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Students exiting preschool special education: A six -year examination of eligibility patterns and performance

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**STUDENTS EXITING PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION:
A SIX-YEAR EXAMINATION OF
ELIGIBILITY PATTERNS AND PERFORMANCE**

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Elisabeth Murphy Powers

January 2000

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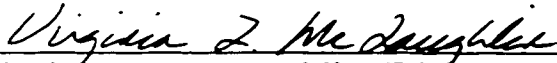
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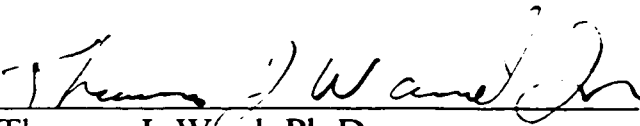
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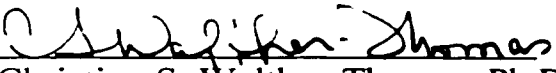
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Students Exiting Preschool Special Education: A Six-Year Examination of Eligibility Patterns and Performance

ABSTRACT

Substantial research supports the efficacy of early intervention services for children with developmental delays from birth to age 5. Federal legislation, IDEA, P.L. 101-476, now mandates that states provide services to infants and toddlers (Part C) and preschoolers ages 3-5 (Part B) using either categorical or noncategorical classifications.

Research relative to eligibility classifications and stability of classifications of preschool students transitioning to school age service is limited. The purpose of this study was to determine: (a) the initial eligibility classification at time of exit from preschool special education services, (b) the stability of classifications for students initially declassified and initially classified, and (c) the performance of students who were classified with mild disabilities in terms of attendance, disciplinary referrals, retention, math and reading achievement, and grade point average. Results of the study indicated that 86% of students who exited preschool special education continued to be eligible for special education services. Overall, 29% of the students maintained the original exit classification status over six years. Seventy-five percent of students originally declassified at time of exit were subsequently reclassified within the first three years following exit. No

significant differences were found on variables of achievement between students originally declassified and originally classified. Examination of stability of school assignments indicated that students who were initially declassified and remained declassified experienced significantly fewer school assignment changes than all other groups.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

Children with disabilities have always been a part of society, but only fairly recently has attention been paid to their special educational needs. Prior to the 1970s, many states had laws permitting public schools to deny enrollment to children with disabilities (Heward, 1996). The provision of equitable educational opportunities to exceptional children of all ages has not come about by chance, but has been strongly impacted by social, political, and legislative influences of the past three decades (Shonkoff & Meisels, 1991).

The early 1960s marked the beginning of a new era in the field of early childhood intervention. Broader public concern for social issues was sparked by President John F. Kennedy's interest in the significant numbers of Americans living in poverty. Head Start programs, established by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the late 1960s, were designed to provide early identification and intervention for preschool-aged children who were at risk of academic failure due to economic disadvantage (Collins, 1993).

President Johnson's administration also demonstrated a commitment to the educational needs of young children with disabilities. In 1968, Congress passed P.L. 90-538, the Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act, which established the Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP). This legislation provided three-year incentive grants to encourage the development, implementation, and replication of model programs for young children ages 3 to 5 years. This was the first federal special education program designed specifically for young children with disabilities and their families (Anastasiow & Nucci, 1994).

Nearly 25 years ago, landmark legislation, Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), P.L. 94-142, was passed, which contained mandatory provisions for a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 years. Legislative amendments to P.L. 94-142, specifically P.L. 99-457, the Education of the Handicapped Children Act Amendments in 1986, and P.L. 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, expanded services to include all preschoolers with disabilities ages birth to 5 years. The extension of services, while broadening the scope of special education services provided to young children, also created great inconsistency

regarding classification criteria, categorical labeling, and preschool versus school-age eligibility.

Statement of the Problem

The past 25 years have shown a significant increase in the prevalence of children at risk for developmental disabilities as well as those with identified disabilities (Guralnick, 1998). This increase is attributed to various environmental and biological factors, including poverty, prematurity, abuse and neglect, prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol, as well as genetic disorders and congenital infections (Guralnick, 1998; Lipkin, 1996). Overall, investigators estimate that approximately 800,000 children birth through age 5 manifest significant disabilities (i.e., 2.2% for all children birth to 2 years of age and 5.2% of all 3- to 5-year-olds) and meet eligibility criteria to receive services under current federal legislation for early intervention (Bowe, 1995). Over the past 10 years the number of preschoolers receiving special education services has doubled. Nevertheless, only 40% of students requiring special education services are identified during the preschool years (Hehir, 1999).

Substantial research supports the efficacy of early intervention for children with developmental delays specific to cognitive abilities as well as social/emotional development (Castro & Mastropieri, 1986; Guralnick,

1998; Slavin, 1994). Congress has recognized the unique needs of the preschool child by identifying a preschool category of developmental delay, extending from birth to age 5 (IDEA). This effort further validates the significance of services to these children.

While the need for research relative to the categorical classification of preschoolers as they transition to school-age service has been recognized for nearly a decade, to date little has been done concerning the transition of preschool children considered eligible under the category of developmental delay to services under Part B categories (McLean, Smith, McCormick, Schakel, & McEvoy, 1991). Historically, the special education services that children receive as they transition to school service have been determined by their disability category, which is, for the most part, contingent on educational and academic criteria, typically neither available nor appropriate for children in developmental programs (Kilgo, Davis & Gamel-McCormick, 1998).

Research studies designed to examine the categorical placements, stability of placements, and outcomes for students who received preschool special education services are limited. In response to the growing need for data on the outcomes of early intervention and preschool special education,

Project Forum and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) collected information from eight states regarding their priorities for longitudinal research on students who received special education services under the age of five years (Markowitz, 1996).

Specifically, state directors of special education were asked to rank nine proposed areas of research, including: (a) rate of retention; (b) home language and economic situation; (c) changes in disability classification over time, including de-classification; (d) rates of suspension and expulsion; (e) rate of graduation; (f) postsecondary status; (g) family satisfaction with preschool services/special education support; (h) mobility rate; and (i) provision of English as a second language services during elementary and secondary years. The high school graduation rate was the area of most interest to states, whereas the mobility rate of students was of least interest. State representatives also indicated an interest in achievement data relevant to the general education curriculum.

Establishing a research base in the areas listed above helps provide more efficient and effective programming, prevents the delivery of inappropriate services based on inaccurate categorical labeling, and reduces inappropriate declassification of children transitioning from preschool to

school-age service. To further this effort, this study answered the following questions:

1. What is the initial eligibility classification at time of transition to school service for students who received preschool special education services under the category of developmental delay?
2. How stable, over six years, are the initial eligibility classifications at time of transition to school services for students who received preschool special education services under the category of developmental delay?
 - a. Students initially classified
 - b. Students initially classified
3. How do students who were classified and declassified at time of transition and those who were subsequently declassified and reclassified with mild disabilities (DD, LD, ED, EMD, & S/L) compare in performance in Grades 3 and 5 in terms of the following: attendance, disciplinary referrals, retention, achievement (math and reading), and grade point average?

Definition of Terms

The following relevant terms are defined to facilitate understanding of this research study.

Categorical Classification

The disability label assigned to students who have met eligibility requirements based on IDEA (Heward, 1996). This includes the following disabilities: autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, emotional disability, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, severe and profound disability, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment.

Declassified

This term refers to the status of a student who was at one time found eligible for special education services but had subsequently been found ineligible for such services.

Developmental Delay

This term refers to a significant delay, 25% or greater, in one or more of the following developmental areas: (a) cognitive; (b) physical, which includes fine and gross motor; (c) communication; (d) social/emotional; and (e) adaptive (Harbin, Danaher, Bailer & Eller, 1991).

Disciplinary Infractions

The school division Rights and Responsibilities Handbook defines rules of conduct and sanctions for rule violations. Disciplinary actions are identified for each rule violation by level as follows: 1-Conference, 2-Intervention, 3-Suspension (1-5 days), 4-Suspension (6-10 days), 5-Suspension (10 days with contract), 6-Long-Term Suspension (11-180 days), and 7-Expulsion (See Rules and Sanctions in Appendix C).

Early Childhood Education

This term is frequently applied to the education of young children from birth through age 8 (Bredekamp, Knuth, Kunesh, & Shulman, 1992).

Early Intervention

This term refers to any program designed to prevent further progression of a disability or disabling condition, to produce improvement in the disabling condition, or to introduce helping procedures in situations where the disabling condition is already established (White & Mott, 1987).

Emotional Disability

This term refers to a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affect educational performance: (a) an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, and health factors; (b) an

inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes children who are schizophrenic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance (45 CFR 121A.5[b] [8] [1978]).

Grading Scale

School board policy designates the following codes for marking student achievement (for integrated language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and health) in Grades 3-5: A=Outstanding Achievement-The pupil has mastered the objectives in the subject area; B=Above Average (High) Achievement-The pupil has mastered most of the objectives in the subject area; C=Satisfactory Achievement-The pupil has mastered the basic objectives in the subject area; D=Below Average (Needs Improvement) Achievement-The pupil has mastered few of the basic objectives in the subject area; F=Unsatisfactory Achievement-The pupil has not mastered the basic objectives in the subject area.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A written document required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 94-142) for every child with a disability. The document must include statements of present level of performance, annual goals, short-term instructional objectives, specific educational and related services needed, frequency and duration of services, evaluation procedures, and general education program participation.

Mental Retardation

This term refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning resulting in or associated with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period.

Individuals considered to have educable mental retardation are generally defined as having an intellectual ability of 50-55 to approximately 70 (American Association on Mental Retardation [AAMR] and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM-IV] [American Psychiatric Association, 1994].

Reclassified

This term refers to the status of a student who had, at one time, been found eligible for special education services, was later found ineligible for

such services but was subsequently again found eligible for special education services.

School Assignment

This term refers to the school within the division to which a child is assigned. Students are assigned to schools based on established school zones or specific program access.

Socio-economic Status

For the purposes of this study, socio-economic status is defined by a student's eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches per United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Income Eligibility Guidelines (See guidelines in Appendix A).

Speech or Language Impairment

This term, as defined in IDEA, refers to a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or voice impairment that adversely affects educational performance.

Specific Learning Disability

This term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. The term includes

such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. A most apparent limitation is that the data represent only one urban school district in southeastern Virginia. Another obvious limitation is the relatively small sample size. Missing data due to a highly transient school population further affected the sample. Another limitation is the existence of confounding variables, such as curriculum and methodology variances, as well as quality and quantity of special education service.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A strong belief exists among educators and the general public that early intervention is a sound investment, especially for promoting later success for young children who are disadvantaged and have disabilities. Early childhood advocates further propose an additional long-term goal of reducing or eliminating the need for special education services for young children when they reach the elementary grades. This research study examined classification rates at time of exit from preschool special education, the stability of these classifications, and the performance of students initially classified and declassified over a six-year period.

This literature review was designed to provide background information as well as current research relative to the impact of preschool special education services on students through the elementary years. The first section addresses legal and legislative influences specific to identification and service provision for children with disabilities, birth to 21 years of age. Next, a review of research regarding identification issues is

provided, specifically those related to categorical labeling and consistency of identification procedures, definitions, and eligibility criteria between early intervention (Part C), preschool services (Part B), and school-age services (Part B). Finally, relevant research regarding the efficacy of early intervention is summarized.

Legislative Influences

The establishment of nursery and preschool programs in the United States was significantly impacted by the social and economic conditions within the country, specifically two world wars and the Great Depression (Beatty, 1995). In 1933, the Federal Emergency Relief Agency funded the establishment of public nursery schools in response to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal aimed to end the Depression. The Lanham War Act of 1940 established nursery schools during World War II, primarily in response to a 76% increase in women in the work force (Beatty, 1995). The early 1960s marked the beginning of a new focus on early childhood intervention. President Kennedy's interest in the "other American" together with President Johnson's War on Poverty brought to public awareness the plight of the nearly one quarter of Americans living in poverty (Collins, 1993).

This heightened public and political focus on young children brought about the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and enactment in 1965 of P.L. 89-10, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA provided funds to state agencies and local school districts for developing programs to serve students who had economical disadvantage and disabilities. One major outcome of this act was formulation of Head Start programs, initially funded as summer programs to assist in early identification of and intervention for preschool-aged children who were at risk of academic failure (Collins, 1993).

In addition to establishing Head Start, President Johnson's administration demonstrated a commitment to the educational needs of young children with disabilities by passing the first federal legislation designed for young children with disabilities and their families. In 1968, Congress passed P.L. 90-358, the Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act, which established the Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP). This legislation provided three-year incentive grants to encourage the development, implementation, and replication of model programs for young children ages 3 to 5 years (Anastasiow & Nucci, 1994).

The Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act, P.L. 92-424, passed in 1972, expanded Head Start services to include children with disabilities. This law required Head Start programs to reserve at least 10% of their class enrollment space for children with disabilities (Thurman & Widerstrom, 1990).

P.L. 94-142

In 1975 the United States Congress passed Public Law 94-142 (P.L. 94-142), the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), providing all children with disabilities access to public education. This landmark legislation provided children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 a free, appropriate public education. The law further required that all children ages 3 to 5 with disabilities receive special education services if state law or practice already provided general public education for children in that age group (Bowe, 1995; Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). In an effort to stimulate states to develop programs for preschoolers with disabilities, EAHCA established the Preschool Incentive Grants, which provided funds to states for establishing or improving preschool programs. Funds for these grants were provided based on the count of children being served (Noonan & McCormick, 1993; Smith, 1990). Despite these efforts, by the 1980-81 school year, only 16 states provided

special education services for the full 3 to 5 year old range and an additional 22 states provided services for preschoolers with disabilities at the age of 4 or 5 (Heward, 1996).

P.L.99-457

A significant series of changes to P.L. 94-142 (EAHCA) occurred in 1986 with the passage of Public Law 99-457, the Education of the Handicapped Children Act Amendments. Noting that more than 30 states and territories still did not require preschool services for all 3 to 5 year old children with disabilities, Congress included provisions in P.L. 99-457 to expand services for this segment of the population (Heward, 1996). In addition, as systematic early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities, birth through age 2, were scarce or nonexistent, this law extended programs to include infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families (Bickel, 1991; Harbin & Danaher, 1994; Heward, 1996). Beginning with the 1990-91 school year, each state was required to serve fully all preschool children with disabilities or lose all future federal funds for preschoolers with disabilities (Heward, 1996).

P.L. 99-457 contains two major provisions concerning the early education of preschoolers with disabilities. The first major component, the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and

Their Families (Part H), serves children from birth to age 3. This provision focuses on facilitating services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families at a statewide comprehensive level which includes a multidisciplinary, interagency approach. The second major component, the Preschool Incentives Grant Program (Section 619, Part B), serving children 3 through 5 requires local education agencies to extend existing rights and privileges of school-age children with disabilities to preschool-age children. States were given five years in which to develop and implement comprehensive services of early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families (Fowler & Ostrosky, 1994).

P.L. 101-476 (IDEA)

In 1990, Congress again reauthorized P.L. 94-142. The result, P.L. 101-476 (The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990) changed the title “Education of the Handicapped Act” to “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act,” commonly referred to as IDEA. The wording changes in IDEA reflect “people first” language and use the term *disability* rather than *handicap* to describe students’ conditions (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1990). The guidelines for infants and toddlers are outlined in Part H of IDEA and guidelines for programs for preschool and school age programs in Part B of IDEA.

Part H of IDEA, also known as The Infant and Toddlers with Disabilities Act, was specifically designed to assist states in their efforts to plan, develop, and implement statewide systems of comprehensive services for all young children with disabilities, birth to age 3 and their families (Noonan & McCormick, 1993). This legislation also mandated services not only to infants and toddlers with developmental delays but to those with established conditions that typically resulted in developmental delays (IDEA, 1991). Lawmakers, recognizing that previous legislation had established categorical classifications for older children not appropriate for preschoolers, permitted states to use a noncategorical classification for young children with disabilities ages 3 to 5 who were experiencing developmental delays (IDEA, 1991).

This category of developmental delay was intended to include children from three to five years of age with significant delays, generally defined as 25% or greater, in one or more domains of physical, cognitive, communication, social and emotional, and adaptive development who, as a result of their delays, need special education and related services (Bernheimer, Keogh, & Coots, 1993). The identification of this new category for preschoolers was based on the belief that categories used to determine eligibility for older school-age children were often

inappropriate for children birth through 5. There was much concern among parents and professionals that the requirement to identify children by disability categories in the early years would lead to premature categorization or miscategorization of young children (Bernheimer et al., 1993; Harbin & Danaher, 1994; Shackelford, 1998; Snyder, Bailey, & Auer, 1994).

Identification Issues in Special Education

Federal legislation now mandates that states provide services to eligible children birth to 21 years of age. These services are provided for in P.L. 101-476, IDEA, through two separate service systems, Part C (previously Part H) for infants and toddlers, and Part B for 3- to 5-year-olds and 5 to 21-year-olds. This federal legislation provides only conceptual regulations and definitions of disabling conditions, leaving interpretation and implementation to states and local education agencies. As might be expected, the broad nature of the federal regulations has led to wide variations in how states and local education agencies identify, define eligibility, and classify children with disabilities (Harbin et al., 1991). Two main issues emerge when examining the identification procedures and policies for providing services to children with disabilities, particularly at the preschool level. The first area of concern relates to lack of continuity

regarding eligibility policy and criteria between Part C (infant/toddler), Part B (preschool, 3- to 5-year-olds), and Part B (school age) services (Harbin et al., 1991; Harbin & Danaher, 1994; McLean, et al., 1991). The second area of concern involves categorical versus noncategorical labels.

Eligibility Policy and Criteria

The two separate service system requirements for infants and toddlers (Part C) and preschoolers (Part B) of P.L. 101-476, IDEA, have caused significant concerns relating to eligibility, assessment, and categorical versus noncategorical classifications (Danaher, 1992; Harbin et al., 1992; McLean, et al., 1991). Concern for the potential harmful effects of labeling preschool age children, together with concern about the appropriateness of assessment instruments and use of Part B categories for young children has resulted in the use of noncategorical eligibility options in many states (McLean, et al., 1991).

There continues to be much concern about the continuity in eligibility policy between Part C (infant/toddler), Part B (preschool 3 to 5 year-olds, and Part B (school age) of IDEA (Harbin, 1992; McLean, et al., 1991). For example, children eligible for Part C services may or may not be eligible for Part B preschool services due to several circumstances. Under Part C, children can be found eligible for services if they (a) are experiencing

developmental delays, (b) have a diagnosed mental or physical condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay, or (c) are at risk of a substantial developmental delay if early intervention services are not provided (Shackelford, 1998). Children who are not demonstrating significant developmental delay but are “at risk” of having a substantial developmental delay are not eligible under Part B (3 to 5 years of age).

Eligibility policies and criteria vary significantly among and between states. Harbin, Danaher, and Derrick (1994) compared eligibility policies for infants/toddlers (Part C) and preschoolers (Part B) within each state and found significant discrepancies in 27 states. In 19 states, children transitioning from Part C programs to Part B programs had to demonstrate a greater degree of delay to qualify for special education services.

Children transitioning from preschool Part B service to school-age Part B services face a similar dilemma in meeting eligibility categorical requirements. Danaher (1998) reviewed the eligibility classifications and criteria in use by state and jurisdictional preschool programs under IDEA. Findings revealed that seven states use only IDEA, Part B, disability categories to identify eligible children of any age. Twenty-three states use all of the Part B disability categories plus an additional category or classification unique to early childhood. However, these states use the

additional category only when another disability category cannot be clearly differentiated. The eligibility policies of 15 states enumerate some, but not all, of the Part B categories, plus a category specific to early childhood. Seven states do not use any of the Part B categories for young children and use a noncategorical designation exclusively. Existing categorical definitions under Part B include three criteria for eligibility: (a) documentation of the presence of a disability, (b) that adversely affects a child's educational performance, and (c) requires special instruction (McLean et al., 1991). These criteria are difficult to document for preschool children, particularly with respect to educational performance. Preschool children transitioning to school age service at the age of 5 or 6 have no documented educational performance. As a result, children with special needs may be found ineligible for services as they transition from preschool to school age because they do not meet the categorical definitions under Part B.

Frequently, assessment instruments used for identifying developmental delays in very young children do not meet acceptable validity, reliability, and standardization criteria. Instruments used in early childhood assessments do not strongly predict later abilities (Flavell, 1992).

Using these assessment measures may increase the risk of serious errors in identification.

Categorical versus Noncategorical Labels

A long-standing controversy in identification of young children in special education concerns whether to use categorical or noncategorical labels. Categorical labeling refers to identifying a student by a primary area of disability. A noncategorical approach uses a degree of delay criterion that takes into account the discrepancy between the child's chronological age and developmental age or uses descriptors such as mild/moderate and severe/profound (Bernheimer et al., 1993). Various types of quantitative measures and criteria (percentage delay versus standard deviations) are used to determine eligibility (Harbin et al. 1991; Kilgo et al., 1998). The degree of percentage of delay used in definitions by states range from 15% up to 50% in one or more developmental areas. The range for standard deviation levels is 1.3 to 2 standard deviations below the mean on one or more developmental areas (Kilgo et al., 1998). This broad range of definitions across states may significantly impact children who move from one state to another or who transition from infant/toddler (Part C) services to preschool (Part B) services.

MacMillan, Gresham, Bocian, and Siperstein (1997) examined the

relationship between authoritative definitions of disabilities, federal and state regulations presumed to guide local education agency (LEA) practices, and the use of assessment data in assigning children to disability categories.

These authors studied 113 students in California who were school classified with mental retardation, learning disabilities, or deemed ineligible. Comparisons were made of the student assessment data, the federal and state eligibility criteria for MR and LD, and the school division's eligibility determination. The decisions in 74 of the 113 cases in which students were classified as either having a learning disability or found ineligible were consistent with state guidelines. This study found that 43 of the students qualified according to state guidelines for MR, with Full Scale IQs (FSIQs) of 75 or less, but only 6 were classified by the schools with mental retardation. Six of the remaining students, who had FSIQs below 75, were found ineligible for services and the remainder were classified with learning disabilities. This study suggests a lack of congruity between federal and state criteria and LEA practices in terms of identification of students eligible for special education services. Given current identification practices, these authors question, whether noncategorical groupings of children in the early elementary grades would be more efficacious than categorical groupings.

Efficacy of Early Intervention

As mentioned earlier, there is a strong belief among educators and the general public that early intervention is a sound investment, especially for promoting later school success for young children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged environments. Wasik and Karweit (1994) affirmed that children who get off to a good start in the early years stand a better chance of being successful in school. Experiences in the years from birth to age 3 set a foundation for language and cognitive skills that prepare children for formal schooling and help prevent school failure. Further research of the efficacy of early intervention programs for young children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged environments consistently supports their effectiveness. The majority of the research on the efficacy of early intervention has concentrated on school-aged children without disabilities in specific targeted programs.

However, the efficacy of early intervention programs for preschoolers at risk and with developmental delays has also been well documented, particularly in the short term (Campbell & Ramey, 1995; Castro & Mastropieri, 1986; Frede, 1995; Guralnick, 1998; Slavin, 1994; Wasik & Karweit, 1994). Guralnick (1988, 1998) found that children at risk and those with established developmental delays, without early intervention,

demonstrated a general decline in their intellectual development during the first five years of life. Declines in intellectual development can be substantially reduced by early intervention for children at biological risk, environmental risk, and with mild to moderate developmental delays (Frede, 1995; Guralnick, 1998; Karweit, 1994).

It has always been the expectation that the extensive resources put into early intervention would produce benefits in both the short and long term. However, documented short-term gains for participants of early intervention programs often produce little to marginal (noncognitive) long-term benefits (Barnett, 1995; Brooks-Gunn, Gross, Kraemer, Spiker, & Shapiro, 1992; Ramey, Bryant, Wasik, Sparling, Fendt, & LaVange, 1992; Wasik & Karweit, 1994). Positive long-term outcomes have been documented for children with certain established disabilities such as autism and prematurity, and for children of poverty who participated in program specific interventions (Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Lovaas, 1987; Ramey et al., 1992). Positive gains in these instances appear specifically related to intensity and duration of early intervention services.

Research on the effectiveness of programs for young children who are disadvantaged or at risk has focused primarily on aspects of intensity of intervention, including persons and resources involved, duration of the

intervention, and immediate and lasting effects on student outcomes.

Barnett and Escobar (1987), in a synthesis of research on studies of early intervention programs, determined that early intervention for disadvantaged children was economically efficient and effective. They cited such programs as the Perry Preschool Project and Head Start to support significant long-term benefits. Slavin (1989) summarized the same studies and determined positive short-term benefits but found a “wash-out” effect as students progressed through the elementary grades.

Head Start

A synthesis of more than 200 evaluation studies on Head Start over a 20-year period found statistically significant short-term effects on cognitive and social-emotional development (Barnett, 1995). Barnett also found that the results of these studies showed a fade-out effect as early as the first year of school. Most researchers determined that the initial significant effects of the program on cognitive and social development were generally not sustained beyond the first grade.

Forness, Ramey, Ramey and Hsu (1998) examined the identification rates of special education in the categories of mental retardation, speech/language impairments, emotional disabilities, and learning disabilities for Head Start children as they completed the first grade. It is

mandated that 10% of the Head Start population served be children with disabilities. The majority of these students are found eligible for services under the category of speech/language impairment. This study found that, at the end of first grade, the majority of students receiving special education services were identified as having speech/language impairments, even though learning disabilities is the largest category of special education. Identification of children with learning disabilities is relatively rare prior to the middle elementary grades. The key diagnostic indicator for learning disabilities, discrepancy between intelligence and achievement, is difficult to substantiate in young children. This may be one reason why the category of speech/language impairment is the largest single disability category identified for special education during Head Start (Forness et al., 1998; Snyder et al., 1994).

Sinclair (1998) conducted a study to determine the relationship between prenatal drug exposure and emotional and behavioral disorder (E/BD) identification in Head Start and subsequent special education kindergarten placement. Results of this investigation of 145 Head Start children showed that 47% of the drug-exposed group versus 35% of the nondrug-exposed group met classification criteria for E/BD. In addition, 53% of the drug-exposed group were placed into special education

kindergarten programs versus 29% of the nondrug-exposed group. Prenatal drug exposure of Head Start children was found to be an effective predictor of later special education placement in kindergarten.

The Perry Preschool Project

The Perry Preschool Project also looked at improving outcomes for children from disadvantaged environments. Data consisted of two parts: documentation of the effect of preschool in general and documentation of the effect of participation in particular preschool curricula. The sample consisted of 123 disadvantaged children who had low IQ from Ypsilanti, Michigan. The children were recruited by locating all families with 3-year-olds and then interviewing the parents to determine occupation, education, and household density. There were five waves of this study, beginning in 1962 and continuing through 1967. Of the 123 participants, 58 were assigned to the preschool condition and 64 to the no-preschool condition. Children entered the program at age 3 and attended for two years. The short-term benefit of the Perry Preschool Project was most significant in an average difference of 11 points in IQ between program and control groups. Further, long-term benefits were significant for preschool enrollees in terms of lower enrollment in special education programs (45 versus 31%) and percent graduated from high school, with 67% of the experimental group

completing high school compared to 49% of students in the control group (Karweit, 1994).

The Milwaukee Project

The Milwaukee Project (Wasik & Karweit, 1994) focused on enriching the early experiences of children born to mothers who were impoverished and had mental retardation. The purpose of this study was to determine if providing enriching environments, regardless of cost or intensity of intervention, could alter the cognitive development of children born in significantly disadvantaged environments. The Milwaukee intervention consisted of two components: a child intervention component and a family-maternal rehabilitation component. A total of 82 infants under the age of 6 months were identified over a 24-month screening period. At the end of the study, at age 6, 17 experimental families, 18 control families, and 8 low-risk control families participated. The results of the project showed consistently higher IQ scores for the experimental than the control group. At the end of the program when children were 6 years of age, the experimental group scored 2.6 standard deviations higher than the control group. Follow-up of these children in the fourth grade indicated that the experimental group was reading a half year ahead of the control group; however, the experimental group was still reading below grade level. At the

end of fourth grade, 29% of the experimental group were retained compared to 59% of the control group. In addition, 41% of the experimental compared to 89% of the control group were receiving special education services.

Fuerst and Fuerst (1993) argued that preschool by itself is not enough to change the life chances of children raised in poverty, maintaining that sustained intervention over a period of years is needed to make a difference for disadvantaged children. In a long-term study of children at the Chicago's Parent Child Center, these authors found that it took four to six years of intensive intervention for girls from low income homes to demonstrate achievement difference. It took boys from similar backgrounds seven to nine years. They did not discount the value of a one- or two- year preschool program but believed that only sustained intervention over a number of years will have long-term effects on children born into poverty.

Carolina Abecedarian Project

The Carolina Abecedarian Project (Ramey & Campbell, 1984) was a center-based program intended to provide early education to children identified at risk for cognitive deficits. Families were screened for participation either before or immediately after the children were born. The study included 53 children in the experimental and 53 children in the

control group. The project was comprised of two components: a preschool program that served children from 6 weeks of age to kindergarten, and a school program that began at kindergarten and ended at the completion of second grade. In addition to the direct, intensive intervention with the children, a resource teacher visited each child's home 15 times during the year to provide parents with materials and instruction on working with their children at home. Results indicated that children in the experimental group scored consistently higher on IQ tests than the control group at 12 months and 36 months of age. Only 12% of the children who were in both the preschool and the school-age program were retained by the time they reached second grade compared to 38% of the children in the school-age only program and 32% of the children in the no-treatment control group. The addition of a school-age program added little to the effectiveness of the preschool and infant program. For children without early intervention, the school-age intervention alone was not sufficient to bring their level up to that of normally achieving peers or to the level of the children who had received the intervention in infancy and preschool. These data suggest that although early intervention alone clearly impacts a student's IQ, school-age interventions are needed to maintain the positive effects of the early intervention. Follow-up data collected when the children were 12 years old

showed that children in the Abecedarian Project had, on average, higher IQ scores than the control group (IQ = 94 and 85 respectively). At age 21, 40% of the young adults who had participated in the project were still in school compared with 20% of the control group. Approximately 35% were attending or had graduated from a four-year college compared with 14% of the control group. These findings suggest that early intervention does indeed provide children from low-income families benefits that carry over into adulthood (Ramey et al., 1994).

Children with disabilities

Determining the effectiveness of early intervention for children with disabilities continues to prove challenging at best. It is widely accepted that the array of early intervention services make positive and significant differences in the lives of children with disabilities and their families. The challenge for researchers involved in early intervention efficacy is to determine the differential effects of program features such as duration, intensity, point of initiation of services, and nature of parent involvement (Guralnick, 1991). Specific program features and child and family characteristics as they impact the effectiveness of early intervention are critical issues.

The belief that the earlier intervention begins the more effective it will be is supported by a strong, logical rationale. Casto and Mastropieri (1986), in their meta-analysis involving children birth to age 5, found no support for the principle of “earlier is better” as effect sizes were similar regardless of when intervention was begun. When looking at the birth-to-3-year-old group, however, Shonkoff (1987) found that more children with mild disabilities had better outcomes if they were enrolled in early intervention programs before 6 months of age.

The significance of the age-of-start issue appears particularly relevant within the context of specific disability groups. White (as cited in Guralnick, 1991) found moderate to no differences relative to age-of-start for children primarily identified as medically fragile. In contrast, substantial research supports “earlier is better” for children with Down Syndrome. Intervention for children with Down Syndrome typically begins at birth and is continually maintained. This ongoing intervention prevents the decline in cognitive development that typically occurs during the first 12-18 months of life for these children and appears to prevent further decrease throughout the remaining early childhood years (Sharav & Shlomo, 1986). Similar outcomes have been observed in children with low birth weight or prematurity as well as in children with cerebral palsy

(Palmer, Shapiro et al., 1990; Rauh, Achenbach, Nurcombe, Howell, & Teti, 1988).

One of the most significant factors contributing to developmental outcomes, both in terms of age-of-start of early intervention and in long-term outcomes, is the severity of the child's disability. Children whose disabilities are most readily apparent at birth or shortly after birth typically begin early intervention immediately, whereas children who have less apparent developmental delays are often not identified until later in their preschool years. Children with more significant delays are less responsive to early intervention in the short and the long-term (Dunst, 1985; Shonkoff, 1987). However, an exception to this pattern has been noted in children diagnosed with autism who have demonstrated significant developmental gains with early intervention (McEachin, Smith, & Lovaas, 1993).

Casto and Mastropieri (1986) conducted a meta-analysis of 74 primary research studies investigating the efficacy of early intervention with preschoolers with disabilities. The overall conclusion supports the belief that early intervention programs do result in moderately large immediate benefits in IQ, motor, language, and academic achievement for preschoolers with disabilities. The majority of children included in the studies were categorized with mental retardation or as having a combination of

disabilities. Few effect sizes were included for children with severe or profound disabilities, sensory impairments, behavioral disabilities, or speech impairments.

The general perception among educators is that once in special education, always in special education. Research regarding students who have been declassified and return to general education is all but nonexistent. Carlson and Parshall (1996) conducted a preliminary study of outcomes of students declassified from special education in Michigan. Data were analyzed from 1989 to 1993 for 51,624 special education students age 6 to 26 years who were declassified and returned to general education. This represents 7% of all students with disabilities age 6 to 26 during this time. Sixty-six percent of those returning to general education had received services for speech or language impairments. Students with learning disabilities (24%) and emotional disabilities (7%) comprised the majority of the remaining students who were declassified. Most students returning to general education did so between the ages of 8 and 11. In a follow-up survey, general education teachers and counselors indicated that grades for students who had been declassified were better for younger than for older students. Data also indicated that the longer the declassified students were in special education, the lower their overall academic performance was

rated. This could be attributed to the fact that students who had been classified with speech or language impairments were declassified sooner than students classified with learning disabilities or emotional disabilities. In addition, respondents reported that 22% of declassified students were socially less well adjusted than peers without disabilities, 65% were as well adjusted, and 14% were better adjusted. Respondents felt that 11% of declassified students continued to need special education services. Results of this study showed that approximately 4% of declassified students were reclassified within three years of declassification. The authors suggested that the students' likelihood of success could be increased if consideration were given to development of a transition plan from special education to general education at the time of declassification.

Current research on termination patterns of preschool students at the time of transition to elementary school is limited. Clarizio and Halgren (1993) and Walker and colleagues (1988) found that termination from elementary special education programs was strongly associated with students' initial primary categorical classification. Students identified with speech/language impairments, preschool through secondary school, were most likely to terminate from special education services. Edgar, Heggelund, and Fischer (1988) found that approximately 87% of preschool students

with special needs continued to be eligible for services as they entered elementary school. Students who were identified with mild disabilities were most likely to terminate.

Limited current research related to reclassification patterns within special education is also evident. Examining the frequency of reclassification within special education, Walker (1988) found that over a two-year period approximately 12% of the students receiving special education services were reclassified with a new categorical classification. Similarly, Clarizio and Halgren (1993) reported a 16% reclassification rate. The most fluid category in terms of classification change was speech/language impairment. The two most common categories to which students reclassified were learning disabilities and mental retardation.

A majority of the research on the efficacy of early intervention has focused on children at risk due to socio-economic and environmental factors and children with specific disabilities (e.g. Down Syndrome, autism). Though these studies have provided valuable information on the short-term effects of early intervention programming for very specific populations, more research is needed on the long-term effect of early intervention on young children with disabilities.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter delineates the procedures, materials, and processes that were implemented to conduct this research study. The following topic areas are addressed: (a) research questions, (b) population and sample, (c) data collection procedures, and (d) data analysis.

Research Questions

This study identified the demographics (i.e., gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) and categorical classifications of students who exited preschool special education programs in an urban school district from 1990 through 1993. Additionally, a comparison was conducted of the performance of students who were classified and declassified during the elementary years relative to attendance, retention, disciplinary referrals math and reading achievement, and grade point average. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the initial eligibility classification at time of transition to school service for students who received preschool special

- education services under the category of developmental delay?
2. How stable, over six years, are the initial eligibility classifications at time of transition to school services for students who received preschool special education services under the category of developmental delay for
 - a. Students initially classified, and
 - b. Students initially declassified?
 3. How do students who were classified and declassified at time of transition and those who were subsequently declassified and reclassified with mild disabilities (i.e., DD, LD, ED, EMD, and S/L) compare in performance in Grades 3 and 5 in terms of the following: attendance, disciplinary referrals, retention, achievement (math and reading), and grade point average?

Population and Sample

The population consisted of students from a large urban school district in Virginia in a city with a population of approximately 180,000. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 12% of the families in the city were below the federal poverty level. The ethnic composition was approximately 62.6% White, 33.6% Black, and 3.8% Other. This school district served approximately 32,000 students, preschool through grade 12. The ethnicity

of the student population was 50% Black, 44% White, 3% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Fifty-two percent of the students received free or reduced-price lunches. In addition, the school district has historically supported a large, transient military population, resulting in a yearly student turnover rate of approximately 46%. Approximately 3,100 students received special education services.

Participating students had been found eligible for preschool special education services under the category of preschool developmental delay and had exited preschool special education programs during the 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92, and 1992-93 school years at either 5 or 6 years of age. As Virginia does not have mandatory kindergarten, students can enter school-age services at the age of 5 or 6. Sixty-nine students (66%) in the sample exited preschool at age 5 and 34 students (34%) exited at age 6. Students were found eligible by the school division for preschool special education services following procedures identified in IDEA and state and local guidelines. Students transferring into the division with an IEP received services according to their IEP and were included in this sample if they had a categorical classification of preschool developmental delay.

Students between the ages of 2 and 5 were referred to the school division for evaluation by parents, physicians, early intervention providers,

daycare personnel, and other established Child Find programs. An assessment using appropriate preschool assessment instruments was conducted by the preschool assessment team, consisting of a school psychologist, school social worker, speech/language pathologist, school nurse, and developmental specialist. Required assessment components included a psychological evaluation, social history with adaptive measure, developmental assessment, speech and language evaluation, and medical assessment, to include vision and hearing. An occupational therapist and physical therapist were also available as needed. Following the assessment, an eligibility committee meeting was held to determine the student's eligibility for special education services. The eligibility committee was comprised of, at a minimum, members of the assessment team, a principal or designee, and the parent. Per state guidelines, students could be found eligible for preschool special education services in any of the designated Part B categories but were generally found eligible under the category of preschool developmental delay. Students found eligible under this category must have had a diagnosed disabling condition or demonstrated a 25% delay in one or more of the following developmental areas: cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, expressive or receptive language, social-emotional, and adaptive skills. Students found eligible for preschool special education

received services based on their Individual Education Program (IEP) on a continuum of service delivery options ranging from collaborative to home-based.

Data Collection Procedures and Data Sources

Data Collection Procedures

Following school division and university approval of the study, the researcher identified, from existing class rolls, students who exited preschool special education programs during the 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92, and 1992-93 school years. A sample of 105 students who exited preschool special education during these four years was identified. The records of 31 (29.5%) students contained partial or missing data. These students had moved out of the division at some point during the six-year period following exit from preschool special education services.

As each student was identified, a subject number was assigned to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects and data. Student records were examined for a period of six years from time of exit from preschool special education to identify for each student: (a) age at exit, (b) gender, (c) ethnicity, (d) socio-economic status, (e) categorical classification at time of exit, and (f) classification status and grade placement over six years. In addition, data were collected on each student

at Grade 3 specific to: (a) grades, (b) attendance, (c) disciplinary referrals, and (d) classification status, and again at Grade 5 specific to: (a) grades, (b) reading and math achievement, (c) attendance, (d) discipline referrals, and (e) classification status. Individual student records and district computer databases were examined to access this information. Data were collected and recorded on a data collection sheet (see Appendix A for the data collection form, descriptors, and codes).

Data Sources

Demographic information was collected from the division database and reflects division criteria and descriptions. Socio-economic status is defined by qualification for free or reduced lunch (see Appendix A for USDA Income Eligibility Guidelines). Ethnicity is defined by parent report using one of following designations: American Indian, Black, Oriental, Spanish Surname American, and White.

Data regarding specific student performance were collected from the following sources:

- (a) Categorical classifications, determined by an eligibility committee and consistent with IDEA regulations, were identified. Data for each student were collected from Eligibility Summaries (see Appendix B).

- (b) Grades reflecting student achievement based on the district approved designations of A, B, C, D, and F were collected from student records.
- (c) Reading achievement was determined by a commercially developed instrument, the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP). The DRP, which measures reading comprehension, reports internal consistency, or the degree to which students respond consistently to the items on a test, with reliability coefficients of .93 to .97. In addition, studies conducted by the test developer support the stability of the DRP measure as well as its ability to determine growth in student learning. Statistical bias analysis of test data indicated that the DRP measures reading comprehension equally well irrespective of ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender (Touchstone Applied Science Associates, 1992). During the identified cohort years, divisionwide, an average of 69% of students at Grade 3 and 69% of students at Grade 5 were reading at or above grade level based on the DRP.

- (d) Math Achievement was determined by a division-developed grade-level objective reference test, which assessed student mastery of math objectives taught at each grade level. Results were reported as a percentage, with 70% or better considered mastery of objectives at each grade level.
- (e) Attendance data, number of days absent for each student, were maintained on the division computer database and reported divisionwide as a percentage of students who were absent 10 days or less. Divisionwide, 79% of students in grades K-5 were absent 10 days or less.
- (f) Discipline referrals and infractions were maintained on the division computer database and reflected school division policy regarding student conduct as defined in the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

Recommended and mandatory disciplinary sanctions were identified in the handbook (see Appendix C) for each rule violation. Disciplinary actions were identified for each rule infraction by level as follows: 1-Conference, 2-Intervention, 3-Suspension (1-5 days),

4- Suspension (6-10 days), 5-Suspension (10 days with contract), 6-Long-Term Suspension (11-180 days), and 7-Expulsion.

Data Analysis

Simple percentages and descriptive analyses were used to examine the research questions. Research Question 1 yielded numbers and percentages of students eligible for IDEA Part B category classifications. These classifications include: autism, developmental delay, educable mental disability, emotional disability, hearing impairment, learning disability, multiple-disability, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, severe and profound disability, speech or language impairment, trainable mental disability, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment.

Research Question 2 utilized descriptive analyses to identify student categorical classifications at time of transition to school services and the stability of those placements over a six-year period. Students transitioning from preschool special education services could have been (a) initially declassified, no longer eligible for special education services per IDEA, or (b) initially classified, eligible for special education under Part B of IDEA under a specific classification category. These students could subsequently have been declassified and or reclassified.

Research Question 3 compared the performance of students who were classified and declassified at time of transition on the variables of attendance, retention, disciplinary referrals, math and reading achievement, and grades to determine whether a significant difference existed among or between groups. Analysis of variance and t -tests were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were also utilized in instances where cell sizes were too small to be analyzed statistically.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the data analysis procedures and results for the research questions outlined in Chapter III. The data were analyzed at two levels: (a) descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts and percentages, and (b) inferential statistics, such as *t*-tests and ANOVAs. The Tukey-B method was used for multiple comparisons. This chapter is organized into sections corresponding to the three research questions. The results of the statistical analyses of the data are summarized in tables as well as described in narrative form.

Research results for Question 1 were based on a sample of 105 students who exited preschool special education during the four identified cohort years, 1990-1993. Of note was the decreased sample size for Questions 2 and 3 due to 31 (29.5%) students moving out of the school division at some point during the six-year period following their exit from preschool special education. This decrease was not surprising given the large military population and was consistent with, in fact lower than, the reported division turnover rate of 46%.

Demographic information (i.e., gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status) describing the subjects is detailed in Table 1. The gender make-up of students was 72% male and 28% female. This is consistent with U.S. Department of Education (1994) findings of approximately twice as many males as females in special education nationwide. The ethnic composition of the sample was determined to be 49% Black, 47% White, 4% Oriental, and 1% Spanish. This does not differ significantly from the ethnic make-up of the school division as a whole, which was 50% Black, 44% White, 3% Asian, and 3% Hispanic. Fifty-two percent of students in the sample qualified for free or reduced-lunch prices. This is slightly higher, but not significantly different, than the 41% rate for the division as a whole.

Question 1

What is the initial eligibility classification at time of transition to school services for students who received preschool special education services under the category of developmental delay?

All students exiting preschool special education services, whether at age 5 or 6, are reevaluated to determine eligibility for school-age special education services. Eligibility at the time of exit from preschool special education services requires that students who continue to be eligible for special education services qualify for one of the identified Part B categories.

These categorical classifications include: developmental delay, educable mental disability, emotional disability, learning disability, speech or language impairment, autism, hearing impairment, other health impairment, orthopedic impairment, severe and profound disability, trainable mental disability, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, and multiple disability.

Table 2 identifies the number and percentage of students by categorical classification as well as those declassified at the time of exit from preschool special education. As illustrated, of the original sample of 105 students, 82% continued to be eligible for services as they transitioned from preschool special education services. At time of exit, 26.6% of the students were classified with developmental delays, 18.1% with speech or language impairments, and 9.5% with educable mental disabilities. In addition, 3.8% were classified with hearing impairments, 4.8% with other health impairments, 7.6% with orthopedic impairments, 4.8% with severe and profound disabilities, 5.7% trainable mental disabilities and 1.0% with visual impairments. A total of 19 students, 18%, were declassified (not meeting eligibility criteria for school-age special education services) as they exited preschool.

Of the 86 students who continued to be eligible for services over the six-year period, 33% were initially classified with developmental delays,

22% with speech or language impairments, and 12% with educable mental disabilities. In addition, 4% were classified with hearing impairments, 6% with other health impairments, 9% with orthopedic impairments, 6% with severe and profound disabilities, 7% with trainable mental disabilities, and 1% with visual impairments. No students were classified with learning disabilities or emotional disabilities as they transitioned from preschool special education services. This is most likely due to the fact that identification with a learning disability requires a documented discrepancy between ability and achievement, and identification with an emotional disability requires documented adverse affect on educational performance. It is difficult to document either a significant discrepancy between ability and achievement or an adverse affect on educational performance in 5- and 6-year- olds transitioning from preschool to school age service as these students have not yet made the measurable academic gains needed to substantiate a “significant” academic delay. In the population as a whole, students with learning disabilities do not typically receive special education services until the third grade and students with emotional disabilities are often not identified until the fifth grade (Hehir, 1999).

Students exiting from preschool special education services were more likely to be classified with developmental delays (33%) than any other

categorical classification. Eligibility criteria for developmental delay Part B (3 to 5 years of age) and developmental delay Part B (5 to 8 years of age) are very similar. This allows some continuity of services for students who continue to display significant learning difficulties but who do not meet the specific eligibility criteria of other categorical classifications.

Question 2

How stable, over six years, are the initial eligibility classifications at time of transition to school services for students who received preschool special education services under the category of developmental delay for:

- 1. Students initially classified, and*
- 2. Students initially declassified?*

A total of 105 students exited preschool special education service from 1990-1993. At the time of exit, 86 (82%) students continued to be eligible for special education services. The remaining 19 students (18.1%) were not eligible for services upon exit from preschool. Of these original cohorts, 74 (70.5%) were still enrolled in the school division six years after preschool exit. The remaining 31 students (29.5%) had missing data, having moved at some point during the six-year period following preschool exit.

The use of categorical classifications, Part B of IDEA, is acceptable

for identification of preschoolers in Virginia; however, the classification of developmental delay is more typically used. At time of exit from preschool services, 86 students continued to be eligible for services. Of these, 28 (33%) were classified with developmental delays and 58 (67%) were eligible for services in categories other than developmental delay. The classification of developmental delay, by definition, can only be used for students through the age of 8.

The following classification and reclassification options existed for students initially declassified and classified. Students initially declassified could (a) remain declassified, (b) be reclassified, (c) be reclassified and subsequently declassified, or (d) be reclassified, subsequently declassified and reclassified again. Students initially classified could (a) remain classified within the same category, (b) remain classified with different categorical labels, (c) be subsequently declassified, or (d) be declassified and subsequently reclassified.

Reclassification rates for students initially declassified and those initially classified are summarized in Table 3. Frequency rates of reclassification for students initially declassified and classified are reported. For students who were initially declassified at time of exit (16), 4 (25%) maintained the declassification status over six years while 12 (75%) were

reclassified. Further examination of the 12 students who were reclassified indicates that 4 (33%) were reclassified the first year following preschool exit, 7 (59%) the second year, and 1(8%) the third year. In addition, of those initially declassified and subsequently reclassified, 7 (59%) of the students were reclassified once, 4 (25%) twice, and 1 (6%) three times. Carlson and Parshall (1996) reported a 7% declassification rate for students grades K-12 with a subsequent reclassification rate of 4%, which occurred between the ages of 8 and 12.

An examination of students who were initially classified at time of preschool exit (76) revealed that 23 (30%) retained their initial classification without any change. Of the remaining classified students, 34 (45%) were reclassified once and 19 (25%) were reclassified twice. It is important to note that reclassification rates for students initially classified were impacted by the fact that all students who were initially classified with developmental delays were mandated to be reevaluated by the age of 8. At that time, students were either reclassified within another category or declassified.

Overall stability of student classification for those initially declassified and classified ($n=92$) indicated that 27 (29%) maintained the original exit classification status over six years. A total of 41 (45%) of the students changed status one time, 23 (25%) changed twice, and 1 (1%)

changed three times. A t -test was employed to determine the level of significance between the means. No significant difference was found between the means of students originally declassified ($p = 1.1250$, $SD = .8851$) and those initially classified ($p = .9079$, $SD = .7690$).

A yearly examination of stability of classification (see Table 4) indicated that from Year 1 to 2, 88% (81) of the students maintained their original classification status and 12% (11) were reclassified. Analysis of Year 2 to 3 data showed that 60% (53) of the students maintained the previous classification status whereas 40% (36) were reclassified. Results of Year 3 to 4 data indicated that 78% (64) of the students showed no change in classification over the previous year and 22% (18) were reclassified. Data from Year 4 to 5 indicated that 85% (67) of the students maintained the same classification status while 15% (12) were reclassified. Finally, Year 5 to 6 data indicated that 87% (64) of the students remained the same and 13% (10) were reclassified. Thus, reclassification patterns were relatively stable throughout the six years with the exception of Years 2 to 3 and 3 to 4 when reclassification rates were 40% and 22%, respectively. The increase in reclassification rates during these two periods can be attributed, in large part, to the mandated reclassification, at age 8, of students classified with developmental delays.

Overall reclassification patterns of students by category are reported in Table 5. These results are reported descriptively given the small cell sizes for many of the categories. As previously noted, the category of developmental delay had a very high reclassification rate. The category of speech or language impairments had a low stability rate as well. A total of 67% (10) of students classified with speech or language impairments were reclassified once and 33% (5) were reclassified twice. In contrast, high stability rates were noted for the categories of educable mental disabilities, severe and profound disabilities, trainable mental disabilities, orthopedic impairments, hearing impairments and visual impairments.

Data were further analyzed using ANOVA to determine if a significant difference existed in stability of classification between students who were initially declassified, initially classified with developmental delays, and all other students as a group. Results reported in Table 6 indicate no significant difference in stability of classification within and between these groups.

School Assignment Stability

The stability of school assignments for students over the course of six years was not originally identified as a variable for this study. In the course of data collection, the frequency of school assignment changes for students

in the sample appeared noteworthy and data were subsequently collected and evaluated.

Of the 63 students in this sample, 15 (24%) were initially declassified and 48 (76%) were initially classified. The number of school assignments for the sample as a whole ranged from 1 to 5 over the six-year period. Overall, 21 students (33%) attended only one school, 18 students (29%) attended two schools, 13 students (21%) attended three schools, 8 students (12%) attended four schools, and 3 students (5%) attended five different schools within the six-year period.

Statistical analyses of the data are reported in Table 7. All of the students who were initially declassified and remained declassified ($n = 4$) had only one change in school assignment over the six years, mean of 1.0000 ($SD = .0000$). The average number of school assignments for the students who were initially declassified and changed classification ($n = 11$) was 2.7917 ($SD = 1.0090$). Students initially classified who remained classified ($n = 24$) and those initially classified who changed classification ($n = 24$) received mean scores of 2.7917 ($SD = .9771$) and 2.2083 ($SD = 1.0624$), respectively. The mean for the group as a whole, $n = 63$, was 2.4444 ($SD = 1.0743$).

Analysis of the variance indicated a significant difference ($p=.006$) in

stability of school assignments for students who had initially been declassified and remained declassified compared to students who were (a) initially declassified and changed classification, (b) initially classified and remained classified, and (c) initially classified and changed classification status.

Question 3

How do students who were classified and declassified at time of transition and those who were subsequently declassified and reclassified with mild disabilities (developmental delays, learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, educable mental disabilities, and speech or language impairments) compare in performance in Grades 3 and 5 in terms of the following: attendance, disciplinary referrals, retention, achievement (math and reading), and grade point average?

Performance data were analyzed respective to two groups of students, those initially declassified and those initially classified. These data were then further defined by students in each group who (a) showed no change in classification status and (b) changed classification status. Data were analyzed in this format due to the numerous classification and reclassification options that existed for students initially classified and those initially declassified. In addition, significant variability in individual cell

sizes occurred due to missing data resulting from students moving out of the division as well as students being exempted from assessment per their Individual Education Program (IEP). Sample sizes were also reduced from the original sample as performance data were collected only on students classified with mild disabilities (i.e., developmental delays, learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, educable mental disabilities, and speech or language impairments).

Attendance

Attendance data were analyzed for students at Grade 3 and Grade 5. At Grade 3, data were available for 56 students, of which 14 were initially declassified and 42 initially classified (see Table 8). An equal percentage (86%) of students initially declassified and initially classified had an absentee rate of 10 days or less. Statistical analysis of the data (see Table 8) showed no significant differences in the means between or within the groups relative to attendance at Grade 3. It is important to note that the large variances in standard deviations, which range from 2.2174 to 8.0312, mask the mean difference analyses.

Analyses of attendance data at Grade 5 revealed similar results (see Table 9). Of the total sample of 51 Grade 5 students, 82% (31) of those initially declassified and 78% (7) of those initially classified had absentee

rates of 10 days or less. No significant differences were found in Grade 5 attendance for students initially declassified and those initially classified irrespective of subsequent classification status.

In summary, there were no significant differences in attendance rates for students in Grade 3 and Grade 5 who were initially declassified and initially classified at time of exit from preschool special education services.

In addition, the attendance rates for students in the sample are consistent with the division average of 79% of students absent 10 days or less.

Disciplinary Referrals

Statistical analyses of data, reported in Table 10, indicated no significant differences in Grade 3 students who were initially declassified and those initially classified relative to behaviors requiring formal disciplinary action. None of the 14 students initially declassified had any disciplinary referrals. Of the 42 students initially classified, 81% (34) had one or fewer referrals.

Similarly, there were no significant differences in disciplinary referrals for Grade 5 students regardless of reclassification status (see Table 11). Of the 13 students initially declassified, 77% (10) had no disciplinary referrals. In addition, 71% (27) of the students initially classified ($n=38$) had no disciplinary referrals.

Statistical analyses of data at Grades 3 and 5 relative to disciplinary referrals for students initially declassified and those initially classified indicated no significant differences in these groups.

Retention

Analyses of retention rates indicated that 6 students (35%) of the 17 students who were initially declassified had been retained. Likewise, 16 (33%) of the 49 students initially classified were retained. There was no significant difference between the retention rates of students initially declassified and those initially classified.

Math Achievement

An analysis of student performance on the division's objective reference test for math revealed significant variability in the mean scores and standard deviations of the groups (see Table 12). The students who had been declassified with no classification status change had a mean score of 82.0000 (SD = 8.1240). Students who were declassified and had a status change received a mean score of 74.3333 (SD = 8.9861). Of students initially classified, those whose status remained the same, had a mean score of 70.3000 (SD = 15.0337) while those who were reclassified had a mean score of 80.2667 (SD = 9.1454). Analysis of the variance of these groups

indicated no significant differences ($p = .115$) between or within these groups.

Reading Achievement

Analysis of student reading achievement based on the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessment showed no significant differences in pass rates between the groups (see Table 13). The total sample consisted of 48 students, 12 (25%) of which were originally declassified and 36 (75%) initially classified. Overall, 20 (42%) received a pass score on the DRP, 15 students (31%) did not pass, and 13 students (27%) were exempted per their IEP.

Evaluation of the data for students who were declassified (12) indicated that four students (33%) remained declassified and eight (67%) changed classification status. All of the students (4) who remained declassified achieved a pass score. Eight students were initially declassified and subsequently reclassified. Of these, four (33%) received a pass score while three (25%) did not pass. One student (9%) was exempted from the testing per the IEP.

Of the 36 students initially classified, one student (3%) had no change in classification status and received a pass score on the DRP. Of the remaining 35 students in the sample, 11 (31%) received a pass score, 12

(33%) did not pass, and 12 (33%) were exempted from testing per their IEP.

In summary, 42% (20) of Grade 5 students passed the DRP, 31% (15) did not achieve a pass score, and 27% (13) were exempted from testing per the IEP. This pass rate is significantly lower than the 69% pass rate of Grade 5 students divisionwide. The 27% exemption rate would seem to impact the overall pass rate.

Grade Point Average

Analyses of grade point average for Grade 3 and Grade 5 are reported in Table 14. As shown, examination of grade point average at Grade 3, $n=69$, indicated a mean of 2.2638 ($SD=.6453$). Grade 5 data revealed, $n=61$, a mean of 2.4361 ($SD=.5771$). Again, no significant differences were found in grade point average for Grade 5 students.

Summary

This study examined, over a six-year period, the initial categorical classifications, stability of classifications and performance outcomes for students who had received preschool special education services. The overall declassification rate at time of exit from preschool special education was relatively low and consistent with earlier studies. High reclassification rates were noted for students initially declassified at time of exit.

Reclassification rates for students identified with developmental

delays and speech or language impairments were also notably higher.

Examination of stability of school assignments indicated that students who were initially declassified and remained declassified had significantly fewer school changes than all other groups. No significant differences were found in achievement outcomes for students initially declassified and those initially classified.

This study adds to the limited research base on classification patterns and performance outcomes for students who received preschool special education services. Further research in this area is clearly warranted.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Proponents of early childhood education programs for young children who are disadvantaged, as well as those with disabilities, have long held the opinion that early intervention is a sound investment, both in the short and long term. They further promote the assumptions that early childhood special education programs: (a) have positive effects on the long-term outcomes of preschoolers with disabilities, and (b) reduce or eliminate the need for special education services in the elementary grades. Substantial research supports the efficacy of early intervention for children with developmental delays specific to cognitive abilities as well as social-emotional development (Castro & Mastropieri, 1986; Guralnik, 1998). Research studies designed to examine the categorical placements and the stability of those placements are limited, however.

The purpose of this study was to determine: (a) the initial eligibility classification at time of exit from preschool special education services, (b) the stability of classifications for students initially declassified and initially classified, and (c) the performance of students who were classified with

mild disabilities with respect to attendance, disciplinary referrals, retention, math and reading achievement, and grade point average.

Findings and Conclusions

The 105 students in this study exited preschool special education services between 1990 and 1993. Based on demographic data, the ethnic composition was approximately equal between Black and White, 49% and 47%, respectively. In terms of gender, substantially more males (72%) than females (28%) participated. Further, 52% of the students received free or reduced lunch. The sample is representative of the students in the school division as a whole in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic status. The gender of the students in this sample is representative of the special education population as a whole.

In the present study, 82% of the students exiting from preschool special education were classified as continuing to be eligible for special education services. This is consistent with the 87% continuation rate reported by Edgar, Heggelund, and Fischer (1988). The majority of the students who continued to be eligible for services were eligible for services in the categories of developmental delay (27%), speech/language impairment (18%), and educable mental disability (10%).

The declassification rate at time of exit from preschool special education services in the current study was found to be 18%. This is consistent with the 13% termination rate reported by Edgar and colleagues (1988). Results of this study indicated an overall reclassification rate of 77% for students initially classified and 75% for students initially declassified. This rate is much higher than the 12% to 16% reclassification rate found by Walker and his colleagues (1988) and Clarizio and Halgren (1993). The higher rate of reclassification found in this study may be attributed to several factors. One such issue was the limited age range of the subjects in this study as the focus was on the preschool to elementary age student. Another important distinction to note is that the category of developmental delay was not available for school-age classification at the time of the earlier studies. Factoring out the category of developmental delay in the current study yielded a reclassification rate of 53% for students initially classified. This rate, while lower than the overall reclassification rate of 77%, is still substantially higher than the previously cited studies.

Two findings relative to reclassification are particularly noteworthy. The first is the 75% reclassification rate, within three years of preschool exit, for students who were initially declassified. There are several possible explanations for this high reclassification rate. One contributing factor may

be the discrepancies in eligibility policies and criteria between preschool and school-age services. The general noncategorical classification used to determine eligibility at the preschool level is often seen as less stringent than the school-age eligibility criteria, especially in terms of an ability-achievement discrepancy. Therefore, students who had been eligible for services at the preschool level may no longer meet eligibility requirements. Another possible explanation is the issue of reliability of assessment instrumentation for very young children. There is concern that instruments used in early childhood assessments do not strongly predict later abilities and could in fact increase the likelihood of classification errors (Flavell et al., 1993). A third factor may be the inherent difficulty in diagnosing some disabling conditions, particularly for preschool students. Given the great variability in rate of development over time for typically developing preschoolers, it is reasonable to expect an even higher degree of variation in developmental progress for preschoolers with disabilities. Diagnostic criteria and eligibility policies do not take these developmental issues into account. A fourth factor that must be considered is the effectiveness of the preschool special education program itself. Program structures, curricular content, and basic organizational philosophy can affect successful transition, both socially and academically, of preschool students as they

enter the elementary grades. For example, highly structured preschool special education programs with low student-teacher ratios, while preparing students academically, may not be providing them with the necessary tools to be successful in typical general education classrooms.

The second issue of note is the frequency of reclassification for students initially declassified and those initially classified. Overall, 45% of the students who changed classification status changed once, 25% changed twice and 1% changed three times. The majority of students who were reclassified did so within the first three years following preschool exit. Year 2 (40%) and Year 3 (22%) following exit accounted for the greatest percentage of reclassifications. These high reclassification rates were due in part to the mandated reclassification at age 8 of all students identified as developmentally delayed. Twelve percent of the students initially classified were reclassified the first year after preschool exit. Though not a particularly high rate, this would lend one to question the appropriateness of categorical classifications, with respect to categorical criteria, committee interpretations, and assessment validity, for students at time of exit from preschool services.

Overall reclassification rates by category indicated high rates for students identified with developmental delays and speech/language

impairments. These findings are consistent with previous studies with respect to the category of speech/language impairment (Edgar et al., 1988; Walker et al., 1988). A high rate of students classified with speech/language impairments are often reclassified with learning disabilities or declassified. This may be due in part to the fact that students with speech/language impairments have needs that range from mild articulation delays to severe language delays. As a result, short-term interventions, normal developmental maturation, or a combination of both might eliminate the continued need for special education services. More significant language delays may later manifest themselves in the form of reading difficulties and more specifically, learning disabilities (Bernheimer et al., 1993; Carlson & Parshall, 1996; Edgar et al., 1988).

Though not originally identified as a variable for this study, analyses of data on the stability of school assignments yielded significant results. Students in the sample attended from one to five different schools within the division over the six-year period. There was a significant difference ($p = .006$) in stability of school assignments for students who had been initially declassified and who remained declassified when compared to students who were (a) initially declassified and changed classification (b) initially classified and remained classified, and (c) initially classified and changed

classification. It is important to note that the division school attendance zones created some instability in school assignments. This is due in part to the mandated busing of students, beginning at Grade 3, designed to ensure racial equity. As a result, the majority of students within the school division, irrespective of special education classification, experienced a minimum of one school assignment change during the elementary years. In addition, student programming needs, specific to categorical classifications and intensity of services, often necessitated a change in school assignment as an individual school may not have offered all categorical placement options. Therefore, multiple changes in classification status may have resulted in multiple changes in school assignments.

Performance data in the areas of attendance, disciplinary referrals, retention, reading and math achievement, and grade point average were evaluated for students who were initially declassified and those initially classified with mild disabilities. Numerous classification options existed for students initially declassified and those initially classified. Students initially declassified could (a) remain declassified, (b) be reclassified, (c) be reclassified and remain classified with different categorical labels, (d) be reclassified, subsequently declassified and reclassified again, or (e) be reclassified and subsequently declassified. By comparison, students

initially classified could (a) remain classified within the same category, (b) remain classified with different categorical labels, (c) be subsequently declassified, or (d) be declassified and subsequently reclassified. For the purposes of this study, these abundant classification options were collapsed into four basic groups specific to stability of classification status. These groups represented students who were (a) initially declassified and remained stable, (b) initially declassified and changed status, (c) initially classified and remained stable, and (d) initially classified and changed status. Analyses of the performance data revealed no significant differences for these groups on any of the variables examined.

Findings from the assessment of performance data may be impacted by several factors. It is important to note a significant decrease in sample size over the course of the six-year period, which significantly affected cell sizes. Specifically, of the original 105 students in the study, a total of 31 (30%) moved at some point during the six-year period. In addition, performance data, particularly as they relate to achievement, were further impacted by the fact that 27% of the students were exempted from the testing per their IEP. Additionally, it is important to note the large variances in standard deviations for Grade 3 attendance and Grade 5 math achievement as they mask mean difference analyses.

Given the paucity of current research relative to classification patterns and performance outcomes for students who received preschool special education services, this study serves to extend this body of research. Classification and declassification rates at time of exit from preschool special education programs are consistent with previous studies. Reclassification rates for students initially declassified at time of exit are significant and warrant further study. Examination of stability of school assignments indicated a significant difference in frequency of school assignment changes between students who were originally declassified and remained declassified and all other groups. Evaluation of performance data indicates no significant differences for students initially declassified and initially classified in respect to attendance, disciplinary referrals, retention, reading and math achievement, and grade point average.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study have several implications for educational best practices. Although the present study found no significant differences in reclassification rates for students initially declassified and initially classified, issues of classification would seem to command attention. The high reclassification rate of students initially declassified cannot be ignored. In addition, a significant number of these initially

declassified students were reclassified during the first and second years following preschool exit. This suggests a lack of appropriate classification or preparation, either before or after preschool exit, on the part of the preschool special education program. Increasing opportunities for integration into programs for typically developing preschoolers seems essential, especially for those preschoolers who are transitioning to school-age services. The intensive instruction and low teacher-student ratios found in many preschool special education programs tend to foster a level of dependence in students that may impact their success in typical school-age classrooms. Implementation of a structured transitional support system for exiting preschoolers should be considered as a means of providing direct assistance to students and teachers during the initial year following preschool exit.

Another issue to be considered regards the use of the category of developmental delay. For students who continued to be classified at time of exit, the greatest percentage continued to be eligible in the category of developmental delay. Given the great variability in developmental growth of typically developing preschoolers, it is often difficult to differentiate typical development from developmental delay. Therefore, the use of the category of developmental delay, from preschool through the age of eight,

should be considered a better approach. Providing continuous support to these students throughout this period would eliminate the “revolving door” of reclassification in those initial years following preschool exit.

Recommendations for Future Research

The present study and the few earlier studies (Edgar et al., 1988; Walker et al., 1988) addressing classification patterns of preschool special education students at time of transition to elementary school are a first step in establishing an understanding of the impact of preschool special education on later school success. However, further research is needed to expand the knowledge base surrounding issues in preschool special education to include: classification patterns, categorical labeling, transition planning, and student outcomes.

Future research should continue to focus on the long-term educational and placement outcomes of preschool students who receive special education services to include:

- a. A more extensive examination of classification and termination rates with larger sample sizes,
- b. Longitudinal and follow-up studies that examine student outcomes and classification patterns,
- c. Examination of assessment instrumentation and eligibility

- determination used in preschool special education programs,
- d. Examination of the transition process between preschool and school age service, and
 - e. Examination of general education teachers' perception of and expectations for students who attended preschool special education programs.

As the population of preschool students identified with developmental delays keeps growing, it becomes even more imperative that research continue to be conducted in the area of preschool special education to ensure the best possible outcomes for students at the time of transition to school-age service and in the long term.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1

Summary of Demographic Data on Student Participants

Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Female	29	27.6
Male	76	72.4
Total	105	100.0

Ethnicity		
	Frequency	Percent
Black	51	48.6
Oriental	4	3.8
Spanish	1	1.0
White	49	46.7
Total	105	100.0

Socio-Economic Status		
	Frequency	Percent
Free/Reduced Lunch	55	52
Not Free/Reduced Lunch	50	48
Total	105	100

Table 2

Initial Classification at Time of Exit

Classification Category	Frequency	Percent
Declassified	19	18.1
Autism	0	0.0
Developmental Delay	28	26.6
Educable Mental Disability	10	9.5
Emotional Disability	0	0.0
Hearing Impairment	4	3.8
Learning Disability	0	0.0
Multiple Disability	0	0.0
Orthopedic Impairment	8	7.6
Other Health Impairment	5	4.8
Severe and Profound Disability	5	4.8
Speech/Language Impairment	19	18.1
Trainable Mental Disability	6	5.7
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0.0
Visual Impairment	1	1.0
Total	105	100.0

Table 3

Summary of Reclassification Rates

Initial Classification Status

	Frequency of Change in Classification			
	0	1	2	3
Declassified (n=16) Missing (3)	25% (4)	44% (7)	25% (4)	6% (1)
Classified (n=76) Missing (10)	30% (23)	45% (34)	25% (19)	0% (0)
Total (n=92) Missing (13)	29% (27)	45% (41)	25% (23)	1% (1)

t-Test

Original Classification	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	SE of Mean
Declassified	16	1.1250	.8851	.2213
Classified	76	.9079	.7690	8.821E-02

Table 4

Stability of Classification Change over Six Years

Years After Exit	Categorical Classification			
	No Change		Change	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 – 2 n=92	81	88	11	12
2 – 3 n=89	53	60	36	40
3 – 4 n=82	64	78	18	22
4 – 5 n=79	67	85	12	15
5 – 6 n=74	64	87	10	13

Table 5

Summary of Reclassification Patterns

Categorical Classification	Initial Classification at Exit	Frequency of Change in Classification			
		0	1	2	3
Developmental Delay (n=17)	26.6% (28)	0% (0)	65% (11)	35% (6)	0% (0)
Educable Mental Disability (n=7)	9.5% (10)	71% (5)	29% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Hearing Impairment (n=3)	3.8% (4)	100% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Orthopedic Impairment (n=8)	7.6% (8)	63% (5)	25% (2)	12% (1)	0% (0)
Other Health Impairment (n=4)	4.8% (5)	25% (1)	25% (1)	50% (2)	0% (0)
Severe and Profound Disability (n=4)	4.8% (5)	100% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Speech or Language Impairment (n=15)	18.1% (19)	0% (0)	67% (10)	33% (5)	0% (0)
Trainable Mental Disability (n=3)	5.7% (6)	67% (2)	33% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Visual Impairment (n=1)	1.0% (1)	100% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total (n=62)	82% (86)	34% (21)	44% (27)	22% (14)	0% (0)

Table 6

Summary of Stability of Classification by Group

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>
Declassified	16	1.1250	.8851	.2213
Developmentally Delayed	23	1.3478	.5728	.1194
All Other Categories	53	.7170	.7690	.1056
Total	92	.9457	.7895	8.232E-02

ANOVA

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between Groups	7.006	2	3.503	6.270	.003
Within Groups	49.722	89	.559		
Total	56.728	91			

Table 7

Summary of Stability of School Assignments

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Subset for alpha = .05*	
					1	2
Declassified /No Change	4	1.0000	.0000	.0000	1.0000	
Classified/No Change	24	2.7917	.9771	.1994		2.2083
Declassified /Change	11	2.7273	1.0090	.3042		2.7273
Classified/Change	24	2.2083	1.0624	.2169		2.7917
Total	63	2.4444	1.0743	.1353		

* Uses harmonic mean sample size=9.429.

The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13.457	3	4.486	4.555	.006
Within Groups	58.098	59	.985		
Total	71.556	62			

Table 8

Summary of Grade 3 Attendance Data

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>	<u>Subset for Alpha=.05*</u> I
Declassified/No Change	4	4.2500	2.2174	1.1087	4.2500
Classified/No Change	20	6.4500	6.2195	1.3907	6.4500
Declassified /Change	10	8.5000	8.0312	2.5397	8.5000
Classified/Change	22	6.3636	6.7510	1.4393	6.3636
Total	56	6.6250	6.5326	.8730	

* Uses harmonic mean sample size=8.980.

The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

ANOVA

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between Groups	59.834	3	19.945	.453	.716
Within Groups	2287.291	52	43.986		
Total	2347.125	55			

Table 9

Summary of Grade 5 Attendance Data

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Subset for Alpha= .05*
Declassified/No Change	4	3.5000	5.0662	2.5331	3.5000
Classified/No Change	19	6.4211	5.8625	1.3449	6.4211
Declassified /Change	9	8.5556	5.0772	1.6924	6.0526
Classified/Change	19	6.0526	6.2847	1.4418	8.5556
Total	51	6.4314	5.8147	.8142	

* Uses harmonic mean sample size=8.577.

The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	77.709	3	25.903	.755	.525
Within Groups	1612.801	47	34.315		
Total	1690.510	50			

Table 10

Summary of Grade 3 Disciplinary Referrals

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Subset for Alpha=.05* 1
Declassified/No Change	4	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000
Classified/No Change	20	.9500	1.3169	.2945	.9500
Declassified /Change	9	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0000
Classified/Change	22	.6364	1.3988	.2982	.6364
Total	55	.6000	1.2263	.1653	

* Uses harmonic mean sample size=8.761.

The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type 1 error levels are not guaranteed.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.159	3	2.386	1.644	.191
Within Groups	74.041	51	1.452		
Total	81.200	54			

Table 11

Summary of Grade 5 Disciplinary Referrals

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>	<u>Subset for Alpha=.05*</u>
Declassified/No Change	4	.2500	.5000	.2500	.2500
Classified/No Change	19	.7895	1.3157	.3018	.7895
Declassified /Change	9	.2222	.4410	.1470	.2222
Classified/Change	19	.3158	.7493	.1719	.3158
Total	51	.4706	.9665	.1353	

* Uses harmonic mean sample size=8.577.

The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

ANOVA

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between Groups	3.137	3	1.046	1.128	.347
Within Groups	43.569	47	.927		
Total	46.706	50			

Table 12

Summary of Grade 5 Math Achievement

	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Subset for Alpha= .05*
Declassified/No Change	4	82.0000	8.1240	4.0620	82.0000
Classified/No Change	10	70.3000	15.0337	4.7541	70.3000
Declassified /Change	9	74.3333	8.9861	2.9954	74.3333
Classified/Change	15	80.2667	9.1454	2.3613	80.2667
Total	38	76.4211	11.4009	1.8495	

* Uses harmonic mean sample size=7.579.

The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	760.230	3	253.410	2.128	.115
Within Groups	4049.033	34	119.089		
Total	4809.263	37			

Table 13

Summary of Grade 5 Reading Achievement (DRP)

	Passed	Not Passed	Exempt
Declassified (<u>n</u> =12)	8 (66%)	3 (25%)	1 (9%)
No Change	4 (33%)		
Change	4 (33%)	3 (25%)	1 (9%)
Classified (<u>n</u> =36)	12 (33%)	12 (33%)	12 (33%)
No Change	1 (3%)		3 (8%)
Change	11 (31%)	12 (33%)	9 (25%)
Total (<u>n</u> =48)	20 (42%)	15 (31%)	13 (27%)

Table 14

Summary of Grade Point Averages

	<u>N</u>	Minimum	Maximum	<u>Mean</u>	Std. Deviation
Grade 3	69	1.10	3.80	2.2638	.6453
Grade 5	61	1.40	3.60	2.4361	.5771

APPENDIX A
DATA COLLECTION

DATA COLLECTION DESCRIPTORS/CODES

Ethnicity

- 1 American Indian
- 2 Black
- 3 Oriental
- 4 Spanish Surname American
- 5 White

SES

- 1-Free or Reduced-Lunch Eligible (See Appendix A for USDA
Income Eligibility Guidelines)
- 0-Not Free or Reduced-Lunch Eligible

C

C-Eligibility Classification

- 0-Declassified
- 1-Developmental Delay
- 2-Educable Mental Disability
- 3-Emotional Disability
- 4-Learning Disability
- 5-Speech/Language Impairment
- 6-Autism
- 7-Hearing Impairment
- 8-Other Health Impairment
- 9-Orthopedic Impairment
- 10-Severe and Profound Disability
- 11-Trainable Mental Disability
- 12-Traumatic Brain Injury
- 13-Visual Impairment
- 14-Multiple Disability

99-Moved out of district

1-6 Years following preschool exit

- 1-1st year following preschool exit
- 2-2nd year following preschool exit
- 3-3rd year following preschool exit
- 4-4th year following preschool exit
- 5-5th year following preschool exit
- 6-6th year following preschool exit

R1-R5

Retained/Year following preschool exit

1-Retained

0-Not retained

GPA 3

3rd Grade Grade Point Average-4-point scale

GPA 5

5th Grade Grade Point Average-4-point scale

DRP 5

5th Grade Degrees of Reading Power Score

ORT 5

5th Grade Math Objective Reference Test Score (%)

AT3

3rd Grade Attendance-Number of Days Absent

AT5

5th Grade Attendance-Number of Days Absent

DIS 3

3rd Grade Discipline Referrals-# of Suspensions

DIS 5

5th Grade Discipline Referrals-# of Suspensions

999

Exempted per Individualized Education Program (IEP)

SCH

of schools attended within the district

RESEARCH DATA

STU #	EYR	AGE	M/F	ETH	SES	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C8	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	GPA3	AT3	DIS3	GPA6	DRP6	ORT6	AT6	DIS6	SCH
1					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0					0	
2					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
3					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
4					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
5					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
6					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
7					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
8					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
9					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
10					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
11					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
12					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
13					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
14					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
15					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
16					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
17					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
18					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
19					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
20					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
21					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
22					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
23					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
24					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0
25					<input type="checkbox"/>								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			0						0

**USDA INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES
HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND INCOME SCALE**

SCHOOL USE ONLY*

MAXIMUM HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR FREE MEALS (130% Federal Poverty Guidelines)

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	YEARLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	HOUSE SIZE
1	\$ 10,257	\$ 855	\$ 198	1
2	\$13,793	\$1,150	\$ 266	2
3	\$17,329	\$1,445	\$ 334	3
4	\$20,865	\$1,739	\$ 402	4
5	\$24,401	\$2,034	\$ 470	5
6	\$27,937	\$2,329	\$ 538	6
7	\$31,473	\$2,623	\$ 606	7
8	\$35,009	\$2,918	\$ 674	8
For Each Additional Family Member - ADD	+ \$3,536	+ \$ 295	+ \$ 68	ADD'T

HOUSEHOLD INCOME RANGE FOR REDUCED MEALS (185% Federal Poverty Guidelines)

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	YEARLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	HOUSE SIZE
1	\$10,257.01 - \$14,597	\$ 855.01 - \$1,217	\$ 198.01 - \$ 281	1
2	\$13,793.01 - \$19,629	\$1,150.01 - \$1,636	\$ 266.01 - \$ 378	2
3	\$17,329.01 - \$24,661	\$1,445.01 - \$2,056	\$ 334.01 - \$ 475	3
4	\$20,865.01 - \$29,693	\$1,739.01 - \$2,475	\$ 402.01 - \$ 572	4
5	\$24,401.01 - \$34,725	\$2,034.01 - \$2,894	\$ 470.01 - \$ 668	5
6	\$27,937.01 - \$39,757	\$2,329.01 - \$3,314	\$ 538.01 - \$ 765	6
7	\$31,473.01 - \$44,789	\$2,623.01 - \$3,733	\$ 606.01 - \$ 862	7
8	\$35,009.01 - \$49,821	\$2,918.01 - \$4,152	\$ 674.01 - \$ 959	8
For Each Additional Family Member - ADD	+ \$5,032	+ \$ 420	+ \$ 97	ADD'T

EXEMPTIONS: - If paid ONCE A WEEK: Salary X 4.33 = Monthly Income
 - If paid ONCE EVERY 2 WEEKS: Salary X 2.15 = Monthly Income
 - If paid TWICE A MONTH: Salary X 2 = Monthly Income

APPENDIX B
ELIGIBILITY SUMMARY

NAME				DOB	STUDENT NO.	
LAST	FIRST	MIDDLE				
ADDRESS				SCHOOL	GRADE	SEX
NAME OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS/SURROGATE				TELEPHONE HOME	TELEPHONE WORK	
Psychological Date	Sociocultural Date	Medical Date	Educational Date	Other Date	Other Date	Written Observations

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORTS AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

MEDICAL:

SOCIOCULTURAL:

PSYCHOLOGICAL:

EDUCATIONAL/DEVELOPMENTAL:

OTHER:

Decision: _____
 Program Recommendations: _____

SIGNATURES OF PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL DIVISION PERSONNEL:	SIGNATURE	AGREE	DISAGREE
Principal or Designee			
Special Educator			
School Psychologist/School Social Worker			
School Social Worker/School Psychologist			
Teacher			
Support Staff			
Parent(s)			
Ident			
Other			
Other			
Other			

I DO __ DO NOT __ concur with the decision of this committee. I have received a copy of the "Parental Rights in Special Education".

signature of parent

date

APPENDIX C

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES HANDBOOK

Attendance Violations

- Rule 1. Attendance:** A student is to attend school (including all classes) each day of the school year. In addition, a student is to report to school and all classes on time. A student of compulsory school age who does not attend school is in violation of the law and the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian are subject to its penalties. A student tardy to school or classes will be treated in the same manner as a truant. Efforts will be made to communicate with parents of absent and truant students.
- A. Tardiness**—Failure to be in a place of instruction at the assigned time without a valid excuse
 - B. Class Cutting**—Failure to report to class without proper permission, knowledge, or excuse by the school or teacher
 - C. School Cutting**—Failure to report to school without prior permission, knowledge, or excuse by the school or the parent
 - D. Excessive Absences (Truancy)** Exempted or unexempted absences which are felt to affect adversely the student's education (See Attendance Policy on page 24)

Levels of Disciplinary Action		
Min	Grade	Max

1		2
1		2
1		2
2		2

Discipline Violations

Rule 2. Unauthorized Activities

- A. Food/Beverages:** A student will not eat in unauthorized areas of the school
- B. Selling of Items:** A student will not sell to or purchase from another student any items that are unauthorized.
- C. Electronic Tampering:** Unauthorized access or use of any network files, or documents (Students will sign a document, Internet Acceptable Use Procedures). Some examples of this rule violation may include, destruction of files, virus introduction, altering data or any other interference with electronic management systems of the school division.



1		7
1		2
1		2
1		7

- Rule 3. Medication:** Students are not to transport prescription or non-prescription medication to or from school or have medication in their possession at any time. This rule will not be interpreted to prevent a student from taking medication (prescribed or over the counter) in the clinic. Exceptions to this rule will be made in accordance with School Board policy.

1		2
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- Rule 4. Student Dress:** A student will maintain personal attire and grooming standards that promote safety, health, and acceptable standards of social conduct. Student dress that disrupts the school environment will not be tolerated. For health and safety reasons, principals may make building level rules regarding student dress and attire.

1		3
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Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)	Level 7 Expulsion	

Rules and Sanctions

Rule 5. Personal Property: A student will not bring or possess any object that has no educational purpose and may distract from teaching and learning. For example:



- A. ***Toys**—Possession of any toys, games, etc., without permission of the administration
- B. ***Radio**—Possession of radio, walkman, etc., without permission of the administration
- C. ***Tape Recorder**—Possession of tape recorder or similar device without permission of the administration
- D. ***Cellular Telephones or Two-way Communication Devices** — Cellular telephones or other two-way communication devices are permitted on school property if left in cars parked on such property. Use of such devices is prohibited between the hours of 6 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on any regular student day (including summer school). Use is permitted in the car between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 6 a.m. on regular student days (including summer school) as well as any other day of the year.
- E. ***Other**—Possession of any object that could disrupt the normal order of school to include but not limited to personal security alarms, look-a-like beepers, etc.
- F. ***Portable Communication Devices** —A student will not possess or use a beeper, or other unauthorized communication devices.

Levels of Disciplinary Action

Min	Grade	Max
1		7
1		2
1		2
1		2
2	(pk-3)	5
3	(4-12)	7
1		3
2	(pk-3)	5
3	(4-12)	7
1		4
1		4
1		4
1		4

* Items will be confiscated from students (grades 4-12) and will not be returned. Items will be taken from Pk-3 students and may be returned to parents following a conference. A second offense will result in the items being confiscated and not returned.

A second offense refers to the second violation of Rule 5 during a school year. This would also include violations committed during summer school following that school year.

Rule 6. Misrepresentation: A student will not lie or cheat. For example:

- A. **Altering Report Cards or Notes**—Tampering with report cards, official passes, and notes in any manner, including changing grades or forging names to excuses
- B. **False Information**—Making false statements, written or oral, to any one in authority
- C. **Cheating**—Violating rules of honesty, such as copying another student's test, assignment, etc.

Level 1 Conference Level 2 Intervention Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days) Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)

Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)

Rules and Sanctions

		Levels of Disciplinary Action:		
		Min	Grade	Max
Rule 7.	Disrespect: A student will behave in a respectful manner. Examples of disrespectful behavior are:	1		3
A.	Walking Away —Leaving while a staff member is talking to the student	1		3
B.	Talking Back —Responding orally in a rude manner to a staff member	1		3
Rule 8.	Insubordination: A student will obey the lawful direction of any authorized staff member during the time the student is in school or participating in a school activity. Examples of insubordination are:	1		4
A.	Failure to comply with proper and authorized direction or instruction of a staff member —Failure to follow any reasonable direction given by a staff member	1		3
B.	Refusal to do assigned work —Failure to do assigned work	1		3
C.	Refusal of Detention —Failure to report to after-school detention and/or In-School Suspension as directed by a staff member	1		3
D.	Refusal to participate in In-School Alternatives —Failure to report to in-school alternatives as directed by a staff member	1		4
E.	Refusal to report to office —Failure to report to the administrative office as directed by a staff member	1		3
Rule 9.	Profanity/Obscenity: A student will not use profane or obscene language or make obscene gestures. For example:	1		5
A.	Swearing —Saying anything that conveys an offensive, racial, obscene, or sexually suggestive message	1		3
B.	Obscene/Offensive Gestures —Making any sign that conveys an offensive, racial, obscene, or sexually suggestive message	1		3
C.	Derogatory Written Materials —Having any written material or pictures that convey an offensive, racial, obscene, or sexually suggestive message	1	(pk-3)	3
		1	(4-12)	5
D.	Directed at Staff Member —Writing, saying, or making gestures that convey an offensive, racial, obscene, or sexually suggestive message toward a staff member	1		5
Rule 10.	Disruption: No student may disrupt the class, school, or bus activity. For example:	1		5
A.	Chronic talking —Repeated talking in the classroom without permission	1		3
B.	Throwing Objects —Throwing any object inappropriately in any part of the school, bus, or school grounds	1		3

Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)	Level 7 Expulsion	

Rules and Sanctions

		Levels of Disciplinary Action		
		Min	Grade	Max
C.	Horseplaying — <i>Rough or noisy play or pranks</i>	1		3
D.	Harassing/Teasing — <i>Pestering or tormenting</i>	1		3
E.	Refusing to Remain in Seat — <i>Getting out of seat or moving seat without permission of staff member</i>	1		3
F.	Rude Noises — <i>Making any unnecessary noise</i>	1		3
G.	Leaving without permission — <i>Leaving the classroom, building, or assigned area without obtaining approval of the teacher and/or administrator</i>	1		3
H.	Chronic Lack of Supplies — <i>Repeatedly reporting to class lacking necessary material such as books, class supplies, etc.</i>	1		3
I.	Bus Misconduct — <i>Bus Rules found on page 17.</i>			
J.	Shoving and/or Kicking — <i>Willfully pushing and/or kicking any one with the intent to harass</i>	2		5
K.	Throwing Objects at Someone — <i>Willfully throwing anything to harass</i>	2		4
L.	Hitting which causes harassment to another student or adult — <i>Hitting a student or adult for the purpose of harassment</i>	1	(pk-3)	3
		2	(4-12)	7
M.	Biting which causes harassment to another student or adult — <i>Biting a student or adult for the purpose of harassment</i>	1	(pk-3)	3
		2	(4-12)	7
N.	Spitting which causes harassment to another student or adult — <i>spitting at a student or adult for the purpose of harassment</i>	1	(pk-3)	3
		2	(4-12)	7
O.	Other — <i>Any other action that disrupts or interferes with educational activities or the school environment, to include public displays of affection</i>	1		4

Law Violations

Parents Will Be Notified

A telephone (☎) identifies a rule violation when the police will be notified.

Rule 11.	Tobacco: A student may not have or use tobacco products on school premises.	2		3
Rule 12.	Threatening: A student will not threaten another student or staff member. For example, the following actions are prohibited:	2		7
A. ☎	Against a Staff Member — <i>Threatening to strike, attack, or harm any staff member</i>	2	(pk-3)	7
		4	(4-12)	7

Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)		

Rules and Sanctions

B. Against a Student—Threatening to strike, attack or harm any student or other person

Rule 13. Fighting: Exchanging mutual physical contact between students by pushing, shoving, or hitting with or without injury is prohibited.

A second fighting offense will carry a penalty of long-term suspension or expulsion for middle and high school students.

A second offense refers to the second violation of Rule 13 during a school year. This would also include violations committed during summer school following that school year.

Rule 14. Trespassing: A student will not enter any school property or school facility without proper authorization (includes entering any school during a period of suspension or expulsion).

Rule 15. Reckless Vehicle Use: A student who operates any motorized or self-propelled vehicle on school grounds will do so in a manner that is not a threat to health or safety, or a disruption to the educational process.

Rule 16. Vandalism: A student will not willfully or maliciously damage or destroy property belonging to another, including school or private property. A student or parent/guardian will be held financially responsible, as allowed by Virginia law, for willful or malicious destruction of property. For example:

A. Writing on Walls, Mirrors or Desks

B. Damaging Another's Clothing

C. Graffiti—Willful or malicious defacing of public or private property

Rule 17. Gambling: A student will not play games of skill or chance for money or property.

Rule 18. Theft: A student will not steal property or possess stolen property.

A. School property—Unlawfully taking and/or carrying away property belonging to Newport News Public Schools

B. Staff Property—Unlawfully taking and/or carrying away property belonging to a staff member

C. Student Property—Unlawfully taking and/or carrying away property belonging to another student





D. Student Locker—Removing any property from a locker other than the one assigned

E. Possession of Stolen Property—Having in one's possession property obtained without the permission of the owner

Levels of Disciplinary Action		
Min	Grade	Max
2	(pk-5)	7
4	(6-12)	7
2	(pk-5)	7
4	(6-12)	7
1		4
3		4
1		7
1		7
1		7
2		7
2	(pk-5)	4
3	(6-12)	7
2	(pk-5)	4
3	(6-12)	7
2	(pk-5)	4
3	(6-12)	7
2	(pk-5)	4
3	(6-12)	7
2	(pk-5)	7

Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)	Level 7 Expulsion	

Rules and Sanctions

		Levels of Disciplinary Act		
		Min	Grade	M
Rule 19.	Sexual Offenses: A student will not engage in sexual behavior. For example:			
	A. Offensive Touching — <i>Inappropriate fondling; placing of hands on another person's private parts</i>	2	(pk-3)	:
		4	(4-12)	-
	B. Sexual Harassment — <i>Verbal or physical abuse of a sexual nature</i>	2		7
	C. Consensual Sex — <i>Sexual activity involving willing participants</i>	5		7
	D. Indecent Exposure — <i>Intentional exposure of private parts of one's body (including "mooning")</i>	2		7
	E.  Rape or Attempted Rape — <i>Unlawful sexual intercourse or attempted sexual intercourse by force, threat, or fear</i>	6		7
Rule 20.	Initiating a Riot: A student will neither create nor attempt to create a public disturbance.	4		7
	A. Attempted — <i>Attempting to create a public disturbance involving violence, confusion, or disorder in the school or on school grounds</i>	4		7
	B.  Actual — <i>Creating a public disturbance involving violence, confusion, or disorder in the school or on school grounds</i>	6		7
Rule 21.	Burglary: A student will not break into School Board property for the purpose of stealing. For example:	5		7
	 A. Attempted — <i>Unlawfully attempting entry into a school</i>	5		7
	B. Actual — <i>Unlawful entry into a school with the intent of committing a felony, or to steal and/or take and carry away the property of another</i>	5		7
Rule 22.	Robbery: A student will not take another person's property by force or violence. For example:	5		7
	 A. Attempted — <i>Attempting to take property from a person by force or violence</i>	5		7
	B. Actual — <i>Taking property from a person by force or violence</i>	5		7
Rule 23.	Extortion: A student will not take or threaten to take the property of others through intimidation. For example:	5		7
	A. Attempted — <i>Use of threats or intimidation in an attempt to obtain money or property from another</i>	5		7
	B. Actual — <i>Use of threats or intimidation to obtain money or property from another</i>	5		7

Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)	Level 7 Expulsion	

Rule 24. False Alarm: Calling 911, or signaling or setting off an automatic signal, falsely indicating the presence of a fire or an emergency, is prohibited. This includes making statements/phone calls that such an emergency exists in the school.

Rule 25. Arson: A student will neither set fire nor attempt to set fire to school property.

Rule 26. Alcohol and Other Drugs: Except as permitted under Rule 3, (medications), a student will not use, purchase, sell, distribute, be under the influence of or possess any kind of alcoholic beverage or any kind of controlled substance as defined by state law. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, anabolic steroids, substances that look like drugs, (BEEDIES) imitation controlled substances, and drug paraphernalia. For example:

Alcohol

A. Use/Under the Influence—*Drinking any alcoholic beverage in school, on school grounds, to and from school, on school bus, or at any school function, or coming to school or school activities after consumption*

B. Possession—*Possessing any alcoholic beverages in school, on school grounds, to and from school, on school bus, or at any school function*

C. Sale/Distribution—*Distributing or attempting to distribute any alcoholic beverage while under the jurisdiction of school authority*

Other Drug Offenses

D. Use/Under the Influence—*Using any narcotic, illegal or controlled drug, anabolic steroid or any illegal substance, on school grounds, to and from school, on school bus, or at any school function, or coming to school or school activities after consumption*

E. Possession/Attempt—*Possessing, or attempting to possess, any illegal or controlled substance or any action that contributes to the possession of any illegal or controlled substance*

F. Paraphernalia—*Possessing, distributing, or using any drug related paraphernalia*

G. Inhalants—*Possessing, distributing, or inhaling any substance/product (off-the-shelf, controlled, or illegal) for mind-altering effects*

H. Sale/Distribution/Purchase/Attempt—*Distributing, selling or purchasing any illegal or controlled substance; attempting to sell, distribute, or purchase any illegal or controlled substance; or any action that contributes to the possession of any illegal or controlled substance*

Levels of Disciplinary Actio:

Min Grade Max

4 (pk-3) 7

6 (4-12) 7

2 7

2 7

2 7

5 7

6 7

2 7

7 7

5 7

5 7

7 7

Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)	Level 7 Expulsion	

Rules and Sanctions

- Rule 27. Assault and Battery:** A student will not assault and/or batter another person (student, staff member, or any other person). For example:
- A. Against Student—Unlawful threatening or beating; any physical force or violence against another student, to include tearing clothes or threatening to seize or strike another student**
 - B. Against Staff—Unlawful threatening or beating; any physical force or violence against a staff member, to include tearing clothes or threatening to seize or strike a staff member**
 - C. Other—Unlawful threatening or beating; any physical force or violence against any other person while under the jurisdiction of school authority; to include tearing clothes or threatening to seize or strike**
- Rule 28. (THIS RULE NUMBER IS NOT USED AT THIS TIME, BUT IS MAINTAINED FOR PRIOR DATA COLLECTION.)**
- Rule 29. Weapons and Dangerous Instruments/Objects:** A student will not possess, handle, transport, or use any weapon, dangerous object, object that can be reasonably considered a weapon, or substance that could cause harm or irritation to another individual. (This rule does not apply to normal school supplies unless they are used as weapons.) For example:
- A. Bomb/Bomb Threats—Any device brought to school that contains combustible material or making statements that such a device exists in school or on school property**
 - B. Explosive—Any device containing combustible material and a fuse**
 - C. Knife—Possession of any size or shape of knife including blades, or other sharp devices**
 - D. Toy Knife—Possession of any size or shape toy knife**
 - E. Razor Blade/Boxcutter—Possession of a razor blade, box cutter, or similar device for cutting**
 - F. Ammunition—Possession of any bullets or shells or any objects that could be considered to be ammunition or resemble ammunition**
 - G. Fireworks, Small Explosives,—Possession of fire crackers or any small explosive device, including caps, and snapper pops**
 - H. Matches and Lighters—Possession of lighters or matches**
 - I. Antipersonnel spray—Possession of chemical (such as Mace) or pepper sprays**

Levels of Disciplinary Action		
Min	Grade	Max
6		7
6		7
6		7
6		7
2		7
5	(pk-3)	7
6	(4-12)	7
5	(pk-3)	7
3	(4-12)	7
5	(pk-3)	7
6	(4-12)	7
2	(pk-5)	7
5	(6-12)	7
5	(pk-3)	7
6	(4-12)	7
4	(pk-3)	7
6	(4-12)	7
2	(pk-3)	7
5	(4-12)	7
2	(pk-3)	7
3	(4-12)	7
5	(pk-3)	7
6	(4-12)	7

Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)	Level 7 Expulsion	

**Levels of
Disciplinary Ac-
Min Grade**

J. *Other—Possession of any object or substance that could cause injury including (but not limited to) slingshots, ice picks, multi-fingered rings, metal knuckles, nunchucks, clubs, stun guns, the use of any object or any substance that will potentially cause harm, irritation, or bodily injury to students or any other persons. (Possession of certain weapons defined by the Virginia State Code require a report to be made to the police.)

5 (pk-3)
6 (4-12)

Rule 30. *Firearms: A student will not possess, handle, or transport any pistol, revolver, firearm, or any other weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind.

2

A.  Possession of a pistol, revolver, or any other firearm (loaded or unloaded)

7



B. Possession of any other weapon or device other than Item A above. Examples may include but not be limited to starter pistol, BB gun, flare gun

6

C. Possession of an instrument or device that resembles or looks like a pistol, revolver, or any type of weapon not capable of propelling a missile. May include but not be limited to a cap pistol, water pistol, or any look-a-like gun

2 (pk-5) 5
5 (6-12) 7

***All items will be confiscated and will not be returned.**

OTHER CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Rule 31. Serious or Repeated Violations: Serious or repeated violations of one or more rules require a need for strong parent-administrator communication, coordination, consideration of outside assistance, and will result in suspension, and/or possible expulsion.

5 7

Rule 32. Endangerment—A student will not be involved in or be responsible for creating a situation that will endanger the safety of self or place others in jeopardy or at risk. This may include bringing dangerous devices onto school property or to school sponsored activities.

5 7

All rules and regulations will be enforced on all Newport News school grounds and premises, including Todd Stadium, before, during and after school hours, or at any other time when school buildings and/or grounds are being used by a school group; or off school grounds at any school activity, function, field trip or event; or when students are traveling to or from school. The rules contained in this *Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* apply to bus behavior and behavior at the bus stop.

The student *Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* sets forth expectations of student conduct in every school in the school division.

Alternative schools/programs and magnet schools, such as Enterprise Academy and the Dunbar-Erwin Achievable Dream School Project, may require additional and/or more restrictive expectations of students relating to the program design and mission. Such components may include but are not limited to attendance, participation, and dress code regulations.

Level 1 Conference	Level 2 Intervention	Level 3 Suspension (1-5 days)	Level 4 Suspension (6-10 days)
Level 5 Suspension (10 days with contract)	Level 6 Long Term Suspension (11-180 days)	Level 7 Expulsion	

Students who break rules are subject to disciplinary action by teachers, administrators or other school personnel. There are seven levels of disciplinary actions.

Level 1 Conference

Conference

Staff members may conduct a conference among any combination of the following:

- Teacher/Student, Teacher/Parent
- Teacher/Counselor, Teacher/Student/Administrator
- Teacher/Student/Counselor/Parent
- Administrator/Student, Administrator/Parent
- Administrator/Parent (Telephone)
- Teacher/Parent (Telephone)
- Other parties deemed necessary

Level 2 Intervention

Intervention

Referral

To School Counselor, Student Assistance Counselor, Child Study Team, Student Services Team, Attendance Staff, or Other

Time-Out

The temporary denial of a student's right to attend class. The student will be assigned for a period of one (1) to six (6) hours.

Detention

Retaining a student for disciplinary reasons before or after school hours (including Saturdays)

Staffing

A meeting of school personnel and perhaps other individuals to consider the behavior of the student and make recommendations

Contract with Student/Parent

A statement is written listing steps to be taken to improve behavior. The statement also describes the support to be provided by school staff and/or parent/guardian as well as the date when the contract will be reviewed.

Restricted Activity

The denial of participation in school activities and extracurricular events or the use of common areas or other parts of the school

Exclusion

Separation of student from class/school for up to 1 day to contact parent for conference – Failure of a parent to respond to a school request may result in a referral to Department of Social Services for educational neglect.

In-School Intervention

May include but is not limited to Saturday School, work assignment, behavior essays, transportation restriction..

Tobacco Education

Refer to Student Assistance Counselor

Substance Abuse Education

Call for intake appointment with secretary for substance abuse education program

Waiting period

A write-up for the discipline offense with a defined period of good behavior to prevent suspension

Mediation

Referral to conflict mediation

In-School Suspension

An alternative to out-of-school suspension - When students are suspended, they are removed from the educational environment, which results in the denial of classroom instruction to students. The program also provides a means for students to keep up with class work and homework assignments while under supervision during their disciplinary period.

Community Service

Whenever possible, administrators seek opportunities for students to participate in community service projects for the school or the community in lieu of out-of-school suspension.

Level 3 Suspension

1-5 days out of school

Level 4 Suspension

6-10 days out of school

Level 5 Suspension

6-10 days out of school with re-entry contract

Level 6 Long-term Suspension

The denial of a student's right to attend school or school sponsored activities for a period of not less than 11 days nor more than 180 days with re-entry contract.

Level 7 Expulsion

The denial of a student's right to attend school or school sponsored activities.

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