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## Perceptions of Selected Groups Toward the Current and Ideal Role of Special Education Directors as Administrative Leaders in North Dakota Schools Which Have High Concentrations of American Indian Students

Ramona DeCoteau

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PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED GROUPS TOWARD THE CURRENT AND IDEAL  
ROLE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS AS ADMINISTRATIVE  
LEADERS IN NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOLS WHICH HAVE HIGH  
CONCENTRATIONS OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

by  
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Bachelor of Science, University of North Dakota, 1974  
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A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
of the  
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Doctor of Education

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May  
1981

This Dissertation submitted by Ramona DeCoteau in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

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(Chairman)

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This Dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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Dean of the Graduate School

Permission

Title Perceptions of Selected Groups Toward the Current and Ideal  
Role of Special Education Directors as Administrative Leaders  
in North Dakota Schools Which Have High Concentrations of  
American Indian Students

Department Center for Teaching and Learning

Degree Doctor of Education

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## ABSTRACT

### The Problem

The purpose of the study was to determine how selected groups view the role of the special education director/coordinator in North Dakota schools which have concentrations of American Indian students. This study also compared the perceptions of the selected groups toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator.

### Procedure

A survey instrument was developed and administered to seventy-eight administrators, special education directors/coordinators, and special education teachers to assess perceptions toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in North Dakota schools serving significant numbers of American Indian students. The data obtained from the survey instrument were statistically tested for significant difference. The .05 level of significance was considered sufficient to reject a hypothesis of no difference. The data reported represented the responses of seventy-eight participants who were working in Bureau of Indian Affairs, contracted, cooperative, boarding, public, or private schools which had 30 percent or more American Indian student enrollment during the 1980-1981 school year. Forty-six (100%) of the special education teachers, twenty-one (95%) of the administrators, and eleven (92%) of the special education directors/coordinators elected to participate in this study.

## The Results

There were statistically significant differences among the perceptions of all the groups toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in all areas of administrative functioning. However, some individual items in the four administrative functions--planning, decision making, executing or operating, and appraising--indicated no significant differences.

There were no perceived differences among the selected groups as to the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator. However, there were a few differences on individual items within the four functions as perceived by the three selected groups.

There was no perceived difference among the three selected groups as to the current role of the special education director/coordinator. However, there were few differences on the individual items with the four functions.

In describing conflicts or problems inherent in working with significant numbers of American Indian special education students, respondents expressed concerns about following regulations recruiting and/or retaining special education teachers or in comparing special education programs to other schools. Other difficulties cited were that there were language and cultural differences which surfaced when interpreting test results. The respondents also cited isolation, stringent North Dakota requirements, lack of suitable housing, and social activity as major factors in recruiting and retaining special education teachers.

## Conclusions

Three major conclusions were drawn from the statistical treatment and analysis of data used in this study. For the total population, there were statistically significant differences among the perceptions of all groups toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator.

The special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and school administrators viewed the ideal role in essentially the same way.

The special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and school administrators viewed the current role in essentially the same way.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The field of special education has been a relatively new endeavor for the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools in the geographic area served by the Aberdeen Area Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Prior to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142), the special education of children in these schools was supported by multiple funding sources. There had not been an encompassing Bureau-wide plan or program for special education; therefore, the provisions for educating handicapped children were left up to the individual area offices and/or the local agencies.

Funds for the Bureau of Indian Affairs special education programs implemented prior to the passage of Public Law 94-142 were primarily obtained from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and the subsequent amendments of this act as well as from Title IV-A of the Indian Education Act of 1972. Since the passage of Public Law 94-142, funding for special education has been secured by several sources dependent upon the type of school, i.e., cooperative, contract, or totally operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The funding sources included, but were not limited to, the following: Public Law 94-142; Public Law 95-561; the Education Amendment of 1978, which included the Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP); and Title VI-B.

The standard practice in the years when special education programs were being introduced into schools was to remove special education students from the regular classrooms and house them together in a special education classroom. Although funding was available for special programs, classroom space in most schools was, for the most part, grossly inadequate or just not available. Due to the lack of classroom space in schools serving concentrations of American Indian students, schools which had been closed were reopened to the children with special needs. Often students were housed in these rural schools called day schools and/or in prefabricated units constructed on or near the school site. This resulted in physically removing the children from the regular education setting. It should also be noted that in some agencies the only special services that were available were the contracted services with a county special services cooperative.

Separate funding and separate facilities, therefore, caused some problems which seemingly resulted in a breakdown of communications among the regular education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators. Still another problem was that the standards for special education certification differed among states within the Aberdeen, South Dakota, area.

The situation was further complicated in that the guidelines for serving children with special educational needs varied among funding agencies. Programs were monitored according to the respective guidelines prescribed by each funding agency. The involvement of several agencies caused further confusion and sometimes even competition between agencies and among staff members attempting to provide special education services.

As the special services were expanding and more special educators were being employed, there was a need to clarify the various roles of educators and the services they provided in regard to their place within the education system. The working relationship among all personnel directly or indirectly involved with the education of children with special educational needs was crucial in providing effective services to these children. Likewise, the coordination of resources was a critical problem to address if effective services were to be provided to children.

Public Law 94-142 was written in terms of requirements rather than as permissive legislation. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, through its twelve area offices, attempted to coordinate the existing services and orchestrate a more effective program for children which would meet both the spirit and letter of the law.

The early development of special education services was done in so many different ways and under such different guidelines at the local agency levels that it was quite difficult for the area office personnel to establish effective direction of the special services which were available. In order to obtain effective direction for special services, the Aberdeen Area Office in South Dakota found it necessary to work with someone at the local level to assist the coordinating functions.

This again was a problem since the local agencies and/or districts had multiple patterns of organization for their schools, which called for local personnel in charge of special services to have many different job descriptions. The authority and responsibility of persons identified as directors, coordinators, or some other

designation for local special services made coordination difficult.

### Need for the Study

Local personnel (especially those providing services), building level administration, and district or agency level administration have had many questions and held conflicting views about who is responsible to carry out certain special education functions within the school. For example, there appeared to be a conflict in just who supervises special education personnel. Was it the responsibility of the principal or the special education director/coordinator? The special education director/coordinator was expected to implement the special education plan and budget but was often left out of the actual planning of each.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how selected groups view the role of the special education director/coordinator in North Dakota schools which have a considerable American Indian student population. In addition, the purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of the selected groups toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator.

### Methodology

A survey instrument was developed to assess perceptions of administrators, special education directors/coordinators, and special education teachers toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in schools serving concentrations of American Indian students. The instrument attempted to assess perceptions or functions typically performed by administrators. Classes at



the University of North Dakota and a jury of judges assisted in efforts to validate the instrument. A set of North Dakota schools with a significant enrollment of American Indian students was identified. A sample of administrators, special education directors/coordinators, and special education teachers was drawn from these schools to respond to the survey instrument.

The survey was administered during February 1981. Procedures securing a high percentage of returns were employed. The data from the survey were scored and transferred to Fortran C coding forms, then keypunched onto standard IBM computer cards, and analyzed statistically using appropriate statistical procedures. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie et al. 1975) was used in the development of the computer program. The computer at the University of North Dakota Computer Center was used to process the data.

The findings are reported in chapter 4. Conclusions and recommendations based on an analysis of the data are reported in chapter 5.

#### Delimitations

The study was delimited in the following ways:

1. to the North Dakota schools which have 30 percent or more American Indian population
2. to the perceptions of school administrators, special education teachers, and special education directors/coordinators
3. to the following sources of information: University of North Dakota Chester Fritz Library; personal libraries of professors in the University of North Dakota Center for Teaching and Learning; Educational Research Information Center (ERIC); local, state, and

national resources; conversations with Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel from the Aberdeen Area Office in Aberdeen, South Dakota; special education personnel at the schools identified in this study; and the writer's personal library

#### Assumptions

This study was based upon the following assumptions:

1. The twenty-one schools that have been identified as having 30 percent or more American Indian population would agree to participate in this study
2. The respondents to the instrument would provide accurate, honest, and forthright responses
3. The instrument developed to measure perceptions would yield valid, reliable, and appropriate data
4. The instrument to measure perceptions would be appropriately administered
5. All surveys would be returned

#### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, several terms were defined as follows:

Bureau. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) of the Department of the Interior.

Agency. The current organizational unit of the Bureau which provides direct services to the governing body or bodies and members of one or more specified Indian tribes.

Aberdeen Area Office. One of twelve regional offices which is an intermediary between the central office in Washington, D.C., and

the agencies.

Boarding school. A Bureau of Indian Affairs school (synonymous with residential school) offering residential care and support services as well as an academic program.

Contract school. A school (other than a public school) which is tribally operated and aided by a financial assistance contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Day school. A Bureau of Indian Affairs school offering an academic program and certain support services such as counseling, food, transportation, etc., but excluding residential care.

Cooperative school. A day school jointly operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a public school district which has a formal "cooperative agreement" (contract) specifying each entity's responsibilities and offerings.

#### Research Questions

Three research questions were asked to provide direction to the study. They were as follows:

Research question A. Do special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators differ significantly in the rankings of their perceptions of the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator?

Research question B. Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative functions in the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator?

Research question C. Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers,

and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative functions in the current role of the special education director/coordinator?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Historical Perspectives

Public education of the exceptional child, most often called special education, was primarily a development of the twentieth century. Prior to 1900, school programs for exceptional children were nearly nonexistent. Those programs which did function were privately supported.

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell used the term special education in a speech to the National Education Association (NEA) conference in 1902. In his 1898 address to that group, Bell (cited in Gearheart and Wright 1979) pointed out the need for special instruction for exceptional children in these words:

Now, all that I said in relation to the deaf would be equally advantageous to the blind and to the feeble-minded. We have in the public school system a large body of ordinary children in the same community. We have there children who cannot hear sufficiently well to profit by instruction in the public schools, and we have children who cannot see sufficiently well to profit by instruction in the public schools, and we have children who are undoubtedly backward in mental development. Why shouldn't these children form an annex to the public school system, receiving special instruction from special teachers, who shall be able to give instruction to little children who are either deaf, blind, or mentally deficient, without sending them away from their homes or from the ordinary companions with whom they are associated (p. 3)?

In 1902, Bell pursued this subject further, and as a result the name of this division of the National Education Association officially became the Department of Special Education.

Since initiation of various types of educational programming for the handicapped and the gifted in the early 1900s, a continuous pattern of growth in these programs had taken place. By mid-century, most schools in the United States had at least limited programming for the handicapped.

According to Gearheart and Wright (1979), many factors contributed to the growth of special education in the United States. The rapid growth in the number of students in the entire education system played an important role. The fact that handicapped children were not kept hidden in attics and cellars has been another factor in the growth of special education. Probably the most important single factor influencing this growth was the expansion and acceptance of the philosophy of education for all. The resultant outcome was the inclusion of most of the students with various handicapping conditions into the existing educational system.

The development of publicly supported special education programs began with the compulsory education laws. In 1840, the first such law was passed in Rhode Island. Massachusetts followed in 1851 and by the turn of the century nearly all the states had laws on their books which delineated public responsibility for the education of their children. According to Aiello (1976), this was the first time that educators were faced with the question of what to do with the less able youngsters.

By 1911, large city school systems had established special education schools and special classes for the handicapped children, and a number of states began to subsidize special programs by paying the excess cost of maintaining special classes. According to

Aiello (1976), 1930 marked the first time that special education received national recognition as a legitimate part of the education community. The federal government began to show interest in special education at the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. The conference participants recommended that the Office of Education include a department of special education, and by the early 1930s a senior officer was appointed to the Department of Special Education.

#### Development of Special Education

Various exceptionalities have received special attention since the beginning of the new century, but none have had greater attention than that which was given to the mentally retarded. In a speech made on 11 October 1961, the late President Kennedy said:

The manner in which our nation cares for its citizens and conserves its manpower resources is more than an index to its concerns for the less fortunate. It is a key to its future. Both wisdom and humanity dictate a deep interest in the physically handicapped, the mentally ill, and the mentally retarded. Yet, although we have made considerable progress in the treatment of physical handicaps, although we have attacked on a broad front of the problems of mental illness, although we have made great strides in the battle against disease, we as a nation have too long postponed an intensive search for solutions to the problems of the mentally retarded. That failure should be corrected (Gearheart and Wright 1979, p. 4).

In discussing the scope of the problem, President Kennedy pointed out that millions of the country's citizens are mentally retarded.

Through efforts of President Kennedy, a congress which followed his lead in this concern, and the efforts and constant public pressure of groups such as the National Association for Retarded Citizens, retarded citizens have a better chance to maximize their potential (Gearheart and Wright 1979).

In the preface to the 1963 publication Behavioral Research on Exceptional Children, editors Kirk and Weiner made the following statements:

During the past two decades, the field of special education has undergone an "explosion" both in service and in knowledge. The development of programs for exceptional children, particularly since World War II, has been so rapid that few professional workers have been able to keep up with the expanding scene. Because of the heterogeneity of this field, which includes so many kinds of deviant development, and because of the multiplicity of disciplines concerned with services and research, information processing has broken down. . . .

. . . . .  
 Much of the early literature on exceptional children pertained to physiological aspects of disability. Valuable as these findings were, there was little in them which had direct relevance to problems of school learning and social adjustment. With more recent advances in theories of perception, learning, and personality, there has emerged greater interest in, and a greater need for, information bearing upon behavioral aspects of exceptional-ity. Responsible instruction, program development, and guidance depend upon such knowledge . . . (p. ix).

Interest in the behavioral aspects of exceptionality apparently have led to systematic program developments in special education.

According to Kirk and Gallagher (cited in Aiello 1976), there have been four stages in the development of attitudes toward the handicapped individual. The first fifty years after 1776 were years of general neglect of the handicapped. The second stage for the following fifty years was the organization of residential schools. The third stage was the development of special classes within the public schools, in addition to residential schools. The fourth stage, 1950-1975, saw an explosion of provisions for the handicapped, led by state and federal legislation and appropriations. During the next twenty-five years (1975-2000), further improvements should be made toward educating the handicapped child with his or her normal peers to whatever extent may be compatible with potential for the fullest



educational development. The 1975 federal law, Public Law 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act), has been established to help determine the future trend in special education.

### The Need for Special Education

Dunn and Cole (1980) reported that approximately 12 percent of our country's children were physically, mentally, or emotionally impaired. Prior to Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, millions of exceptional children were completely excluded from the public school system. They were often committed to institutions. Many children, whether in or not in institutions, failed to receive appropriate educational services. Such children now will be helped to grow into productive citizens, rather than being required to vegetate in homes for the "insane" or in the closeted environment of their own homes. Under Public Law 94-142, school districts were required to inform parents of what was being done for their children and of their rights in the matter, but many parents found it extremely difficult to be objective about their children's handicaps. Sometimes their personal pain, caused by shame, guilt, frustration, desperation, hopelessness, lack of time or energy, or inability to cope with the problem, prevented them from cooperating fully with the schools. Dunn and Cole (1980) concluded that Public Law 94-142 had brought exceptional children out of institutional isolation into schools where skilled professional teachers and administrators were helping them to build productive lives.

An estimated six million school-age and one million preschool-age American Indian children are handicapped. Because more than 60 percent of the school-age children received no special education

services, the Office of Education chose to adopt as a priority in fiscal year 1971 to promote, in cooperation with state and local agencies, "a national commitment to provide equal educational opportunity for all handicapped children by 1980" ("Participation of Private School" 1971, p. 75). As a result, the Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the National Institute of Mental Health developed plans to make joint efforts for advocacy programs in fiscal year 1972. The programs were designed to help children obtain whatever services were necessary for their full development. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education endorsed the national goal of fuller participation of handicapped children in day care and preschool activities, with special emphasis upon integration of handicapped children in Head Start. The Office of Education developed a strategy to assist the states in meeting the goal. Included in the plans scheduled to begin in fiscal year 1972 were:

A series of national workshops, in cooperation with the Education Commission of the States, to assist in the development of legislation appropriate to the particular needs of each State.

A series of workshops, in cooperation with the American Association of School Administrators, to offer technical assistance to State administrators of federally funded programs in long range planning.

A series of administrative workshops for the State administrators on administrative procedures leading to more efficient managerial operation in both State education agencies and OE.

Continuation of visits and technical assistance by OE State Plan Officers. These senior education specialists will work with their counterparts in each State to improve the administration of Federal funds and to assist the States in long range planning and full utilization of available resources.

Expansion of OE funding of model programs in early childhood education, learning disabilities, deaf-blind programs, instructional material centers, inservice training for teachers and other teacher training programs, and research and demonstration programs ("Participation of Private School" 1971, p. 78).

While planning with a view to the implementation of the national commitment to provide equal educational opportunity for all handicapped children by 1980 continued, more immediate tasks were undertaken in the administration of existing programs for the handicapped. In fiscal year 1971, nearly \$129 million was allocated to the states to put into process the 1980 commitment. This included approximately \$46 million for programs in state schools for the handicapped under Public Law 89-313, \$34 million for local school programs under part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act, \$16.5 million for supplemental projects in local schools under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and \$32 million to meet a requirement of the Vocational Education Act so that 10 percent of each year's vocational education appropriation was used to train the handicapped. Beyond the monies directly administered by states, other monies were awarded for early childhood education models, learning disability projects, deaf-blind centers, teacher training, recruitment, research, and media services for a total allocation of \$199 million. Well over 500,000 handicapped children received some special education services through Office of Education funds in fiscal year 1971.

#### Legislation

The landmark decisions which led to the passage of Public Law 94-142 were the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 334 F. Supp 866 and the Mills v. Board of Education 348 F. Supp 866 (Reutter and Hamilton 1976, Morris 1980). In both cases, the federal courts ordered that public schools must furnish a free, appropriate education to all handicapped children.

The Fourteenth Amendment provided that no state may deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law. As interpreted by the courts, the amendment produced a remarkable series of judicial results which effectively prevented the government from denying governmental benefits to persons because of their unalterable and uncontrollable characteristics such as age, sex, race, or handicap. In many cases, affirmative action was required to redress the unequal treatment people had experienced at the government's hand. Inequalities have existed in the opportunity to be educated, and handicapped children had been among the victims of educational discrimination. The Fourteenth Amendment has recently become the vehicle for redressing that equality (Turnbull III and Turnbull 1978).

Turnbull III and Turnbull (1978) reported that it took more than a cursory review of constitutional developments to explain how the handicapped child's right to an education was established. The earliest federal role creating schools for the mentally ill, blind, and deaf between the 1820s and 1870s paralleled a similar movement at state levels, in which state schools for the handicapped were established. Some had their beginnings as early as 1823. No further significant federal activity occurred until World Wars I and II spurred the government into vocational rehabilitation programs and aid for disabled veterans and other disabled persons. Public assistance programs were evidence of increasing federal concern for the handicapped. The application of the Social Security Act to the blind, disabled, aged, and dependent; the granting of benefits under Medicare and Medicaid programs; the payment of Supplementary Security Income;

and a host of programs under Title XX of the Social Security Act all gave testimony to the federal government's concerns for handicapped persons.

### Efforts Supporting Special Education

The parent movement typified by the formation of the National Association for Retarded Citizens in the 1950s and its increasing clout on the federal and state scene in the 1960s was enhanced in the early 1960s when President Kennedy and Vice President Humphrey used their influence to advance the interests of the mentally retarded. Therefore, the President's Committee on Mental Retardation was established.

The interest of the federal government in the handicapped, expressed in a piecemeal way through federal legislation, included the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, the Economic Opportunities Act of 1972 (Head Start) and the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1969 (Public Law 93-230), Public Law 93-380 of 1974 which provided funds for the education of handicapped students under Title VI-B, and Public Law 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, and the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 1974 also contributed to the political feasibility of Public Law 94-142. By small increments and by ever-widening strides, the federal government became involved in and concerned with the education of the handicapped children and the treatment of handicapped adults. "The streams of constitutional litigation and federal legislation flowed into each

other and created a river whose current carried forward the education of handicapped students" (von Hippel et al. 1978, p. 19).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the nation's first law to protect the civil rights of handicapped people. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provided that:

No otherwise qualified individual . . . shall solely provide by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (von Hippel et al. 1978, p. 1).

The regulations, which became effective 3 June 1977, were applicable to recipients of funds provided through programs administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The basic requirement incorporated in the regulations was that handicapped persons, regardless of the nature or severity of handicap, be provided a free, appropriate education in the most integrated setting compatible with the handicapped persons' needs. To this end, educational agencies must identify and locate unserved handicapped children, improve evaluation procedures to avoid the inappropriate education that results from misclassification, and must establish procedural safeguards to enable parents and guardians to participate in decisions regarding evaluation and placement. In short, Section 504 prohibited discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Galloway et al. (1979) stated: "The Education for All Handicapped Children Act has been called the most significant piece of federal legislation since Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965" (p. 6). When Public Law 94-142 was signed into law on 28 November 1975, it was met with widely differing reactions from various elements of the public sector. Obviously, the Congress,

certain handicapped children's advocacy groups, and numerous educators saw it as the ushering in of a bright new era of hope, opportunity, and the right to a free and appropriate public education for thousands of citizens previously regarded as "second class" citizens. The legislation meant that children who had traditionally been completely excluded from public education or who were previously automatically placed in state residential institutions would now be placed in public school programs, and all handicapped youths would be provided an appropriate education at public expense. As part of its commitment toward these goals, the United States Congress appropriated more than \$1.5 billion to state and local education agencies during the 1977-80 school years.

Weatherley's (1979) comments supported the view of Galloway et al. (1979). He pointed out that in October 1975, Congress enacted what will probably be regarded as the most significant child welfare legislation of the 1970s, Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Its passage marked the culmination of efforts through court action, state legislation, and federal legislation to extend guarantees for a free and appropriate public education to all children regardless of any handicap.

Public Law 94-142 can be stated in terms of four basic areas. First, the law detailed the rights that must be extended to all handicapped children. Among these rights were the right to a free and appropriate public education as well as the right to due process, the right to nondiscriminatory testing and labeling, and the right to confidential handling of personal records and files. Second, Public Law 94-142 tied local education agencies to the federal government

through the state departments of education, which must be accountable for supporting, monitoring, developing, and policing local provisions for handicapped children. Third, the law authorized federal support for state and local agencies and attempted to design and implement programs to insure compliance with the law. The last of the four basic areas contained two of the law's most controversial provisions: the Individual Education Program and the concept of the least restrictive environment (Weatherley 1979).

#### The Development of Special Education Administration

Prior to 1970, special education programs tended to be limited to students whose exceptional conditions were obvious and whose needs for extraordinary instructional approaches and/or physical facilities were undeniable. Given such characteristics, the programs tended to encourage organizational structures separate and distinct from the mainstream of public education (Gearheart 1967, Burrello and Sage 1979). Since that time, programs of special education have developed in the public school systems, both large and small, throughout the United States.

The administration of special education programs was, at first, a direct responsibility of the superintendent of schools, with no director, supervisor, or consultant appearing in the line of command between the superintendent and the classroom teacher. Recently, according to Gearheart (1967), school systems have employed a director to administer and supervise the special education program.

Since the mid-1960s, cooperative districts which coordinated special education services for many school districts had developed



rapidly. An organizational pattern of this kind was designed especially to respond to schools in rural areas which were too small to provide a full range of services for handicapped students (Gearheart and Wright 1979).

Historically, for a number of years following the turn of this century, most of the school systems in the United States which made provisions for specific special education programs were able to administer and supervise these programs with a minimum of specially trained supervisory help. Special education programs in the larger schools systems were administered by directors of elementary education or assistant superintendents. Small school districts did not have anyone in a director's role; thus, teachers were left to their own devices and placement practices (Gearheart 1967).

#### Leadership in Special Education Administration

Several improvements have occurred in recent years. One factor which had an influence was genuine interest and inspired leadership from the federal level. A second factor was excellent leadership from a number of colleges and universities which had developed into centers of interest and influence in the education of the exceptional child. A third force was a number of nationwide charitable organizations which promoted both research and legislation relating to the exceptional child. A fourth influence was further evaluation of the philosophy of American education which said, in effect, that every child deserved an opportunity to develop his or her particular potential. The impact of special education at the national level was due, in part, to the efforts of the Council for Exceptional

Children, the result of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and the interest of the late President Kennedy (Gearheart 1967).

In the early development of special education administration, it was desirable to have an administrator whose expertise was in the technical aspects of education for that particular exceptionality, e.g., schools for the deaf. The assumption was that technical expertise, as a requirement for instructional practice, had dictated similar expertise as a requirement for administration. This assumption generated and reinforced a "mystique of specialness" which further segregated the special education system concept (Burrello and Sage 1979).

As individual exceptional children applied for admission to the school programs and were grouped for instruction, local and state boards of education introduced the administrative aspect of special education. Local school administrators and state coordinators began efforts to improve the instructional techniques. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, administrators were mainly drawn from among successful teachers, psychologists, and the medical profession (Connor 1970). As general educators recognized an inability to deal with exceptional children, the specialists willingly involved themselves. The specialists appeared to have a sincere desire to serve exceptional children, to achieve professional prominence, and to promote the cause of the Department of Special Education (Burrello and Sage 1979).

Prior to the 1950s, there were no doctoral level programs to train administrators of special education. During the 1950s, fellowships in the area of education-related fields became a possibility

and then a reality. It was individuals who were receiving Ph.D. or Ed.D. degrees in education, education philosophy, or special education who were beginning to administer special education programs. However, emphasis was on some sub-area of the field, such as deaf or mentally handicapped, with limited training in administrative skills and practices (Gearheart 1967).

There were a number of reasons why strong, competent local leadership was required in special education. One reason was the newness of the field. Research information, available in many other areas of education, did not exist in the area of special education leadership. Quality leadership should help to strengthen research efforts in this field.

In the development of any new field, the establishment and legitimization of a role identity becomes a critical concern. This was found among the growing group of persons who found themselves in special education leadership roles (Burrello and Sage 1979).

Professional special education administration organizations have been established and have grown steadily in membership since the early 1950s. Among them were the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. One function of the organizations was to conduct research studies for the purpose of describing the roles and functions of special education leadership.

#### Certification of Special Education Administration

Gearheart (1967) wrote that a special education director is obviously the key person on the special education team. The growth

and complexity of special education demanded the leadership of a well-trained, highly qualified professional who was a specialist and possessed a wide background of training and experience in many exceptionalities (Kern and Mayer 1971). The numbers of special education administrators with unique competencies to direct special education programs have grown. As special education continued to grow and became more complex, those things formerly perceived as needs came to be currently perceived as imperative. One of the obvious variables which affected the demands for such specially trained individuals was the state-to-state requirements. Only nine states maintained certification requirements which demanded some level of competency (Forgnone and Collings 1975). Progress was made in regard to certification standards for special education leadership personnel. This decade saw a steady increase in the number of states implementing precise standards for leadership personnel. The number grew from twelve in 1970 to thirty in 1979. This reflected the increasing importance of special education to the total educational program. Present certification standards in most states now require that specially trained and qualified personnel must assume the leadership reins if the promise of special education is to be realized (Whitworth and Hatley 1979).

#### Functions of the Special Education Administrator

Burrello and Sage (1979) reported an analysis of special education administrator functions in four categories of administrative tasks: (1) improving educational opportunities, (2) obtaining and developing personnel, (3) maintaining effective interrelationships

with the community, and (4) providing and maintaining funds and facilities. Graham (cited in Connor 1961) outlined the functions of a special education director as follows:

Establishment of a certain number of classes and adding a number of special educators to the school staff does not constitute a department or division of special education. A department or division of special education exists only when an acceptable philosophy of education of exceptional children is being practiced; when uniform practices and procedures are being followed; when planned, developmental, ongoing programs are provided; when records are cumulative and provide for continuous evaluation; when channels of communication which allow, and necessitate, team work are established; when the various members are well acquainted with each other's work; when all special programs are being continuously evaluated in terms of meeting present and future needs of exceptional children; when consideration is always given to the impact of a single school policy on special education; when all special personnel feel that they have the identity with a department that is an integral and vital part of a school system. The entity of a department is developed and assured only to the extent that the foregoing provisions are satisfied.

#### I. Administrative Functions

1. Responsibilities for developing policies
2. Responsibilities for establishing special education programs
3. Responsibilities in placement of children
4. Responsibilities for schedules for special teachers
5. Responsibilities for completion of state forms
6. Responsibilities for pupil accounting and records
7. Responsibilities for teacher accounting
8. Responsibilities for transportation
9. Responsibilities for establishing channels of communication
10. Responsibilities for and evaluation of personnel
11. Responsibilities for equipment and instructional supplies
12. Responsibilities for planning and appraisal of the total program

#### II. Supervisory Functions

1. Fostering professional growth
2. Evaluating personnel
3. Serving as a resource person
4. Building staff morale

#### III. Coordinating Functions

1. School personnel
2. Community agencies
3. State personnel (pp. 55-56).

Effective communication, good interpersonal skills, and/or degree of authority of individuals influenced the final outcome of the decision-making process as it relates to special education. It was posited that the decision in screening, assessment, placement, and monitoring of special education students was complex despite demographic differences. While recommendations and decisions were made on the basis of multidisciplinary evaluation and input from many school professionals, many subtle, though nonetheless forceful, influences impacted on the decision-making process: (1) parental pressures, (2) available programs/resources, (3) the student's male/female identity, (4) racial considerations, (5) vested interests of social agencies/advocacy groups, (6) the teacher's and/or principal's influence, (7) physical/social/emotional maturity of the student, (8) geographical proximity of certain special education services, and (9) academic abilities as well as school behavior of the student. To complicate the decision process further, each professional, as well as the student and his or her parents, interpreted the vast amounts of varied information through previous experiences, biases, beliefs, and perspectives. More effective communication among school personnel appeared crucial to the success of the assessment and placement processes for the exceptional student. The lack of communication between evaluation team members and local personnel, e.g., principals and teachers, often resulted in a failure to implement team recommendations. This was compounded by lack of evaluation team support from building administrators (Holland 1980).

According to the American Association of School Administrators (1955), in order to bring about desirable learning conditions,

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According to the American Association of School Administrators (1955), in order to bring about desirable learning conditions,

administrators engaged in such activities as:

- Obtaining agreement on the aims of education
- Assuring funds for the employment of teachers and other personnel, the construction and maintenance of buildings, and the provision of needed equipment and supplies
- Employing teachers and other personnel and assigning duties and responsibilities to those employed
- Stimulating effective individual and cooperative activity for achievement of the agreed-upon purposes
- Coordinating the activities of various individuals and groups in order to bring about concerned effort for the achievement of purposes
- Evaluating the effects of plans, procedures, and the performance of persons (p. 9).

Table 1 offers a description of the essence of administration (Knezevich 1975).

Wirtz (1977) urged that persons selected to serve in the capacity of director or supervisor of special education should have a philosophy of special education and its relationship to the general education program. The person who served as a director should be certified to teach in more than one area of the handicapped, in spite of the fact that regulations call for certification in only one area. The director should also have some specific training in the techniques of administration. In addition, this person should have at least three years of teaching experience.

A majority of special education administrators spent one-fourth to one-half of their time on what may be called general administrative duties and responsibilities. Among the tasks involved in special education administration were reviewing requisitions for curriculum materials or equipment, preparing the budget for the following year, getting the necessary forms prepared for reimbursement claims, meeting with the superintendent, meeting with the director of elementary education regarding additional space, consulting with parents or with



TABLE 1

## DESCRIPTIVE TERMS USED BY VARIOUS WRITERS TO SUGGEST THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Fayol (1916)	Gulick and Urwick (1937)	Newman (1950)	Sears (1950)	AASA (1955)	Gregg (1957)	Campbell et al. (1958)	Newman and Sumner (1961)	Johnson et al. (1967)
1. Planning	1. Planning	1. Planning	1. Planning	1. Planning	1. Decision making	1. Decision making	1. Planning	1. Planning
2. Organizing	2. Organizing 3. Staffing	2. Organizing 3. Assembling resources	2. Organizing	2. Allocating resources	2. Planning 3. Organizing	2. Programming	2. Organizing	2. Organizing
3. Command- ing	4. Directing	4. Directing	3. Directing	3. Stimulating	4. Communi- cating	5. Influencing	3. Stimulating	3. Leading
4. Coordinat- ing	5. Coordinat- ing		4. Coordinat- ing	4. Coordinat- ing	6. Coordinat- ing	4. Coordinat- ing	4. Measuring and Controlling	3. Communi- cating
5. Control- ling	6. Reporting 7. Budgeting	5. Controlling	5. Controlling	5. Evaluating	7. Evaluating	5. Appraising		4. Controlling

SOURCE: Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975), p. 28.

visiting educators, meeting with architects relative to special education needs in a building, meeting with university officials regarding staff needs or the undergraduate programs, interviewing teacher applicants, meeting with state officials about proposed legislation, determining class placement for children, or many of the day-to-day responsibilities (Gearheart 1967).

To have an effective program, the special education director must supervise those individuals who report directly to him. In addition, he must assist the building principal in supervising special education teachers who report to the building principal. With the responsibility of recommending the employment of individuals, there was also the responsibility to supervise, evaluate, and sometimes recommend dismissal (Gearheart and Wright 1979).

Among other functions of the special education director, the importance of research and continued professional study was stressed. It was a responsibility of the director to keep the public adequately informed regarding educational provisions and opportunities for exceptional children in the schools. The best public relations program was one with an excellent educational program which was well published. It was also imperative for the director of special education to be fully aware of both state and federal laws pertaining to exceptional children. Legislative knowledge and planned efforts to correct any deficiencies in existing laws were an important part of the total responsibility of the special education administrator. Staff development and inservice training were other functions for which the director of special education was responsible (Gearheart 1967, Gearheart and Wright 1979).

Hagerty and Howard (1979) reported that the quality of services provided for handicapped children depended upon three basic factors--local administrative leadership, local parent advocacy groups, and local taxable wealth. School districts which had all three of these factors working in their favor were able to provide quality services to their handicapped population. Conversely, districts which essentially lacked these factors were hard pressed to provide anything but the minimal services for their children with handicaps. When key administrators wanted quality special education services, they tended to get them. Superintendents who were deeply interested in providing special education often succeeded in providing broad-based services for handicapped children even when there was substantial pressure to the contrary. It was time for local school superintendents, in cooperation with special education administrators, to supply the leadership necessary to secure quality programming for the handicapped at the local district level.

Special Education and Services for  
American Indian Children

According to Zimiles et al. (1976), Bureau of Indian Affairs programs for the handicapped were inadequate and insufficient. Despite the Bureau of Indian Affairs' commitment to provide services for children with special needs and extensive guidelines which cover all aspects of delivery of such services, most of the programs in schools were funded by other sources.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Title IV-A of the Indian Education Act provided funding to meet the special needs in some Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. Various

sources of funding for programs were implemented to meet the differing special educational needs in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. For example, Fort Yates, North Dakota, and Acoma, New Mexico, provided programs for the learning disabled children through Title IV-A funding. A more comprehensive program with multiple funding sources was in operation at the Turtle Mountain Community School in Belcourt, North Dakota. The Turtle Mountain Community School provided services, with appropriate staff, for the physical, emotional, and mentally handicapped. The school worked in conjunction with state agencies for related services, such as psychological evaluations.

On some Indian reservations there were residential programs for handicapped children. In addition, there were centers off of the reservation which served reservation or village children, e.g., the Los Lunas Hospital and Training School and the Alaska Treatment Center for Crippled Children and Adults in Anchorage, Alaska (Zimiles et al. 1976).

Hall (1976) reported that there were nearly two hundred schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs which served approximately 50,000 students. Approximately 19,000 students have been estimated to need special education services. Of the 19,000 students, about 4,000 were receiving some type of special education service in 1976.

Although considerable special education services took place in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools over the past decade, most were operated with flow-through funds from the United States Office of Education, with approximately 5 percent of special education programs being funded with regular Bureau of Indian Affairs budget funds. Each

year, since 1972, the Office of Indian Education Programs has sought item funding for special education in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools but has not been able to obtain it. Also, there were no Bureau of Indian Affairs regulations concerning the education of the handicapped. Hall (1976) reported that the two outstanding needs concerning full special education services for Bureau of Indian Affairs schools were:

1. A budget line item for initiating and maintaining special education programs and services in BIA operated schools
2. Mandatory legislation with respect to education of exceptional Indian children (p. 11).

Lack of leadership in all aspects of education for Indian children in Bureau of Indian Affairs, cooperative, and contract schools came from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. With regard to special education, the following statement expresses the status of the Bureau of Indian Affairs leadership in special education:

The Bureau is slow to comply with the mandate of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 because of poor leadership and a lack of emphasis placed on the program. The other problems, such as the late start on student assessment, the limited efforts to hire special education personnel, and the expenditures of funds for purposes other than hiring teachers are all the direct result of the lack of leadership and emphasis. The Bureau has made some progress in complying with the law, but it did not meet the September 1, 1978, deadline even though the act was passed in November 1975, and allowed three years for preparation and implementation (Stastx 1979, pp. 3-4).

#### Personnel Considerations

Martinson (cited in Jordan 1966) reported that the personnel problems in sparsely populated areas were in many ways different from those of urban areas. The differences related to lack of financial support, variability of assignment, remoteness, lack of preparation, and others. The specialist in a sparsely populated area was usually expected to be a person with many competencies, prepared to work with

teachers who often had no background for the task of meeting special learning needs and problems. The specialist was often unavailable to teachers when help was needed, and services were provided less frequently and continuously than in urban areas. The teacher in day-to-day contact with exceptional children then became the person who had almost total responsibility for providing adequate learning opportunities for the child and became the key person for educational improvement. The teacher's background, preparation, knowledge, effective use of resources, and skills became the avenue to better learning for the child.

The need for more professionally trained personnel was evident as far back as the late 1920s. More than five decades have passed since the following statement appeared in the Meriam (1928) report:

Properly equipped personnel is the most urgent immediate need in the Indian education service. At the present time the government is attempting to do a highly technical job with trained . . . people. It is not necessary to attempt to place blame for this situation, but it is essential to recognize it and change it (p. 359).

Ramirez and Tippeconnic III (1979) reported statistics within a United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare report to Congress indicating that for the 1978-79 school year federal Indian schools throughout the country would require approximately 386 additional special education teachers. Note that these shortages pertained only to the Bureau of Indian Affairs school system, which enrolled slightly less than 25 percent of all Indian children residing on or near Indian reservations. There was increasing evidence that public, tribal, or Indian community-controlled schools had similar needs. Ramirez and Tippeconnic III (1979) also noted that while it

it is important to be aware of the present personnel shortage in special education, it is equally important to recognize that very often educators working with Indian children and youth have not had the benefit of training in Indian education.

Over the past decade, several major studies called attention to the general failure of public and federal schools to adequately educate Indian children. A major reason cited for this failure was inadequately trained and sometimes insensitive school personnel. Unfortunately, many of the difficulties identified by these earlier studies continued to plague school systems serving Indian communities. Some of the more frequent problems, particularly with regard to reservation and rural settings, included:

- Recruitment of teachers who have little knowledge of teaching in culturally diverse reservation settings and who have ideas about upgrading the "Indian Condition"
- These individuals all too often become impatient and disillusioned and opt for more familiar settings
- Low expectations from educators that lead to poor student performance, drop-out, and negative attitudes toward Indian students
- High school turnover rates due to the isolation of the reservation schools and communities, inadequate or minimal housing facilities, and feelings of not being part of the community
- Inadequate numbers of Indian and Alaskan Native teachers, administrators and other specialized school staff (Ramirez and Tippeconnic III 1979, pp. 27-28).

Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, required that handicapped children receive the special education and related services necessary for each child to reach his or her full potential. A fundamental step in providing these services to Indian handicapped children was the preparation of necessary special education teachers and related school staff with training in Indian education. In view of the recurring personnel difficulties associated

with Indian children and various kinds of staff required to fully carry out the requirements of federal education laws for the handicapped, it became increasingly evident that these problems, if left unattended, would further delay the provision of a free and appropriate public education to Indian handicapped children (Ramirez and Tippeconnic III 1979).

Connor (1961) noted that the selection of personnel for a special class or school was a vital administrative skill, for it was a truism in education that the teaching staff determines, to a great extent, the effectiveness of the program. Since the current personnel shortage generally pervades all positions in special education, administrators must do more than wait for qualified individuals to apply. Administrators need to make personal contact with teacher preparation institutions to interview prospective special education staff.

Some issues that arose when trying to find qualified and certified special education administrators in schools that serve American Indian students were the conflicts or differences in requirements for the administrative and/or special education credentials. The Bureau of Indian Affairs area office serves several states, including North Dakota and South Dakota. Each state has different criteria for certification (see appendix A for North Dakota criteria). In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs sets its own criteria for qualified personnel (see appendix B).

Those schools in North Dakota and South Dakota for which the Bureau of Indian Affairs has special education responsibility in recent years have become more responsive to the certification requirements of the respective states. Consequently, a conflict



arises when, for example, an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs working in special education in North Dakota must meet every stringent special education and administration credential requirements while an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs working in South Dakota must meet minimal requirements (see appendix C). As a result, there is no consistency in the title and job description for those persons who are currently serving as special education administrators. The problem, at this point, appears not with requirements but with semantics, i.e., administrators are referred to as directors when Bureau of Indian Affairs and state requirements are met and coordinators when the requirements cannot be met.

#### Related Studies

A study conducted by Wisland and Vaughan (1964) titled "Administrative Problems in Special Education" undertook the task of identifying problems and problem areas which directors and supervisors were currently experiencing. Thirteen western states provided empirical evidence for developing better training programs for individuals planning to enter the field of special education administration. The purpose of the study was twofold: (a) to identify and describe the kinds of problems directors and supervisors encountered in their programs in each of the states and (b) to determine if there were any relationships between these problems and the three following factors--size of the program, type of the program, and the length of time an individual was employed in his or her current position. This comparison was anticipated to show differences that could be used to develop guides in the improvement of training programs and to provide criteria for selecting adequately trained individuals for special

education. The thirteen states included in the study were Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and Nevada.

Table 2 indicates the problem areas identified by administrators and supervisors of special education in the thirteen western states. Also indicated are grand means, which are averages of the mean rating of the specific problems.

TABLE 2

MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS  
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE THIRTEEN WESTERN STATES

Problem Area	Grand Means
Self-directed Study and Research	2.69
Student Personnel	2.77
Communication	2.78
Supervision	2.86
Professional Personnel	2.89
Policies and Procedures	2.97
Education of the Public	3.02
Finance	3.53

SOURCE: Milton V. Wisland and Tony D. Vaughan, "Administrative Problems in Special Education" Exceptional Children 31 (October 1964), p. 89, table 1.

The statistical analysis revealed that few significant differences existed between the mean ratings of various groups. The results of this study did not support the hypothesis that administrative and supervisory problems differed when they were grouped by size,

type of program, or experience. However, the major problem areas and their sub-problems identified in the study appeared to be of value in forming basic guides in developing programs for training future administrative and supervisory personnel in special education. Table 3 represents the ten major problem areas identified in the study.

Exploration of special education services in sparsely populated areas offers a tremendous challenge for researchers according to Miller (1966). There was practically no research and almost no guidelines relevant to the provisions of special education programs for youth in geographic areas characterized by great space and few people. Special education programs in metropolitan areas were designed to serve clusters of children with similar exceptionalities. Similar program designs were not successful in sparsely populated areas.

A survey conducted in Montana revealed only eleven children with five different kinds of handicaps lived in a county encompassing thirty-three hundred square miles. Miller (1966) posed the questions, "How can these eleven be provided with the multiple kinds of special services they need? How do we provide special education for sparsely populated areas (p. 2)?"

Public school administration needs research findings on which to base more adequate educational programs (Miller 1966). Educators must give direction and stimulate action in education; researchers must become acquainted with problems faced by administrators. School administrators were asking for assistance and the public expects action. The research field faced a challenge to find new and successful ideas in the provision of special education programs to those children who, for geographic reasons, have been denied educational

TABLE 3  
TEN MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS

Problem Statement	Mean Rating
Obtaining adequately prepared personnel	1.67
Adequately providing for the multiple handicapped child	2.07
Helping parents understand their exceptional child	2.13
Adequately providing for all types of exceptional children	2.22
Having adequate time to carry out active research	2.24
Counseling parents	2.28
Developing curriculum for the different types of exceptional children	2.33
Starting new programs for exceptional children not previously included in your program	2.34
Developing new programs and services to expand the program for exceptional children	2.39
Obtaining adequate physical facilities for the instructional phase of the special education program such as classrooms, therapy rooms, counseling rooms, and examining rooms	2.42

SOURCE: Milton V. Wisland and Tony D. Vaughan, "Administrative Problems in Special Education" Exceptional Children 31 (October 1964), p. 89, table 2.

opportunities that would prepare them for satisfying and responsible adulthood.

Traditional arrangements for administering schools in sparsely populated areas did not lend themselves readily to the provisions of special education services (Isenberg 1966). Immense land areas, scattered population, and a low incidence of children having particular special needs became obstacles for the development of service programs requiring highly trained and scarce personnel and specialized facilities and equipment. School districts large in geographic area but low in enrollment were not appropriate bases for administering comprehensive special education programs.

The need to reorganize the administrative approach to serve all types of exceptional children was noted by Isenberg (1966): provide or have access to a complete diagnostic team; associate with health, welfare, and other agencies in the area; provide follow-up services for all handicapped children; and provide leadership that can coordinate all special education efforts in the area. A regional, county, multi-county, or multi-district approach to provide the necessary services for the exceptional children in sparsely populated areas was considered essential.

The personnel problems in sparsely populated areas were in many ways different than those of urban areas. The specialist in sparsely populated areas usually was expected to be a person with many competencies, prepared to work with teachers who often had no background for the task of meeting the special learning needs and problems of handicapped children. The specialist was often unavailable to teachers or provided services less frequently than those in

urban areas. The regular teacher had almost total responsibility for providing adequate learning opportunities for the exceptional child.

Recruitment, selection, and retention of professional personnel were areas in need of research. Martinson (1966) raised the following questions:

- (1) What are the factors involved in effective selection and recruitment of teachers of exceptional children?
- (2) What can be done to interest prospective teachers in special education in sparsely populated areas?
- (3) What are the factors involved in effective retention of teachers of exceptional children in sparsely populated areas (p. 14)?

Duncan and Hill (1979) conducted a study in North Dakota titled Expectations for the Role of Cooperative Special Education Director. The purpose of the study was to attempt to clarify the role expectation held for the cooperative special education director in the state of North Dakota as perceived by public school superintendents, public school special education teachers, and public school special education directors.

The administrative situations that the respondents were asked to rate were long-range plans, program continuity, curriculum development and revision, consultation with colleges and universities, development of policy, channels of communication, special education regulations, staff meetings, evaluation and supervision, scheduling special education staff, maintaining student records, distributing materials and information, involvement in hiring staff, adapting special education programs for student needs, coordinating all special education transportation, and implementing long-range plans. The analysis of the data was completed by considering the following

comparison: Do the three selected groups agree with each other on the role expectations for the cooperative special education director? It was determined that the means between groups were found to be similar to one another even though variance within groups was considerable.

Duncan (1979) noted that the cooperative special education director is such a new position to the area of special education that little research dealing specifically with the role has been conducted. Until more was known about the role, many cooperative special education administrative positions may be filled by personnel who possess attributes of the general special education administrator. Duncan (1979) made the recommendation that additional research should be done on the position of the cooperative special education administrator in North Dakota and throughout the United States.

Special education personnel problems that administrators in rural areas were faced with during the 1960s have not been resolved. Sixty-seven percent of all schools in the United States today are in rural areas, and the majority of unserved and underserved handicapped children is located in rural areas according to Helge (1981). Implementation of special education programs was compounded in rural areas. Vast land areas, scattered populations, and lack of services for low-incidence handicapping conditions were obstacles to the development of programs requiring highly trained personnel.

The National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project conducted a study to determine problems and effective strategies for implementing Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The data provided reaffirm that the issues

currently affecting rural local education agencies' and cooperatives' attempts to implement comprehensive special education programming have been with us for a long time. Ninety-four percent of the states surveyed reported that recruiting and retaining qualified staff to educate handicapped children were major problems for rural education agencies; 88 percent reported "resistance to change"; 72 percent reported "suspicion of outside interference"; 83 percent reported "long distances between schools and services"; and 61 percent reported "cultural differences" (Helge 1981).

Following the recommendations made by Duncan (1979), this study attempted to achieve a more indepth look at the perceived role of the special education director/coordinator in North Dakota schools which have an American Indian student population of 30 percent or more. Chapter 3 describes how this study was conducted.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine how selected groups view the role of the special education director/coordinator in North Dakota schools which have a considerable American Indian population and, in addition, to compare the perceptions of the selected groups toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator. This section of the study describes the instrument, the sample, procedures for data collection, and the method used to analyze the data.

Three research questions were asked. They are as follows:

Research question A. Do special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators differ significantly in the rankings of their perceptions of the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator?

Research question B. Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative functions in the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator?

Research question C. Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative

functions in the current role of the special education director/  
coordinator?

### Instrumentation

The instrument was designed to respond to the theoretical construct forwarded by Knezevich (1975) in which he described first-order and second-order abstractions or functions. He stated:

First-order abstractions are a part of each of the second-order functions. . . .

Because the first-order abstractions constitute a higher level of analysis, there is some overlap among such terms as "planning" and "decision making" (pp. 35-36).

The first-order abstractions identified by Knezevich (1975) were planning, decision making, executing or operating, and appraising. The second-order abstractions were goal orienting, organizing, assembling and allocating resources, leadership, coordinating, controlling, and performing ceremonial functions.

The first-order abstractions or functions were more generic and comprised what Knezevich (1975) described as the administrative process; thus, the instrument dealt with second-order abstractions only through the first-order ones. Knezevich (1975) explained:

. . . The obvious similarities support the contention that further abstracting the planning and decision-making processes to reveal their essence will show a common base in thinking. The differentiation between planning and decision making can be made on the basis that one is the preparatory and the other the culminating phase of reflective thinking.

. . . Action starts the execution of the plan or the decision to do something, and this is followed by appraisal (the culminating activity). In this sense administration can be conceived of as "thinking" and "action" . . . (p. 36).

In comparing the four first-order abstractions with the descriptive language used by other writers (Newman 1950, Sears 1950, Gregg 1957, Campbell and Gregg 1957, Johnson et al. 1967), there

appeared to be a very high degree of agreement. This suggested that the measurement of these functions would give a broad picture of the administrative performance of the special education director/coordinator as he/she carried out or more ideally should carry out the administrative role assigned.

The instrument was cast in a survey form and the original set of statements was generated from information gained from previous studies, student colleagues, professors, and the writer. There were forty-three statements in the original survey instrument. The survey was administered to a special education graduate class and to educational administration graduate doctoral students at the University of North Dakota for the purpose of obtaining feedback about its ease of administration, clarity, and content validity. It was tested for internal consistency or reliability using coefficient alpha. The overall alpha coefficient indicated a reliability of .898. An examination of the original items indicated that only one (statement thirty-five) had a negative relationship to the overall instrument. This item was revised for clarity and content. Three additional items had a relatively low positive relationship to the overall instrument; these were statements eight, ten, and thirty-nine. These were also revised to improve their clarity and content validity.

After revisions were made, the refined instrument was submitted to a jury. The jury consisted of one professor of education, the Associate Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and two educational administration professors. On the basis of input from the jury, statement twenty-one was also revised and statement forty-two was dropped from the instrument. It was anticipated that after the

improvement of the instrument an even higher internal consistency score would be obtained.

The final survey contained a total of forty-two statements designed to measure the perceptions of the selected groups toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator. In addition to the survey statements, there were four open-ended statements that dealt directly with possible problems or conflicts that might be present in schools serving significant numbers of American Indian students.

On the instrument itself, the only demographic data requested was the type of school in which the educators served, i.e., Bureau of Indian Affairs, contracted, cooperative, boarding, or public school. It was discovered during the administration that one of the schools was private, so it was identified as such. To expedite the process of organizing and classifying the returned data, the survey instrument was color-coded. Instruments that were given to school administrators were blue; instruments given to special education directors/coordinators were yellow; and those given to special education teachers were pink. This method also served to assure the anonymity of respondents because identities or signatures were not requested.

The instrument was designed for respondents to rate the functions of a special education director/coordinator on their perceptions of the current and the ideal role. Respondents were asked to rate current and ideal roles on the following scale: not at all, to a limited extent, more than limited but less than considerable extent, to some considerable extent, and to a very great extent. These ratings were scored on a one-to-five scale, with one being not at all

and five being to a very great extent. The current role category was identified on the survey form as "is now"; the ideal role was identified on the survey form as "should be" (see appendix D for copy of instrument).

### The Sample

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction identified twenty-one schools with an American Indian student population of 30 percent or more. The schools included Bureau of Indian Affairs, contracted, cooperative, boarding, and public schools. Some personnel from each of these type schools were asked to participate in this study.

Forty-nine special education teachers providing special education services to the twenty-one schools were identified by contacting local school administrators and/or special education directors/coordinators. The twenty-three administrators identified included fifteen superintendents, four agency superintendents for education, and four elementary principals. Twelve special education directors/coordinators were identified by contacting the Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck, North Dakota, and the Aberdeen Area Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Each of the special education teachers, special education directors/coordinators, and administrators was sent a letter informing them of the writer's intent to conduct the study and requesting their participation in the study (see appendix E for copy of letter). One week after the letter was sent, a follow-up telephone call was made to each of the identified educators to confirm their participation and to schedule an appointment for the writer to hand deliver the survey.

Data Collection

The data collection was completed by visiting the site schools' special education teachers, special education directors/coordinators, and administrators who agreed to participate in the study. The visitations were conducted on the basis of schedules arranged by telephone following an initial letter requesting individual participation in the study. In order to secure a high participation in the study, it was decided that the instruments should be hand delivered and insofar as possible collected by the writer. This was accomplished during the first two weeks in February 1981.

Three of the special education directors/coordinators and one administrator were not available for an appointment; however, each agreed to complete the survey and return it by mail to the writer. In this case, the writer mailed the survey form to each participant and also included a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a stamped, self-addressed post card. The envelope was for the participant's use in returning the survey form. The post card was simply to be signed, dated, and returned. Since the survey ensured anonymity, the post card indicated to the writer that an individual had completed the survey form. Three post cards were returned to the writer. In some cases, the participants were not able to keep the scheduled appointment. In these cases, the writer left the survey form with a school official and a stamped, self-addressed post card and envelope. The envelope was for the participant's use to return the completed survey form to the writer. The post card was to be signed, dated, and returned. Since the survey ensured anonymity, the post card indicated to the writer that an individual had completed and mailed the survey

form. One week after the survey was left with the school official, a telephone call was made to the participants who had not returned the survey reminding them to complete and return the survey. In all cases, all survey forms which were mailed were returned to the writer. One of the administrators' survey form was returned after the data were processed; therefore, the data from that individual were not reported.

In those cases where the writer hand delivered the survey form to all other participants, they were asked to respond to all of the statements, which took an average of twenty minutes to complete. The respondents returned the completed survey form to the writer to hand carry back for data processing. This method was selected to increase the percentage of returns.

One of the administrators from the identified sample declined to participate in the study. He also refused to allow three special education teachers to take part in the study. Attempts to contact the special education teachers outside of school hours were unsuccessful. Therefore, data were included from twenty of the twenty-one schools.

#### Statistical Procedures

All data pertaining to the research questions were analyzed using chi square. According to Siegel (1956), the chi square test was an appropriate statistic because:

The usual parametric technique for testing whether several independent samples have come from the sample population is the one-way analysis of variance or  $F$  test are that the observations are independently drawn from normally distributed population, all of which have the same variance. The measurement requirement of the  $F$  test is that the research must achieve at least interval measurement of variable involved.

If a researcher finds such assumptions are unrealistic for his data, or if his measurement is weaker than interval scaling, or if he wished to avoid making the restrictive assumption of the  $F$  test and thus to increase the generality of his findings, he may use one of the nonparametric statistical tests for  $k$  independent samples. . . . These nonparametric tests have the further advantage of enabling data which are inherently only classificatory (in a nominal scale) or in ranks (in an ordinal scale) to be examined for significance (pp. 174-175).

. . . . .  
 When frequencies in discrete categories (either nominal or ordinal) constitute the data of research, the  $\chi^2$  test may be used to determine the significance of the difference among  $k$  independent groups (p. 175).

The data for this study were nominal and ordinal. Siegel (1956) went on to say:

There is usually no clear alternative to the  $\chi^2$  test when it is used, and thus the exact power of  $\chi^2$  usually cannot be computed. However, Cochran (1952, pp. 233-324) has shown that limiting power distribution of  $\chi^2$  tends to 1 as  $N$  becomes large (p. 179).

The three groups--special education teachers, school administrators, special education directors/coordinators--were compared to determine if significant differences existed as a total group on perceptions about the current role and the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator. In addition, comparisons were conducted between the perceptions of current and ideal roles of the four administrative functions, which were planning, decision making, executing or operating, and appraising.



## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

The data reported in this chapter represent the responses of seventy-eight participants who agreed to participate in this study. Forty-six (100%) of the special education teachers, twenty-one (95%) of the school administrators, and eleven (92%) of the special education directors/coordinators elected to participate in this study.

Eleven (14%) of the participants indicated that they were working in a Bureau of Indian Affairs school. Seven (9%) of the individuals indicated that they were working in a contracted school. Thirty-two (41%) of the participants reported that they were employed in a cooperative school. Five (6%) of the participants reported that they were employed in a boarding school. Twenty-one (27%) of the participants stated that they were working in a public school. Two (3%) of the participants stated that they were employed in a private school. There were not enough responses from each type of school to run appropriate statistical tests.

Participants in this study were asked to rate four administrative functions as they perceived how the functions are now being carried out (current role) and how they perceived the functions should be carried out (ideal role) by the special education director/coordinator serving their school. The four categories of administrative functions consisted of planning, decision making, executing or

operating, and appraising. In addition, participants were asked to respond to four open-ended statements dealing with difficulties experienced in attempting to implement special education programs, particularly as they pertained to work in schools which served a concentration of American Indian students.

This chapter presents data in four distinct sections. The first section presents the perceptions of the administrative functions of the total sample population. The second section addresses the administrative functions as they were perceived for the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator by the three separate groups (special education teachers, school administrators, and special education directors/coordinators). The third section addresses the administrative functions as they were perceived for the current role of the special education director/coordinator by the three separate groups (special education teachers, school administrators, and special education directors/coordinators). The fourth section presents a summary of responses from the open-ended statements.

Each of the three research questions were statistically analyzed and reported in tables according to the administrative functions previously mentioned. The tables consist of a summary of the instrument items listed according to function. The item numbers listed in each of the tables correspond with the numbers of the items on the instrument (see appendix D). The table headings utilize the following statistical symbols: the  $C$  represents the contingency coefficient, the  $X^2$  represents chi square, and the  $p$  represents probability. Also included on the tables are the median scores of special education teachers, administrators, and special education

directors/coordinators and the median score of all the groups on both the current and ideal measures.

#### Perception Analysis by Total Group

This section of the chapter will address research question A: Do special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators differ significantly in the rankings of their perceptions of the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator? Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 present the results of the statistical testing of research question A.

The ten items from the survey instrument which pertain to planning are grouped together in table 4. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing the current and ideal role of special education directors/coordinators revealed that eight of the ten were significant at the .05 level or less.

The median scores for the ideal role were higher in nine of the ten planning items. The item that had a lower median in the ideal category was identified on the table by an asterisk. This item, number six (prepare the annual budget requests for special services), was nevertheless significant at the .001 level which could be accounted for on the basis of an unusual number of empty cells in the chi square matrix. It was not perceived that there was a significant difference between the current and ideal categories regarding the special education director/coordinator's responsibility to plan staff development activities to assure recency of training of special educators nor the special education director/coordinator's responsibility to conduct planning to determine the best way the school can work with community social service agencies. Because eight of the ten items were

TABLE 4  
 COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT AND IDEAL ROLES  
 AMONG ALL GROUPS ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
 FUNCTION OF PLANNING

Instrument Items **	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Median Current	Median Ideal
1. Plan staff development	18.89	0.44	0.266	3.00	4.10
6. Prepare annual budget	84.39	0.72	0.001	4.63	4.58*
7. Conduct planning	43.37	0.59	0.001	3.18	4.02
9. Conduct planning to work with community services	20.72	0.46	0.054	3.00	4.04
14. Conduct planning to coordinate services	46.54	0.61	0.001	3.70	4.43
21. Conduct planning to assure transportation	39.93	0.58	0.001	3.70	4.35
26. Conduct planning to assure consulting services	24.54	0.49	0.017	3.63	4.61
29. Conduct planning to assure IEPs	26.30	0.59	0.009	3.67	4.30
38. Conduct planning in developing future goals	31.81	0.54	0.010	3.20	4.28
42. Conduct planning for continuity of cur- riculum	94.88	0.74	0.001	2.25	4.34

\*\*The item numbers listed in each of the tables correspond with the numbers of the items on the instrument (see appendix D).

significant at the .05 level or less, the hypothesis of no difference between the current and ideal role as perceived by all participants related to the planning function was rejected.

The ten items from the survey instrument which pertain to decision making are grouped together in table 5. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing the current and ideal role of special education directors/coordinators revealed that nine of the ten were significant at the .05 level or less.

The median scores for the ideal role were higher for all ten of the decision-making items. It was not perceived that there was a significant difference between the current and ideal categories regarding the special education director/coordinator's responsibility to choose appropriate consultants to conduct inservice education sessions for the special education staff. Because nine of the ten items were significant at the .05 level or less, the hypothesis of no difference between the current and ideal role as perceived by all participants related to the decision making function was rejected.

The fourteen items from the survey instrument which pertain to executing or operating are grouped together in table 6. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing the current and ideal role of special education directors/coordinators revealed that all of the items were significant at the .05 level or less.

The median scores for the ideal role were higher for all fourteen executing or operating items than the median scores recorded for the current role. Because all items were significant at the .05 level or less, the hypothesis of no difference between the current and ideal role as perceived by all participants related to the

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT AND IDEAL ROLES  
AMONG ALL GROUPS ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
FUNCTION OF DECISION MAKING

Instrument Items	$\chi^2$	C	p	Median Current	Median Ideal
4. Select resource persons	44.50	0.60	0.001	3.75	4.42
12. Decide how to distribute resources	58.91	0.66	0.001	3.95	4.41
16. Select and recommend personnel	44.73	0.60	0.001	3.87	4.37
19. Decide whether personnel should be retained or not	33.88	0.60	0.005	2.66	4.16
25. Decide what material to adopt	46.10	0.60	0.001	2.78	4.01
33. Choose appropriate consultants to conduct inservice	26.00	0.50	0.600	3.25	4.43
34. Approve budget request	63.08	0.67	0.001	3.86	4.43
35. Select a training design for inservice	33.97	0.56	0.005	2.73	4.23
36. Approve curriculum goals	40.57	0.59	0.001	2.97	4.27
40. Decide to remove student where environment is not suitable	40.57	0.57	0.001	2.97	4.27

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT AND IDEAL ROLES  
AMONG ALL GROUPS ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
FUNCTION OF EXECUTING/OPERATING

Instrument Items	$\chi^2$	C	p	Median Current	Median Ideal
2. Conducting system of personnel supervision	40.50	0.59	0.001	2.32	4.00
3. Implementing plans	44.10	0.60	0.001	3.83	4.57
8. Disseminating information	25.49	0.50	0.012	3.90	4.42
10. Coordinator between regular and special education	41.01	0.59	0.001	3.08	4.23
13. Written policy regarding special education	35.17	0.56	0.001	4.18	4.80
15. Make appropriate student placements	41.43	0.59	0.001	3.44	4.54
20. Serve as liaison	36.26	0.57	0.001	3.83	4.68
23. Conducting orientation of new personnel	26.80	0.50	0.043	2.32	4.22
24. Delegate duties to personnel	52.28	0.63	0.001	3.26	4.03
27. Prepare reports	52.03	0.63	0.001	4.63	4.79
30. Develop commitment to common goals	36.04	0.57	0.002	3.15	4.17
31. Establish lines of communication	26.24	0.50	0.050	2.50	4.08
32. Schedule staff work	60.00	0.66	0.001	2.67	3.84
39. Assure congruence between IEPs and special education	30.40	0.52	0.002	2.93	4.15

executing or operating function was rejected.

The eight items from the survey instrument which pertain to appraising are grouped together in table 7. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing the current and ideal role of special education directors/coordinators revealed that every item was significant at the .05 level or less.

The median scores for the ideal role were higher for all ten appraising items than the median scores reported for the current role. Because all eight items were significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference between the current and ideal role as perceived by all participants related to the appraising function was rejected.

In summary, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the ideal role and the current role of the special education director/coordinator on all four of the administrative functions tested. It should be noted that the ideal role had a higher median score than did the current role. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

#### Perception Analysis for Ideal Role

This section of the chapter will address research question B: Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative functions in the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator? Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 present the results of the statistical testing of research question B.



TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT AND IDEAL ROLES  
 AMONG ALL GROUPS ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
 FUNCTION OF APPRAISING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Median Current	Median Ideal
5. Share responsibility for evaluation personnel	31.94	0.53	0.010	2.62	4.10
11. Conduct assessment to determine program changes	21.01	0.47	0.050	3.06	4.32
17. Secure evaluation of similar programs	32.46	0.54	0.008	2.73	3.79
18. Conduct studies to determine future needs	27.30	0.50	0.007	2.63	4.05
22. Secure opinions on methods to improve delivery	34.83	0.56	0.001	3.37	4.17
28. Assessing objectives of overall program	38.38	0.58	0.001	3.91	4.57
37. Monitoring activities in special education	23.43	0.49	0.024	3.36	4.46
41. Conducting internal program evaluation	37.34	0.57	0.001	3.23	4.32

The ten items from the survey instrument which pertain to planning are grouped together in table 8. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education director/coordinators' perceptions regarding the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that all of the ten items failed to reach the .05 level of significance. Since none of the ten items was significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in carrying out the planning function was retained.

Ten items from the survey instrument which pertain to decision making are grouped together in table 9. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education director/coordinators' perceptions regarding the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that two of the ten items were significant at the .05 level or less. The two items which were significantly different at the .05 level were number thirty-four (approve budget request) and number thirty-five (select a training design for inservice). By visual inspection, it was determined that special education directors/coordinators had a higher median score on "approve budget requests" than did the other two groups, and special education teachers had a higher median score on "select a training design for inservice" than did either of the other groups. Since eight of the ten items were not significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE IDEAL ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF PLANNING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
1. Plan staff development	4.03	0.22	0.853	4.02	4.11	4.40
6. Prepare annual budget	11.42	0.36	0.178	4.50	4.40	4.90
7. Conduct planning	11.27	0.35	0.186	3.75	4.54	4.40
9. Conduct planning to work with community services	8.11	0.30	0.230	3.96	4.25	4.20
14. Conduct planning to coordinate services	5.40	0.25	0.714	4.44	4.31	4.60
21. Conduct planning to assure transportation	7.50	0.30	0.277	4.37	4.42	4.12
26. Conduct planning to assure consulting services	3.53	0.20	0.739	4.64	4.54	4.60
29. Conduct planning to assure IEPs	6.04	0.27	0.780	4.21	4.54	4.20
38. Conduct planning in developing future goals	7.40	0.29	0.339	4.08	4.54	4.60
42. Conduct planning for continuity of curriculum	7.47	0.30	0.486	4.18	4.70	4.25

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE IDEAL ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF DECISION MAKING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
4. Select resource persons	8.00	0.30	0.433	4.38	4.40	4.58
12. Decide how to distribute resources	6.92	0.29	0.327	4.25	4.54	4.71
16. Select and recommend personnel	0.24	4.90	0.767	4.37	4.08	4.71
19. Decide whether personnel should be retained or not	13.20	0.38	0.105	4.00	4.54	4.40
25. Decide what material to adopt	8.52	0.31	0.383	4.00	4.25	3.70
33. Choose appropriate consultants to conduct inservice	15.22	0.40	0.054	4.36	4.29	4.81
34. Approve budget request	16.28	0.41	0.038	4.28	4.63	4.71
35. Select a training design for inservice	17.64	0.43	0.024	4.25	4.20	4.20
36. Approve curriculum goals	12.93	0.38	0.114	4.15	4.12	4.20
40. Decide to remove student where environment is not suitable	2.90	0.19	0.941	4.23	4.31	4.38

ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in carrying out the decision making function was retained.

The fourteen items from the survey instrument which pertain to executing or operating are grouped together in table 10. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education director/coordinators' perceptions regarding the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that one of the fourteen items was significant at the .05 level or less. The item which was significantly different at the .05 level was number thirteen (written policy regarding special education). By visual inspection, it was determined that special education directors/coordinators had a higher median score on "written policy regarding special education" than did the other two groups. Since only one of the fourteen items was significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in carrying out the executing or operating function was retained.

The eight items from the survey instrument which pertain to appraising are grouped together in table 11. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education director/coordinators' perceptions regarding the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that all eight items failed to reach the .05 level of significance. Since none of the eight items was significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the ideal role of the special education

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE IDEAL ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF EXECUTING/OPERATING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
2. Conducting system of personnel supervision	14.27	0.39	0.363	3.97	3.75	4.11
3. Implementing plans	5.91	0.27	0.657	4.36	4.62	4.90
8. Disseminating information	6.56	0.28	0.363	4.21	4.70	4.71
10. Coordinator between regular and special education	9.27	0.32	0.319	4.17	4.25	4.60
13. Written policy regarding special education	14.04	0.39	0.029	4.84	4.54	4.90
15. Make appropriate student placements	4.08	0.22	0.666	3.92	4.54	4.71
20. Serve as liaison	8.93	0.32	0.177	4.61	4.75	4.81
23. Conducting orientation of new personnel	12.43	0.37	0.132	4.00	4.75	4.33
24. Delegate duties to personnel	5.82	0.26	0.666	3.94	4.00	4.60
27. Prepare reports	7.71	0.30	0.291	4.82	4.70	4.81
30. Develop commitment to common goals	10.00	0.33	0.129	4.00	4.54	4.60
31. Establish lines of communication	5.18	0.24	0.737	3.97	4.22	4.33
32. Schedule staff work	7.64	0.30	0.468	3.72	4.20	4.00
39. Assure congruence between IEPs and special education	5.56	0.26	0.475	4.00	4.43	4.20

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE IDEAL ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF APPRAISING

Instrument Items	$\chi^2$	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
5. Share responsibility for evaluation personnel	4.57	0.23	0.802	4.09	4.00	4.33
11. Conduct assessment to determine program changes	8.89	0.32	0.180	4.24	4.25	4.71
17. Secure evaluation of similar programs	6.45	0.27	0.596	3.77	3.71	4.00
18. Conduct studies to determine future needs	6.32	0.27	0.388	3.96	4.14	4.40
22. Secure opinions on methods to improve delivery	3.65	0.21	0.723	4.17	4.06	4.40
28. Assessing objectives of overall program	10.00	0.37	0.557	4.61	4.54	4.41
37. Monitoring activities in special education	14.70	0.40	0.065	4.26	4.69	4.71
41. Conducting internal program evaluation	6.16	0.27	0.629	4.16	4.63	4.41

director/coordinator in carrying out the appraising function was retained.

In summary, it was determined that there was no significant difference among the perceptions of the school administrators, special education teachers, and special education directors/coordinators for the ideal role on all four administrative functions tested. Thus, the null hypothesis was retained.

#### Perception Analysis for Current Role

The third section of this chapter addresses research question C: Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative functions in the current role of the special education director/coordinator? Tables 12, 13, 14, and 15 present the results of the statistical testing of research question C.

The ten items from the survey instrument which pertain to planning are grouped together in table 12. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education directors/coordinators' perceptions regarding the current role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that eight of the ten items failed to reach the .05 level of significance. The two items which were significantly different at the .05 level were number six (preparation of an annual budget) and number fourteen (planning for coordination of services). (Special education directors/coordinators had higher median scores than either special education teachers or school administrators on items six and fourteen.) Since eight of the ten items



TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE CURRENT ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF PLANNING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
1. Plan staff development	4.41	0.23	0.819	2.95	2.71	3.38
6. Prepare annual budget	21.08	0.46	0.007	4.64	3.88	4.85
7. Conduct planning	12.14	0.37	0.145	3.02	3.29	3.90
9. Conduct planning to work with community services	13.18	0.38	0.105	3.00	2.44	3.80
14. Conduct planning to coordinate services	17.56	0.43	0.024	3.75	3.00	4.60
21. Conduct planning to assure transportation	11.05	0.32	0.198	3.80	3.08	4.33
26. Conduct planning to assure consulting services	9.05	0.32	0.337	3.67	2.88	4.20
29. Conduct planning to assure IEPs	6.81	0.28	0.642	3.41	3.69	4.20
38. Conduct planning in developing future goals	9.03	0.32	0.430	2.90	3.08	4.08
42. Conduct planning for continuity of curriculum	11.30	0.36	0.334	2.10	2.25	3.33

were not significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the current role of the special education director/coordinator in carrying out the planning function was retained.

The ten items from the survey instrument which pertain to decision making are grouped together in table 13. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education director/coordinators' perceptions regarding the current role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that nine of the ten items failed to reach the .05 level of significance. The one item which was significantly different at the .05 level was number thirty-five (selection of a training design for inservice). Special education directors/coordinators had a higher median score than either special education teachers or school administrators on item thirty-five. Since nine of the ten items were not significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the current role of the special education director/coordinator in carrying out the decision making function was retained.

The fourteen items from the survey instrument which pertain to executing or operating are grouped together in table 14. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education director/coordinators' perceptions regarding the current role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that thirteen of the fourteen items failed to reach the .05 level of significance. The item which was significantly different at the .05 level was number eight

TABLE 13

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE CURRENT ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF DECISION MAKING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
4. Select resource persons	8.81	0.32	0.193	3.83	3.00	4.58
12. Decide how to distribute resources	14.47	0.40	0.070	4.07	3.66	4.71
16. Select and recommend personnel	12.44	0.37	0.132	3.92	3.25	4.60
19. Decide whether personnel should be retained or not	8.93	0.32	0.347	2.65	2.33	3.75
25. Decide what material to adopt	7.00	0.29	0.537	2.58	3.08	3.12
33. Choose appropriate consultants to conduct inservice	7.01	0.29	0.535	2.50	3.25	4.38
34. Approve budget request	9.42	0.33	0.308	3.92	2.80	4.60
35. Select a training design for inservice	16.38	0.42	0.037	2.50	2.71	4.60
36. Approve curriculum goals	5.71	0.26	0.679	2.83	3.06	3.41
40. Decide to remove students where environment is not suitable	6.15	0.27	0.63	2.77	2.80	3.90

TABLE 14

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE CURRENT ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF EXECUTING/OPERATING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
2. Conducting system of personal supervision	5.76	0.26	0.674	2.27	2.29	2.75
3. Implementing plans	11.15	0.35	0.193	3.77	3.28	4.71
8. Dissemination information	21.56	0.46	0.005	3.76	3.62	4.71
10. Coordinator between regular and special education	6.20	0.27	0.624	2.86	3.11	3.90
13. Written policy regarding special education	13.90	0.39	0.084	4.54	3.38	4.40
15. Make appropriate student placements	6.46	0.28	0.596	4.50	3.41	4.25
20. Serve as liaison	6.28	0.27	0.615	3.81	3.40	4.38
23. Conducting orientation of new personnel	15.04	0.40	0.058	2.17	2.29	3.12
24. Delegate duties to personnel	5.20	0.25	0.735	3.17	2.88	4.12
27. Prepare reports	3.53	0.20	0.461	4.68	4.12	4.81
30. Develop commitment to common goals	3.21	0.20	0.267	3.02	3.00	4.00
31. Establish lines of communication	12.52	0.37	0.129	2.42	2.40	3.00
32. Schedule staff work	5.75	0.26	0.675	2.50	3.00	3.25
39. Assure congruence between IEPs and special education	8.82	0.32	0.357	2.77	3.00	3.70

(dissemination of information). Special education directors/coordinators had a higher median score than either special education teachers or school administrators on item eight. Since thirteen of the fourteen items were not significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the current role of the special education director/coordinator in carrying out the executing or operating function was retained.

The eight items from the survey instrument which pertain to appraising are grouped together in table 15. An examination of the chi square statistics comparing special education teachers', school administrators', and special education director/coordinators' perceptions regarding the current role of the special education director/coordinator revealed that seven of the eight items failed to reach the .05 level of significance. The item which was significantly different at the .05 level was number eighteen (conduct studies to determine future needs). Special education directors/coordinators had a higher median score than either special education teachers or school administrators on item eighteen. Since seven of the eight items were not significant at the .05 level, the hypothesis of no difference among the perceptions of the three groups related to the current role of the special education director/coordinator in carrying out the appraising function was retained.

In summary, it was determined that there was no significant difference among the perceptions of the school administrators, special education teachers, and special education directors/coordinators for the current role of all four administrative functions tested. Thus, the null hypothesis was retained.

TABLE 15

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATORS ON THE CURRENT ROLE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION OF APPRAISING

Instrument Items	X <sup>2</sup>	C	p	Mdn Tchr	Mdn Adm	Mdn Dir
5. Share responsibility for evaluation personnel	8.09	0.30	0.423	2.50	2.20	3.67
11. Conduct assessment to determine program changes	9.61	0.33	0.293	3.00	2.63	3.90
17. Secure evaluation of similar programs	10.24	0.34	0.284	2.71	2.33	3.20
18. Conduct studies to determine future needs	19.05	0.44	0.014	2.50	2.41	3.50
22. Secure opinions on methods to improve delivery	7.27	0.30	0.507	3.50	3.00	4.00
28. Assessing objectives of overall program	7.32	0.30	0.268	3.90	3.72	4.60
37. Monitoring activities in special education	7.00	0.29	0.320	3.02	3.42	4.40
41. Conducting internal program evaluation	12.82	0.38	0.118	3.10	3.11	4.00

A visual inspection of tables 8 through 11 describing the ideal role of the special education directors/coordinators and tables 12 through 15 describing the current role of the special education directors/coordinators seemed to indicate a pattern in which the median scores of special education directors/coordinators had higher scores than did school administrators. The sign test was selected to test the potential relationship between these two groups of median scores. The rationale for this test was presented by Siegel (1956):

The sign test is applicable to the case of two related samples when the experimenter wishes to establish that two conditions are different. The only assumption underlying this test is that the variable under consideration has a continuous distribution of differences, nor does it assume that all subjects are drawn from the same population (p. 58).

The formula given for calculating the sign test by Siegel (1956) was:

$$z = \frac{(x \pm .5) - \frac{1}{2} N}{\frac{1}{2} \sqrt{N}} \quad (\text{p. 72}).$$

The data from tables 8 through 11 for the ideal role of the special education directors/coordinators revealed a nearly consistent pattern of ranking for school administrators below that of special education directors/coordinators. The results of the statistical testing were that  $z = 2.49$  and  $p < .05$ . It may be concluded that a significant trend existed between the median scores of the special education directors/coordinators and the school administrators. Twenty-nine of the forty-two statements had higher median scores recorded for the special education directors/coordinators.

The data from tables 12 through 15 for the current role of the special education directors/coordinators revealed a consistent pattern of ranking for school administrators below that of special education

directors/coordinators. The results of the statistical testing were that  $z = 6.24$  and  $p < .001$ . It may be concluded that a significant trend existed between the median scores of the special education directors/coordinators and school administrators. Forty-one of the forty-two statements had higher median scores recorded for the special education directors/coordinators.

#### Summary of Open-ended Statements

The fourth section of this chapter presents data regarding the schools in which the respondents work and a summary of responses from the open-ended statements of the instrument. Responses for each of the four open-ended statements are presented first for the special education directors/coordinators, second for the administrators, and third for the special education teachers who participated in the study. For the reader's convenience, each open-ended statement precedes the summarized responses.

Statement number one. Describe any problems inherent in working with sometimes conflicting regulations. Please explain what specific changes you would suggest.

Nine special education directors/coordinators responded to the first statement. Two of the respondents' replies reported that no conflicts existed because the regulations were prescriptive and specific. One stated that there was a conflict between state and federal laws on entrance and exit ages of handicapped children. Three of the replies indicated that regulations were ill conceived and in conflict. A suggested change from one respondent was to "restrict interpretation of laws." Two of the respondents failed to provide



useable/relevant information.

Thirteen administrators furnished responses to the first statement; eight administrators did not offer comment. Two administrators stated that there were conflicts between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the "state forms" for compliance with the mandated law. The suggested change was to implement uniform forms. "Interpretations of the law create conflicts" was reported by two administrators. Another suggested change was to implement cooperation between agencies. One administrator's reply was "no problem, just challenges." Eight respondents did not provide useable/relevant commentary about the statement.

Forty-one special education teachers supplied responses to the first open-ended statement. Six teachers indicated that there were not any conflicts in the regulations. Ten of the teachers stated that there were conflicts because the teachers were responsible to more than one administrator. Changes that were suggested by individual special education teachers included: "To have a liaison person between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and state, to interpret guidelines and regulations;" "More cooperation between administrators of each of the schools within the district;" "More cooperative planning between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the special education district." Another recommendation included the following: "The Individual Education Program should not be required until thirty days after placement takes place. This will allow the special education teachers to develop a valid and more accurate Individual Education Program." While it does not appear to directly address the statement, twenty-two special education teachers commented negatively about the

amount of paperwork involved in the implementation of Public Law 94-142.

Statement number two. Describe any special complications associated with working with significant numbers of American Indian special education students. Please explain why you think these complications exist.

The complications listed by individual special education directors/coordinators were lack of parental involvement and cooperation in obtaining consent for psychological evaluations, absenteeism, and behavioral problems. Eight of the responses did not provide useable/relevant data and no explanations were offered regarding why complications exist.

Seven of the administrators stated that there were not any complications. One response was that there was "very good cooperation-Indian parents show support for those dealing with their child." Three respondents indicated that lack of parental support and lack of understanding about special education were complications of the current situation. Three replied that it was difficult to obtain parental consent for placement or reevaluation of the child's Individual Education Program plan, due to the distance parents live from the school. Two responses noted that there were cultural differences. Nine of the responses given by the administrators did not supply useable/relevant data. Ten administrators did not respond to the statement.

Five of the special education teachers mentioned that one complication of working with American Indian special education students was that test scores are difficult to interpret because

there was a lack of unbiased assessment materials available to use with American Indian handicapped children. Twelve special education teachers noted that language differences and parental involvement were also complications. One person said that misunderstandings existed between non-Indian staff and Indian parents. Eight of the special education teachers indicated that because there were differences between the Indian culture and non-Indian culture, children felt torn between the two cultures. Seven of the special education teachers stated that there were no particular complications working with American Indian children. Four of the special education teachers explained that there were too many Indian people living in the home, which created complications. Three of the special education teachers commented that parents do not spend enough time talking with their children, which caused Indian children to have many language problems. One special education teacher indicated that Indian children had more ear infections than non-Indian children, which caused them to have difficulty with auditory memory. One response was that Indian children were undernurtured. Five respondents did not furnish useable/relevant comments.

Statement number three. Describe what difficulties occur in recruiting and/or retaining special education teachers in your school. Please explain why you think these problems exist.

Five of the special education directors/coordinators stated that the North Dakota special education certification requirements for special education teachers were too stringent. Seven indicated that it was difficult to recruit and retain special education teachers because teachers did not want to teach in a rural area. Six

responses were that the salaries for special education teachers were too low and the work demands too high. Six of the directors/coordinators pointed out the lack of suitable housing for teachers as another difficulty in hiring and keeping teachers. One special education director/coordinator stated that special education teachers "get frustrated" because they did not know who was responsible for the special education program.

Seven administrators mentioned the isolated geographic location as one difficulty in recruiting special education teachers. Seven responses were that North Dakota certification requirements for special education teachers were too high, which resulted in a low number of certified teachers. Four respondents attributed the difficulty to inadequate salary and additional work demands in the field of special education, which caused teachers to be frustrated and to leave the field of education entirely. Lack of housing for teachers in the rural areas was cited by one administrator as a difficulty in recruiting teachers.

Six of the special education teachers concurred that there was lack of communication between administrators and special education teachers. Three teachers said there was no supervision or evaluation by the administrators so, therefore, there was a lack of understanding of the special education program and staff by the administrators. Another teacher noted a lack of continuity and effective leadership in the special education program within the school. North Dakota's stringent certification requirements were cited by four special education teachers as a factor creating difficulty in recruiting teachers. Ten of the teachers indicated that the lack of suitable

living quarters and lack of social activity, due to the "rural area" of the schools, compounded the process of recruiting and retaining teachers.

Statement number four. Describe any differences in the special education program in your school when compared with other schools because you have a significant number of American Indian students. Please explain why you think these differences exist.

Three of the responses of the special education directors/coordinators cited lack of parental involvement. Two indicated behavior problems due to maladjusted children coming from homes with "solo" parents. There was one of each of the following responses: community acceptance, lack of services due to isolation, and identifying specific agencies that have jurisdiction or authority in a situation. Two of the special education directors/coordinators indicated that there were no differences.

Seven responses by the administrators indicated there were no differences in the special education program. Two respondents stated that there was a lack of parental interest. Lack of staff, which resulted in lack of services, was reported by two administrators. One noted that there were cultural differences. Stereotyping was cited by one administrator. There was one each of the following replies: communication with parents, far distances from special education centers, lack of money and education values, importance of grades and attendance not stressed in the homes. One administrator stated, "It is better because Indian professionals have taken an aggressive advocacy role to seek out resources. In addition, the expertise Indians have developed over the years has uniquely equipped the

schools to seek out and administer federal resources."

Five of the special education teachers stated that there were no differences in the special education program. More supplies and materials were available for use with the handicapped students when compared to other schools was a response made by nine of the special education teachers. Limited auxiliary services were available due to the rural area of the schools was noted by three of the teachers. Lack of continuity in special education programs with programs changing from year to year was reported by one respondent. Higher percentages of special education student enrollments as compared to public schools, low economic status, some dialect differences, value differences, and ineffective administrators were also cited as differences in the special education programming at their school mentioned by individual teachers. Indian children do not socialize with other races due to the isolation, "more time is spent on health and hygiene-related programs because these are not taken care of at home" were also replies that were given once. "I think that special education services are accepted better within the American Indian population because the Indian values already respect individual differences" was a reply given by a special education teacher.

The preceding pages reported the data generated about the study questions in both narrative and tabular form. Chapter 5 presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from this study.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary and Background for the Study

Prior to Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, it was not mandated for schools to provide services for the handicapped children; therefore, special education administration was not an area of concern. Special education programs that were in existence were generally administered by school administrators who did not have training in special education.

The growth and complexity of special education demanded the leadership of a well-trained, highly qualified professional who was a specialist in special education and school administration. The special education director/coordinator was the key person for an effective special education program in the school.

Writers in the field of educational administration concurred that an administrator in a school setting must carry out particular functions to operate an effective educational program. Among those functions which were most commonly mentioned include: (1) planning, (2) decision making, (3) executing or operating, (4) appraising, (5) coordinating, (6) leading, (7) reporting, (8) organizing, (9) continued professional study, and (10) interpersonal communication skills. Since special education was a part of the total educational

program, the director of special education must carry out the same administrative functions as a general school administrator to insure a quality special education program.

These functions applied to the administration in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools as well as to others. However, the Bureau of Indian Affairs leadership did not place any special emphasis on special education until recently. This lack of emphasis on special education services exacerbated the need for more qualified special education teachers and directors to work in schools where there exists a concentration of American Indian students. Since most of the schools that serve American Indian children are geographically isolated, it has been increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified special education personnel to provide quality special education services.

#### Major Findings From the Review of the Literature

The review of the literature revealed a number of commonly cited issues and concerns related to the effective administration of special education programs past and present in the schools. These findings were discussed in various kinds of research studies and informal evaluations but are synthesized in the topics mentioned in this section.

One of the common problems administrators encountered when dealing with special education programs was obtaining adequately prepared personnel to provide services. In general, there was a shortage of qualified special education staff--teachers and administrators alike. This problem was compounded further in areas



of isolation. A related problem was the lack of qualified, trained personnel who were capable of working with the multiply handicapped child and with all the different types of exceptionalities. Recruitment, selection, and retention of certified professional personnel were more difficult to achieve in sparsely populated areas than in urban areas.

An additional problem cited in the literature was how curriculum and educational programs for the different types of exceptionalities could be developed and expanded. Different children with different kinds of exceptionalities required varying types of curriculum, instruction, and materials. Again, in rural areas it was difficult to find teachers who were trained to deal with many types of uniquenesses.

Parents, too, needed to effectively deal with their exceptional child and may have required counseling to help them understand their child's handicapping condition. Administrators were typically faced with the problem of dealing with the public and parents on all school-related issues. As new responsibilities emerged for those dealing with special education concerns, new counseling and public relations skills were required in special education administrative positions. Therefore, the person who had the role of a special education administrator must be trained in a myriad of areas of expertise.

Another area of concern, as stated in the review of the literature, was the role expectation for the special education director/coordinator. One study (Duncan 1979) indicated that a great deal of variance existed among special education teachers, administrators, and special education directors/coordinators on job

descriptions and/or functions of the special education directors/coordinators.

An examination of the literature also revealed that special education administrators lacked adequate time or opportunity to carry out active research. Without this role-related responsibility being fulfilled, administrators were being put in the position of making guesses about how to solve problems their schools faced in developing more adequate programming for exceptional students.

These were the major findings from the review of related literature. Problems which appeared common to many special education programs included (1) obtaining adequately trained personnel, (2) working with multiply handicapped students, (3) retaining certified professional personnel in rural areas, (4) developing and expanding appropriate educational programs, (5) varying curriculum instruction and materials, (6) dealing with parents and the public on special education issues, (7) clarifying precisely the role of the special education director/coordinator, and (8) conducting active research to support training for regular teachers. These findings pointed to the need to study further selected perceptions about how the role of special education director/coordinator was viewed in a rural state such as North Dakota.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how selected groups viewed the role of the special education director/coordinator in North Dakota schools which have a considerable American Indian student population. In addition, the purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of the selected group toward the current and ideal

role of the special education director/coordinator.

### Conclusions

Three major conclusions may be drawn from the statistical treatment and analyses of the data used in this study. Research questions formed the basis for guiding the inquiry into the current role and ideal role of the special education directors/coordinators as perceived by administrators, special education teachers, and special education directors/coordinators. The three research questions used in this study provided the primary foundation for the major conclusions drawn. Each research question is restated in this section of chapter 5 and is followed with major conclusions drawn from the data. Following the major conclusions for each research question are secondary conclusions and findings associated with the data generated by the research.

#### Research Question A

Do special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators differ significantly in the rankings of their perceptions of the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator?

#### Major Conclusions

For the total population, there were statistically significant differences among the perceptions of the total group toward the current and ideal role of the special education director/coordinator. Each administrative function tested separately was rejected and the median scores were systematically higher in the ideal category than in the current category. It appeared that all participants believed

that the current role of the special education director/coordinator was less adequately performed than would be ideal in each of the four administrative functions tested.

### Secondary Conclusions

For the total population, the comparison of perceptions of the current and ideal roles on the administrative function of planning was significant for eight of ten items. The two items in the planning category which were not rejected related to planning staff development activities and planning work which was coordinated with other community service agencies. This suggested that the work of the special education director/coordinator was satisfactory in these areas, i.e., there was no perceived difference in performance of the ideal and current role categories.

For the total population, the comparison of perceptions of the current and ideal roles on the administrative function of decision making was significant for nine of the ten items. The item in decision making which was not rejected related to choosing appropriate consultants to conduct inservice. This suggested that the work of the special education director/coordinator was satisfactory in this area, there was no perceived difference in performance between the ideal and current role categories.

For the total population, the comparison of the current and ideal roles on the administrative function of executing or operating was significant for all of the fourteen items. This suggested that the work of the special education director/coordinator was not perceived as ideal for any aspect of this administrative function.

For the total population, the comparison of perceptions of the current and ideal roles on the administrative function of appraising was significant for all eight items. This suggested that the work of the special education director/coordinator was not perceived as ideal for any aspect of this administrative function.

#### Research Question B

Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative functions in the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator?

#### Major Conclusions

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators there were no statistically significant differences among the perceptions of the groups toward the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator. Each administrative function tested separately was retained. Thus, it appeared that each of the three groups viewed the idealized performance of the administrative functions of planning, decision making, executing or operating, and appraising in essentially the same way. It was of some interest to note that special education teachers and school administrators who had perceptions which were external to the role of the special education director/coordinator viewed the ideal role in essentially the same way as the role incumbent.

#### Secondary Conclusions

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators, the comparisons of perceptions

of the ideal role on the administrative function of planning were not significant for any of the ten items. Since none of the ten items in the planning category were rejected, this suggested that there was no perceived difference among the three selected groups regarding the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in any aspect of the planning function.

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators, the comparisons of perceptions of the ideal role on the administrative function of decision making were significant for two of the ten items. The two items which were rejected related to approving budget requests and selecting a training design for inservice. An examination of median scores regarding approval of budget requests showed the special education directors/coordinators with the highest, school administrators with the second highest, and special education teachers with the lowest. This suggested that the special education director/coordinator viewed the ideal performance of this role at a higher level than did school administrators or special education teachers. An examination of the median scores regarding the selection of an appropriate training design for inservice education showed the special education teachers with the highest and the school administrators and special education directors/coordinators with equally lower scores. This suggested that the special education teachers viewed the ideal performance of this role at a higher level than did school administrators or special education directors/coordinators.

For special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators, the comparisons of perceptions of

the ideal role on the administrative function of executing or operating were significant for one of the fourteen items. The item which was rejected related to written policy regarding special education. An examination of the median score for written policy regarding special education showed that special education teachers with the highest score, special education directors/coordinators with second highest, and school administrators with the lowest. This suggested that the special education teachers viewed the ideal performance of this role at a higher level than did school administrators or special education directors/coordinators.

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators, the comparisons of perceptions for the ideal role on the administrative function of appraising were not significant for any of the eight items. Since none of the eight items in the appraising category were rejected, this suggested that there was no perceived difference among the three selected groups regarding the ideal role of the special education director/coordinator in any aspect of the appraising function.

#### Research Question C

Is there a significant difference among special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators in their perceptions of the administrative functions in the current role of the special education director/coordinator?

#### Major Conclusions

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and school administrators, there were no

statistically significant differences among the perceptions of the groups toward the current role of the special education director/coordinator. Each administrative function tested separately was retained. Thus, it appeared that each of the three groups viewed the current performance of the administrative functions of planning, decision making, executing or operating, and appraising in essentially the same way. It was of some interest to note that special education teachers and school administrators who had perceptions which were external to the role of the special education director/coordinator viewed the current role in essentially the same way as the role incumbent.

#### Secondary Conclusions

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and school administrators, the comparisons of the current role on the administrative function of planning were significant for two of the ten items. The two items in the planning category which were rejected related to preparing the annual budget and conducting planning to coordinate services. An examination of the median scores regarding preparing the annual budget showed the special education directors/coordinators with the highest, special education teachers with the second highest, and school administrators with the lowest scores. This suggested that the special education directors/coordinators viewed the current performance of this role at a higher level than did special education teachers or school administrators. An examination of median scores regarding conducting planning to coordinate services showed the special education directors/coordinators with the highest, special education teachers



second highest, and school administrators with the lowest scores. This suggested that the special education directors/coordinators viewed the current performance of this role at a higher level than did special education teachers or school administrators.

For special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and school administrators, the comparisons of perceptions of the current role on the administrative function of decision making were significant for one of the ten items. The item in the decision making category which was rejected related to selecting a training design for inservice. An examination of the median scores regarding selecting a training design for inservice showed the special education directors/coordinators with the highest, school administrators and special education teachers with the lowest scores. This suggested that the special education directors/coordinators viewed the current performance of this role at a higher level than did school administrators or special education teachers.

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and school administrators, the comparisons of perceptions of the current role on the administrative function of executing or operating were significant for one of the fourteen items. The item which was rejected related to disseminating information. An examination of the median scores regarding disseminating information showed the special education directors/coordinators with the highest, special education teachers with second highest, and school administrators with the lowest scores. This suggested that the special education directors/coordinators viewed the current performance of this role at a higher level than did special education

teachers or school administrators.

For the special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators, the comparisons of perceptions for the current role on the administrative function of appraising were significant for one of the eight items. The item in the appraising category which was rejected related to conducting studies to determine future needs. This suggested that the work of the special education director/coordinator was satisfactory in the other seven items but that there was a perceived difference in performance of statistical significance among the selected groups in relation to the current role. An examination of the median scores on the instrument item, conducting studies to determine future needs, showed the special education directors/coordinators with the highest score, special education teachers with second highest, and school administrators with the lowest. This suggested that the special education directors/coordinators viewed the ideal performance of the ideal role at a higher level than did special education teachers or school administrators.

No formal hypotheses were stated for the comparison of median scores between special education directors/coordinators and school administrators on the ideal role dimensions or on the current role dimensions. Nevertheless, such comparisons were made and conclusions can be drawn.

#### Major Conclusions

It may be concluded that a significant trend of differences existed between the median scores of the special education directors/coordinators and the school administrators on the ideal role discussion.

The special education directors/coordinators had a systematically higher median score on this role dimension. This discrepancy suggested the special education directors/coordinators had higher expectations for their performance in the ideal role than did school administrators.

It may be concluded that a significant trend of differences existed between the median scores of the special education directors/coordinators and the school administrators on the current role dimension. Forty-one of the forty-two statements had higher median scores recorded for the special education directors/coordinators on this role dimension. This discrepancy suggested that special education directors/coordinators viewed their current performance at a higher level than did school administrators.

Respondents were asked to share their perceptions related to the special nature of their work situations based on four open-ended statements. The statements and conclusions follow:

#### Statement Number One

Describe any problems inherent in working with sometimes conflicting regulations. Please explain what specific changes you would suggest.

#### Major Conclusions

This statement yielded conflicting data. Members from each of the three groups reported there were no conflicts and members from each of the groups reported conflicts between state and federal regulations. Special education teachers stated that there was a conflict because teachers are responsible to more than one administrator. There were few suggestions about specific changes people

would make on consensual data in this regard.

#### Secondary Conclusions

An examination of the responses regarding problems inherent with conflicting regulations suggested that not every school was affected by the conflicts between state and federal regulations. Teachers' responses suggested that it was difficult to be responsible to more than one administrator.

#### Statement Number Two

Describe any special complications associated with working with significant numbers of American Indian special education students. Please explain why you think these complications exist.

#### Major Conclusions

Several administrators and special education teachers indicated they experienced no particular complications working with American Indian special education students. Several special education teachers mentioned one complication in working with American Indian students was that test scores were difficult to interpret because there was a lack of unbiased assessment tests for use with American Indian students. Frequently cited by special education teachers was that there is a language difference. None of the groups addressed the second part of the statement which asked to explain why these complications existed.

#### Secondary Conclusions

An examination of the responses regarding complications working with significant number of American Indian special education

students suggested that administrators and special education teachers did not perceive the complications with the American Indian students per se. However, special education teachers indicated that complications arose as a result of cultural factors which affected the interpretation of assessment tests, e.g., language difference.

### Statement Number Three

Describe what difficulties occur in recruiting and/or retaining special education teachers in your school. Please explain why you think this problem exists.

### Major Conclusions

Frequently cited by each of the three groups was the problem of isolation of the schools and stringent North Dakota special education certification requirements. Special education directors/coordinators and special education teachers cited the lack of suitable housing. Special education teachers were concerned with the lack of social activity due to the rural area of the schools, lack of leadership, communication difficulties, and supervision from the administrators. None of the groups attempted to explain why these problems existed.

### Secondary Conclusions

An examination of the responses regarding recruitment and retention of special education teachers suggested that the three groups viewed the problem in basically the same way. This suggested that the problem lies with the factors related to rural area of these schools rather than monetary concerns. Lack of leadership, communication difficulties, and supervision from administrators were concerns

of special education teachers. This suggested that these administrative functions were viewed by special education teachers to be important in relation to recruiting and retaining teachers.

#### Statement Number Four

Describe any differences in the special education program in your school when compared with other schools because you have significant numbers of American Indian students. Please explain why you think these differences exist.

#### Major Conclusions

Frequently cited by each of the three groups was that no differences in special education programs existed. Special education directors/coordinators noted frequently there was a lack of Indian parental involvement. Special education teachers commented that there were more supplies and instructional materials in schools which serve American Indian students. No attempt was made to account for the differences noted.

#### Secondary Conclusions

An examination of responses regarding differences in special education programs serving American Indian students as compared to other schools suggested that the three groups did not perceive any differences. Responses also suggested that there was a need to develop a plan to encourage parental involvement in their child's education. Responses also suggested that there were adequate supplies and material available.

### Limitations

Limitations which may have affected the results of this study were:

1. The number of available special education directors/coordinators was relatively few. This may have weakened the statistical evidence generated by the study
2. Building principals were not included in this study with the exception of one who was the only administrator in that school. Since this group may have more direct contact with the special education director/coordinator, their input would have probably strengthened the findings
3. One of the schools identified chose to not participate in this study
4. The instrument was limited to first-order abstractions defined by Knezevich (1975). The instrument could have included his second-order abstractions, which would have strengthened the study, as additional data would have been obtained
5. The instrument could have included demographic information. This would have provided additional insight to the study regarding sex, age, number of years of teaching and/or administrative experience, length of time in present position, educational background, and race

### Recommendations

The results of the interpretation of the review of literature and the data collected for this study led to the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that each of the schools' special education programs identified in this study should be studied in greater depth and should include the administrators, particularly the building principals, who are most directly involved with special education directors/coordinators. Since building principals may have more direct contact with the special education directors/coordinators, their input would probably strengthen the findings

2. It is recommended that a study should be conducted and perhaps revisions made regarding the position requirements of the special education director/coordinator in those schools served by the Aberdeen Area Office of Bureau of Indian Affairs and throughout the other eleven areas. This would perhaps eliminate the inconsistencies that exist pertaining to the qualification of the special education director/coordinator in schools served by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the respective states in which these schools are located

3. It is recommended that special education directors/coordinators conduct a self-assessment of the types of functions they carry out and utilize the data obtained to determine how they could move toward a more ideal performance. This would assist special educators to move toward a more ideal performance of their role

4. It is recommended that more time and energy be spent on supervision. This would assist in meeting some of the expressed needs of teachers. A supervision process that has been mutually agreed upon may be initiated through inservice training

5. It is recommended that more American Indian teachers be trained to provide services for handicapped American Indian children who are located primarily in areas of geographic isolation in order



to minimize the problem of recruitment and retention of personnel. The training of local personnel who plan to continue their homes, particularly on Indian reservations, would not only assist with recruitment and retention, it would help local school personnel to develop continuity in the instructional program

6. It is recommended that cultural awareness training has become an integral component of staff inservice. This action would assist local school personnel to meet the expressed need of sensitizing school staff, especially those who are non-Indian, to the cultural differences of Indian students

7. It is recommended that the schools serving a high degree of American Indian students make greater efforts to educate and involve parents in the special education of their children. This action would assist local school personnel to respond to the need for greater parental involvement

8. It is recommended that the decision-makers in the various schools collaborate in their efforts to standardize the paperwork requirements among the various agencies (state and federal) in order to simplify the procedures and facilitate the transfer of students among the various types of schools found on or near Indian reservations

9. It is recommended that more clearly defined lines of authority be established in schools that have special education administration personnel within the hierarchy of administration. This may be accomplished by the individuals involved with the board of education or other decision-making groups to discuss the issue and develop a written policy in which the lines of authority are

clearly defined

### Perspective

The following recommendations encompass the writer's views reflecting not only the data but also reflecting insights developed by doing the study. The insights reflected in these recommendations do not necessarily have an evidentiary base but were nevertheless presented for consideration.

1. It is recommended that schools in collaboration with colleges and universities more actively explore the possibility of providing special education programs which train teachers and administrators for service in rural areas. A "field-based" program might meet these needs. Such a delivery system would facilitate the training of more American Indian personnel in the field of special education

2. It is recommended that a symposium of rural and reservation schools be convened to discuss the problems of special education in rural areas. The problems centering around such issues as recruitment, retention, and geographic proximity of multi-districts need to be addresses in order for quality special education services to be delivered to rural and geographically isolated areas in North Dakota

APPENDIX A

NORTH DAKOTA CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Guidelines for the North Dakota Special Education Credentials:

A. Director of Special Education

The director of special education shall have a valid special education director's credential.

1. A valid North Dakota teaching certificate.
2. A Master's degree preferably in special education.
3. Basic preparation in one area of special education credential for North Dakota.
4. An additional nine semester hours in more than one other area of special education.
5. Eight semester hours in School Administration or a four semester hour internship in Administration of Special Education and two semester hours in School Administration should be chosen from courses in School Law, Administration of the Public School, School Finance, Teacher Personnel Administration, or a seminar in Administration.
6. At least two years of successful experience in one area of special education.
7. Recommendations from Supervisor of practicum experience.

APPENDIX B

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Bureau of Indian Affairs Aberdeen Area Office Agency Coordinator of Special Education. Knowledge required by the position:

The incumbent will have a valid professional teaching certificate. The incumbent will have a Master's Degree which will include basic preparation in one area of special education. The incumbent will have an additional 12 hours in more than one area of special education. The incumbent will have a working knowledge of Learning Disabled students, Educable Mental Retarded students. Evidence of this working knowledge will be either by one year's working experience with children in these areas or by a three-hour graduate course in each area. The incumbent will have eight semester hours in School Administration or four semester hours internship in School Administration or successful experience in administration as determined by the Department of Public Instruction of the state or states where they are employed.

APPENDIX C

SOUTH DAKOTA CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

South Dakota

South Dakota requirements for special education director certificate endorsement are as follows:

1. An elementary or secondary teacher certificate with an endorsement in special education;
2. Three years of teaching experience on an elementary or secondary teaching certificate, one year of which was teaching special education. A year of experience in which working with special education students was the primary responsibility of the position may be accepted in lieu of the special education teaching requirements.



APPENDIX D

SURVEY OF THE CURRENT AND IDEAL ROLE OF PERCEPTIONS TOWARD  
THE ROLE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR



- 1) Not at all
- 2) To a limited extent
- 3) More than limited but less than considerable extent
- 4) To a considerable extent
- 5) To a very great extent

The person responsible for giving overall direction to the special education efforts in a school district should . . .

	<u>Is now</u>	<u>Should be</u>
6. Prepare the annual budget request for special services.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Conduct planning which will assure that special education instruction will be adapted to individual needs of children.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Disseminate information to be used by teachers, administrators, advisory groups, and parents (e.g., federal rules and regulations, proposal guidelines).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. Conduct planning to determine the best way the school can work with community social services agencies.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10. Serve as a coordinator between regular and special education programs.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11. Conduct assessment to determine if program changes are required to meet program goals.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12. Decide how to distribute resources such as equipment, supplies, and travel money.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
13. Assure that the district has a written policy regarding all special education activity (e.g., placement, screening).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14. Conduct planning to coordinate services for the handicapped with county and state agencies.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
15. With the assistance of the team, make appropriate student placements based on determined needs.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

- 1) Not at all
- 2) To a limited extent
- 3) More than limited but less than considerable extent
- 4) To a considerable extent
- 5) To a very great extent

The person responsible for giving overall direction to the special education efforts in a school district should . . .

	<u>Is now</u>	<u>Should be</u>
	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
16. Select and recommend personnel for special education to the hiring authority.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
17. Secure evaluation of similar programs for comparison purposes.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
18. Conduct studies to determine future program needs.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
19. Decide, on the basis of systematic evaluation, whether personnel should be retained or released and make those recommendations to the board or other authorities.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
20. Serve as the liaison among chief school administrators, boards, and other agencies in regard to special education services.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
21. Conduct planning which will assure that transportation is available to serve the handicapped.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
22. Secure opinions from staff and patrons on methods to improve service delivery.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
23. Be responsible for conducting an orientation of new personnel to work effectively with American Indian students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
24. Delegate duties (e.g., scheduling, assigning) to special education personnel.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

- 1) Not at all
- 2) To a limited extent
- 3) More than limited but less than considerable extent
- 4) To a considerable extent
- 5) To a very great extent

The person responsible for giving overall direction to the special education efforts in a school district should . . .

	<u>Is now</u>	<u>Should be</u>
25. With the assistance of the team, decide what material to adopt for use with the handicapped in the special education program.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
26. Conduct planning which will assure that consulting services are available to the district (e.g., psychological evaluators, occupational therapists).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
27. Prepare state and federal reports for program approval and support.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
28. Be responsible for assessing the objectives of the overall special education program.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
29. Conduct planning which will assure development of the Individual Education Program (IEP) for every child served by special education.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
30. Develop commitment of staff toward common program objectives.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
31. Establish specific lines of communication among faculty, parents, and agencies (e.g., newsletter).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
32. Schedule professional staff work assignments.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
33. With the assistance of the team, choose appropriate consultants to conduct inservice training for the special education personnel.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
34. Approve appropriate budget requests from staff for special education.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

- 1) Not at all
- 2) To a limited extent
- 3) More than limited but less than considerable extent
- 4) To a considerable extent
- 5) To a very great extent

The person responsible for giving overall direction to the special education efforts in a school district should . . .

	<u>Is now</u>	<u>Should be</u>
35. Select a training design for inservice education for staff.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
36. Approve curriculum goals that will be implemented in special education.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
37. Be responsible for monitoring the activities in the special education program.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
38. Conduct planning sessions with other school officials in developing future goals for special education services.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
39. Assure congruence between each Individual Education Program (IEP) and the special education program.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
40. With the assistance of the team, decide to remove a handicapped student from a particular classroom where learning environment is not suitable.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
41. Be responsible for conducting internal program evaluation of the special education program.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
42. Conduct planning which will assure that there is continuity of curriculum between elementary and high school special education services.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

I am especially interested in your perceptions related to the special nature of your work situations. Please respond to the statements below. If you need more space, feel free to add additional pages.

1. Describe any problems inherent in working with sometimes conflicting regulations. Please explain what specific changes you would suggest.

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2. Describe any special complications associated with working with significant numbers of American Indian special education students. Please explain why you think these complications exist.

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3. Describe what difficulties occur in recruiting and/or retaining special education teachers in your school. Please explain why you think these problems exist.

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4. Describe any differences in the special education program in your school when compared with other schools because you have a significant number of American Indian students. Please explain why you think these differences exist.

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APPENDIX E

LETTER OF INTENT TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF  
NORTH  
DAKOTA

THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING  
Box 8158, University Station  
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58202

January 27, 1981

Dear :

I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration at the University of North Dakota. My dissertation is an investigation of the current and ideal role of special education directors in North Dakota schools which have high concentrations of American Indian students.

It is my desire to survey selected personnel in North Dakota schools which have a substantial percentage of American Indian students. You have been selected for participation in this study because of your role and your knowledge. You will be contacted by telephone in the near future to answer any questions and request your participation. My plan is to deliver the survey to you. At the time of our telephone conversation we can, if you agree to be a part of the study, work out a mutually satisfactory time for me to deliver the survey.

This study has the potential for defining a more productive and useful role for persons administering special education programs which serve American Indian students. In addition, it could also establish a framework for policy decisions in special education for schools which receive significant federal assistance because they have substantial numbers of American Indian students. The information gathered should, in my view, be useful to you and your school from these perspectives.

Your participation in this study is extremely important to me. I hope you will consider the time you devote to completing the survey (about twenty minutes) as time well spent.

Sincerely,

Ramona DeCoteau

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#### SELECTED REFERENCES

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