of completed referrals to the appropriate special education personnel.

Individualized Educational Program

The Individualized Educational Program (IEP) is a mandated component of Public Law 94-142. Seventy-six of the seventy-seven principals surveyed responded to participation in students' individualized educational program meetings as an area within their total role responsibility.

Nine of the ten principals interviewed were able to express the meaning of a special education student's individualized educational program. Although one principal appeared unable to define an IEP, he nevertheless was able to discuss the IEP process within his building.

All of the principals appeared not only aware of the IEP process in their schools, but able to describe role responsibilities during the IEP process. In addition, all of the principals possessed ready access to IEP forms and eighty percent of the administrators were able to display formalized procedures for the IEP process in their schools.

Six principals reported that their role responsibilities included participation in the writing of the student's IEP. Seven administrators assumed total responsibility for conducting all of the IEP meetings held in their schools. Further, three of the principals specifically stated that, in addition to attending all of the intake IEP meetings, they also attended their students' annual reviews.

During the IEP process, seven principals maintained that their role responsibilities included the explanation of parental rights. Upon the completion of the IEP process, all of the administrators reported maintaining access to copies of each student's IEP.

Least Restrictive Environment

The third major area of concentration in this study dealt with the principal's role as the facilitator in the principle of least restrictive environment. Seventy-two of the seventy-seven principals surveyed indicated involvement in facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment. Data analysis of those five principals who responded that facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment was "not applicable" to their present assignment revealed that their special education classes consisted of preschool age or early childhood children.

Eighty percent of the principals in this study displayed an appropriate awareness of the concept of least restrictive environment. Once the term "mainstream" was utilized, all of the administrators not only spoke freely, but also were able to appropriately describe their role responsibilities during the mainstreaming process.

All of the principals interviewed in this study reported procedures involved in the mainstreaming process of special education students. One administrator provided a written procedure for the mainstreaming of students in his building. The previously mentioned nine principals related verbal mainstreaming procedures within their schools.

Communication was reported by eight principals as the initial step to the mainstreaming process. Upon completion of the initial phase of communicating with the principal, seven administrators described scheduling as a part of their role responsibilities. The scheduling of special education students ready to be mainstreamed included not only the selection of the time the student would participate, but also the deci-

sion regarding the involvement of the regular education teacher. In addition to scheduling special education students, eight principals accepted the responsibility of informing the regular education teacher of the incoming special education student.

Monitoring mainstreaming special education programs beyond the initial placement procedures was described as a routine responsibility for nine of the ten principals in this study. The degree to which the administrators monitored the mainstreaming process depended upon the individual differences of each building principal.

With the passage of Public Law 94-142, mainstreaming became that portion of the least restrictive environment clause that functions at the local school level. The building principal then is in a critical position to provide administrative support to mainstreaming procedures. Eighty percent of the principals in this study appeared to provide just such administrative support.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1976, PL 94-142, mandated a free appropriate public education for all exceptional children. The majority of administrators in this study, functioning at the building level, appeared to comply with directives derived from federal legislation and from the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education in the State of Illinois regarding their role responsibilities involved in the identification, the individualized educational program, and the principle of least restrictive environment.

Conclusions

Within the limitations inherent in this study and based upon the findings reported, the following conclusions were derived:

1. Elementary principals in the South Suburban area of Cook County, Illinois generally remain in their administrative positions for more than three years thereby providing a consistency in educational leadership.

Sixty-one of the seventy-seven, or 79 percent of the principals surveyed, had three or more years in their present positions. Twenty-five of those sixty-one principals had ten years or more, eleven had fifteen years or more and three had served at the same schools for more than twenty years.

2. Servicing special education students is indeed a part of the total role responsibility of elementary school principals.

All seventy-seven principals surveyed in this study reported two or more high incidence, district level, special education programs operating within their schools. Sixty-eight of the seventy-seven principals or eighty-eight percent, reported three or more high incidence, district level, special education programs operating within their schools. Further analysis revealed that forty-seven principals serviced more than three high incidence, district level, special education programs within their schools. Two principals reported nine special education programs, one reported ten programs. The highest number serviced was reported as twelve programs.

3. Regardless of the number of years a principal

services a particular school, special education needs must be considered as part of the principal's total role responsibility.

Nine first year principals reported four, five and six special education programs operating within their school buildings. One principal with fourteen years in the present administrative position reported two existing special education programs within the school.

4. A majority of the elementary principals assuming responsibilities for the education of handicapped children did not have any formal special education training.

Two-thirds of the elementary principals surveyed in this study had no course work which could be identified as related to exceptional child education. The findings in this study are consistent with research completed in 1970 by Bullock and in 1980 by Davis. Both Bullock and Davis support the fact that principals who are being required to assume responsibilities for the education of handicapped children do not have a high degree of formal special education training.

5. Despite the fact that 66.5 percent of the principals in this study reported having no course work related to exceptional children, administrators do have role responsibilities which involve the the special education referral process, the individualized educational program, and the principle of least restrictive environment.

All seventy-seven elementary principals surveyed indicated some type of interaction with the special education referral process. Seventy-six of the seventy-seven administrators surveyed responded to participation in students' individualized educational program meetings. Seventy-two principals indicated involvement in the principle of least restrictive environment as applicable to their present assignments.

6. Elementary principals take an active role in the process of identifying students who may be in need of special education intervention.

All ten principals interviewed, as well as all of the surveyed administrators in this study, indicated some degree of administrative intervention into the referring of students to special education. One hundred percent of the interviewed principals were, not only able to describe their role responsibilities during the referral process, but also were able to present formalized referral forms. Sixty percent of these principals displayed written procedures for the referral of students for special education services. Fifty percent of the interviewed principals were also involved in pre-referral procedures to encourage the exploration of every possible building level alternative prior to proceeding with the formalized referral for special education services.

7. Elementary principals take an active role in assuring that each special education student is provided with an individualized educational program.

Seventy-six of the seventy-seven principals surveyed in this study reported participation in the IEP meetings. All of the interviewed principals presented specific forms utilized in their schools during the implementation of a student's individualized educational program. Administrative leadership for the IEP process was demonstrated by eighty percent of the principals interviewed. Only one principal reported attending, "some of the IEP meetings," as opposed to being in attendance at all of the IEP meetings. Data analysis revealed that the one principal reporting inconsistent IEP meeting attendance relied on the district special education coordinator to assume responsibility for the IEP meetings.

8. Regardless of leadership style, elementary principals are involved in facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment.

Seventy-two of the seventy-seven principals surveyed indicated involvement in facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment. Data analysis of those five principals who responded that facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment was, "not applicable" to their present assignment revealed that their special education classes consisted of early childhood or preschool age children. This appears to indicate confusion in the usage of the term mainstreaming as the academic integration of handicapped children with nonhandicapped and not the least restrictive environment definition as listed in Public Law 94-142.

Two of the ten principals interviewed encouraged participatory decision making regarding the scheduling of exceptional students, indicating a democratic leadership style. Seven principals reported authoritarian characteristics and one described a laissez-faire style. The leadership styles may have varied, yet all ten interviewed principals reported procedures involved in facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment.

9. While the procedural areas of special education, which include the referral process, the individualized educational program, and the facilitation of the principle of least restrictive environment do not appear as stress situations for elementary principals, certain intangible areas of special education, such as inservicing, time, and parental involvement may cause considerable stress.

Survey results indicated that the administrative task of providing in-service ranked number one as the task that produced the largest problem area of responsibility for principals. Maintaining an adequate amount of time for special education needs ranked as the second administrative problem area, and involving parents in assessment and educational planning decisions that affect their child ranked as the third problem area for elementary principals.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this study:

1. State departments of education should require course work in the area of exceptional child education in order to obtain elementary administrative certification.
2. University training programs in school administration should require specific courses in the developmental aspects of exceptional child education, possibly in cooperation with the school's department of special education.
3. School districts should investigate the resources available through their Special Education Cooperatives. Inservice programs should be developed based on the needs of the school district.
4. Principals should investigate professional growth provided by principal centers such as The Harvard Principals' Center or The Illinois Principals' Center. Specific topics to be considered should include the following:
 - a. inservice education for regular teachers regarding special education;
 - b. maintaining an adequate amount of time for special education needs;
 - c. involving parents in assessment and

educational planning decisions that affect their child.

5. Principals should be made aware that principals' centers such as The Harvard Principals' Center or The Illinois Principals' Center assemble directories of areas of staff development specifically designed for principals around the country. Many principals enlist themselves as resources for others so they may share their knowledge or form support groups.
6. Principals should utilize special educators as support personnel for regular educators. Special educators may provide inservice during faculty meetings or at district workshops. Trained special education teachers might be used as consultants in the regular classrooms suggesting appropriate curriculum strategies to facilitate the education of exceptional children.
7. School Superintendents should recognize the critical role that elementary principals play in the delivery of special education programs. To accommodate these roles Superintendents should focus on the time commitments required by principals as they administer special education programs in their schools.
8. Elementary principals should make every effort to personally communicate with parents of students referred for special education. The attitude parents

develop depends to a large extent on their first contacts. Since first opinions are often difficult to change, the attitudes they generate will most likely influence the degree of cooperation between parents and educators during later planning.

9. Principals should respond promptly to parents' questions and concerns about special education placements. Parents should be made to feel that they are full participants in decision making and program planning. With sufficient information, parents may become more involved in assessment and educational planning decisions that affect their child.
10. Principals should, either inform parents of special education students of existing support groups, or should investigate the possibility of providing annual workshops for parents that highlight ways they can help their children and augment the school's efforts.
11. Principals should analyze the possibility of initiating a pre-referral stage prior to the initiation of formalized student referrals for special education intervention. The pre-referral process may prevent additional problems as the special education population in the school increases.
12. Leadership should be displayed by each building principal during the procedures involved in writing students' individualized educational programs.
13. Principals should be viewed as advocates to the

mainstreaming programs integrated into their school's total curriculum.

14. Communication should be stressed by principals at each level of special education responsibility.
15. Regardless of personal preference, building principals, by virtue of their leadership role, should support the special education programs in their schools.

Recommendations For Further Study

This study has only begun to address the elementary principal's role in special education. The following recommendations for further study are suggested:

1. Design a study to determine the primary information sources of elementary principals as they implement role responsibilities for special education.
2. The further investigation of aspects of formal training programs which have assisted elementary principals in their role responsibilities for special education could provide valuable knowledge for the revision of current courses and workshops for school administrators.
3. The completion of a non-participant observation study could further verify and substantiate that the descriptions of responsibilities offered by the principals in this study demonstrate what they actually do in the provision of special education services.

4. Additional studies attempting to identify building administrators' leadership styles could be compared to their involvement in special education to determine whether one leadership style more than another would support special education intervention.
5. Finally, this research was limited to the South Suburban public schools in Cook County, Illinois. Public Law 94-142 is a federal mandate, not limited to the state of Illinois. Investigation into other states and comparative studies with this study could assist educational leaders.

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APPENDIX A

SOUTH SUBURBAN ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, ELEMENTARY DISTRICTS

133	Riverdale
142	Forest Ridge
143	Midlothian
143 1/2	Posen-Robbins
144	Prairie-Hills
145	Arbor Park
146	Tinley Park
147	Harvey
148	Dolton
149	Dolton
150	South Holland
151	South Holland
152	Harvey
152 1/2	Hazel Crest
153	Homewood
154	Thornton
154 1/2	Burnham
155	Calumet City
156	Calumet City
157	Calumet City
158	Lansing
159	Matteson
160	Country Club Hills
161	Flossmoor

162	Matteson
163	Park Forest
167	Brookwood
168	Sauk Village
169	East Chicago Heights
170	Chicago Heights
171	Lansing
172	Lynwood
194	Steger

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

January 3, 1984

Dear Superintendent:

This letter is to seek your assistance with my dissertation research, which I am currently conducting as a doctoral student at Loyola University of Chicago.

My topic is "An Analysis of the Role Responsibilities of Selected Elementary School Principals in the Delivery of Special Education Services." The results of this study will attempt to identify, describe and analyze role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools.

Upon receipt of Superintendent consent questionnaires will be sent to the principals of elementary schools in the South Suburban Area of Cook County, Illinois. A limited number of respondents to the questionnaire will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview.

Participation in any part of this research will be voluntary. You may be assured that no principal or school will ever be identified.

May I please have your permission to contact principals in your district? I recognize that you maintain a busy schedule therefore I have enclosed an addressed postcard to facilitate your return response. I would appreciate hearing from you by January 13, 1984.

I wish to thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in providing me with the opportunity to continue my study.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Firzgerald

Enclosure

APPENDIX C

RETURN POSTCARD FROM SUPERINTENDENTS

January, 1984

Mrs. Fitzgerald,

_____ You have my consent to contact principals within my
school district regarding your research.

_____ No.

Signature

District 148

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT

January 3, 1984

Dear Superintendents and District Directors of Special Education:

I am writing to seek your assistance and cooperation on behalf of Dorothea Fitzgerald, as assistant principal at the Lincoln School in School District 148.

Mrs. Fitzgerald is completing work leading to the Doctorate of Education at Loyola University of Chicago and is now preparing her dissertation which will focus on the role of the elementary principal in the delivery of special education services. Mrs. Fitzgerald has worked in District 148 for fifteen years and is a competent professional. I am of the opinion that the study she has undertaken may be of further benefit to the elementary principals who deliver special education services to students within their buildings.

I, therefore endorse Dorothea Fitzgerald's study and seek your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Colleen Stano

Director of

Special Education

District 148

APPENDIX E

SOUTHWEST COOK COUNTY COOPERATIVE DIRECTOR

January 3, 1984

Dr. Benjamin L. Braun
Director
6020 West 151st Street
Oak Forest, Illinois 60452

Dear Dr. Braun:

As Director of Special Education I want you to be aware that I am conducting a research study concerning the role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services. The principals of the elementary public schools in the South Suburban Area of Cook County, Illinois provide the target population for this study.

I have enclosed a copy of the request for consent letter that I am sending to each district superintendent. In addition, I am enclosing a letter of endorsement from Colleen Stano, Director of Special Education in District 148.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please contact me.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Fitzgerald

Enclosures

APPENDIX F

ECHO COOPERATIVE DIRECTOR

January 3, 1984

Dr. Russel Retterer
Director of Special Education
320 East 161st Place
South Holland, Illinois 60525

Dear Dr. Retterer:

As Director of Special Education I want you to be aware that I am conducting a research study concerning the role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services. The principals of the elementary public schools in the South Suburban Area of Cook County, Illinois provide the target population for this study.

I have enclosed a copy of the request for consent letter that I am sending to each district superintendent. In addition, I am enclosing a letter of endorsement from Colleen Stano, Director of Special Education in District 148.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please contact me.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Fitzgerald

Enclosures

APPENDIX G

SPEED COOPERATIVE DIRECTOR

January 3, 1984

Dr. Theodore Riggen
Director
1125 Division Street
Chicago Heights, Illinois 60411

Dear Dr. Riggen:

As Director of Special Education I want you to be aware that I am conducting a research study concerning the role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services. The principals of the elementary public schools in the South Suburban Area of Cook County, Illinois provide the target population for this study.

I have enclosed a copy of the request for consent letter that I am sending to each district superintendent. In addition, I am enclosing a letter of endorsement from Colleen Stano, Director of Special Education in District 148.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please contact me.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Fitzgerald

Enclosures

APPENDIX H

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

January 13, 1984

Dear Superintendents:

Recently I wrote seeking your kind assistance with my dissertation research. I have been anxiously awaiting your consent to send questionnaires to the elementary principals in your district regarding their role responsibilities in the delivery of special education services.

If you have already returned the enclosed postcard please accept my apology for this reminder. Please be assured that no principal or school will be identified in the findings of this study.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Fitzgerald

Enclosure

APPENDIX I

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

January 16, 1984

Dear Principal:

This letter is to seek your assistance with my dissertation research, which I am currently conducting as a doctoral student at Loyola University of Chicago.

My topic is "An Analysis of the Role Responsibilities of Selected Elementary School Principals in the Delivery of Special Education Services." The results of this study will attempt to identify, describe and analyze role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools.

To complete this research I am seeking your assistance by asking you to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. A limited number of respondents will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview. I have received consent from your Superintendent to ask you to participate in this study.

You may be assured that no principal or school will be identified in the research findings. The number code will be used only to identify the need for follow-up letters. Should you choose not to participate in any or all of this study, please return the blank questionnaire to me in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

To facilitate the completion of this study, I would appreciate hearing from you by January 31, 1984. I recognize that you maintain a busy schedule and am hopeful that this will provide you with ample time to complete and return the material.

I thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in providing me with this information.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Fitzgerald

Enclosures

APPENDIX J

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Present Assignment:

Currently I am the Principal of the following grades _____.

School enrollment is approximately _____.

I have been Principal at this school for _____ years.

Mark any of the following high incidence, district level, special education programs that are currently operating in your school, if there are two or three programs of the same category please place the appropriate number of marks, one for each program:

1. Resource Learning Disabilities _____
2. Resource Speech and Language _____
3. Resource Behavior Disordered _____
4. Self-contained Early Childhood _____
5. Self-contained Learning Disabilities _____
6. Self-contained Behavior Disordered _____
7. Self-contained Educably Mentally Handicapped _____
8. Other _____

The administrative tasks below represent areas of responsibility for servicing students within your school who may require special education. These tasks may or may not represent problems for you. Please indicate by making a circle around the degree to which each task does or does not produce problems for you as a principal. An answer of one (1) indicates that the task does not produce any problems for you. Two (2) indicates that the task causes some problems (moderate). Three (3) indicates that the task causes considerable problems (high), and an answer of four (4) indicates that the task causes severe problems (very high) for you as an administrator.

	NOT	NOT A			
	APPLICABLE	PROBLEM	MODERATE	CONSIDERABLE	SEVERE

1. Initiating and/ or reviewing referrals for special education.	N/A	1	2	3	4
---	-----	---	---	---	---

2. Involving parents in assessment and educational planning decisions that affect their child.	N/A	1	2	3	4
---	-----	---	---	---	---

3. Assisting in the assessment process of students referred for special education.	N/A	1	2	3	4
4. Participating in the Individual Educational Program (IEP) Meeting.	N/A	1	2	3	4
5. Scheduling services for special education students.	N/A	1	2	3	4
6. Facilitating the principle of least restrictive environment.	N/A	1	2	3	4
7. Providing in-service education for regular teachers regarding	N/A	1	2	3	4

special

education.

N/A

1

2

3

4

8. Maintaining an
adequate amount
of time for
special

education needs.

N/A

1

2

3

4

9. Maintaining a
positive
attitude
concerning
the value of
special
education
programs.

N/A

1

2

3

4

10. Additional
special
education
responsibilities
not listed.

N/A

1

2

3

4

Comments

Background:

What is your highest level of professional preparation?

1. Bachelor's Degree _____
2. Master's Degree _____
3. Certificate of Advanced Study _____
4. Doctoral Candidate _____
5. Doctoral Degree _____
6. Other _____

Please list courses that you have completed in the area of Special Education

Number of years you have worked in the field of education _____

Number of years in educational administration _____

Sex _____

Marital status _____

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to complete this survey. As stated in the cover letter, your identity will remain anonymous and results of this survey will be used for educational purposes only.

Please return this survey to me in the enclosed stamped envelope by February 6, 1984.

APPENDIX K

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

January 31, 1984

Dear Principal:

Recently, I wrote seeking your kind assistance with a study that I am conducting to analyze role responsibilities of elementary principals in the delivery of special education services within their schools. I am very anxious to receive the survey expressing your views.

I recognize that you maintain a very busy schedule, however, I sincerely need your help to complete this study. If you have already completed and mailed the questionnaire then please accept my apology for this reminder. Please be assured that your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration in completing this survey for me.

Most appreciatively,

Dorothea Fitzgerald

Enclosures

APPENDIX L

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

How would a student in your school be referred for Special Education services?

May I please see a copy of the referral form?

Once a student is recommended for Special Education services, how is the Individual Educational Program (IEP) developed?

May I please see any available forms for developing a student's IEP?

After a student is placed into a Special Education program, how is the principle of least restrictive environment implemented?

May I please see any available procedures for implementation of the principle of least restrictive environment?

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Dorothea Rinella Fitzgerald has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Melvin P. Heller, Director
Professor,
Education Administration and Supervision
Loyola University of Chicago

Dr. Max A. Bailey
Associate Professor,
Education Administration and Supervision
Loyola University of Chicago

Dr. Elizabeth A. Hebert
Adjunct Professor,
Education Administration and Supervision
Loyola University of Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Date

May 8, 1985

Director's Signature

