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The University of Oklahoma

Graduate College

OKLAHOMA SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTION  
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION WITHIN THEIR DISTRICTS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

MARY LEE STEVENS

Norman, Oklahoma

1998

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OKLAHOMA SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS'  
PERCEPTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION WITHIN THEIR DISTRICTS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” ( Romans 8: 38-39).

I think this scripture describes the graduate school experience better than any words I may write. For indeed I have been at heights and depths I did not conceive a mere educational experience (as separate from actual life) could cause. I have certainly learned much during these years. And during this time I have received a great deal of help. I wish to thank those whose help was most prominent during these years.

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# Oklahoma Special Education Administrators' Perception of Special Education Within Their Districts

## Abstract

The study examined the perception Oklahoma special education administrators have of the implementation of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) within their school districts. All the districts in Oklahoma were included in the survey population. A survey was designed for this study. The survey was based upon three models of special education predicated upon LRE (inclusion, continuum of services, and unified). Demographics of the district special education administrators were included within the survey. Follow-up telephone interviews of a randomly selected sample of administrators were also made.

Results, obtained from the survey indicated Oklahoma special education administrators did not consider their district to be following any one of the three identified models more closely than another. Interviews indicated students with mild disabilities were more likely to be educated in inclusive settings. However, students with more severe disabilities were usually in self contained classes.

Comparisons of statements between and among models was made. A statistical comparison between district and administrator demographics and model choice was made. Demographics were also examined. Results from an analysis of demographic data indicated special education administrators were frequently part-time. More than half of the administrators were women.

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**“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.” Psalm 19:14.**

## Chapter I

### Introduction

The manner in which special education has been practiced since the passage of PL 94-142, the original Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) has been subjected to intense scrutiny in the last ten years. The most concentrated focus has been placed on the least restrictive environment requirement of that law and its subsequent reauthorization, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Brown et al, 1981; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Kauffman, 1989; Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1989; Parrish, 1994; Sailor, 1991; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1984; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986; Wigle, Wilcox, & Manges, 1994; Will, 1986; Winzer, 1993; Yell, 1995).

Will (1986) is generally credited with intensifying the debate over the appropriateness of a separate education for students with disabilities which had previously been ignited by Dunn (1968). Both Will and Dunn cited research results which indicated students with disabilities in separate settings were achieving, both academically and socially, at levels below those of similar students who were being taught in regular education classrooms. Will's (1986) article opened a dialogue among scholars which has continued to the present. The movement to educate students with disabilities in regular education classroom, the regular education initiative (REI), was scorned by some as an example of Reagan-Bush trickle down economics. These scholars feared that the REI would limit the availability of special education services (Kauffman, 1989; Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1989; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). At the same time, other authorities focused on the rights of students with disabilities to be



educated with students without disabilities (Stainback & Stainback, 1989) as well as the dismal results of separate schooling (Bateman, 1992). The focus of this debate was the least restrictive environment provision of the law.

#### Definition of The Least Restrictive Environment

The Individuals with Disabilities Act was reauthorized by Congress in 1997. Regulations for implementation of that Act are being reviewed. However, no changes were proposed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) regulation in the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA. The discipline procedures now will permit a change of placement for up to 45 days of students with disabilities who bring weapons or illegal drugs to school (Proposed Rules 34 CFR section 300.520 (a) (1), 1997).

The least restrictive environment is defined extensively in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). This code book contains implementation regulations for federal laws. The LRE regulation states: “(1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily” (CFR Section 300.550, 1992; Proposed Rules, 1997).

IDEA regulations further require that a “continuum of alternate placements” (34 CFR section 300.551, 1992; Proposed Rules, 1997) be provided. This continuum is stated in order of least to the most restrictive of school

environments, instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, instruction in hospitals or institutions.” (34 CFR. section 300.551, 1992 Proposed, 1997). Although Congress created a preference for education within the regular classroom, the continuum was provided to permit other placements when justifiable for some students (Tucker & Goldstein, 1993).

Comments within the CFR further clarify the use of the continuum as it relates to students with challenging behavior stating that in cases “where a child with disabilities is so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of the other students is significantly impaired, the needs of the child with disabilities cannot be met in that environment” (34 CFR. section 300.552 comments, 1992; Proposed Rules 1997).

Interpretation of this public law by the states has resulted in uneven implementation of the LRE (Haring et al, 1994; Hasazi, Johnston, Liggett, & Schattman, 1994). That is, students with disabilities in one state were far more likely to be placed in separate classes than similar students in another state. For example, placement of children with disabilities in segregated day and residential facilities varied from a high of 15,000 children per million in the District of Columbia to 600 per million in Oregon (Danielson & Bellamy, 1989). This variability has also been documented between districts within a single state (Hasazi et al, 1994). The confusion surrounding LRE has resulted in court cases, that have been decided by the Federal Courts of Appeal. These case law directives have served as guidance for lower courts (Yell, 1995).

### Case Law of Least Restrictive Environment

Decisions concerning Least Restrictive Environment have been rendered in the third, fifth, ninth, and eleventh circuits of the U.S. Court of Appeals. These rulings control decisions of lower courts within each circuit (Yell, 1995).

In contrast to rulings from appellant courts, rulings from the Supreme Court are considered controlling for all lower courts. However, the circuit court rulings on LRE have all been similar. As a result, it is unlikely the Supreme Court will hear a case involving LRE. The Supreme Court rarely hears cases unless there are conflicting rulings at the appellant level (Yell, 1995).

In the fifth district, a two-prong test was created in the *Daniel R.R. v. the State Board of Education*, (1989) case. This test became a standard for other cases involving LRE (Yell, 1995). The first prong of the test was a three part question. The first part of the question asked if special education provided within the regular classroom (with the use of supplementary aids and services) could be satisfactorily achieved. Supplementary aids and services must have been provided and shown to be inadequate in addressing the first prong of the test. If this was not done, then the school failed the first part of the test and was in violation of IDEA.

If education in the regular education classroom with supplementary aids and services were provided and failed, then it is necessary to determine if the student can receive educational benefit from the regular class placement. This inquiry addresses not only academics but also social benefits. Finally the third part of this prong addresses how the behavior of the identified student negatively impacts the learning process for other students. If the presence of the identified

child interferes with the education of other students then the current regular education placement may not be appropriate.

If the school determined through district documentation that unsuccessful interventions were implemented and education in the regular classroom was not appropriate, the second prong was applied. This part determined if the child was educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. This may include nonacademic classes and periods such as lunch or recess (Yell, 1995).

In Daniel R.R. the court determined that the regular teacher was spending so much time with Daniel that it was negatively affecting other students' education. In this case the court ruled in favor of the school district indicating that the regular classroom was not the least restrictive environment for Daniel.

The Daniel R.R. test was later applied to cases heard in other circuits. The eleventh circuit heard Greer v. Rome City School District (1991) while the third district heard Oberti v. Board of Education (1993). In both cases the schools failed to meet the first prong of the test. The courts ruled that education in the regular classroom with supplementary aids and services had not been attempted. In Oberti (1993) the court stressed that school districts are responsible and must provide proof they are meeting IDEA requirements.

The ninth circuit used a four factor test, based upon the Daniel R. R. two prong test, to determine if the Sacramento City Unified School District was meeting LRE requirements (Sacramento City Unified School District v. Rachel H., 1994). The first factor considered whether the general education classroom with supplementary aids and services or education in the special education classroom

were most appropriate for Rachel H. The second factor considered the nonacademic benefits of each placement. On both factors the parents showed that the student benefited from regular class placement despite the school's contention she was not making progress.

The third factor the court examined was the effect Rachel had on other students. In this factor both parties agreed there was no harm to the other students. The final factor examined was cost. Was the cost of educating Rachel in combined special education and regular education excessive? The court found that it was not. Sacramento appealed this case to the U.S. Supreme Court who refused to hear it. Thus by their refusal the lower court ruling was upheld. Federal law, policy and case law have been influential in the development of three models of special education practice which reflect attempts to implement LRE requirements. These three models are described in the sections below.

#### Models of Practice

Three models of special education practice; the Continuum of Services, Inclusion, and Unified Models were identified by an extensive study of actual school districts (McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; McLaughlin & Warren, 1995). During the two year study, data was gathered through site visits to 15 school districts throughout the United States. Telephone interviews with 47 additional districts were also conducted. The models were predicated on the least restrictive environment (Burrello, Lashley, & Van Dyke, 1996; Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; McLaughlin & Warren, 1995).

### Definition of The Continuum of Services

The first model, the Continuum of Services, was the traditional method of providing education for students with disabilities (Lashley, 1993). This model was the standard interpretation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, a precursor of the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990 (EHCA/IDEA). The assumptions of this model were: (a) students with disabilities required an intense service or program in a special classroom, separate school, or other specialized setting; therefore, (b) a continuum of services must be available to provide students with disabilities with a free appropriate education; (c) meeting the needs of students with disabilities required a high degree of specialized knowledge in curriculum and instruction of each separate category of disability; (d) a specialized cadre of personnel supervised by a highly focused administration was a requirement of this model as well; (e) great importance was placed on existing special education eligibility requirements and procedures which emphasized categorical programs, these requirements and procedures served a major purpose in ensuring that students with disabilities received an appropriate education; (f) under this model the responsibility for ensuring that IEP requirements were met belonged to special educators and related service personnel; and (g) the educational focus for students with disabilities was on providing highly individualized instruction and specific skill attainment, including vocational competence (McLaughlin and Warren, 1992, p. 39).

### Definition of Inclusive School

The inclusive schools model was articulated by Sailor (1991). Under this model all students attended the school to which they would go if they had no

disability. Additional requirements of this model included: (a) a natural proportion (i.e., representative of the school district at large) of students with disabilities occurred at any school site; (b) and a zero-rejection philosophy existed so that no student could be excluded on the basis of type or extent of disability “[except...for children with deafness]” (Sailor, 1991, p. 10); (c) at each school general education placements were age and grade appropriate, (d) no self-contained special education classes were operative at the site; (e) cooperative learning and peer instruction were preferred teaching methods, both were significantly used in general instructional practice at the school site; (f) special education supports were provided within the context of the regular education class and in other integrated environments (Sailor, 1991).

#### Definition of The Unified School

A third model, the Unified Model was found to be emerging (Burrello, personal communication, July 12, 1996). The most obvious feature of the unified school model was that it embraced collaborative practice (Burrello, Lashley, Van Dyke, 1996). The Unified Model developed from the current regular education reform movement and from the inclusive school movement in combination with the continuum of services (McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).

In the Unified Model (a) equal access was provided to high-quality instruction that resulted in desired outcomes for all students; (b) valued expectations were identified for all students regardless of their characteristics or educational needs; (c) schools were held accountable for a single set of student outcomes; (d) the decision making and responsibility for students' programs were shared among site and district, regular and specialized staff, students, and parents;

(e) generally, all students were educated in their neighborhood schools and fully included in the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school; (f) the students were educated in age-appropriate regular education classrooms; however, (g) some specialized placements were made available on a limited-time basis to any student who needed intensive services; (h) most specialized instruction and services were provided without the need to label or otherwise categorize students, although, a small number of intensive or highly specialized services could be provided on a short-term basis outside the neighborhood school; (i) the services were available to any student; (j) these services were provided without labels (k) and utilized resources from all categorical programs, as well as other sources. (McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).

#### Definition of Segregation

Segregation is defined as separation of students with disabilities from their peers for education purposes. The segregated students with disabilities received education in separate schools, or separate classrooms (Turnbull et al., 1983).

#### Statement of the Problem

Much of the literature, research, program development and discourse in the special education field has included debate concerning LRE. The examination of LRE has ardent supporters who espouse the education of students with disabilities totally within the general education population. Dissenting voices maintain that special education is more effective in separate settings. As a result of the opposing voices within the discipline, the heuristic quality of the discourse would be expected to stimulate and guide differentiated practice in the manner in which individual students receive special education services. However, actual knowledge



about the manner in which special education is practiced is clouded, few systematic studies of the practice of special education have been reported. Nationally, the available data is inadequate and fails to provide consensus on fundamental issues such as placement (Paul, Epanchin, Rosselli, & Duchnowski, 1996). This lack of data is particularly evident when single states are examined.

Two national studies (Katsiyannis, Conderman, & Franks, 1995; Lipsky, 1995) collected data concerning inclusive practices within individual states, however, the studies were not in depth reviews of special education practices. In addition, some disparity in the number of schools using inclusive practices were noted between the two studies. Katsiyannis, Conderman, & Franks (1995) reported 10 percent of the districts in Oklahoma were using inclusive practices, while, Lipsky (1995) reported four districts (less than one percent) were using inclusive practices. Both studies relied upon child count data gathered from the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OKSDE) for identification rather than from the 549 state districts. Lipsky (1995) contacted the districts identified as inclusive by the OKSDE. Katsiyannis, Conderman, and Franks, (1995) did not. An additional study that reported state errors in child count was conducted (Haring et al., 1994). The state child count data is an amalgamation of all the districts within a state thus obscuring what may be happening in individual districts. Lack of knowledge about the nature of special education placement practices within the states limits the quality of personnel preparation, and the accountability for school finance, and evaluation.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe: 1) the perceptions of special education administrators within the context of special education practiced in Oklahoma; and 2) to determine if there are relationships between the personal and district demographics of responding special education administrators and the most dominate model of special education practiced.

This study was specifically designed to determine if special education administrators perceived their district as following the practices associated with the Continuum of Services, Inclusion, or a Unified Model. The data were collected and analyzed to identify relationships between administrator demographics (i.e., age, type, and degree of education, the number of years and type of experiences) and the special education model identified as most employed within their districts. This study also correlated demographics of population, geographic size, rural-urban location and relative wealth of the district to the perceived model of special education practiced within the district.

### Importance of the Study

Since Will's (1986) article, the current debate over Least Restrictive Environment has had a relatively undocumented effect upon special education practices (Zigmond et al., 1995). The results of changes, in terms of student outcomes attributed to LRE placement, are still generally unknown (Paul, Epanchin, Rosselli, & Duchnowski, 1996; Zigmond et al., 1995). Within Oklahoma student outcome data are largely anecdotal in nature. Various contact points, such as, receipt of files on student transfers, and interactions of teachers and administrators in conferences or meetings are unreliable. The present survey

was conducted to provide data for documenting changes which have taken place in special education practices. Without knowledge of the changes which have occurred, the benefits from these changes may be lost (Cuban, 1990). A systematic empirical study was needed to describe the present state of special education practiced in Oklahoma, as related to changes in federal law and public policy. Indeed without descriptive studies, successful continued growth is unlikely (Cuban, 1990). This survey could lay the groundwork for further study of how educational change occurs in one state that is trying to implement the broad intents of IDEA.

## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

#### Introduction

Definitions of three models of special education practice, (a) Continuum of Services, (b) Inclusion and (c) Unified Models were presented in Chapter 1. A definition of Least Restrictive Environment was also included. In addition, a rationale for the study and research questions which have guided this project were advanced.

The review of the literature discussed in Chapter II will provide an overview of the opposing concepts of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). It will present research on practices within the three models the Continuum of Services, Inclusion, and Unified Models. Finally, literature describing LRE implementation studies will be discussed.

#### Overview of the Least Restrictive Environment

The first special education classes in public schools were begun in the 1890s. The classes were separate and reserved for students with mild mental retardation (Winzer, 1993). This practice continued through the 1960s (Winzer, 1993; David & Green, 1983). However, review of literature from the era 1932 through 1959 (Johnson, 1962) indicated that students with mental retardation, who were educated in special classrooms, achieved lower academically and did no better in social or motor areas than students with retardation, who were educated solely in the general education classroom. Similar data were reported in 1968 (The President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1968; Dunn, 1968). Current studies indicated that establishing the efficacy of separate programs for serving

students with special education needs continues to be problematic (Edgar, 1987, Werner, 1993). The introduction of the least restrictive environment clause in the 1975 Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) was an attempt to ameliorate this by emphasizing the provision of special education services in the regular education classroom (Deno, 1994; Tweedy, 1983).

With the passage by Congress of the EHA, education was required for all students with disabilities. For the first time, the rights of students with moderate and severe disabilities to receive free and appropriate educational services were codified. (The right to education for students with profound disabilities was not assured until *Timothy W. v. New Hampshire* in 1989.) However, the segregated placements of students with disabilities remained common (Brown et al., 1981; Deno, 1994; Edgar, 1987; Will, 1986).

Advocates, seeking to change the relatively dismal special education student outcomes have complained that the LRE is not being properly implemented, that the continuum of services embedded within it is partially responsible for students with disabilities being served in separate settings (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Sailor, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1984; Will, 1986). Although, separate settings were perceived by some as a civil rights issue (Edgar, 1987; Hilton & Smith, 1994; Sage & Burrello, 1994; Stainback & Stainback, 1984; Winzer, 1993) as well as an education issue, voices on both sides of the debate have concentrated on determining the efficacy of special education.

The philosophy propelling inclusive advocates should be clarified. The following quotation provides some insight into that philosophy.

A more fundamental point ... is that although research will likely continue to be conducted on the quality of special and regular classes, whether we integrate our schools is in the final analysis not a scientific or research issue. It is one of equality for all society's members. It encompasses such questions as: Do we want to live in an integrated society in which all people are considered of equal worth? Or do we want to segregate some people? Should we require some people to earn their access to the mainstream by demonstrating various competencies created by professionals, when this access is an inherent right for others? Most integration advocates believe if we want a democratic, egalitarian society, the answers to these questions are obvious. Throughout history we have focused on such questions repeatedly, specifically in regard to nationality, religion, race, sex, and now in relation to physical and intellectual differences, and in every instance we have reaffirmed a commitment to integration and equality for all (Stainback & Stainback, 1989, p. 262 ).

The most vocal advocates for change have been those concerned about individuals with severe and profound disabilities (Hilton & Smith, 1994). Brown et al., (1981) wrote that due to rigid or antiquated belief systems (a) untrained or undertrained individuals were providing direct service to students, (b) students with disabilities had no contact with nondisabled peers, while, (c) most of the curricula taught the student how to function as a child under the age of five, (d) parents and guardians were not sufficiently involved, and (e) the programs did not prepare the student to function as independently and productively as possible. Strong concern was also expressed that education be conducted in settings where

all could see and be held accountable for educating individuals with disabilities (Brown et al., 1981).

The school envisioned by integration advocates has come to be called full inclusion (Sailor, 1991). Perhaps the most controversial concept of the full inclusion movement is the merger of regular and special education (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). A merger has been presented as a means of (a) achieving the acceptance of students with disabilities in the general education setting, (b) providing individualized programs for students who are not eligible for special education services but are at risk for school failure, (c) removing personally and socially debilitating labels from students with disabilities, and (d) providing general education with much needed financial support (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987, Stainback & Stainback, 1989).

These proposals have brought biting responses from special educators concerned with where such drastic action would lead. Hilton and Smith (1994) wrote: "Until appropriate methods are determined and adequate funding is provided, students with disabilities, and especially those with mental retardation, run risks of being 'lost in the shuffle' unless decisions concerning their placement and program design are based on their individual needs, not on a philosophy that ultimately through research concerning practice may be shown to be ineffective for some students,"(p. 253).

The differences between the special education combatants became particularly rancorous as the proponents of full inclusion gained national prominence (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Hilton & Smith, 1994; Kaufman, 1989; Kaufman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1989; Kauffman & Hallahan, 1990; Lieberman,

1985; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). Influential general educators such as Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, joined ranks in opposition to inclusion. Shanker (1994) wrote that students with disabilities would be placed in classrooms with unprepared teachers and few supports. He cited the deinstitutionalization of people with mental illness, which resulted in some people with mental illness becoming homeless, as an example of what could happen in general education classrooms. The US Department of Education attempted to moderate between the two philosophies held by those advocating for integrated vrs separate (segregated) provision of special education services. The Office of Special Education Programs has provided limited guidance for educators struggling with the debate (Heumann & Hehir, 1994). In addition, limited research was available during the early stages of the movement. The need for research data became increasingly more important to assist educators making reasonably informed decisions concerning practice (Keogh, 1994).

### Summary

Special educators have debated the issue of LRE as both civil rights and an educational effectiveness issue. However, most of the literature has concentrated on the educational appropriateness of the model. Unfortunately, little research has been reported which can support any model of practice predicated upon LRE.



## Models of Practice

### The Continuum of Services

The growth of special education under EHA (1975) was dramatic. Education services were suddenly provided to thousands of individuals with disabilities who had been excluded (The President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1976). Despite EHA's support for education in the regular classroom, the practices which were followed within most school districts stayed close to special education's roots of separate placement (David & Green, 1983; Snell & Drake, 1994).

Lack of trained teachers, support personnel, limited financial resources and facilities, made providing special education services challenging within an urban setting (David & Green, 1983). However, a free appropriate public education may have been even more difficult to deliver in rural areas (Cates & Yell, 1994; Hicks, 1994; Skrtic et al., 1985). Skrtic et al. (1985) conducted a qualitative study of the special education practices in five rural sites. Site visits and unstructured interviews were the primary methods of data collection. The purpose of the study was to describe the nature of rural special education. Four of the five sites were cooperatives formed from several districts. One of the sites was a single district. Special education practices, expectations, and services differed depending on local context.

Following the Continuum of Services scenario of separate specialized administration, the sites were governed by an administrator, although nominally, they were governed by a board. The continuum of placements and related services were available for most students. However, the majority of students of any

category were usually educated with other students having the same category of disability. Other aspects identified as part of the continuum of services scenario were present at the study sites. Students were served in categorical settings. The requirements and procedures for providing special education (i.e., child find, screening, evaluation) were in place at all sites. Placement was generally based on issues such as student category or accessibility of related services rather than what was most relevant to the child. Responsibility for the implementation of the IEP belonged to the special education teacher.

While the Continuum of Services was the practice of choice, the nature of the practice was challenged by difficulties associated with rural education. A rural area brought with it a set of issues which severely affected the education of individuals with disabilities. Such issues as scarcity, recruitment and retention of personnel, high cost of services, and the effect of weather on travel placed severe limitations on service (Skrtec et al, 1985).

Difficulty with recruitment and retention of teachers, transportation, and professional development continue to plague rural special education (Cates & Yell, 1994). Cates and Yell (1994) reported these facts may have affected the delivery of special education services in rural South Carolina. A study was designed to determine the attitude of rural South Carolina special education administrators and teachers toward inclusion of students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. The survey respondents were 68 special education directors and 43 teachers of students with emotional disabilities in rural districts in South Carolina.

The teacher survey instrument consisted of a two part questionnaire, one section covering respondent demographics and a section designed to ascertain

attitudes regarding placement options, training requirements, need for collaboration among school districts, and regular class adjustments. The administrator survey consisted of only section two of the teacher survey. Single item chi-square analyses were conducted for each item to determine the significance of frequency distribution. Results indicated that pull out, a component of the Continuum of Services, was the preferred method of service delivery. The special education administrators expressed an interest in using a special education cooperative approach for students with moderate to severe emotional or behavioral disabilities. The cooperative approach was perceived as a method to overcome the dual issues of scarcity of teachers with expertise in the special education field of emotional disabilities and providing a separate classroom for students with emotional or behavioral disabilities.

Unlike the issues studied by Cates and Yell (1994) and Skrtic et al. (1985), which examined practices affecting individuals of all ages, some studies only addressed issues at the secondary level. Cline and Billingsley (1991) studied the perception of special education teachers and supervisors of secondary learning disabilities programs using a Likert like survey. The responses of both teachers and supervisors indicated that the majority of programs utilized the Continuum of Services Model (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warner, 1992).

The researchers (Cline & Billingsley, 1991) analyzed 325 secondary special education teacher surveys and 145 special education supervisor surveys. The surveys questioned administrators and teachers about the teachers' responsibilities, instructional focus of their program, and needs for assistance. It also questioned the teachers and supervisors about what they thought their instructional focus

should be, as well as what their roles should be. Frequency ranking, mean, and standard deviation were the reported descriptive statistics. The results of the survey indicated that a continuum of services was available for students with learning disabilities. It also indicated that most special education teachers spent the majority of their time teaching in pull-out programs. A majority of both teachers and administrators thought more time should be devoted to consultation with general education teachers.

The research described (Cates & Yell, 1994; Cline & Billingsley, 1991; Skrtic et al., 1985) was designed to answer questions about special education practice. However, two of the three studies described used survey research. A limitation of this type of research is that it can produce only approximations, never precise measurement. While the survey method is a useful tool for large populations, its use is problematic when complex ideas must be differentiated. Unknown to the researcher, respondents may, in fact, not understand the concepts on which they have commented (Hoinville, 1978). Careful selection of respondents and skillful crafting of the survey instrument are used to overcome this limitation.

While none of the studies described in this chapter addressed the practice of special education as being an example of a particular model, parallels can be drawn that the practice resembled one of the models identified by Lashley (1993), Burrello, Lashley, and Van Dyke (1996), or McLaughlin and Warren (1992). Each of the studies described (Cates & Yell, 1994; Cline & Billingsly, 1991; Skrtic et al, 1985) a continuum of services that was present, although most emphasis was

placed on separate programming. In addition, service was generally delivered by specialized teachers and a dual system of education was evident.

The previous studies lent understanding to how special education has been practiced. Unlike earlier research, Lashley's (1993) study was conducted to identify different models of special education practice.

Lashley (1993) conducted a qualitative study of two special education administrators who supported a Continuum of Services Model of special education as well as two special education administrators who supported an Inclusive Model of special education services. Lashley (1993) used site visits and unstructured interviews to conduct this study of educators who worked in different states. Two of the special education administrators supported a model Lashley (1993) defined as the Continuum of Services Model. The two administrators who supported the Continuum of Services Model stated that a continuum was necessary to meet the needs of a widely varying population. Other themes, articulated by these administrators and included within the Continuum of Services Model, provided that teachers and administrators needed a high degree of specialized knowledge; eligibility requirements must be followed carefully; and the responsibility for meeting the IEP requirements rested upon the special education staff (Lashley, 1993).

#### The Inclusion Model

Lashley's (1993) study also examined two special education administrators who supported an inclusion model of special education service delivery. Within the districts of these administrators specialized supports and services were provided within the general education classes and in other integrated

environments. In addition, the students were educated in neighborhood schools, in age appropriate classrooms, and special education services within the regular classroom were used to benefit a wider variety of students.

These themes were also evident in a study of a New York school district. The purpose of that study was to determine (a) what it was like to be a part of the inclusion program, (b) how the program was developed, and (c) what factors affected implementation (Salisbury, Palombaro, & Hollowood, 1993). The researchers used qualitative methods to conduct the study. Data collection methods were interviews, participant observations of classrooms and classroom meetings, anecdotal records, and newsletters and minutes of meetings. The authors (Salisbury, Palombaro, & Hollowood, 1993) acted as participant observers. The newsletters and minutes of meetings were gathered as they became available.

The researchers reported that the district administration decided to use an inclusion Model to provide special education services to students with disabilities. The decision to implement the Inclusion Model was made without prior teacher input. The study indicated that the Inclusion Model followed by the district was similar to that identified by Sailor (1991) and Lashley (1993). Although the implementation method was questioned by those most directly responsible for carrying out the program, the study found wide satisfaction with the model among students, parents, and school personnel (Salisbury, Palombaro, & Hollowood, 1993).

A similar study of two inclusive school programs was described by MacKinnon and Brown (1994). The qualitative study was conducted in two junior high schools in different districts. Research methods included examination

of policy documents, and observations of school and classroom practices. Site visits occurred approximately once a month. The data report did not state if both districts followed inclusive practices or only the two specific school sites followed those practices. However, the sites closely resembled Sailor's (1991) definition of an inclusive school. The study was an evaluation of the governance structure that evolved during one year of implementation at one site and two years of implementation and practice at the second site.

This study examined the adhocratic versus bureaucratic structure. An adhocratic organizational structure, like a bureaucracy relies on the expertise of professionals. However, where a bureaucracy required standardized programs into which clients were placed, the professionals in an adhocracy formed multidisciplinary teams to deal with problems as they saw fit (MacKinnon & Brown, 1994). The flexibility of an adhocratic structure permitted problem solving teams to address the complex needs of the students they taught. During the course of the study the two schools developed adhocratic practices to create successful inclusive programs.

#### The Unified Model

The Unified Model has been discussed by Burrello, Lashley, and Van Dyke (1996) as an emerging model. McLaughlin and Warren (1992) wrote of it as a conceptual alternative to the Continuum of Services and Inclusion. The concept, as presented by McLaughlin and Warren (1992) was a blending of the Continuum of Services with Inclusion and the regular education reform movement. Accountability for the education of all students by all educators was a cornerstone of the concept. Site based management, collaborative teaching, and educational

teams were concepts taken from regular education reform. Educating all students in the neighborhood school was an idea from the Inclusion Model which the Unified Model fused with a Continuum of Services Model.

The final components of the Unified Model required the site accept the responsibility for the education of all students (with an understanding that short-term segregated educational intervention might be necessary at another site for some students in crises). The curriculum as envisioned by McLaughlin and Warren (1992) was driven by the same valued outcomes for all students. District administrators were to act as advisors and find services for students who required out of site placements. No research of this model could be found.

#### Implementation Studies

Only a few studies have examined implementation of the LRE models of special education. In one of these studies the knowledge and acceptance of inclusive practices were examined by Belcher (1995). The study surveyed 60 regular and special educators in attendance at New Mexico's Council for Exceptional Children State Conference. The survey purpose was to examine the knowledge and acceptance level of inclusive education following New Mexico's State Department of Education campaign for inclusive education. Results indicated support for inclusive concepts but found the practices had rarely been implemented, particularly in rural schools. The sample size was small, casting some doubt on the validity of the study. The author (Belcher, 1995), however, noted that the sample proportionally represented the state in percentages of administrators, special education teachers, and related service personnel.



In a second study, Hasazi et al. (1994) conducted qualitative research of LRE practice in six states and 12 local school districts. The extensive study was designed to examine the factors which determined LRE. The three year study used a total of 350 tape recorded and transcribed interviews as well as documents and field notes of events or observations made at the time of the interviews. Results from the study identified six factors determined to affect LRE. The factors were finance, organization, advocacy, implementers, knowledge and values, and state/local context.

Hazasi et al. (1994) found that:

1. Considerable financial support was required to implement LRE. Inclusive practices were reported to require more funds than could be provided through categorical funding.
2. A dual organization was in place at all levels; federal, state, regional, and local. These organizational entities dominated the manner in which LRE was implemented.
3. Parent advocacy strongly impacted the manner in which LRE was implemented for either segregated options or inclusive ones.
4. Commitment to LRE came from values. Knowledge enabled the commitment to be put into practice.
5. The law and leadership provided by federal education authorities during the 80s also impacted LRE. The local implementers interpretation of LRE made the federal monitoring work.

6. The culture of the state and district in accepting change also greatly influenced LRE. The areas where greater effort was needed to bring about change were less likely to be inclusive.

These factors can be broken into demographic attributes (i.e., district revenue source, physical size, total student population, special education population, and educational background of administrators) which affect the manner in which LRE is practiced. This research supports Skrtic et al.'s (1985) data on factors affecting rural schools.

A national study designed to determine the number of districts using inclusive practices was reported by Lipsky (1995). Inclusive districts were identified by each of the 50 states' chief school officer. The Federal Regional Resource Centers also identified inclusion projects. The superintendent of each of the identified school districts was then contacted for further information concerning district inclusive practices. Questions asked during the interview focused on: (a) when the inclusion programs were initiated; (b) the process used to implement inclusive practices; (c) and the extent of inclusion activities in the district. The result was a series of reports from 891 districts following inclusive practices in all 50 states. Lipsky reported this to be an increase of 100% from the previous year. Oklahoma was described as having four districts which supported inclusive practices.

Katsiyannis, Conderman, and Franks (1995) also conducted a national study to determine state practices on inclusion. A survey was mailed to the state directors of special education in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The survey respondents were asked to describe the nature of state inclusive policies

and practices, the type and availability of inclusion training and technical assistance, pilot programs and compliance monitoring. They were also asked to include state developed materials on inclusion with their completed survey. Responses were received from 40 states. The study reported the percent of districts within each responding state which had implemented inclusive practices. Oklahoma reported that 10%, or 54 districts, had inclusive practices.

The Oklahoma data report for 1995-1996 school year (the latest available) indicated that resource rooms and regular classrooms are the preferred mode of providing special education services for 95% of the students with learning disabilities, and 99% of the students with speech and language disabilities (see Table 1). However, only 46% of students with emotional disabilities are educated in regular education and resource rooms, while 17% of the students with multiple disabilities are educated in regular classrooms or resource rooms.

This state specific data is reported here in order to provide a graphic representation of the placements reported on students with disabilities. Clearly the severity of disability and the degree to which emotional/behavior problems are apparent greatly impact LRE in Oklahoma. The survey developed for this study was designed to determine how special education administrators reported differential placements based on category of students, (2) look at the relationships between district demographics and placement options (particularly urban vrs. rural and large vrs. small and financial).

Table 1

Educational Placement of Oklahoma Children with Disabilities During 1995-96

Disability	%	RC	RR	SC	PSS	PRSS	PRF	PRRF	H/H
Mental Retardation	10	43	44	.008	.0014	.0009	0	.002	
Hearing Impaired	23.5	11.5	47	1.4	0	16	.1	0	
Speech/Lang. Imp	89	10.2	.3	.06	.18	.014	.01	.01	
Visually Impaired	44	15.6	15.3	6.4	0	16	0	0	
Emotional Disturb.	16	27	48	23	.58	.9	.46	3.4	
Orthopedic Impair	66.7	14	16.8	.8	0	0	0	1.07	
Othr Hlth Impair	51.9	28	15.8	.9	.39	0	0	28	
Learning Disabled	48.8	46.7	3.9	1.6	.12	.07	.01	.02	
Deaf-Blindness	.04	.178	.39	.14	0	1.42	0	1.07	
Multiple Disabil	5.83	12	64.3	9.1	.14	2.95	1.5	4	
Autism	14	21.4	60.4	1.9	0	0	.48	.97	
Traum. Brn. Inj.	33.6	36	.24	1.6	0	0	1.6	3.2	
Total	48	37	14	.637	.16	.50	.07	4.3	

Note: RC = regular class; RR = resource room; SC = separate class; PSS = public separate school facility; PRSS = private separate school facility; PRF = public residential facility; PRRF = private residential facility; H/H = homebound/hospital placement.

### Demographics

The importance of special education administrators in the choice of service provision model was questioned by Hasazi et al (1994). They did not gather data on this. Little research addressing the perspectives of special education administrators is available (Gillung, Spears, Campbell, & Rucker, 1992). One study indicated that administrators' gender may impact delivery (Mulkerne & Mulkerne, 1984). The study examined the leadership styles of 28 special education administrators, 14 men and 14 women in Florida. Findings from this study indicated that women were perceived as being less powerful than men. The directors, their superintendents (all male), and a man, and a woman subordinate were surveyed. A major finding of the study was that the women were perceived to show less leadership ability than men. The study was limited by the small number of participants.

### Summary

Special educators have been debating the most appropriate place to provide special education services for many years (Johnson, 1962; Hilton & Smith, 1994; Winzer, 1994). Litigation and varying interpretations of appropriate education may have resulted in differentiated practice. The extent of practice of any particular model is not well documented, although, three models of practice: (a) Continuum of Services, (b) Inclusion and (c) Unified (Burrello, Lashley, & Van Dyke, 1996; Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992) have been identified from the alternatives advanced by scholars. Empirical studies of these models are limited. This current study was designed to examine the extent to which the

models were valid and reliably being implemented within a single state. The specific research questions were: 1) What is the perception of Oklahoma special education administrators of the context of special education practiced within their districts; and 2) what are the relationships between personal and district demographics of responding special education administrators and the most dominant mode of special education practiced.

### Chapter III

#### Methodology

Despite the fact that other, more sophisticated methods of analysis have been developed within recent years, the descriptive survey still remains the most commonly used research method in education (Harris, 1985; Tatsuoka & Silver, 1988). The purpose for using descriptive survey methodology is to describe and characterize the situation that exists in the target population (Tatsuoka & Silver, 1988). Although, surveys cannot give precise measurement of a phenomenon, nor is survey research an exact science, the survey provides a means of aggregating collected information, and illuminating variations in behavior and attitude. In addition, they provide a context for informed judgment and decisions (Hoinville & Jowell, 1977).

The survey method was chosen as appropriate for this study because the purpose of this study was to describe and characterize the practice of special education in Oklahoma as it is related to LRE. The survey was an efficient method of gathering necessary information from a large number of sources.

The framework for the survey was based on three models of special education which are predicated upon the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) principle. The three models are: (a) Continuum of Services, (b) Inclusion, also referred to as no physical separation between students with and without disabilities, and (c) The Unified Model of Public Education. The models are well identified in the literature (Burrello, Van Dyke, & Lashley, 1996; Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991; Wright, Lashley, & Scholl, 1993). However, despite the fact that these models have dominated the discourse of

special education for more than 10 years, there is little empirical research to support their development. The models were developed through focus groups, site visits, and interviews (though not in enough detail to constitute a case study) (personal communication, McLaughlin, July 26, 1997); case study (Lashley, 1993); philosophy, research review, the socio-political realities of funding a dual system of public education, the work of parent/advocacy organizations; and, anecdotal reports (Gartner & Lipsky, 1989; Sailor, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1984 ).

While the models are not the result of direct research, the scholars who participated in their development have contributed extensively to the field. Their research, concept development, and advocacy have had a significant impact upon the direction of special education discourse and practice. Their deep knowledge of the field of special education was developed through years of research, experience, and literature review. The models, then, are well designed exemplars of special education as currently implemented post PL 94-142.

The discourse of special education, particularly since 1986, has been fluent and fervent as differing views of an appropriate education were presented (Hilton & Smith, 1995; Kaufman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1988; Lipsky & Gartner, 1987; Skrtic, 1991; Will, 1986). Still, the effect of these concept advancements and examples of practice among numerous school districts of America is generally unknown (Katsiyannis, Conderman, & Franks, 1995). A review of literature indicated that while some research has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of services provided in various locales (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Fuchs et al, 1995; Helmstetter, Peck & Giangreco, 1994), little research has been conducted to determine the extent to which any one model of special education is



valid and reliably being implemented. Lipsky (1995) conducted a national study which detailed the number of schools using inclusive practices. No national studies of the other models were found in an extensive literature review, although, a case study examined the Continuum of Services Model in two unidentified school districts (Lashley, 1993). In addition, Burrello (personnel communication, August, 22, 1997) stated that studies of the Unified Model using data gathered in New Mexico will be published during 1998. The limited information available on this subject indicated an area open for investigation. Therefore, this study was chosen to add to the research concerning the use of these three models. A survey format was selected as the most efficient manner in which to reach the entire state.

#### Development of the Instrument

The first section of the survey instrument, a Survey of Oklahoma Special Education Administrators, concerned the respondents' demographics, (see Appendix H) for example: (a) education, experience, experience in their current assignment, certification, most current formal class work and gender; and (b) the district demographics including geographic size, urban-rural location, child count, relative wealth, number of students in each of seven different special education categories, transfers and cooperative use. The purpose of the demographics was to determine factors which may account or interact with differences in participant responses to the survey (Alreck & Settle, 1995).

The demographic items used in this study were selected for three reasons: 1) They provide a profile of the respondents; 2) The data can be compared to indicate if a possible relationship exists between the demographic and survey responses (Alreck & Settle, 1995); and 3) The literature review indicated that

some demographic variables (i.e. rural vs. urban, administrator educational background) impact the practice of LRE ( Hasazi et al., 1994; Lashley, 1993; Skrtic et al., 1985).

Section II of the survey consisted of 30 statements exemplifying one of the three discrete models of service delivery in special education practice. Ten statements were designed to assess fidelity to practice i.e., the questions asked explicitly that the respondent make a forced choice in order to better allay their current district practices to one of the three models in the conceptual framework of the study. Each statement was mutually exclusive and covered a facet of the model which would be likely to occur in only one of the models. The statements or items were developed from a literature review (Burrello, Lashley, & Van Dyke, 1996; Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991), consultation with a doctoral committee, and review of the items in a pilot study conducted with the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services (ODSS). Each item described the key components of practice identified with one of the three models (see Table 2). A likert-like scale was used for this section of the survey. The range for each statement was from “clearly like my district” (4) to “clearly unlike my district” (1).

Section III began with a brief paragraph describing each of the models. The respondent was subsequently asked to determine which description most closely resembled his/her district. Section IV requested permission to interview the respondent and their name and telephone number.

Table 2

Rationale of Model And Corresponding Statement

Model	Rationale	Statement
Continuum of Services	Some students with disabilities required an intense service or program that cannot be provided within a regular comprehensive class or school setting (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Some students require long term placement in a special classroom, separate school, or other specialized setting.
	Meeting the needs of students with disabilities required a high degree of specialized knowledge in curriculum and instruction of each separate category of disability (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Meeting the needs of students with disabilities requires teachers with knowledge in special education curriculum and instruction.

(table continues)

Table 2. (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Continuum of Services	The strength of the system rests with its strong identity and single focus in students with disabilities (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Special educators and general educators have separate professional development activities.
	Great importance was placed on special education eligibility requirements and procedures which emphasized categorical programs (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Assessments are used to determine the educational setting of students with disabilities.
	Outcomes for students with disabilities should reflect the individual needs of each student with disabilities (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Some students with disabilities may require a separate set of standards.

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Continuum of Services	The content of educational programs designed for students with disabilities qualitatively differs from that of students in other programs therefore different indicators are required (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Separate performance indicators are used to assure school accountability for students with disabilities.
	Different outcomes are established for some students with disabilities (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Some students with disabilities require knowledge or experiences which can best be provided through differentiated curriculum.

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Continuum of Services	A specialized cadre of personnel supervised by a highly focused administration (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	Special education decision making requires specialized knowledge and a degree of uniformity best achieved through centralized authority. The need for accountability regarding the rights of students with disabilities requires expertise.
Inclusion	All students attended the school to which they would go if they had no disability (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991).	All students are educated in their neighborhood school in age- appropriate regular education classrooms and community sites shared by all students.

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Inclusion	<p>Socialization among all peers is as important as specific skill attainment (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin &amp; Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991).</p> <p>Special education supports were provided within the context of the regular education class and other integrated environments (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin &amp; Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991)</p>	<p>Socialization among all peers is as important as specific skill attainment.</p> <p>Specialized service and support are provided within regular education classes and other integrated environments.</p>

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Inclusion	A zero-rejection philosophy existed so that typically no student would be excluded on the basis of type or extent of disability (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991).	No student is denied placement at the neighborhood school site unless the student is a danger to self or others.
	A basic assumption that all students can learn is part of the philosophy (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992).	It is assumed that all students can learn.
	A natural proportion (i.e., representative of the school district at large) of students with disabilities occurs at any school site (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991)	A natural proportion (i.e., representative of the school district at large) of students with disabilities occurs at any school site.

(table continues)



Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
	Cooperative learning and peer instructions were preferred teaching methods, (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991).	Students are encouraged to collaborate on learning activities.
	Special education services within the regular classroom are used to benefit a wider range of students while directly focusing on identified students (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991).	Special education services within the regular classroom are used to benefit a wider range of students while directly focusing on identified students.
	No self-contained special education classrooms are operative at the site (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991)	In order to limit self contained classrooms we provide special education services in the general education classroom.

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Inclusion	Special education eligibility is driven by individual student need rather than categories (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991).	Eligibility for special education is driven by individual student need rather than categories.
Unified	A key principle is that each student is a unique combination of abilities and educational needs and may require individual assistance at varying times during the school years (Burrello, Lashley, & Van Dyke, 1996).	Generally all students are educated in their neighborhood schools. However, some specialized placements can be made available on a limited time basis to any student who may need intensive services.

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Unified	Accountability for all students is vested in their neighborhood school, and there is one set of valued outcomes for all students (McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Wright, Lashley, & Scholl, 1993).	All students are entitled and expected to reach one set of educational goals.
	Multiple ways to assess each of the outcomes are used in order to include students with various learning levels and styles (Burrello, Lashley, & Van Dyke, 1996; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Wright, Lashley, & Scholl, 1993).	Multiple performance measures of the educational goals are valued and accepted by all educators as well as the community.

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Unified	<p>Outcomes are valued and accepted as legitimate by all educators as well as the community ( Burrello, Lashley, &amp; Van Dyke, 1996; McLaughlin &amp; Warren, 1992; Wright, Lashley, &amp; Scholl, 1993).</p> <p>Individual schools are responsible for the education of all students (Burrello, Lashley, &amp; Van Dyke, 1996; McLaughlin &amp; Warren, 1992; Wright, Lashley, &amp; Scholl, 1993)</p>	<p>The educational goals are valued and accepted by all educators as well as the community.</p> <p>School level leaders must be responsible for the education of all students.</p>

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Unified	<p>Unified System is characterized by collaborative teams who plan together for instruction in multiple settings and measure performance on the basis of agreed upon criteria and student goals (Burrello, Lashley, &amp; Van Dyke, 1996).</p> <p>The individual site staff are in the best position to determine curriculum and instruction for all students. This is consistent with site based management (Burrello, Lashley, &amp; Van Dyke, 1996; McLaughlin &amp; Warren, 1992).</p>	<p>Collaborative teams plan together for instruction in multiple settings and measure performance on the basis of agreed upon criteria and student goals.</p> <p>The individual site staff are in the best position to determine curriculum and instruction for all students.</p>

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Model	Rationale	Statement
Unified	<p>Individual sites have the authority for budget, personnel, and program decisions for all students with disabilities.</p> <p>Collaboration is enhanced as regular and special teachers determine their staff development needs (McLaughlin &amp; Warren, 1992; Wright, Lashley, &amp; Scholl, 1993).</p>	<p>Both general and special education staff attend the same professional activities.</p>

### Pilot

A pilot survey was conducted prior to the main study. The pilot study provided feedback on item clarity and procedural as well as content recommendations for finalizing the instruments and methods for statewide utilization. It also permitted a thorough check of the statistical and analytical procedures (Borg & Gall, 1987). Finally, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was applied to measure internal consistency of the instrument (see Table 3). Correction of the instrument was made following the analysis to increase reliability.

Table 3

### Instrument Reliability

Model	Alpha
Continuum of Services	.7883
Inclusive	.6923*
Unified	.7069

Note: \* = One item on the instrument was changed to reach this level. Initial alpha was .3465.

The sample population consisted of the executive committee of a state special education administrators organization, the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services (ODSS). The ODSS committee was chosen because they were in a leadership position within the state. They are experienced special educators, representative of the state's special education administrators, the intended

recipients of the main survey. Eight of ten administrators returned completed surveys.

In addition to completing surveys, the participants responded to queries on the effectiveness of the instrument in covering the model of special education practiced in their districts, as well as the readability and ease of use. Suggestions for improvement of the instrument were solicited. Items were clarified and edited.

### Main Study

#### Data Collection

Survey packets were sent to the 542 districts within the state of Oklahoma whose special education administrator had not participated in the pilot study. The packet consisted of the survey, a letter of explanation, a consent letter, a stamped self-addressed envelope, and a pen with the researcher's name, address, and telephone number, as well as, the slogan "Special Education Administrators make the difference".

In a variety of cases, it was difficult to ascertain who served as special education administrators within a district. Therefore two methods were used in addressing the survey. One hundred sixty three surveys were addressed to special education administrators who were identified in one of three lists; The State School Directory, 1997 (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1996) The University Affiliated Programs list of special education administrators, or the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services Directory, 1997. Surveys were sent to 379 superintendents for those districts which did not have a special education administrator listed in one of the directories. These districts did not participate in the earlier pilot study. A follow up post card was sent to nonrespondents two



weeks after the initial survey mailing. A second mailing of the survey packet to the nonrespondents was made two weeks after the post card was sent.

Responses were received from 264 districts for a response rate of 48.7%. Of the respondents, one filled out the demographic portion of the questionnaire but did not respond to the statements concerning the models. The administrator stated there was a single student with disabilities in the district who was transferred to another district, therefore, the survey statements were not applicable.

#### Data Analysis of Returned Surveys

The survey data were analyzed through frequency counts, distributions and descriptive statistics (Tatsuoka & Silver, 1989). Responses were reported in frequency distributions of raw numbers and percentages, means and standard deviations. In addition, correlational analyses using comparative statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted.

The research question "What is the perception of Oklahoma special education administrators of the context of special education practiced in their districts?" was analyzed through the addition of the responses to the statements associated with each context. A model was considered supported if a score of 34 (80%) out of a possible 40 points was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were determined for comparison purposes. A ranking of items within each model which respondents said were most like or least like their district was also reported.

To respond to the second question "What are the relationships between personal and district demographics of responding special education administrators and the most dominant model of special education practiced?" Comparative

statistics and analyses were used to determine if differences existed in the model choice that were influenced by personal or district attributes.

An index of demographics of administrators whose districts pursued each model was developed. The models were treated as units. The analysis was aimed at retaining the unitary nature and emphasizing the relationship between the model and administrator or district (Moser & Kalton, 1972).

### Interviews

In addition to the survey, 14 respondents were interviewed by telephone concerning their responses to the questionnaire. The interview sample was chosen by the following method. Each school district was assigned a unique number from one to 542. The numbers were assigned alphabetically by county. The responses were arranged numerically as they were received. Surveys were randomly selected from the returned set (Borg & Gall, 1987). The resulting sample roughly matched state demographics (see Table 4). Interviewees were drawn from all geographic regions of the state.

Table 4

### Interview Sample

Demographic	State %	Sample %
Population Less than 500	60	60
Low Socio-Economic	53	57

The interview was begun with an initial comment on the results of the returned survey. Questions were then posed in no particular order depending on the interviewee's response to the initial comment (see Table 5). Handwritten notes were made during the interview. The notes were transcribed and coded by pattern (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Analytic files were developed during the course of the interviews. Files were organized by position (superintendent, other administrative position in addition to special education, teacher administrator, and special education administrator) and place (district size and geographic location).

The fourteen follow-up interviews were transcribed and a coding scheme was developed around the topics which emerged during analysis. The responses were then color coded for ease of use, by topic and district size (i.e., large districts were light hues, medium districts were medium hues, and small schools were dark hues of the same color. For example, comments about teachers were hues of yellow.)

### Summary

A survey instrument, A Survey of Oklahoma Administrators of Special Education was developed to investigate the models of special education practiced in Oklahoma and the relationship of administrator and district demographics to the model of special education practiced. The surveys were mailed to 542 districts (the entire state). Analysis of the data were conducted through: (a) fidelity (80% or above agreement) with the model followed; (b) descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, standard deviation, and frequency of item choice; (c) item ranking between and among models; (d) comparative correlational statistics and

analysis of variance between models and demographics; and (e) an aggregation of the demographics of the districts and administrators who responded to the survey.

Table 5

Interview Questions

Subject	Question
Students in regular education	How is support provided for students in regular education classrooms?
	How have teachers responded to students with disabilities in regular education?
	Have you found that your students with disabilities require a continuum of services?
	Are all students with disabilities included in some regular education?
Transfers or Cooperatives	You indicated you (transferred students with disabilities, or were a member of a special education cooperative). How has this helped you provide special education?

(table continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Subject	Question
Teachers	<p>How much experience do your special education teachers have?</p> <p>What have you found to be their knowledge of providing services in regular education?</p> <p>Have you seen collaboration between regular and special teachers in the provision of educational services?</p>
Site Based Management	<p>Are sites choosing differing ways of providing special education services?</p>

## Chapter IV

### Results

This study was designed to answer two questions: 1) What is the perception of Oklahoma special education administrators of the context of special education practiced within their districts; and 2) what are the relationships between personal and district demographics of responding special education administrators and the most dominant model of special education practiced? A survey was used to obtain initial data concerning these questions. Follow-up telephone interviews of randomly selected respondents were then conducted.

#### Demographics

The majority of administrators who responded to the survey were women (54.5%) (see Table 6). The administrators were divided across all four categories of years of experience as a special education administrator with none having the majority. A slight majority (51.4%) of respondents had 0-5 years experience in their current position.

Many of the respondents (58%) reported their title was as a special education administrator, although, one third (33.3%) of the administrators reported they were superintendents. The superintendents indicated they served their district in several capacities including fulfilling the obligations of a special education administrator. Many of the administrators held special education teacher certification. Twenty three and six tenths % (23.6%) had only special education certification, an additional 28.3% had both special education and general education certification for a total of 51.9% with special education certification. A slightly larger number (62.2%) reported administrative certification.

The majority (78.5%) of the administrators reported that they were not full time special education administrators (see Table 6). In fact, 63% indicated they spent less than 25% of their time as special education administrators. However, a significant number did not indicate their primary job. Most of the administrators (89.3%) had education attainment of a masters degree or greater. In addition, many (47.2%) reported their last year of formal education had been within the last four years.

The districts (see Table 7) whose administrators responded to the survey were typically independent (i.e., they had a high school) (83.7%). The geographic size of the districts varied widely, however, 25.2% ranged from 21 to 50 square miles while 35.1 percent covered 51 to 150 square miles. The districts reported that 61.4% received local tax support chiefly from agriculture. The majority of districts (53.3%) were members of special education cooperatives. The use of transfers to other districts in order to provide special education services were reported by 42.3% of the districts.

Ninety percent of the districts reported at least one child as having the disabilities of mental retardation, emotional disturbance, autism, multiple disability/deaf blindness, or traumatic brain injury (n = 196). Forty-seven percent of the respondents had 50 or less students with disabilities in their district (see Table 8).

Table 6

Administrator Demographics

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	117	45.2
	Female	142	54.8
No. of yrs. as Spec. Ed. Admin.	0-5 yrs.	81	31.4
	6-10 yrs.	69	26.7
	10-15 yrs.	51	19.8
	16-Above	57	22.1
Experience in current assign.	0-5 yrs.	132	51.4
	6-10 yrs.	68	26.5
	10-15 yrs	27	10.5
	16 Above	30	11.7
Title	Spec. Ed. Ad	148	58
	Supt.	85	33.3
	Principal	10	3.9
	Other	12	4.7

(table continues)



Table 6 (continued)

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Certification	Spec. Ed.	60	23.6
	General Ed.	120	47.2
	Both	72	28.3
	Unknown	2	.8
Administrative Certification	Yes	161	62.2
	No	98	37.8
Full Time Equivalent	Below .25	150	63.3
	.25-.49	17	7.2
	.50-.75	22	9.3
	1.0	48	20.3
Highest Degree	BA	28	10.8
	MA	212	81.9
	Doctoral	14	5.4
	Other	5	1.9

(table continues)

Table 6 (continued)

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Last Formal Classwork	93-97	119	47.2
	88-92	62	24.6
	83-87	36	14.3
	Before 83	35	13.9

Table 7

District Demographics

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
District Classification	Independent	216	83.7
	Dependent	42	16.3
Physical Size of District	1-20 Sq. Mi.	33	13.6
	21-50	61	25.2
	51-150	85	35.1
	Above 150	63	26

(table continues)

Table 7 (continued)

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Income Generated From	Agriculture	151	61.4
	Industry	16	6.5
	Residential	74	30.1
	Commercial	5	2
Number of students transferred in order to receive Special Education Services	0	146	57.7
	1-5	95	37.5
	6-10	6	2.4
	Over 10	6	2.4
Is your district a member of a Special Education Cooperative?	Yes	138	53.3
	No	120	46.3
Is the Cooperative housed in your district?	Yes	26	10
	No	103	39.8
	Partially	11	4.2

Table 8

Students with Disabilities Demographics

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Special Education Child Count	0-50	117	47
	51-499	113	45.4
	500-999	10	4.
	Above 1000	9	3.6
Number of Students with LD	0	9	3.9
	Below 25	91	39.4
	26-99	94	40.7
	100-999	33	14.3
	More than 999	4	1.7
Number of Students with MR	0	43	18.7
	1-25	150	65.2
	26-199	33	14.3
	200-499	2	.9
	Above 500	2	.9

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Number of Students with TBI	0	174	75
	1	40	17.2
	2-5	15	6.5
	6-10	3	1.3
	Above 10	0	0
Number of Students with SED	0	112	48.3
	1-10	92	39.7
	11-25	13	5.6
	26-99	11	4.7
	Above 99	4	1.7
Number of Students with MH/DB	0	123	53.
	1-2	46	19.8
	3-5	28	12.1
	6-50	33	14.2
	Above 50	2	.9

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

Demographic Item	Choice	Frequency	%
Number of Students with Autism	0	177	76
	1	30	12.9
	2-3	16	6.9
	4-20	8	3.4
	Above 20	2	.9
Students with Sensory Impairments	0	175	77.1
	1	21	9.3
	2-5	21	9.3
	6-10	2	.9
	Above 10	8	3.5

### Statistical Analysis of Demographics

To address question number 2, “What are the relationships between personal and district demographics of responding special education administrators and the most dominant mode of special education practiced,” statistical analysis were made. A correlation analysis between specific demographics (see Table 9) indicated a significant relationship between experience as a special education administrator and the administrators’ experience in the current assignment (/R/ =

.63). Several other correlations were also found. There was a significant correlation between the child count and the administrators Full Time Equivalent (FTE) as a special education administrator ( $r = .48$ ); between the FTE of the special education administrator and the district special education child count ( $r = .50$ ); and between the child count and number of students with Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) ( $r = .65$ ). Although, not strong enough to be considered significant two other correlations were found. A positive correlation was found between the number of transfers and the special education child count ( $r = .30$ ) and the number of transfers and students with SED ( $r = .29$ ).

One way analysis of variance were conducted between the mean score achieved for each model and 6 demographics that could be coded numerically. Due to the small variance between mean scores for the three models no significant group differences were detected.

Table 9

Correlation Analysis of Demographics

Variable 1	Variable 2	/R/	Obs.
Experience as Special Education Administrator	Experience in Current Position	.639	257
Full Time Equivalent	Child Count	.48	228
Child Count	No. of Students with SED	.65	232
Full Time Equivalent	No. of Students with SED	.50	214
Child Count	No. of Transfers	.30	244
No. of Students with SED	No. of Transfers	.29	230

Note: /R/ = Pearson's Correlation Coefficient; Obs = numbers of observations



## Survey Results

The survey was constructed with a Likert like scale ranging from one to four with one as clearly unlike and four as clearly like the special education practiced in their district. Only four points were used in order to prevent neutral responses (Moser & Kalton, 1972). Both descriptive and comparative analyses were used to analyze the results of the survey. The mean and standard deviation were found for responses within each model (see Table 10). In addition, the statements comprising the models were ranked within each model and between models. Inferential statistical analysis was used to determine possible effects of demographics on perceived similarity to the survey statements.

### Inclusion Model

There was only minimal difference in the perceived service model the districts practiced (see Table 10). The inclusion model was the only model which was followed at 80% fidelity to model. Fidelity to model was determined by the frequency with which administrators chose the ten statements which defined each model at the clearly like (4) level (Moser & Kalton, 1974).

Indeed, one of the statements in the Inclusion Model received the highest ranking of the thirty statements. The item perceived as most like the districts was the statement that ‘all students can learn’ (Item 15;  $M = 3.89$ ;  $SD = .36$ ). This philosophy was considered clearly “like my district” by 90.8 per cent of the administrators. No respondent considered this as “clearly unlike” my district.

Table 10

The Models of Special Education Perceived to be Practiced by Oklahoma Districts

Model	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum M	Maximum M
Continuum of Services	31.43	3.76	17.00	39.00
Inclusive	34.12*	3.94	22.00	40.00
Unified	31.66	4.30	19.00	40.00

\*Note: A score in the range of 34 - 40 indicates fidelity to model.

The second ranked statement, no student is denied placement at the neighborhood school site unless they pose a danger to self or others (Item 14), was perceived as clearly like their school by 74.9 % of the administrators (See Appendix F for frequencies). However, only 45% of the respondents reported that all students in their districts were educated in their neighborhood schools in age appropriate, regular classrooms and community sites shared by all students (Item 11; M = 3.16; SD = .96) (see Table 11).

There was also high agreement with other Inclusion Model statements (i.e., 'socialization is as important as academics' [Item 12; M = 3.58; SD = .60; % = 63.2]; and 'eligibility is driven by student need not category' [Item 20; M = 3.58; SD = .68; % = 66.9]). In addition, one half of the administrators considered their districts to have provided special education services in the general education classroom (Item 13; M = 3.38; SD = .76; % = 50.2). However, only one third thought this was done to limit self-contained classes (Item 18; M = 2.97; SD = .92;

% = 33.3) or that such services were used to benefit a wider range of students (M = 3.07; SD = .81; % = 31.8).

Table 11

Intramodel Ranking of Items: Inclusion

Rank	No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
1	15	All students can learn	3.89	.36	90.8
2	14	No student is denied placement at neighborhood school unless a danger to self or others	3.61	.76	74.9
3	12	Socialization among all peers is as important as specific skill attainment	3.58	.60	63.2
4	20	Eligibility is driven by student need not category	3.58	.68	66.9
5	16	Natural proportion of students with disabilities occurs at any school site	3.46	.72	57.4
6	17	Students are encouraged to collaborate on learning activities	3.46	.66	54.

(table continues)

Table 11 (continued)

Rank	No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
7	13	Specialized services and support are provided within regular education classes and other integrated environments	3.38	.96	50.2
8	11	All students are educated in their neighborhood school in age-appropriate regular classrooms and community sites shared by all students	3.16	.76	45.6
9	18	Special education services within the regular education classroom are used to benefit a wider range of students while directly focusing on identified students with disabilities	3.07	.81	31.8
10	19	In order to limit self contained classrooms we provide special education services in the general education classroom	2.97	.92	33.3

Note: % = percent of administrators who perceived their district as being clearly like the statement or 4.

### Continuum of Services

Responses to the Continuum of Services or traditional special education model indicated that administrators perceived their districts as following these practices to a lesser extent than they followed either inclusive practices or unified practices (see Table 10). The least supported of any item on the survey was the continuum of services practice of general and special educators attending separate professional development activities (Item 3;  $M = 2.12$ ;  $SD = .96$ ;  $\% = 6.2$ ) (see Table 12). Two other items in the Continuum of Services Model were also considered dissimilar to the manner in which special education was practiced in the districts whose administrators responded to the survey. The items considered not descriptive of most districts were: ‘Some students require separate long term placement in a special classroom, separate school or other specialized setting’ (Item 1;  $M = 2.67$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ;  $\% = 31.5$ ) and ‘special education decision making requires specialized knowledge and a degree of uniformity best achieved through centralized authority’ (Item 9;  $M = 2.76$ ;  $SD = .93$ ;  $\% = 22.6$ ). The statements which define the segregation of the Continuum of Services Model were considered clearly like their district by a third or less of the administrators (see Table 12). This rejection of segregation is consistent with the profile reported in the responses to the Inclusion Model statements.

While the administrators perceived their districts as rejecting specialized knowledge and uniformity through centralized authority, they indicated the need for teachers with expertise in special education curriculum and instruction (Item 2;  $M = 3.72$ ;  $SD = .56$ ;  $\% = 77.3$ ), as well as the need for accountability requiring expertise, albeit, to a lesser extent (Item 10;  $M = 3.49$ ;  $SD = .66$ ;  $\% = 57.5$ ).

Table 12

Intramodel Ranking of Items: Continuum of Services

Rank	No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
1	2	Requirement for teachers with knowledge in special education curriculum and instruction	3.72	.56	77.3
2	4	Assessments are used to determine the educational setting	3.61	.70	70.4
3	5	Focus is on providing individualized instruction including vocational competence	3.57	.63	63.1
4	10	Need for accountability regarding the rights to education of students with disabilities requires expertise	3.49	.66	57.5
5	8	Some students require knowledge or experiences which can best be provided through differentiated curricula	3.33	.71	44.2
6	7	Separate performance indicators are used to assure school accountability	3.13	.83	35.2

(table continues)

Table 12 (continued)

Rank	No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
7	6	Some students with disabilities may require a separate set of standards	3.04	.95	35.9
8	9	Special education decision making requires specialized knowledge and a degree of uniformity best achieved through centralized authority	2.76	.93	22.6
9	1	Some students require long term placement in a special classroom, separate school or other specialized placement	2.67	1.14	31.5
10	3	Special educators and general educators have separate professional development activities	2.12	.96	6.2

Note: % = percent of administrators who perceived their district as being clearly like the statement.

### Unified Model

Although there was little difference between the models, the Unified Model ( $M = 31.66$ ;  $SD = 4.30$ ) was perceived by administrators as similar to their districts to a lesser degree than the Inclusion Model ( $M = 34.12$ ;  $SD = 3.94$ ) but greater than the Continuum of Services Model ( $M = 31.43$ ;  $SD = 3.76$ ). The Unified Model statements indicated that a moderate number of administrators perceived their districts make school level leaders responsible for all students (Item 25;  $M = 3.60$ ;  $SD = .61$  % = 65.1) and used multiple measures to evaluate the learning of all students (Item 23;  $M = 3.44$ ;  $SD = .67$ ; % = 53.1). Most students were perceived to attend their neighborhood school (Item 21;  $M = 3.43$ ;  $SD = .81$  % = 59.4) (see Table 13). Statements involving site-based management (Item 29;  $M = 2.57$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ; % = 27.5), and collaborative teacher teams (Item 27;  $M = 2.74$ ;  $SD = .86$ ; % = 17.6) were not perceived as being like most districts. Modest support was perceived for the statement that educational goals are valued and supported by all educators and the community (Item 24;  $M = 3.35$ ;  $SD = .62$ ; % = 42.1). However, the statement, all students are entitled and expected to reach one set of educational goals (Item 22;  $M = 2.63$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ; % = 28.1) was not perceived as being similar to practices in their districts.



Table 13

Intramodel Ranking of Items: Unified

Rank	No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
1	25	School level leaders must be responsible for the education of all students	3.60	.61	65.1
2	23	Multiple performance measures of the educational goals are used to evaluate the learning of all students	3.44	.67	53.1
3	21	Generally all students educated in neighborhood schools. Some specialized placements made on short term basis	3.43	.81	59.4
4	30	Both general and special education staff attend the same professional activities	3.37	.69	46.6
5	28	Individual site staff are in best position to determine curriculum and instruction for all students	3.37	.71	48.5
6	24	Educational goals are valued and accepted by all educators as well as the community	3.35	.62	42.1

(table continues)

Table 13 (continued)

Rank	No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
7	26	Collaborative teams plan together for instruction in multiple settings and measure performance based on agreed upon criteria and student goals	3.20	.84	40.8
8	27	Collaborative teams reflect about their practice and have the time and support necessary to solve their own problems	2.74	.86	17.6
9	22	All students are entitled and expected to reach one set of educational goals	2.63	1.14	28.1
10	29	Individual sites have the authority for budget, personnel, and program decisions for all students	2.57	1.11	27.5

Note: % = percent of administrators who perceived the statement as clearly like  
their district

### Comparison of Models

There was little difference in the overall ratings between the models. Ranking by mean scores of the statements indicated a merged model existed. The statement which was perceived as most practiced by Oklahoma districts was the philosophical statement 'all students can learn' as the highest ranked item (Item 15;  $M = 3.89$ ;  $SD = .36$ ;  $\% = 90.8$ ), (Inclusion Model). No other statement was perceived as so strongly representative of their district practices by the administrators. However, several statements were perceived by the majority of the administrators as clearly like their district. They are: (a) 'meeting the needs of students with disabilities requires teachers with knowledge in special education curriculum and instruction' (Item 2;  $M = 3.72$ ;  $SD = .56$ ;  $\% = 77.3$ ), (Continuum of Services); (b) 'No student is denied placement at neighborhood school unless a danger to self or others' (Item 14;  $M = 3.61$ ;  $SD = .76$ ;  $\% = 74.9$ ), (Inclusion); (c) 'assessments are used to determine the educational setting' (Item 4;  $M = 3.61$ ;  $SD = .70$ ;  $\% = 70.4$ ), (Continuum of Services); (d) 'school level leaders must be responsible for the education of all students' (Item 25;  $M = 3.60$ ;  $SD = .60$ ;  $\% = 65.1$ ), (Unified); (e) 'socialization among all peers is as important as specific skill attainment' (Item 12;  $M = 3.58$ ;  $SD = .60$ ;  $\% = 63.2$ ), (Inclusion); (f) 'eligibility is driven by student need not category' (Item 20;  $M = 3.58$ ;  $SD = .68$ ;  $\% = 66.9$ ), (Unified); (g) 'the focus is on providing individualized instruction including vocational competence' (Item 5;  $M = 3.57$ ;  $SD = .63$ ;  $\% = 63.1$ ), (Continuum of Services); (h) 'the need for accountability regarding the rights to education of students with disabilities requires expertise' (Item 10;  $M = 3.49$ ;  $SD = .66$ ;  $\% = 57.5$ ), (Continuum of Services); (i) 'natural proportion of students with

disabilities occurs at any school site' ( Item 16;  $M = 3.46$ ;  $SD = .72$ ;  $\% = 57.4\%$ ), (Inclusion), (see table 14).

The item ranked 11, 'students are encouraged to collaborate on learning activities' (Item 17;  $M = 3.46$ ;  $SD = .66$ ;  $\% = 54$ ) (Inclusion), had a mean and standard deviation similar to 10. The item ranked 12, 'multiple measures of the educational goals are used to evaluate the learning of all students' (Item 23;  $M = 3.44$ ;  $SD = .67$ ;  $\% = 53.1$ ) (Unified Model), is also a proactive step taken to accommodate students with disabilities.

Two items in the Inclusion Model requirements received moderate support: They are: (a) 'appropriate regular classrooms and community sites are shared by all students' ( Item 11  $M= 3.16$ ;  $SD = .96$ ;  $\% = 45.6$ ); (b) and 'in order to limit self contained classrooms we provide special education services in the general education classroom' (Item 19;  $M = 2.97$ ;  $SD = .92$ ;  $\% = 33.3$ ). These were ranked 20th and 24th respectively.

Further analysis of the remaining statements indicated that no particular model was closely followed. Lower ranked items were from all three models as the higher ranked had been. The items in the lowest five were support for collaborative teams (Item 27;  $M = 2.74$ ;  $SD = .86$ ;  $\% = 17.6$ ), (Unified Model); long term separate placement ( Item 1;  $M = 2.67$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ;  $\% = 31.5$ ), (Continuum of Services); a single set of educational goals for all students ( Item 22;  $M = 2.63$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ;  $\% = 28.1$ ), (Unified Model); site based management (Item 28;  $M = 2.57$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ;  $\% = 27.5$ ),(Unified Model); and separate professional development activities for general and special educators (Item 3;  $M = 2.12$ ;  $SD = .96$ ;  $\% = 6.2$ ), (Continuum of Services).

The following pattern emerged from the analyses. The administrators perceived their districts as supporting the position that all students can learn and multiple performance measures of the educational goals were used to evaluate the learning of all students. They also perceived the need for expertise in curriculum, and instruction, as well as to provide accountability, while school level leaders must be responsible for the education of all students. Although eligibility was driven by student need not category, assessments were used to determine the educational setting. Socialization among all peers was considered as important as specific skills attainment and students were encouraged to collaborate on learning activities. While specialized services and support were provided within regular education classes and other integrated classrooms, they were not used to provide benefits for a wider range of students.

Table 14

Intermodel Ranking

Rank	Model No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4	
1	I	15	All students can learn	3.89	.36	90.8
2	CS	2	requirement for teachers with knowledge in special education curriculum and instruction	3.72	.56	77.3
3	I	14	No student is denied placement at neighborhood school unless a danger to self or others	3.61	.76	74.9
4	CS	4	Assessments are used to determine the educational setting	3.61	.70	70.4
5	U	25	School level leaders must be responsible for the education of all students	3.60	.61	65.1
6	I	12	Socialization among all peers is as important as specific skill attainment	3.58	.60	63.2
7	I	20	Eligibility is driven by student need not category	3.58	.68	66.9

(table continues)

Table 14 (continued)

Rank	Model No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4	
8	CS	5	Focus is on providing individualized instruction including vocational competence	3.57	.63	63.1
9	CS	10	Need for accountability regarding the rights to education of students with disabilities requires expertise	3.49	.66	57.5
10	I	16	Natural proportion of students with disabilities occurs at any school site	3.46	.72	57.4
11	I	17	Students are encouraged to collaborate on learning activities	3.46	.66	54.
12	U	23	Multiple performance measures of the educational goals are used to evaluate the learning of all students	3.44	.67	53.1
13	U	21	Generally all students educated in neighborhood schools. Some specialized placements made on short term basis	3.43	.81	59.4

(table continues)

Table 14 (continued)

Rank	Model No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
14	I	13	Specialized services and support are provided within regular education classes and other integrated environments	3.38 .76	50.2
15	U	30	Both general and special education staff attend the same professional activities	3.37 .69	46.6
16	U	28	Individual site staff are in best position to determine curriculum and instruction for all students	3.37 .71	48.5
17	U	24	Educational goals are valued and accepted by all educators as well as the community	3.35 .62	42.1
18	CS	8	Some students require knowledge or experiences which can best be provided through differentiated curricula	3.33 .71	44.2

(table continues)



Table 14 (continued)

Rank	Model No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4	
19	U	26	Collaborative teams plan together for instruction in multiple settings and measure performance based on agreed upon criteria and student goals	3.20	.84	40.8
20	I	11	All students are educated in their neighborhood school in age-appropriate regular classrooms and community sites shared by all students	3.16	.96	45.6
21	CS	7	Separate performance indicators are used to assure school acceptability for students with disabilities	3.13	.83	35.2
22	I	18	Special education services within the regular education classroom are used to benefit a wider range of students while directly focusing on identified students with disabilities	3.07	.81	31.8
23	CS	6	Some students with disabilities may require a separate set of standards	3.04	.95	35.9

(table continues)

Table 14 (continued)

Rank	M	No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
24	I	19	In order to limit self contained classrooms we provide special education services in the general education classroom	2.97	.92	33.3
25	CS	9	Special education decision making requires specialized knowledge and a degree of uniformity best achieved through centralized authority	2.76	.93	22.6
26	U	27	Collaborative teams reflect about their practice and have the time and support necessary to solve their own problems	2.74	.86	17.6
27	CS	1	Some students require long term placement in a special classroom, separate school or other specialized placement	2.67	1.14	31.5
28	U	22	All students are entitled and expected to reach one set of educational goals	2.63	1.14	28.1

(table continues)

Table 14 (continued)

Rank	Model No.	Item	M	SD	% at 4
29	U	29 Individual sites have the authority for budget, personnel, and program decisions for all students	2.57	1.11	27.5
30	CS	3 Special educators and general educators have separate professional development activities	2.12	.96	6.2

Note. CS = Continuum of Services; I = Inclusion; U = Unified; % = percent of administrators who perceived their district as clearly like the statement.

### Inferential Statistical Analysis

In order to determine if model choice was related to the degree of disability of the students within the district, an analysis of variance was performed on the statement that special education services are provided in the general education classroom in order to limit self contained classrooms by; (1) if students with disabilities were transferred; (2) if the district was a member of a special education cooperative; and (3) if the cooperative was housed in the district. No significant differences were found in these analyses.

The responses were also separated into districts which had students with severe/profound disabilities enrolled and those which did not. Descriptive analyses (mean and standard deviation) were conducted for both categories. Little difference was found between the responses of the two groups or the study as a whole (see Tables 15 and 16), although, the administrators who reported no students with severe disabilities in their districts perceived their district as following both more inclusive and unified practices.

Table 15

#### Choice of Model for Districts with no Students with Severe Disabilities

Model	N	M	SD	Min. M	Max M
Cntrsv	29	29.6	4.7	17	38
Inclus	29	35.1	2.7	30	40
Unify	29	33.5	4.0	24	40

Table 16

Choice of Model for Districts with Students with Severe Disabilities

Model	N	M	SD	Min M	Max M
Cntrsv	196	31.6	3.5	21	39
Incl.	196	33.9	4.06	22	40
Unify	196	31.4	4.3	19	40

Interviews

An attempt to gain further insight into the nature of special education practiced in Oklahoma was made through interviewing a small number (14) of randomly selected survey respondents. The 14 administrators that were randomly selected, achieved representation of the districts' characteristics (see Chapter 3, Table 5 for the interview protocol). Results from the interviews indicated that the majority of students with mild disabilities spent most of their school day in general education settings and students with more severe disabilities were generally educated in separate classrooms (see Table 17). Administrators responded to the interviewer's question concerning how students with disabilities were provided special education services. While districts were reported to vary in the manner in which services were provided to students with learning disabilities all administrators consistently reported students with more severe disabilities were educated in segregated settings (see Table 17). The following are comments from the interviews regarding placement:

“The MR and Severe are not in regular class. But the LD population are in regular classes. If we had more money we would put MR in a class by themselves. Currently they are in class (resource room) with LD. I would like to divide them into distinct categories.”

“If you really believe all students can learn, their place is in the regular classroom. Most of our students are in the regular classroom. But we send the students with SED or in a wheelchair to the coop. That’s where the experts are.”

“We have speech and LD at every site. But we only have EMH and MH at one site. EMH is at one school and MH at another. We tried to place a multi in the regular class. But the teacher fussed so much it didn’t work, even though we had some people (from a university) come down and work with us.”

The influence of teachers in deciding how services were provided was described as being very important. Administrators, in both small and medium sized schools, discussed teacher knowledge as being the deciding factor in service delivery, while those in larger school districts discussed the roles of principals as well. The majority of reports were very positive for the use of in-class support. The administrators stated:

“At first the general education teachers were frustrated because they had never had to have students with disabilities. But now, when they have a problem they can go to the special education teacher.”

“We made changes over the years. We replaced the LD teacher (she retired). We hired a new LD teacher who wanted to try inclusion. She worked in class in grades one to 12. She stayed two years. Then the new teacher was a very enthusiastic person who wanted to try it too. It’s worked out really well.”

Table 17

Administrators' Description of Predominant Placement

District	Total School		General	Resource	Separate
	Student Pop.	% Special Ed			
1	444	10.4	M		S
2	2,166	12.2	M	M	
3	496	15.	M		
4	491	15.3		M	S
5	132	23.4	M		S
6	230	10.	M		S
7	248	14.8	M	M	S
8	149	10.7	M	M	S
9	1,565	11.2	M	M	S
10	1,537	11.8	M	MS	
11	128	11.7	M	M	S
12	3,925	8.0	M	M	S
13	301	15.3	M	M	S
14	256	10.	M	M	S

Note: M = students with mild disabilities; S= students with severe disabilities

General = regular education classroom; Resource = resource room; Separate = separate special education classroom

“The teachers (general education) are open to suggestions on how to work with kids. When I have time I go in and observe in the classroom. That’s the thing, we have really great teachers (general education)”

“The service delivery varies from school to school. It depends on what they (the school administrator) want.”

Fear of new practices was reported by two administrators. Both administrators confirmed they were discussing teachers with over 10 years of experience.

“The teachers are afraid to try inclusion. The principal and I sat down with a special education teacher of twenty years experience and told her she would be co-teaching next year. She cried.”

“We didn’t opt for inclusion. ... We have a fair group of older teachers who won’t use inclusion setting. We go back to what’s best for the student. We place them in the regular class as much as possible, but we pull out if it’s needed.”

### Summary

This chapter described the results obtained from analyses of the survey of Oklahoma Administrators of Special Education data. Analyses of the data indicated little variation among the three models of special education practice, Continuum of Services, Inclusion, and Unified Model. Interviews indicated school districts were following inclusive practices more closely for students with mild disabilities than for students with severe disabilities



## Chapter V

### Discussion

#### Introduction

Findings from this study indicated that Oklahoma special education administrators did not perceive their districts as following any one of the three models more closely than any other. While the difference between the use of the models was small, the replies of the administrators on issues which promoted either inclusion or separation, indicated support of a philosophy which promoted the education of students with disabilities within the general education population.

#### Effect of District Demographics

Districts which were members of special education cooperatives in order to provide special education services perceived their districts to be following the Continuum of Services Model more closely than the other models. Small rural districts were more likely to be members of a special education cooperative.

The special education cooperatives were developed by small school districts to meet the educational needs of students with low incidence disabilities. Two primary factors influenced their development: (a) Many rural districts had only a single student with a low incident, high challenging disability, such as a student with multiple disabilities; (b) There were very few teachers certified to teach students with low incidence disabilities. With no model other than separate placement, Oklahoma districts chose to pool resources and hire a teacher with the necessary credentials. The teacher was then housed at one site within the cooperative and students were bused to that site.

Few of the administrators discussed cooperatives other than to say it was an option for students with emotional disturbance or with other severe disabilities. An exception was a rural district special education administrator/teacher/counselor. She discussed the struggle she and the teacher of students with multiple disabilities at the cooperative site had to insure a student with disabilities from her district was included with nondisabled peers at lunch.

“The teacher,” she said, “was really wise in her approach. She didn’t fight with the teachers (who wanted to deny the child with disabilities a chance to eat lunch with his peers). She just said he has to eat lunch with everyone. It’s the law.”

As interviews with the nine rural administrators revealed, Oklahoma rural sites are aware of models other than the Continuum of Services. However, interviews with special education administrators from the full range of schools; large, medium, and small; indicated the districts within the state have not chosen to adopt another model for students with severe disabilities.

The physical size of the district, has been reported as significant in other studies of rural districts. It has resulted in students with disabilities being educated in more restrictive environments (Hasazi, et al., 1995; Skrtic et al., 1985). It did not appear to affect the administrators’ perception of the choice of model followed by Oklahoma districts. However, a second finding from research (Hasazi, et al, 1995; Skrtic et al., 1985), reported the negative affect of isolation on the provision of related services. This was reported in interviews for the current study to have similar effect. Two administrators in rural districts reported difficulty in providing occupational therapy or physical therapy for students.

One administrator reported, "Going to the PT takes a whole day. We have to go to... (a small city fifty miles from the school site). It's sad for the kids."

When questioned about bringing services into the classroom, the administrator responded, "They need to have equipment we don't have. And they need more than what a teacher can do. I know that model doesn't work."

The majority (11) of the administrators reported they did not have students who required occupational therapy or physical therapy. A single administrator reported that the cooperative provided those services.

#### Effect of Administrator Demographics

The majority of administrators who responded to the survey were women (54.5%). This finding supports recent research (Irby, Brown, Bull, & Montgomery, 1995) which also found that more women than men, in the south central region of the nation, are special education administrators. The finding that women are more likely to be special education administrators is important because women in special education administrative positions are perceived to be less powerful than men (Mulkerne & Mulkerne, 1984).

When these findings are coupled with several other administrator demographic factors the impact of the special education administrator upon the districts' special education program development may well be negligible. These factors were: (a) The administrators were often inexperienced (31.4% have 0-5 years experience); (b) They were part-time in their role as special education administrators (63.3% were less than 25% FTE); (c) They had no special education certification (47.2%); 4) and/or they had no administrative certification (37.8%). These demographics seem to indicate a lack of importance placed upon

the position of special education administrator. Together these factors suggest that many special education administrators' chief function may be completion of paperwork necessary to maintain the legal limits of special education requirements.

However, consideration must be given to the fact that 60% of Oklahoma districts had less than 500 total student population. Indeed, 78% had less than 1000 students (Oklahoma Office of Accountability, 1997). It may well be only reasonable to expect that administrators in such small systems have more than one area of responsibility or that teachers without administrative certification are given administrative responsibilities. This, in fact, is what the special education administrators reported. Although, not all part-time special education administrators reported their other positions, fourteen different titles were reported. The other positions reported were all ones which required a majority of the administrators' time. The most frequently occurring administrator title (other than special education administrator) was superintendent. Several superintendents reported they served all administrative roles, superintendent, principal, special education administrator, and federal programs administrator. One administrator reported that in addition to the roles previously mentioned he was also the counselor. This administrative roll can be called an all-in-one-administrator.

The all-in-one administrator was the only administrator within the district. This individual was the superintendent, with responsibility to the board of education for school management, but also had direct, hands-on management of finance, personnel, maintenance, student transportation, academics, curriculum, extra curricular activities, federal programs (Title I, II, VI, VII, IX, Johnson O'Malley), and special education. This administrator was also the principal with

building level (K-8 or K-12) responsibility and responsibility for teachers and student supervision.

The administrators in these positions are themselves school level as well as central office administrators. However, as one administrator reported, they do not use site based management methods of collaborative planning and decision making. In addition, 42.7% of the special education administrators did not have special education certification. Oklahoma administrators are only required to take a single three hour course over special education. A single three hour course can not cover in sufficient depth issues of law, student characteristics, and program design to enable the administrators to be considered experts in special education. Therefore, the all-in-one administrator probably, as shown by the survey, does not have special education expertise, making central office expertise a moot point.

Although, the all-in-one administrator was not the model Stainback and Stainback (1984) advocated, small Oklahoma districts have, to this extent, achieved the merger of regular and special education administrative responsibilities. Interviews with administrators of schools of varying sizes indicated the administrator frequently relied heavily on the special education teacher for program development. This was reported by two administrators, both superintendents without special education certification, who said:

“We have to lean on practical people in the classroom. They have to show leadership.”

“When I came (the administrator had been in the district for three years) it was strictly a pull-out program. The special education teacher was burned out. I had to hire a special education teacher. Now our LD and MR are in the regular

classroom. Their enrollment is like everyone else. If a regular teacher has a problem, she can go to the special education teacher.”

A third administrator stated “Inclusion is site based. The teachers who are more comfortable with it are doing more with it.”

Several part-time special education administrators also reported they were special education teachers. An accurate count of teacher administrator could not be made from this survey, since all administrators did not report their second position. However, some teacher administrators reported the role of administrator was secondary to their role of teacher. The role of teacher administrator seemed to be somewhat ambiguous.

Two teacher administrators wrote they had no time within the school day for administrative duties. One wrote she had no title or compensation but had to oversee all the special education paperwork, including the district special education plan, the data report and the child count. The district special education child count was 81. The second respondent did have a title of special education program coordinator, however, her responsibilities and compensation were similar.

The teachers who filled these positions were young; one reported she was an entry year teacher. The school districts were small. In such districts personnel in specialized jobs frequently take on the role of a department, i.e., teacher/special education administrator.

Although this study was not intended to address the issue of special education administrators’ leadership role, that role does have bearing on special education program development (Mulkerne & Mulkerne, 1984). As one special

education administrator explained, “We’re not doing any inclusion. The superintendent won’t let us change anything.”

A study by Sullivan and Leary (1991) found the perception of special education administrators education was significantly different from the perception of principals and superintendents. The principals and superintendents did not perceive developing special education policies, establishing special education programs and integrating special education with the entire school program as important objectives. The special education administrators considered these as very important. Although, a direct relationship cannot be made from their study, Sullivan & Leary’s (1991) findings may explain some of the survey responses, especially those related to the importance of a central special education administrator. The survey respondents indicated that ‘special education decision making did not require specialized knowledge and a degree of uniformity best achieved through centralized authority’ ( $M = 2.76$ ;  $SD = .93$ ;  $\% = 22.6$ ). The role of special education administrator appeared to be one of little power in the majority of Oklahoma districts.

### The Survey

#### The Models

Oklahoma special education administrators did not indicate that their districts were following any of the three models, Inclusion Continuum of Services, or Unified Model (Burrello, Lashley, & Van Dyke, 1996; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991 ). They indicated their districts were following a mixture of the three practices.

The districts overwhelmingly supported the philosophy that all children can learn. One superintendent stated in an interview, “If we really believe all children can learn, their place is in the regular classroom.”

The districts perceived a need for teachers with special education expertise (a Continuum of Services concept). Some districts perceived the need for special teacher support for students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Other districts saw special teachers as the only teachers for the student with disabilities. This concept was more prevalent when administrators addressed the needs of children with severe disabilities. Students with emotional disturbance or multiple disabilities were frequently sent to special education cooperatives. As one administrator explained, the cooperatives had the staff with expertise.

The third ranked statement, the inclusive statement, ‘no student is denied placement at the neighborhood school site unless the student poses a danger to self or others,’ may have been affected by the fact that 60% of all Oklahoma districts have single sites. One administrator wrote beside this question on the survey, “This question is for large schools. Small schools have always done this.”

The statement (no student is denied placement ...) was a general placement definition of the Inclusion Model. Each model had a similar statement. The Unified Model stated, ‘generally all students are educated in neighborhood schools, although some specialized placements are made on a short term basis,’ was ranked thirteenth. The Continuum of Services statement, ‘some students require long term placement in a special classroom, separate school or other specialized placement,’ was ranked 27th. The ranking of these statements



indicated that Oklahoma special education administrators considered their districts as following some Inclusive Model practices more closely than Continuum of Services Model or Unified Model practices. The districts seemed to follow a Pragmatic Inclusive Model.

The Pragmatic Inclusive Model provided inclusive practices for students with mild disabilities. Most of the students attended the same neighborhood school (60% of the districts had a single campus), socialization among all peers was considered as important as specific skill attainment, and a natural proportion of students with disabilities occurred at any school site. Students with severe disabilities were provided education in a less inclusive manner. Despite administrator perception that no student is denied placement in the neighborhood school, students were transferred to other districts (42.3% reported they transferred students in order to provide special education services) or transported to special education cooperatives (36.3% sent students with disabilities to cooperatives housed in other districts).

Although, the fourth ranked statement was the Continuum of Services statement, ‘assessments are used to determine the educational setting of students with disabilities’, an inclusive statement, ‘eligibility is driven by student need not category’ was ranked seventh. The juxtaposition of these two statements seemed to indicate that assessments may be used to determine student need as well as educational setting. This point was addressed by interview participants who reported serving students with mild disabilities in regular education classrooms, while students with more severe disabilities were served in separate settings.

Perhaps these statements reflect the division within special education over LRE. Certainly, assessments are intended to determine existence and extent of disability, not educational setting. In the past, the only model recognized was service in a separate setting. Teacher education emphasized pull out programs, leading some to assume identification meant that students with disabilities required a special setting in order to learn. Lack of knowledge concerning implementation may be a contributing factor to choice of educational setting.

The Unified Model statement ‘school level leaders must be responsible for the education of all students,’ was ranked fifth. This statement and a second statement, ‘special education decision making requires specialized knowledge and a degree of uniformity best achieved through centralized authority,’ (ranked twenty-fifth); may have been affected by the all-in-one administrator phenomenon.

Further inclusive statements, ‘socialization among all peers is as important as specific skill attainment;’ and ‘students are encouraged to collaborate on learning activities;’ were ranked sixth and eleventh. Carrying out these statements required proactive steps on the part of the district. Most of the administrators who participated in interviews reported their students with mild disabilities were receiving services in regular education classrooms and resource rooms. Thus the majority of students with disabilities probably received their education in inclusive settings. This conclusion is further supported by the ranking of the statement, ‘all students are educated in their neighborhood school in age-appropriate regular classroom and community sites shared by all students,’ as 20th. Students in rural areas with more severe disabilities (often no more than one child within a district) received special education services at cooperatives.

Although, the Unified Model ( $M = 31.66$ ;  $SD = 4.30$ ) was ranked second, there was actually very little difference between the mean and standard deviation of the Unified Model and the Continuum of Services Model ( $m = 31.43$ ;  $SD = 3.76$ ). The Unified Model emphasized special education as a part of a collaborative, site based school system, while the Continuum of Services emphasized the traditional special education model.

The survey respondents considered their districts as being most like the Continuum of Services Model in their requirement for expertise, both in the knowledge of curriculum and instruction and for accountability of the rights of students with disabilities. Although they did not perceive the districts as requiring a central office authority with expertise in special education (a Continuum of Services position), they also did not perceive their districts as having site based management (a Unified Model position). The present author has defined an all-in-one-administrator model. This includes the concept that school level leaders are responsible for the education of all students, (a Unified Model concept). The all-in-one administrator was both site and central leader. The site staff were considered to be in the best position to determine both the curriculum and instruction for all students (a Unified Model concept).

### Conclusion

This study was designed to answer two questions: 1) What is the perception of Oklahoma special education administrators of the context of special education practiced within their districts; and 2) What are the relationships between personal and district demographics of responding special education administrators and the most dominant model of special education practiced?

In answer to the first question, the survey respondents did not perceive their districts as following any model more closely than the other two models. Some aspects of all three models were reported as practiced.

The administrators perceived the need within their districts for teachers with knowledge in special education curriculum and instruction. They also perceived the need for special education expertise in order to assure accountability regarding the rights of students with disabilities. However, they did not perceive the need for such expertise in the central office.

In further analysis the administrators were largely divided on the need for some students to have differentiated curricula, although, they did perceive their focus was on providing individualized instruction including vocational competence. A few perceived that separate performance indicators were used to assure school accountability. Even fewer perceived the need for long term separate placement. In fact, long term separate placement received an overall negative response in the ratings.

The Unified Model concepts which the administrators perceived as clearly like their districts were those which supported the education of students with disabilities within the general education environment. School level leaders were perceived as responsible for the education of all students and multiple performance measures were used to evaluate the learning of all students. All students were generally perceived to be educated in neighborhood schools, while general and special educators attended the same professional activities. The individual site staff was also considered to be in the best position to determine curriculum and instruction for all students, although one set of educational goals for all students

was not supported. Limited agreement was noted for items describing collaborative teams planning together for instruction in multiple settings and measuring performance upon agreed upon criteria and student goals.

The items which were perceived to be the least practiced within the districts were those which impacted most upon traditional scheduling and management issues. These included collaborative teams reflecting on their practice and having time and support to solve their own problems. Nor did the sites have the authority for budget, personnel, and program decisions for all students. These issues are unlikely to change without extensive preservice and inservice education on this topic.

#### Demographics

The demographics' relationships with model choice appeared to be limited. When model choice between differentiated demographics were examined the choices were very similar. The administrators reported a philosophy which supported inclusive practices. However, they also reported that those inclusive practices were chiefly for students with mild disabilities. Students with moderate to severe disabilities were educated in more separate settings. The administrators were largely inexperienced and /or new to their current position, suggesting that the knowledge base and administrative ability for carrying out their philosophical position may not have been in place. Poor implementation of the Inclusion Model was noted, for students with low incidence disabilities. There were, however, several naturally occurring factors which provided support for inclusive practices. Sixty percent of Oklahoma districts had a single site for all grades, therefore, all students attended there. In many districts a single administrator was responsible

for both building level and central level requirements, creating an inadvertent merger of general and special education administrative responsibilities.

The role of special education administrator is multifaceted, included among the knowledge and skills needed for this position are sensitivity to the physical, emotional, and social well being of the students for whom they are responsible. The special education administrator must model the appropriate behavior and people first language to show respect for all people. Twelve of the fourteen administrators interviewed called students with disabilities by the disability category (i.e. multis). This indicates a disrespect which must come from the heart. The language of those who, by reason of their position, should know and do better, must reflect a purity of heart toward their students. This includes recognizing the person first, foremost, and separate from the disabilities encountered.

### Recommendations

The field of education is steadily evolving as research adds to the knowledge base. Special education is particularly important in this process as much has been discovered about teaching and learning through its efforts. Future research may examine how the naturally occurring factors within school districts could be used as building blocks for best practices in serving students with disabilities in the fabric of general education.

The effectiveness of cooperatives for the provision of special education services for students with severe disabilities should be explored. An itinerant teacher approach using an inclusive model can be educationally effective for the student and cost effective for the district. This model does require inservice

training for all involved in the process, i.e., regular and special teachers, assistant, parent, and administrator.

Particularly needed are data on how special education support is provided to students within regular education. Better resource utilization would enhance the education of all students. In addition, research might examine the impact of the provision of related services at the school site. Since a large number of district administrators are, of necessity, fulfilling all administrative positions, including special education, an examination of their knowledge base and effectiveness could prove fruitful.

Developing administrative training that is relevant to the multiple roles that are assumed in the practice of special education in Oklahoma could be influential. Initially, more descriptive data are needed to examine issues of administrative power, skill, abilities, and personal characteristics. For example, this research indicated that special education administrators in Oklahoma are largely inexperienced women. How does this effect their ability to develop policy that impacts practice? In addition, when teachers are pressured to fulfill uncompensated administrative duties, how does this impact their efficacy as special education teachers? Different ways to compensate teachers, who have been called upon for administrative duty, such as release time for administrative duties, could also be beneficial to the students needing special education services.

The key element of the Unified Model is the teachers (Burrello, Lashley, & Van Dyke, 1996). This model can not be successful unless teachers, regular and special, understand collaborative practices and have time to plan together. Finally, further careful examination of the impact of various demographics (school size,

experience and education of teachers) on the provision of special education should be examined.

### Limitations

This study has several limitations. The first is the use of the survey as a method of gathering information. While the descriptive survey is the most frequently used method of educational research (Tatsuoka & Silver, 1988), response effect or the tendency of the respondent to give misleading or inaccurate information is problematic (Borg & Gall, 1989). The use of more than one source in gathering information is frequently used to counteract this problem (Borg & Gall, 1989). Semi structured interviews (Borg & Gall, 1989) and data from the State Department of Education Special Education Section and the State Office of Accountability were used for this purpose.

The survey was conducted in only one state. Although, a response rate of 48% was obtained, more than half of the potential respondents are not represented in this study. However, the respondents were 48 percent of the whole population not of a sample.

Finally, the models themselves, while developed by scholars with extensive knowledge and experience in the field of education and special education, have no basis in empirical research. Actual empirical research is needed to verify the fidelity of the 3 models to actual practices. The reliability of the models, as designed for testing with the survey instrument, was examined using Cronbach's Coefficient. All models obtained adequate reliability, internal consistency and coherence.



## Summary

Administrators who responded to this survey reported they did not perceive their districts as strongly following any of the three models of special education. Students who were provided inclusive services in general education were students with mild disabilities. Students with more severe disabilities appear to have separate placements.

The responding administrators did not perceive their districts to have two educational systems, special and regular. However, they also reported that the time for collaboration between teachers was not available. The impact of district or administrator demographics could not be deduced from this study.

Two major types of special education administrator were identified from this study, the all-in-one administrator and the teacher/administrator. The all-one-administrator had little knowledge of special education. This administrator had many responsibilities including special education. The teacher administrator had little knowledge of administration. This administrator seemed to have little power. Both these types of administrators appear to be problematic for special education program development.

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## Appendix A

### Definition of Terms

Least Restrictive Environment. This definition is taken solely from the Code of Federal Regulations 34 Parts 300 and 301 Assistance to States for the Education of children with Disabilities Programs and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities; Final Rule.

Section 300. 17 (i) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings:

Section 300.132 Least Restrictive Environment.

(a) Each State plan must include procedures that ensure that the requirements of Sections 300.550-300.556 are met.

Least Restrictive Environment

Section 300:550 General

(a) Each SEA shall ensure that each public agency establishes and implements procedures that meet the requirements of Sections 300.550-300.556.

(b) Each public agency shall ensure-

(1) That to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and

(2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(50(b);1414(A)(1)(c)(IV))

**Section 300.551 Continuum of alternative placements.**

(a) Each public agency shall ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.

(b) The continuum required in paragraph (a) of this section must -

(1) Include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under section 300.17 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions); and

(2) Make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B)).

**Section 300.552 Placements**

Each public agency shall ensure that:

(a) The educational placement of each child with a disability -

(1) is determined at least annually:

(2) is based on his or her IEP: and

(3) is as close as possible to the child's home.

(b) The various alternative placements included at 300.551 are available to the extent necessary to implement the IEP for each child with a disability.

(c) Unless the IEP of a child with a disability requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled.

(d) In selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he or she needs.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B)).

Note: Section 300.552 includes some of the main factors that must be considered in determining the extent to which a child with a disability can be educated with children who are nondisabled. the overriding rule in this section is that placement decisions must be made on an individual basis. The section also requires each agency to have various alternative placements available in order to ensure that each child with a disability receives an education that is appropriate in his or her individual needs.

The requirements of Section 300.552 as well as the other requirements of Sections 300.550-300.556 apply to all preschool children with disabilities who are entitled to receive FAPE. ...

In each case the public agency must ensure that each child's placement is in the LRE in which the unique needs of that child can be met, based upon the child's IEP, and meets all of the other requirements of sections 300.340 - 300.350 and section 300.350 - 300.556.

The analysis of the regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (34 CFR part 104 - Appendix, Paragraph 24) includes several points regarding educational placements of children with disabilities that are pertinent to this section:

1. with respect to determining proper placements, the analysis states "... it should be stressed that, where a handicapped child is so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of other students is significantly impeded, the needs of the handicapped child cannot be met in that environment. Therefore, regular placement would not be appropriate to his or her needs ..."

2. with respect to placing a child with a disability in an alternate setting, the analysis states that among the factors to be considered in placing a child is the need to place the child as close to home as possible. Recipients are required to take this factor into account in making placement decisions. The parents' right to challenge the placement of their child extends not only to placement in special classes or separate schools, but also to placement in a distant school, particularly in a residential program. An equally appropriate education program may exist closer to home; and this issue may be raised by the parent under the due process provisions of this subpart.

#### Section 300.553 Nonacademic settings.

In providing or arranging for the provision of nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, including meals, recess periods, and the services and activities set forth in section 300.306, each public agency shall ensure that each child with a disability participates with nondisabled children in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(5)(B))

Note: Section 300.553 is taken from a requirement in the final regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. With respect to this requirement, the analysis of the Section 504 Regulation includes the following statement: (This paragraph) specifies that handicapped children must also be provided nonacademic services in as integrated a setting as possible. This requirement is especially important for children whose educational needs necessitate their being solely with other handicapped children during most of each



day. To the maximum extent appropriate, children in residential settings are also to be provided opportunities for participation with other children.” (34 CFR part 104 - Appendix, Paragraph 34.)

**Segregation.** This is defined as the education of students with disabilities in a separate environment. The environment may be in a separate institution, day school, or classroom within a general education school.

## Appendix B

### Models of Practice

Continuum of Services This model (a) maintains a range of separate and specialized educational services and settings, including separate classrooms and schools, to accommodate the range of individual and unique needs of students with disabilities; The belief (b) is that some students with disabilities require a different curriculum and intensive instructional supports that cannot be provided within a regular comprehensive school building; (c) An individualized education program and related services are provided for students identified as having disabilities; (d) The needed services are provided within a continuum of specialized placements; Within this model (e) special education is maintained with a separate identity, including separate staff within central administration; (f) Specialized placements and procedures, as well as separate staffs at the local school sites, are supervised by the central administration; (g) This traditional special education model has categorical programs with a continuum of placements; (h) Some scholars believe the strength of this model rests with its strong identity and single focus on students with disabilities ( Lashley, 1993: McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; )

Inclusion Model. This model represents the philosophy that all students should be educated with their peers. Components of the model includes: (a) All students (except those who are a danger to self or others) attend the school to which they would go if they had no disability; (b) A natural proportion (i.e., representative of the school district at large) of students with disabilities exists at any school site; (c) no student is excluded based on the type or extent of disability (except ... children with deafness); (d) school and general education placements are

age and grade appropriate; with no self-contained special education classrooms operative at the site; (e) cooperative learning and peer instructional methods receive significant use in general instructional practice at the school site; (f) special education supports are provided within the context of the general education class and in other integrated environments (Lashley, 1993; McLaughlin & Warren, 1992; Sailor, 1991).

Unified Model This model is based around services not programs. Assumptions of this model are; (a) equal access is provided to high-quality instruction that results in desired results for all students; (b) the local school staff, students, and parents are responsible for decision making and the program of all students; (c) generally, all students are educated in their neighborhood schools and fully included in the curricular and extra-curricular school program, including being educated in age-appropriate regular education classroom (d) some specialized placements can be made available on a limited-time basis to any student who needed intensive services; (e) most specialized instruction and services are provided without the need to label or otherwise categorize students; (f) a small number of intensive or highly specialized services might be provided on a short-term basis outside the neighborhood school, and would be available to any student; (g) services are provided without labels and use resources from all categorical programs, as well as other sources.

**Appendix C**  
**University of Oklahoma - Norman Campus**  
**Informed Consent Statement**  
**Primary Participants**

**Title of Research Study: Oklahoma Special Education Administrator's Perception of Special Education Within Their District**

**Sponsor:** Kathryn Haring, Professor, Department of Educational Psychology/ Special Education

<b>Principal</b>	Mary L. Stevens	(405) 721-5930 (home)
<b>Investigator:</b>	7325 Crown Point Road	(405) 499-4611 (work)
	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73132	

I am writing to invite you to participate in the research for my doctoral dissertation. This consent form outlines the purposes of this study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant. The purposes of this project are:

1) to determine the perception of special education administrators of the context of special education practiced in Oklahoma; 2) the demographics of administrators in relation to the context of special education practiced; 3) the district demographics in relation to the context of special education practiced; 4) to fulfill the dissertation requirement for the PHD program in Special Education at The University of Oklahoma - Norman Campus, Norman, Oklahoma.

The practice of special education in Oklahoma has changed within the last five years. A systematic study of those changes has not been attempted. Knowledge of those changes are necessary in order to encourage beneficial changes, and to hold onto that which should not be changed. A survey of special education administrators will be used to gather knowledge of those changes. The survey should take approximately thirty minutes to complete.

A request for volunteers to participate in a telephone interview is included on the survey. The telephone interview will cover, in greater detail, items on the survey. This interview should take about fifteen minutes.

No risks to the participants in this study are expected. A benefit to the participants will be the knowledge of how special education is practiced in Oklahoma. It will allow special education administrators an opportunity to reflect on their practice, the practice of their peers, and the factors that impact upon it.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. There is no penalty for failure to participate. Nor will there be any loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled. The participant may discontinue participation at any time.

Confidentiality of information will be maintained at all times. All records will be kept in a locked file. Identity of the participants will be known only to myself. Identity will be used solely for the purpose of collection of data. The identifiable data will be destroyed once it is no longer needed.

Anyone with questions concerning the study may contact Mary Stevens at the address and phone numbers listed above.

Your signature on this form will serve as documentation of informed consent for participation.

Mary L. Stevens,  
Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please return this form with your survey.

Appendix D  
**Mary Lee Stevens**  
7325 Crown Point Road  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73132  
Home Phone 405-721-5930  
Work Phone 405-499-4611  
email mlstevens@mymail.net

Dear

I appreciate you taking the time to examine this survey. The survey is intended for Special Education Administrators. I know that some schools in Oklahoma do not have a special education administrator. However, in these cases the Superintendent is usually the person most able to answer the questions in this survey.

If your district has a special education administrator, pass this survey on to that individual. If, however, your district does not have a special education administrator please complete the survey and return it to me in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope.

This survey will help identify the nature of special education as it is practiced in Oklahoma. That knowledge can be used to determine needs for teacher pretraining and inservice training. It also will be a useful tool to measure the effect of past efforts. Your participation is very important to the success of the project. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Stevens

Appendix E  
**Mary Lee Stevens**  
7325 Crown Point Road  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73132  
Home Phone 405-721-5930  
Work Phone 405-499-4611  
email mlstevens@mymail.net

Dear Special Education Administrator:

I appreciate you taking the time to examine this survey. The survey is intended for Special Education Administrators as the person most knowledgeable about special education issues within a district. Please complete the survey and return it to me in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope.

This survey will help identify the nature of special education as it is practiced in Oklahoma. That knowledge can be used to determine needs for teacher pretraining and inservice training. It also will be a useful tool to measure the effect of past efforts. Your participation is very important to the success of the project. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Stevens

## Appendix F

### Frequency Analysis of Survey Data

#### Section I

Statement	Demog.	Freq.	Percent
1. How many years have you been	0-5 yrs.	81	31.4
a special education a special education	6-10 yrs.	69	26.7
administrator?	10-15 yrs.	51	19.8
	16-Above	57	22.1
	Frequency Missing = 4		
2. How many years have you been a	0-5 yrs.	81	31.4
special education administrator in your	6-10 yrs.	68	26.5
current assignment?	10-15 yrs.	27	10.5
	16-Above yrs.	30	11.7
	Frequency Missing = 7		
3. What is the title of your position?	Spec Ed. Ad.	148	58.
	Supt.	85	33.3
	Princ.	10	3.9
	Other	12	4.7
	Frequency Missing = 7		

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(table continues)



Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq.	Percent
4. What is your certification?	spec. ed.	60	23.6
	gen. ed.	120	47.2
	Both sped & gen	72	28.3
	Unable to deter.	2	.8
	Frequency Missing = 8		
administrative certification?	yes	161	62.2
	no	98	37.8
	Frequency Missing = 3		
5. Are you a full time special education administrator?	yes	55	21.5
	no	201	78.5
	Frequency Missing = 3		
FTE	below 25%	150	63.3
	25 to 49 %	17	7.2
	50 to 75 %	22	9.3
	1	48	20.3
	Frequency Missing = 25		

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog.	Freq.	Percent
6. What is your highest level of academic achievement?	Bachelor	28	10.8
	Masters	212	81.9
	Doctorate	14	5.4
	Other	5	1.9
	Frequency Missing = 3		
7. What year was your last formal class work completed? (This may be work beyond your last degree).	93-97	119	47.2
	92-88	62	24.6
	87-83	36	14.3
	82-below	35	13.9
8. Check one.	Male	117	45.2
	Female	142	54.8
9. Is your district	Independent	216	83.7
	Dependent	42	16.3

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog.	Freq.	Percent
10. How much territory does your district cover?	1-20 sq mi	33	13.6
	21-50 sq mi	61	25.2
	51-150 sq mi	85	35.1
	Above 150 sq mi	63	26
11. Is your district property tax generated mainly from	Agricultural land	151	61.4
	Industry	16	6.5
	Residential property	74	30.1
	Commercial/retail	5	2.0
12 What is your district child count?	0	1	.4
	1-50	117	47
	51-499	113	45.4
	500-999	10	4
	Above 1000	8	3.2

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog.	Freq.	Percent
13. How many of your students with disabilities are categorized as:			
LD	0	9	3.9
	Below 25	91	39.4
	26-99	94	40.7
	100-999	33	14.3
	1000 up	4	1.7
MR	0	43	18.7
	1-25	150	65.2
	26-199	33	14.3
	200-499	2	.9
	1000 up	2	.9

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demo.	Freq.	Percent
TBI	0	174	75
	1	40	17.2
	2-5	15	6.5
	6-10	3	1.3
	Frequency missing = 30		
SED	0	123	48.3
	1-10	92	39.7
	11-25	13	5.6
	26-99	11	4.7
	100-up	4	1.7
	Frequency Missing = 30		

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog.	Freq.	Percent
MH/DB	0	123	53.
	1-2	46	19.8
	3-5	28	12.1
	6-50	33	14.2
	Above 50	2	.9
	Frequency Missing = 30		
Autistic	0	177	76.
	1	30	12.9
	2-3	16	6.9
	4-20	8	3.4
	Above 20	2	.9
	Frequency Missing = 29		

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq.	Percent
Sensory Imp.	0	175	77.1
	1	21	9.3
	2-5	21	9.3
	6-10	2	.9
	Above 10	5	3.5
	Frequency Missing = 35		
14. How many students with disabilities does your district transfer?	0	146	57.7
	1-5	95	37.5
	6-10	6	2.4
	Above 10	6	2.4
	Frequency Missing = 9		

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	%
<hr/>			
15. Is your district a member of a special education cooperative?	Yes	138	53.3
	No	120	46.3
	Frequency Missing = 4		
16. Is the cooperative housed in your district?	Yes	26	10.
	No	103	39.8
	Part of Coop	11	4.2
	NA	119	45.9
	Frequency Missing = 3		
 <u>Section II</u>			
1. Some students require separate	1	57	21.9
long term placement in a special	2	4	20.8
classroom, separate school, or	3	67	25.8
other specialized setting.	4	82	31.5

(table continues)



Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq.	Percent
2. Meeting the needs of students	1	2	.8
with disabilities require teachers	2	9	3.5
with knowledge in special	3	48	18.5
education curriculum and instruction.	4	201	77.3
Frequency Missing = 2			
3. Special educators and general	1	89	34.2
educators have separate professional	2	66	25.4
development activities.	3	89	34.2
	4	16	6.2
Frequency Missing = 2			
4. Assessments are used to determine	1	8	3.1
the educational setting of students	2	8	3.1
with disabilities.	3	61	23.5
	4	183	70.4
Frequency Missing = 2			

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog.	Freq.	Percent
5. The educational focus for students with disabilities is on providing individualized instruction including vocational competence.	1	3	1.2
	2	11	4.2
	3	82	31.5
	4	164	63.1
	Frequency Missing = 2		
6. Some students with disabilities may require a separate set of standards.	1	28	10.8
	2	27	10.4
	3	111	42.9
	4	93	35.9
	Frequency Missing = 3		
7. Separate performance indicators are used to assure school accountability for students with disabilities.	1	15	5.9
	2	28	10.9
	3	123	48
	4	90	35.2
	Frequency missing = 6		

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	Percent
8. Some students with disabilities require	1	8	3.1
knowledge or experiences which can best	2	13	5
be provided through differentiated curricula.	3	124	47.7
	4	115	44.2
	Frequency = 2		
9. Special education decision making	1	29	11.3
requires specialized knowledge and	2	61	23.7
a degree of uniformity best achieved	3	109	42.4
through centralized authority.	4	58	22.6
	Frequency Missing = 5		
10. The need for accountability	1	2	.8
regarding the rights to education	2	18	6.9
of students with disabilities requires	3	90	34.7
expertise.	4	149	57.5
	Frequency Missing = 3		

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq.	Percent
11. All students are educated in	1	25	9.6
their neighborhood school in	2	26	10
age-appropriate regular	3	91	34.9
education classrooms and	4	119	45.6
community sites shared by	Frequency Missing = 1		
all students.			
12. Socialization among all peers	1	2	0.8
is as important as specific skill	2	9	3.4
attainment.	3	85	32.6
	4	165	63.2
	Frequency Missing = 1		
13. Specialized service and support	1	4	1.5
are provided within regular education	2	24	9.2
classes and other integrated	3	102	39.1
environments.	4	131	50.2
	Frequency Missing = 1		

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	Percent
14. No student is denied placement	1	9	3.5
at the neighborhood school site	2	17	6.6
unless the student is a to self or	3	39	15.1
others.	4	134	74.9
Frequency Missing = 3			
15. It is assumed all students can learn.	1	0	0
	2	4	1.5
	3	20	7.7
	4	237	90.8
Frequency Missing = 1			
16. A natural proportion (i.e. representative	1	6	2.3
of the school district at large) of students	2	17	6.6
with disabilities occurs at any school site.	3	87	33.7
	4	148	57.4
Frequency Missing = 4			

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq.	Percent
17. Students are encouraged to collaborate on learning activities.	1	3	1.1
	2	16	6.1
	3	101	38.7
	4	141	54.0
	Frequency Missing = 1		
18. Special education services within the regular classroom are used to benefit a wider range of students while directly with disabilities.	1	11	4.2
	2	43	16.5
	3	124	47.5
	4	83	31.8
	Frequency Missing = 1		
19. In order to limit self contained classrooms we provide special education services in the general education classroom.	1	18	6.9
	2	59	22.6
	3	97	37.2
	4	87	33.3

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq.	Percent
20. Eligibility for special education is	1	6	2.3
driven by individual student need	2	11	4.2
rather than categories.	3	69	26.5
	4	174	66.9
21. Generally, all students are educated	1	11	4.2
in their neighborhood schools.	2	20	7.7
However, some specialized placements	3	75	28.7
can be made available on a limited time	4	155	59.4
basis to any student who may need			
intensive services.			
22. All students are entitled and	1	65	25.
expected to reach one set of	2	39	15
educational goals.	3	83	31.9
	4	73	28.1

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	Percent
23. Multiple performance measures	1	2	.8
of the educational goals are used	2	20	7.6
to evaluate the learning of all students.	3	101	38.5
	4	139	53.1
24. The educational goals are valued and	1	2	.8
accepted by all educators as well as	2	14	5.4
the community.	3	135	51.7
	4	110	42.1
	Frequency Missing = 1		
25. School level leaders must be	1	3	1.1
responsible for the education	2	8	3.1
of all students.	3	80	30.7
	4	170	65.1
	Frequency Missing = 1		

(table continues)



Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	Percent
26. Collaborative teams plan together for instruction in multiple settings and measure performance on the basis of agreed upon criteria and student goals.	1	15	5.8
	2	25	9.6
	3	114	43.8
	4	106	40.8
	Frequency Missing = 2		
27. Collaborative teams reflect about their practice and have the time and support necessary to solve their own problems.	1	24	9.2
	2	67	25.7
	3	124	47.5
	4	46	17.6
	Frequency Missing = 1		
28. The individual site staff are in the best position to determine curriculum and instruction for all students.	1	6	2.3
	2	17	6.5
	3	112	42.7
	4	127	48.5

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	Percent
29. Individual sites have the authority	1	58	22.1
for budget, personnel, and program	2	68	26.
decisions for all students.	3	64	24.4
	4	72	27.5
30. Both general and special education	1	6	2.3
staff attend the same professional	2	14	5.3
activities.	3	120	45.8
	4	122	46.6

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	Percent
<u>Section III</u>			
Please check the model of special education practice which your district most closely follows.			
In my district, it is assumed that some children have disabilities which require special education services and support. Specialists have developed tools and strategies to assess, plan, and provide education services and supports for these students, often in separate settings, in order that their needs will be met.		127	48.5
In my district all students attend the school to which they would normally go if they had no disability. Special education services are provided in the general context.		76	29.

(table continues)

Appendix F (table continued)

Statement	Demog	Freq	Percent
In my district, all students have special needs, some more unique than others. Teachers with varying expertise work collaboratively and use a variety of strategies and technologies to meet the needs of all students.		54	20.6

**Appendix G**  
**IRB Letter**



*The University of Oklahoma*

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

October 31, 1996

Ms. Mary L. Stevens  
7325 Crown Point Road  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73132

Dear Ms. Stevens:

Your research proposal, "Oklahoma Special Education Administrators' Perception of Special Education Within Their District," has been reviewed by Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, and found to be exempt from the requirements for full board review and approval under the regulations of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Activities.

Should you wish to deviate from the described protocol, you must notify me and obtain prior approval from the Board for the changes. If the research is to extend beyond twelve months, you must contact this office, in writing, noting any changes or revisions in the protocol and/or informed consent form, and request an extension of this ruling.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Karen M. Petry".

Karen M. Petry  
Administrative Officer  
Institutional Review Board

KMP:sg  
97-051

cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, IRB  
Dr. Kathryn Haring, Educational Psychology

Appendix H  
Section I  
Demographics

Circle the response that most closely resembles you or your district.

1) How many years have you been a special education administrator ?

A. 0-5 years    B. 6-10 years    C. 10-15 years    D. 16-Above years

2) How many years have you been a special education administrator  
in your current assignment?

A. 0-5 years    B. 6-10 years    C. 10-15 years    D. 16-Above years

3) What is the title of your position? \_\_\_\_\_

4) What is your certification? (Mark all that apply.) How many years of experience have  
you in your area of certification?

Certification	Years Taught	Years of Experience
____ A. Special Education	_____	_____
____ B. General Education (elem)	_____	_____
____ C. General Education ( secondary)	_____	_____
____ D. Principal (elem. or secondary)	_____	_____
____ E. Superintendent	_____	_____

5) Are you a full time special education administrator? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, what is your FTE as a special education administrator? \_\_\_\_

6) What is your highest level of academic achievement?

A. Bachelor    B. Masters    C. Doctorate    D. Other (specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

7) What year was your last formal class work completed? (This may  
be work beyond your last degree) \_\_\_\_\_

8) Check one.    A. Male \_\_\_\_    B. Female \_\_\_\_

9) Is your district

A. Independent \_\_\_\_    B. Dependent \_\_\_\_

11) How much territory does your district cover?

- A. 1-20 square miles      B. 21-50 miles  
C. 51-150 square miles      D. Above 150 square miles

12) Is your district property tax generated mainly from

- A. Agricultural land      B. Industry  
C. Residential property      D. Commercial\retail

13) What is your district child count? \_\_\_\_\_

14) How many of your students with disabilities are categorized as

LD \_\_\_\_\_ MR \_\_\_\_\_ TBI \_\_\_\_\_  
SED \_\_\_\_\_ MH\DB \_\_\_\_\_  
Autism \_\_\_\_\_ Sensory Impaired \_\_\_\_\_

15) How many students with disabilities does your district transfer?

\_\_\_\_\_

16) Is your district a member of a special education cooperative?

\_\_\_\_\_

17) Is the cooperative housed in your district? \_\_\_\_\_



## Section II



Clearly    Somewhat    Somewhat    Clearly

Unlike    Unlike    like    like

1) In my district, some students  
require long term placement in a  
special classroom, separate school, or  
other specialized setting .....

1           2           3           4

2) In my district, meeting the needs  
of students with disabilities requires  
teachers with knowledge in special  
education curriculum and instruction.  
.....

1           2           3           4

3) In my district, special educators  
and general educators have separate  
professional development activities.  
.....

1           2           3           4

4) In my district, assessments are used to determine the educational setting of students with disabilities.

.....

Clearly    Somewhat    Somewhat    Clearly

UnLike    Unlike    Like    Like

1            2            3            4

5) In my district, the educational focus for students with disabilities is on providing individualized instruction including vocational competence.

.....

1            2            3            4

6) In my district, some students with disabilities may require a separate set of standards. ....

1            2            3            4

7) In my district, separate performance indicators are used to assure school accountability for students with disabilities.

.....

1            2            3            4

8) In my district, some students with disabilities require knowledge or experiences which can best be provided through differentiated curricula.

.....

Clearly Unlike	Somewhat Unlike	Somewhat Like	Clearly Like
-------------------	--------------------	------------------	-----------------

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

9) In my district, special education decision making requires specialized knowledge and a degree of uniformity best achieved through centralized authority.

.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

10) In my district, the need for accountability regarding the rights to education of students with disabilities requires expertise. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

11) In my district, all students are educated in their neighborhood school in age-appropriate regular education classrooms and community sites shared by all students.

.....

Clearly Unlike	Somewhat Unlike	Somewhat Like	Clearly Like
-------------------	--------------------	------------------	-----------------

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

12) In my district, socialization among all peers is as important as specific skill attainment.

.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

13) In my district, specialized service and support are provided within regular education classes and other integrated environments. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

14) In my district, no student is denied placement at the neighborhood school site unless the student is a danger to self or others.

.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

15) In my district, it is assumed all students can learn. ....

Clearly Unlike	Somewhat Unlike	Somewhat Like	Clearly Like
1	2	3	4

16) In my district, a natural proportion (i.e. representative of the school district at large) of students with disabilities occurs at any school site. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

17) In my district, students are encouraged to collaborate on learning activities.  
.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

18) In my district, special education services within the regular classroom are used to benefit a wider range of students while directly focusing on identified students with disabilities.  
.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

19) In my district in order to limit self contained classrooms we provide special education services in the general education classroom.

.....

Clearly Unlike	Somewhat Unlike	Somewhat Like	Clearly Like
-------------------	--------------------	------------------	-----------------

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

20) In my district, eligibility for special education is driven by individual student need rather than categories.

.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

21. In my district, generally, all students are educated in their neighborhood schools. However, some specialized placements can be made available on a limited time basis to any student who may need intensive services. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

22. In my district, all students are entitled and expected to reach one set of educational goals.

.....

Clearly Unlike	Somewhat Unlike	Somewhat Like	Clearly Like
-------------------	--------------------	------------------	-----------------

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

23) In my district, multiple performance measures of the educational goals are used to evaluate the learning of all students.

.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

24) In my district, the educational goals are valued and accepted by all educators as well as the community.

.....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

25) In my district, school level leaders must be responsible for the education of all students. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

26) In my district, collaborative teams plan together for instruction in multiple settings and measure performance on the basis of agreed upon criteria and student goals.

.....

Clearly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Clearly
Unlike	Unlike	Like	Like

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

27) In my district, collaborative teams reflect about their practice and have the time and support necessary to solve their own problems. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

28) In my district, the individual site staff are in the best position to determine curriculum and instruction for all students. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---



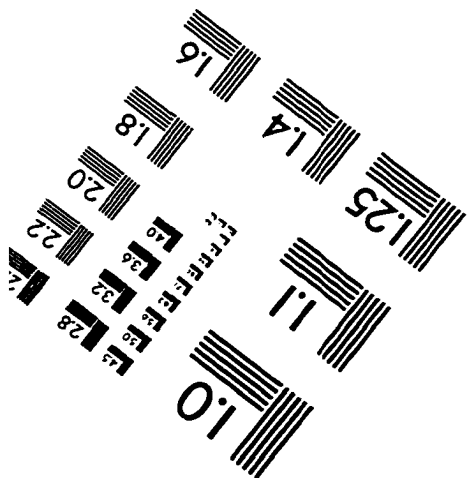
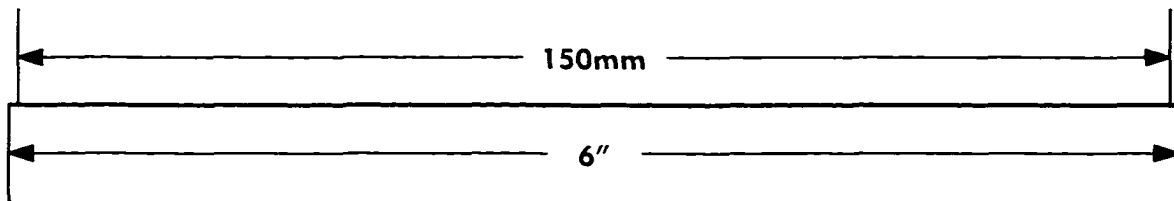
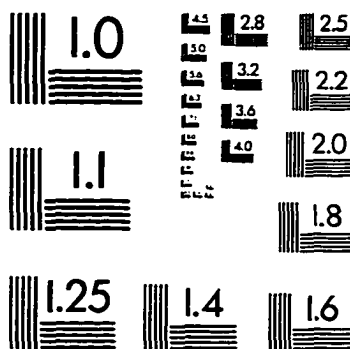
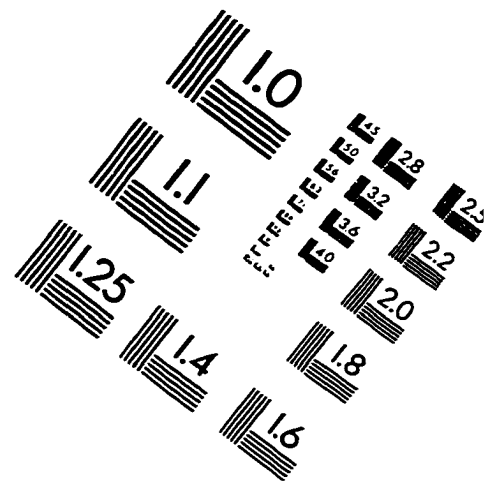
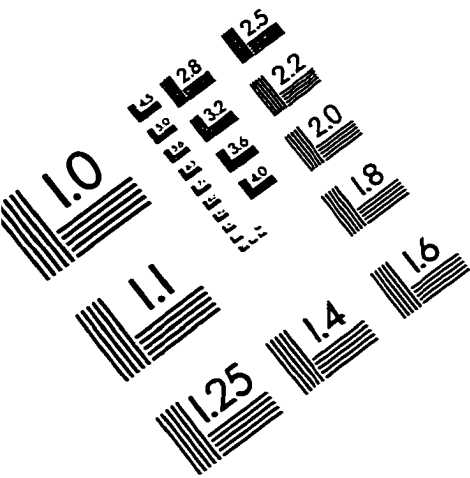
29) In my district, individual sites have the authority for budget, personnel, and program decisions for all students . .....

Clearly Unlike	Somewhat Unlike	Somewhat Like	Clearly Like
1	2	3	4

30) In my district, both general and special education staff attend the same professional activities. ....

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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