Special Ed Administrators’ Perceptions of Responsibilities and Challenges
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Special Education Administrators' Perceptions of Responsibilities and Challenges

TCASE Interactive Convention
July 15, 2015

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Summary of Presentation

- Background
- History
- Significance of the Study
- Research Questions
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Contribution of Research
- Limitations
- Future Directions
- Acknowledgements
- References

Background

Non-Hispanic or Latino
48
3 School Districts: Urban, Suburban, Rural
Mid-Management
M.A.
Speech-Language Pathologist
Years of Experience: Negotiated
Local School District
Director of Special Education
Female
M.Ed.
26 Years in Education
228 Days
7 years as SpecEd Director
History

1970-2009
49 Commentaries
25 Data-based Studies

1990-2009
27 Commentaries
6 Data-based Studies

- Responsibilities and challenges of special education administrators have evolved and expanded since the inception of Public Law 94-142
- Few studies identifying the responsibilities and challenges (Kohl & Marro, 1976)
- Little exploration of the knowledge base supporting the practice of special education leadership and administration (Crockett, Becker, & Quinn, 2009)
- Policy changes have affected type of challenges faced by special education administrators (Tate, 2010)

Significance of the Study

- Increased demands may lead to shortages
- Lack of knowledge and experience may lead to increased litigation
- Insights from special education administrators may be used to develop training opportunities

Research Questions

[Questions related to data collection, data analysis, and implications for educational administration]
Methodology

Participants
- 515 Special Education Administrators from the state of Texas were contacted
- 176 responses
- 154 surveys used

• Instrumentation
  - Survey developed based upon the first national study of special education administrators conducted by Koziol and Mann (1976)

• Data Collection Procedures
  - E-mail with link to survey using PsychData
  - Two reminders (2 days, 2 weeks)

• Data Analysis
  - Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency tables, percentage tables, and cross-tabulation
  - Friedman Test with post hoc tests
  - One-way ANOVA with Tukey HSD post hoc tests

Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Characteristics</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Administrative Title*</td>
<td>• Staffing*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employment*</td>
<td>• Evaluation of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender</td>
<td>• Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethnicity</td>
<td>• Policy Development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Race</td>
<td>• Program Development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education</td>
<td>• Data Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Certification*</td>
<td>• Staffing*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Career Path</td>
<td>• Evaluation of Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Years of Experience*</td>
<td>• Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Salary</td>
<td>• Policy Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contract Days</td>
<td>• Program Development*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question

1. What are the differences in background characteristics (administrative title, employment, gender, ethnicity, race, education, certification, career path, years of experience, salary, contract days) between special education administrators in rural, suburban, and urban school districts in the state of Texas?
### Background Characteristics

#### Administrative Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Title</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Special Education</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Special Programs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exec. Director of Special Education</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator of Special Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Special Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exec. Director of Special Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Employment Entities

- Majority employed by a local school district (73.9% n = 311)
- Significant difference (p = .001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Entities</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local school district</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Cooperative</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Services</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County-wide Special District</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IBI)</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Background Characteristics

#### Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Ethnicity

- Non-Hispanic (95.4%)
- African American (2.4%)
- Hispanic/Latino (2.0%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Background Characteristics

- Rural special education administrators — Master's degree with additional coursework
- Suburban and Urban special education administrators — Doctoral degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree + additional coursework</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Background Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Management</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SpEd Teacher</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Diagnostician</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Teacher*</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SpEd Administrator</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Pathologist</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Background Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Position</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Diagnostician</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSSP</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SpEd Teacher</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Pathologist</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Background Characteristics

**Age at first job as Special Education Administrator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mean Age**: 43  
**Minimum Age**: 25  
**Maximum Age**: 59

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### Background Characteristics

**Primary Reason for Becoming a Special Education Administrator**

- Consider administration as especially important: 43.4%
- Encouraged by others: 59.7%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider administration as especially important</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged by others</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Background Characteristics

**If starting all over again, would you become a special education administrator?**

- Certainly would: 55.5%
- Probably would: 53.5%
- Possibly would: 22.4%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certainly would</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably would</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibly would</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Background Characteristics

**Other**

- Chances about same: 16.5%
- Probably would not: 10.8%
- Certainly would not: 7.5%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chances about same</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably would not</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certainly would not</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background Characteristics

Final Educational Goal
- YES (32.9%)
- NO (67.1%)

Possible Future Positions
- Special Education, University
- Superintendent
- Asst. Superintendent
- Campus Administration
- Special Education, State Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Educational Goal</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Future Position</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education, University</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Superintendent</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Administration</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education, State Department</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background Characteristics

Total Years of Educational Experience

Mean: 26.43
Minimum years: 7
Maximum years: 47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Educational Experience</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 - 10</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 27</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background Characteristics

Years as a Special Education Administrator

Mean: 19.49
Minimum year: 1
Maximum years: 39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years as Special Ed. Admin.</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 4</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 25</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 39</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Questions

1. What are the differences in responsibilities, staffing, evaluation of staff, budget, policy development, and program development between special education administrators in rural, suburban, and urban school districts in the State of Texas?

2. What are the most important challenges in staffing, evaluation of staff, budget, policy development, and program development between special education administrators in rural, suburban, and urban school districts in the State of Texas?

Staffing Responsibilities & Challenges

- Participates in recruitment, selection, and making sound recommendations relative to personnel placement and assignment, (R = 4.45; C = 2.76)
- Contracts with outside providers of special services for students with disabilities (e.g., OT, PT, Music Therapy), (R = 4.45; C = 2.76)
- Monitors staff caseloads, (R = 4.45; C = 2.66)
- Personifies direct service to students with disabilities (including teaching and assessment), (R = 1.89; C = 1.65)

Staffing Responsibility

Monitors staff caseloads
Responsibility (p = .005)

- Essential (45.2%)
  - Rural (40.1%)
  - Urban (58.8%)
  - Suburban (53.1%)
- Very Important (44.7%)
  - Rural (48.5%)
  - Suburban (46.5%)
  - Urban (55.2%)
Staffing
Responsibility & Challenges

- Contracts with outside providers of special services (OT, PT, etc.)
  - Responsibility 
    - Essential (60.4%, C = 2.30)
    - Very Important (10.0%, C = 2.05)
    - Not Applicable (4.5%, C = 1.98)
  - Challenge
    - Substantial Challenge (55.7%, C = 2.62)
    - Somewhat of a Challenge (36.2%, C = 2.03)
    - Not a Challenge (11.0%, C = 1.98)

Evaluation of Staff
Responsibilities & Challenges

- Evaluates diagnostic staff (i.e. educational diagnosticians); (R = 4.50; C = 2.60)
- Makes recommendations relative to retention, transfer, discipline, and dismissal of staff; (R = 4.40; C = 2.60)
- Evaluates secretarial and clerical staff; (R = 4.45; C = 2.72)
- Evaluates clerical staff (i.e. V.I. teacher, counselor, special education nurse); (R = 3.85; C = 2.03)
- Assists in general education walk-throughs and/or evaluations; (R = 2.84; C = 1.98)
- Evaluates special education teachers on campuses through the designated teacher appraisal system; (R = 2.55; C = 1.98)

Budget
Responsibilities & Challenges

- Compiles budgets and cost estimates based upon documented program needs; (R = 4.65; C = 3.05)
- Ensures that programs are cost effective and funds are managed prudently; (R = 4.65; C = 3.05)
- Admits the special education budget; (R = 4.65; C = 2.76)
- Collaborates with business office on requisitions, purchase orders, contracts, etc.; (R = 4.45; C = 2.15)
- Develops and submits budgets and financial reports for central administration; (R = 4.35; C = 2.72)
- Maintains a current inventory of supplies and equipment; recommends the replacement and disposal of equipment, when necessary; (R = 3.95; C = 2.60)
Policy Development
Responsibilities & Challenges

- Knowledge of federal and state special education law; (R = 4.93; C = 3.85)
- Implements the policies established by federal and state law; State Board of Education rules, and the local board policy in the area of special education; (R = 4.85; C = 3.85)
- Knowledge of state level assessment procedures and requirements; (R = 4.9; C = 3.85)
- Recommends and consults on policies to improve programs that impact students with disabilities; (R = 4.9; C = 3.85)
- Participates in the development of district goals and objectives; (R = 4.9; C = 3.85)
- Attends school board meetings regularly and makes presentations to the school board; (R = 3.45; C = 1.85)

Policy Development
Responsibility

Participates in the development of district goals and objectives (R = .005)

- Essential (38.9%)
  - Urban (36.9%)
  - Suburban (27.7%)
  - Rural (15.6%)
- Very Important (38.9%)
  - Rural (41.9%)
  - Suburban (29.0%)
  - Urban (29.0%)
- Somewhat Important (26.4%)
  - Rural (25.9%)
  - Suburban (22.0%)
  - Urban (27.0%)

Program Development
Responsibilities & Challenges

- Discusses special education programs, personnel, and students with building administrators; (R = 4.85; C = 2.53)
- Collaboration between general education and special education; (R = 4.8; C = 2.84)
- Encourages the use of assessment to inform instruction; (R = 4.8; C = 2.84)
- Ensures that student progress is evaluated on a regular, systematic basis, and the findings are used to make the special education program more effective; (R = 4.44; C = 1.87)
- Encourages the use of effective, research-based instructional strategies; (R = 4.44; C = 2.75)
- Provides access to appropriate materials needed for instruction; (R = 4.33; C = 2.75)
Program Development
Responsibilities & Challenges

- Creates supportive and safe learning environments; (R = 4.24, C = 2.28)
- Seeks and demonstrates parent involvement in students’ education; (R = 4.43, C = 2.30)
- Articulates the district’s mission and goals in the area of special education to the community and solicits its support in realizing the mission; (R = 4.41, C = 2.50)
- Assists with alignment of student goals with standards-based goals; (R = 4.37, C = 2.46)
- Monitors developmental and skill progress and communicates with parents and other professionals; (R = 4.47, C = 2.54)
- Selection of instructional materials used in special education programs; (R = 4.07, C = 2.36)

Program Development
Responsibilities & Challenges

- Serves as a resource person in the design and equipping of facilities for students with disabilities; (R = 4.03, C = 2.28)
- Consults with teachers regarding the evaluation and placement of their students; (R = 3.97, C = 2.21)
- Facilitates/promotes the use of technology in the teaching-learning process; (R = 3.90, C = 2.46)
- Participates in committee meetings to ensure the appropriate placement and development of individual education plans for students with disabilities; (R = 3.77, C = 2.93)
- Demonstrates skill in conflict resolution with administrators, parents, teachers, staff, and community; (R = 3.66, C = 2.43)

Program Development
Responsibility

Serves as a resource person in the design and equipping of facilities for students with disabilities

- Essential (38.91%)
  - Video (32.24%)
  - Usher (25.88%)
  - Real (20.70%)
- Very Important (35.66%)
  - Real (41.55%)
  - Solution (35.94%)
  - Usher (27.49%)
- Not applicable (6.96%)
  - Usher (3.9)
  - Real (2.23%)
  - Solution (2.69)
Program Development Responsibility

Provides access to appropriate materials needed for instruction

- Essential (61.9%)
  - Urban (31.9%)
  - Suburban (30.2%)
  - Rural (1.8%)

- Very Important (35.5%)
  - Rural (35.5%)
  - Suburban (35.5%)
  - Urban (35.5%)

- Not Applicable (2.6%)
  - Rural (2.6%)
  - Suburban (2.6%)
  - Urban (2.6%)

Program Development Responsibility & Challenge

Collaboration between general education and special education

- Essential (61.9%)
  - Rural (31.9%)
  - Suburban (29.2%)
  - Urban (1.6%)

- Very Important (24.5%)
  - Rural (24.5%)
  - Suburban (24.5%)
  - Urban (24.5%)

- Not Applicable (4.0%)
  - Rural (4.0%)
  - Suburban (4.0%)
  - Urban (4.0%)

Substantial Challenge (29.7%)

- Suburban (29.7%)
- Rural (29.7%)
- Urban (29.7%)

A little bit of a Challenge (22.8%)

- Urban (22.8%)
- Rural (22.8%)
- Suburban (22.8%)

Not a Challenge (4.8%)

- Urban (4.8%)
- Rural (4.8%)
- Suburban (4.8%)

Program Development Challenge

Demonstrates skill in conflict resolution with administrators, parents, teachers, staff, and community

- Substantial Challenge (15.8%)
  - Suburban (15.8%)
  - Rural (15.8%)
  - Urban (15.8%)

- Somewhat of a Challenge (35.5%)
  - Rural (35.5%)
  - Urban (35.5%)
  - Suburban (35.5%)

- A little bit of a Challenge (22.8%)
  - Rural (22.8%)
  - Suburban (22.8%)
  - Urban (22.8%)
Reasons Able to Operate to Optimum Effectiveness

Top Three Reasons Able to Operate to Optimum Effectiveness

- Sufficient knowledge concerning special education, state and federal laws, budget, etc.
- Support from central administration
- Professional background and education prepared them for job

Top Three Reasons Unable to Operate to Optimum Effectiveness

- Insufficient number of staff
- Lack of time
- Insufficient financial resources

Responsibilities Vs. Challenges

- 34 out of 39 responsibility statements showed a statistically significant difference
- The general pattern suggested as the importance of the responsibility increased the level of the challenge increased though other patterns existed within the various categories of staffing, evaluation of staff, budget, policy development, and program development.

Conclusions

- There are significant differences between special education administrators in rural, suburban, and urban school districts.
- One of the challenges for the future will be to increase the diversity of special education administrators.
- Special education administrators have a strong educational background yet have a greater turn-over rate than special education administrators in the past.
- The most critical or essential responsibilities are in the areas of policy development and budget.
**Contribution of Research**

- Provides information in the development of training programs and supports needed at the district level.
- Provides information to help target leadership skills

**Limitations**

- Limited research studies that involved responsibilities and challenges
- Use of electronic survey may exclude some special education administrators from participating in the study
- Length of data collection was limited to two weeks and some special education administrators may not have had the time to complete the survey during the designated window of time
- Participants were limited to special education administrators in the state of Texas and may not be generalized across other states
- Study did not address reasons for extended contracts or responsibilities that might be different in the summer

**Future Directions**

- Difference between actual responsibilities of special education administrators and job descriptions
- Effectiveness of special education administrators from different career paths
- Opportunities encountered by individuals from different ethnic and racial backgrounds that aspire to being a special education administrator
- Factors that influence a special education administrator's decisions to remain in the field of special education or leave the field of education
- Factors that influence a special education administrator's contract days and the difference in responsibilities between the school year and the summer months.
Acknowledgements

Dr. Jane Pemberton
Dr. David Marshall
Dr. Teresa Starrett
Dr. Jerry Whitworth

References

References


