

June 2021

Administrators of General and Special Education Perceptions of Leadership Practices for Supporting Inclusive Learning Environments for Students with Disabilities

Kimberly B. Cass
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2



Part of the [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Elementary Education Commons](#), and the [Special Education Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cass, Kimberly B., "Administrators of General and Special Education Perceptions of Leadership Practices for Supporting Inclusive Learning Environments for Students with Disabilities" (2021). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 2164.
<https://doi.org/10.7275/22107503.0> https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2/2164

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

ADMINISTRATORS OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PERCEPTIONS
OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Dissertation Presented

by

KIMBERLY B. CASS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2021

College of Education

© Copyright by Kimberly B. Cass 2021

All Rights Reserved

Administrators of General and Special Education Perceptions of Leadership Practices for
Supporting Inclusive Learning Environments for Students with Disabilities

A Dissertation Presented

By

KIMBERLY B. CASS

Approved as to style and content by:

Mary Lynn Boscardin, Chair

Linda Griffin, Member

Robert Marx, Member

Elizabeth McEneaney, Member

Jennifer Randall
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
College of Education

DEDICATION

To my amazing, supportive husband who never stopped believing in me and my mother
who taught me to be a lifelong learner.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Mary Lynn Boscardin. This has been a lifelong dream that was realized only through her encouragement and support. I am truly grateful. I would also like to thank the committee members, Dr. Linda Griffin, Dr. Betsy McEneaney, and Dr. Robert Marx for their time and expertise. I would like to thank Dr. Martha von Mering for her ongoing, selfless, incredible support, and for being an amazing critical friend. I would like to thank Sarah Hopson for her time, patience and expertise.

ABSTRACT

ADMINISTRATORS OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PERCEPTIONS OF
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE LEARNING

ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

MAY 2021

KIMBERLY B. CASS

B.A. UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, DARTMOUTH

M.A. BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY

ED.S. UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

PH.D. UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Mary Lynn Boscardin

The purpose of this study was to explore and analyze general education and special education administrators' perceptions of leadership practices that support inclusivity of students with disabilities in local public school districts. This study compared inclusive leadership priorities between special education administration and elementary principals across a total of 11 districts. Utilizing Q-sort methodology, special education administrators and principals sorted 40 inclusive leadership statements. The research questions that guided this study were: 1) How are inclusive leadership practice statements ranked similarly and differently among participants? 2) How do participants describe rankings for most and least important inclusive leadership practice statements? 3) How are inclusive leadership practice statements ranked in relationship to participants roles? An analysis resulted in two factor groups who sorted their cards similarly.

The responses from Factor A members suggest developing interpersonal relationships and trust are how they lead their schools and districts. The overall responses from Factor B members suggest that they strongly believe in a mission and vision, collaboratively developed, to support all students' success.

A framework based on the themes and categories emerged from the literature for building stronger, inclusive learning environments that support students with disabilities. This framework supports the research that suggests a component of each of the five themes; (a) inclusive collaboration; (b) shared vision, moral purpose and core values; (c) shared decision making, distributed leadership and teacher leadership; (d) meaningful professional development and; (e) data driven decision making and are needed to develop and sustain effective inclusive schools and districts. Within this study, the areas most important in administrator's day to day work clearly fell into three areas of this model, indicating where existing strengths in the areas of (a) inclusive collaboration and (b) shared vision, moral purpose and core values and data driven decision making and may be contributing to inclusivity where the gaps in the importance of (c) shared decision making, distributed leadership and teacher leadership, and (d) meaningful professional development may be preventing it. As a result, an action model for effective, inclusive leadership suggests leadership is a dynamic process, where leaders incorporate all aspects of the model.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v	
ABSTRACT.....	vi	
LIST OF TABLES	x	
LIST OF FIGURES	xi	
CHAPTER		
1. EXAMINING INCLUSION AND THE ROLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERS		
Introduction.....	1	
Historical Perspective	3	
School Reform Movement’s Influence on Inclusion and Special Education Administration	5	
Special Education Administration	9	
Ethical Practice	11	
Collaborative Practice.....	12	
Chapter Summary	14	
2. OVERVIEW OF EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP		16
Introduction.....	16	
Inclusive Collaboration.....	17	
Shared Vision/Moral Purpose/Core Values	20	
Shared Decision Making/Distributed Leadership/Teacher Leadership	24	
Meaningful Professional Development.....	27	
Data Driven Decision Making	31	
Overall Effective Inclusive Leadership	32	
Aligning Special Education Administration and General Education Administration for Effective Inclusion	35	
Chapter Summary	46	
3. METHODOLOGY.....		49
Introduction.....	50	

Rationale and Research Design	50
Q Methodology	51
Research Questions	58
Item Development and Selection	59
Definitions	69
Participants	71
Procedures	78
Data Analysis	80
Labels, Dimensions, Descriptors, and Hypotheses	85
Chapter Summary	87
4. FINDINGS	88
Factor Determination	88
Factor Results	92
Factor A and Factor B Member Demographic Composition	95
Demographic Similarities and Differences of Factor A and Factor B Members	98
Participant District Demographic Representation by Factor	99
Similarities and Differences in Factor A and Factor B Participants' District Demographics	102
Statement Rankings by Factor	103
Factor A Rankings	104
Factor B Rankings	116
Factor B Members Negative Cases	126
Participant Similarities and Differences in Ranking Leadership Practice Statements	129
Overall Connections to the Literature	131
Summary	137
5. DISCUSSION	140
Transactional Equity Driven Relational Leaders Themes	141

Transformational Culture Driven Collaborative Leaders Themes	148
Inclusive Leadership	157
Extending the Model for Effective Inclusive Leadership	160
Limitations	166
Suggestions for Future Research.....	168
Conclusions.....	169
APPENDIX: INSTRUMENTATION	172
BIBLIOGRAPHY	189

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1 LRE/Inclusion History	5
2.1 Collaborative Problem Solving.....	17
2.2 Collaborative Decision Making	18
2.3 Six Strategies	19
2.4 Principal Perspectives	20
2.5 Three Must-Haves.....	22
2.6 Essential Principal Practices	22
2.7 Six Primary Job Functions	23
2.8 Key Concepts	26
2.9 Key Findings.....	27
2.10 Nine Necessary Steps.....	29
2.11 Five Critical Skills	30
2.12 Number of Schools Per Letter Grade Received From the SDOE.....	33
2.13 Seven Essential Variables	34
2.14 Special Education Competencies for Principals	38
2.15 PSEL and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities...	40
2.16 LSEA Responsibilities	43
2.17 School Leadership Practices	44
3.1 Uses for Q-Methodology	52
3.2 R Methodology versus Q Methodology.....	53

3.3 Key Leadership Practices.....	62
3.4 Pilot Follow-up Questionnaire.....	66
3.5 Final Q-sort Key Leadership Practice Statements	66
3.6 Characteristics of Participants.....	74
3.7 Participant District Information	75
3.8 Follow-up Questionnaire	80
4.1 Factor Membership	92
4.2 Demographic Information by Position from Factor A and Factor B	96
4.3 Participant District Demographic Representation by Factor A and Factor B.....	100
4.4 Item Rankings by Factor.....	103
4.5 Factor A Highest Ranked Statements	105
4.6 Factor A Lowest Ranked Statements.....	106
4.7 Rationale of Factor A Members for Highest Ranked Items	109
4.8 Rationale of Factor A Members for Lowest Ranked Items	114
4.9 Factor B Highest Ranked Statements	117
4.10 Factor B Lowest Ranked Statements	118
4.11 Rationale for Factor B Members Highest Ranked Items	120
4.12 Rationale for Factor B Members for Lowest Ranked Items	124
4.13 Factor B Members Negative Cases' High and Low Item Rankings.....	127
4.14 Connecting Statement Rankings with the Literature Themes.....	132
5.1 Transactional Equity Driven Relational Leaders Themes	141
5.2 Transformational Culture Driven Collaborative Leaders Themes.....	149

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
3.1 The Stages of Q Process	57
3.2 Special Education and General Education Administration Priority Similarities and Differences	59
3.3 Q-Sort Grid	79
3.4 Three Main Stages of Q Analytic Process	81
4.1 Eigenvalue by principal component scree plot	90
4.2 Principal component analysis: Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization	94
5.1 Inclusive Leadership	157
5.2 Model for Effective Inclusive Leadership	162

CHAPTER 1

EXAMINING INCLUSION AND THE ROLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERS

Introduction

The definition and perception of the term inclusion in education can vary (Billingsley et al., 2018). Within their review of the literature, Billingsley and Banks (2019) chose to adopt the definition of inclusion by the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Center (2017). The SWIFT Education Center project is part of a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). SWIFT Education Center is a national technical assistance center that builds school capacity for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and inclusion in providing equality. They believe that every student should be valued as a member of their neighborhood schools, and that organizations should support all students with academic and behavioral supports to increase student outcomes, including students who need extensive supports (SWIFT, 2017). The SWIFT Center (2017) definition of inclusion supports the following:

Equity-based inclusive education means all students, including those with the most significant support needs, are educated in age-appropriate classes in their neighborhood schools. Students receive the help they need to be full members of their general education classrooms. Every member of the school community is welcomed, valued, and participates in learning. Inclusive education means that districts support schools, and schools and families support one another as ALL students are welcomed and included in their communities. (SWIFT Center, 2017, p. 1)

According to the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation Center (SWIFT, 2017), strong, local education agency (LEA) and school relationships are vital to the “domains and features of the schoolwide integrated framework for transformation” (p. 1).

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has published an Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice (2017). Within their text, they very specifically define inclusion:

Although commonly associated with special education and the federal mandate that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate, an inclusive philosophy goes beyond the needs of students with disabilities to frame a system of accessible instruction and positive behavior supports that generates positive outcomes for all students. The emphasis on systemic implementation is important. Inclusion is not solely the job of any one educator or classroom- the successful creation of inclusive settings begins at the school and district levels, with superintendents and principals bearing as much responsibility for student success as educators and related service providers. (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017, p. 2)

In concert with the belief that all students should be included to the maximum amount possible, based on the students' needs, The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Code of Ethics promotes meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with exceptionalities in schools and the community (CEC, 2016).

Leaders in the field of education, both general and special education, need to collaborate to meet the needs of all students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE);

“As inclusive practices and accountability continue to shape American education, special education and general education leaders will be challenged to join together in solving the problems of practice inherent in a diverse, complex, high-stakes educational environment”

(Boscardin, 2011, p. 382). In order to provide high quality instruction and programming for all

students, today's educational administrators face many challenges, including the ongoing collaboration between special education and general education teachers and administrators (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003). Educational leaders face these challenge as they

redefine the leadership mission, transforming the dual system of general and special education administration to a distributed system of leadership that collaboratively supports the use of proven practices to achieve school-wide improvement for students with disabilities, as well as for all the students in their charge. (Boscardin, 2005, p. 31)

With leadership being second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2008), investigating general education and special education leadership priorities is relevant. As such, the primary purpose of this study was to explore and analyze general education and special education administrators' perceptions of leadership practices that support inclusivity of students with disabilities in local public school districts.

Historical Perspective

In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, litigation questioned both the purpose of institutions and the confinement of people in institutions, which progressively led to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) language that the United States Supreme Court included in the *Olmstead* decision. It stated that needlessly confining a person in an institution is segregation, that segregation is discrimination, and the ADA forbids such discrimination. *Brown vs. the Board of Education* in 1954 established the principle that school segregation denied students an equal educational opportunity. This began the conversation about separation and equality for all students. The United States Supreme Court held that separate was not equal. Although the *Brown* decision referred to racial segregation, it began to influence thoughts and future decisions about other kinds of segregation, including people with disabilities. These decisions upheld

confinement to institutions as not acceptable if less restrictive options could maintain them safely within their community (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019). Thus, the concept of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) entered conversations surrounding educational access.

In the 1960s and 1970s, more decisions supported the concept of LRE. In the 1980s, advances were made with the types of services available as well as the assistive technology that supported people with disabilities as much as possible, introducing the concept of inclusion, where people of all abilities actively and meaningfully participated within their communities. *Least restrictive* was not enough; more was needed (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019).

Following the passage of the ADA in 1990 and as directed by Congress, the United States Attorney General issued regulations implementing Title II that are based on the regulations issued under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Title II regulations require public entities to “administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities” (Title II, § 35.104). “The preamble discussion of the ‘integration regulation’ explains that ‘the most integrated setting’ is one that ‘enables individuals with disabilities to interact with nondisabled persons to the fullest extent possible’” (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 28 C.F.R. Pt. 35, App. A 2010 addressing § 35.130). Full integration via the integration mandate was then incorporated into the ADA (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019).

School Reform Movements Influence on Inclusion and Special Education Administration

Over the 100-year history, various case decisions and policy changes brought about support from the federal government, recognizing the importance and benefits of inclusion (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

LRE/Inclusion History

1920s	Children continued being placed in institutions as many parents believed these facilities offered the only educational opportunity available to their child. Special education was typically only offered in large cities (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019).
1941	Rosemary Kennedy was Institutionalized after failed lobotomy. She was diagnosed as intellectually disabled and experienced seizures and violent mood swings. In response, her father authorized a prefrontal lobotomy, changing a physically healthy young woman to a permanently incapacitated, unintelligible, isolated adult (Wright & Wright, 2016).
1950	The ARC Champions Abilities of Mentally Retarded was founded by parents of youth diagnosed with developmental disabilities. Its mission was to educate the public about the capabilities of youth with intellectual and related disabilities given the supports and services they need (The ARC, 2020).
1953	A Radiation Experiment was Conducted without consent. Mentally disabled children were fed oatmeal containing radiation in order to track how nutrients were digested. The children were told they were joining a science club (United States Congress House of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 1986).
1954	The Supreme Court ruled that students could not be separated in schools because of race; the parents’ movement worked to change the belief that individuals with disabilities could not be taught (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019).
1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> of Topeka established the principle that school segregation denied students an equal educational opportunity (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, 2019).
1962	Reynolds published the first model of the continuum of alternative placements (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019).
1965	The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law. This law brought education into the forefront of the national assault on poverty and represented a landmark commitment to equal access to quality education (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019).
1971	<i>Mills v. Board of Education</i> established that "all children are entitled to free public education and training appropriate to their learning capacities" (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, 2019, p. 1). <i>Pennsylvania Assn. for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</i> ruled the existing law restricting kids ages six to twenty-one years of age was unconstitutional. It was also stated that Pennsylvania was responsible for providing free public education to all children (Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, 2019).

1972	Congressional Investigation of 1972. In 1972, legislation was introduced in Congress after several “landmark court cases establishing in law the right to education for all handicapped children” (Wright & Wright, 2016, p. 72).
1975	The Education for Handicapped Children Act of 1975—now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Congress intended that all children with disabilities would “have a right to education, and to establish a process by which State and local educational agencies may be held accountable for providing educational services for all handicapped children” (Wright & Wright, 2016, p. 73).
1975	The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (sometimes referred to using the acronyms EAHCA or EHA, or Public Law (PL) 94-142). This act required all public schools accepting federal funds to provide equal access to education for children with physical and mental disabilities (CONNECT, 2009).
1990	In 1990, the United States Congress reauthorized EHA and changed the title to IDEA (Public Law No. 94-142). The requirement is to provide children with disabilities the same opportunity for education as those students who do not have a disability (Wright & Wright, 2016).
1990	Passage of ADA issued regulations implementing Title II that are based on the regulations issued under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Title II regulations require public entities administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities." The preamble discussion of the "integration regulation" explains that "the most integrated setting" is one that "enables individuals with disabilities to interact with nondisabled persons to the fullest extent possible" (Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2019, p. 1)
1992	Policy Advisory: The Law on Inclusive Education requires schools to support inclusion of children with disabilities through the least restrictive and natural environment mandates (CONNECT, 2009).
1997	The reauthorization of the IDEA. Ten provisions of the Act that support inclusive education. “(1) language in the "Findings" section of the law that states the education of students with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for students and ensuring their success in the general education curriculum; (2) a requirement that in the referral process schools give consideration to factors other than disability that may be affecting a student’s performance; (3) a requirement that a general education teacher be on the Individualized Education Program team; (4) a requirement that a decision to exclude a student from general education must be justified; (5) a requirement that special education students be taught the general curriculum, not a separate special education curriculum; (6) a requirement that states establish performance goals for students with disabilities; (7) an end to the stricture that the use of special education funds may have only "incidental benefits" for general education students; (8) enhanced rights of parents; (9) funds for personnel preparation of general educators; and (10) a requirement that states funding formulas be placement neutral” (Gartner & Lipsky, 1998, p. 1).
2001	No Child Left Behind Act was established to “ensure all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state assessments” (Wright & Wright, 2016).
2004	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 is known as IDEA 2004. The IDEA requires that “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in the regular classes with

	the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily” 20 U.S. '1412(a)(5) (CONNECT, 2009).
2015	Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the statute formerly known as No Child Left Behind. The new statute, Every Student Succeeds Act was signed into law (Wright & Wright, 2016).

In its current state, Congress has also recognized the importance of inclusion:

...in enacting IDEA (and in each subsequent revision of the law) Congress has also recognized the benefits of inclusion. Section §1400(5) of IDEA states: Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by . . . ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible.

(CONNECT, The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge, 2009, p. 1)

In addition to the academic benefits of inclusion, courts have long recognized that there are noneducational benefits to inclusion that are important to the quality of life for children with disabilities—such as the opportunity to make friends and increase acceptance among their peers (Daniel R.R. v. State Bd. of Educ., 1989; Sacramento City Sch. Dist. v. Rachel H., 1994). Federal law thus recognizes and supports inclusion because of the developmental, educational, and social benefits that inclusion provides to children with disabilities (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990).

Along with the historical underpinnings of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and inclusion comes the need for change amongst teachers and administration (Billingsley & Banks, 2019). Billingsley and Banks (2019) say it best in their review of *Leadership for Inclusive Schools 1995-2015*; “School reform is difficult even with knowledgeable and willing participants and leaders often underestimate the complexity involved in reform” (p. 196). During the 1990s, states and school districts began to recognize and support practices that increased students with

disabilities' time in the general education setting (Pazey & Yates, 2012). Also, during this time frame, the largest amount of literature was found when looking at abstracts from 1970-2009, substantiating inclusion as a hot topic within that decade (Crockett et al., 2009).

With the increase in literature and recognition from states and districts also came conflict among special education professionals and school policy makers (McDonnell et al., 1997). These differences in expectations, resource allocation, professional preparation, and understanding of law, policy, and practice brought about changes in the role of special education administration (Pazey & Yates, 2012). With students being included within general education classrooms, special education administrators were no longer solely responsible for programming and planning for students with disabilities. The fine line of when the special education administrator was to become responsible for students in the general education setting was blurred. It was unclear as to when, how, or how often the special education administrator was accountable for students in the general education setting (Fuchs & Stecker, 2010). This would remain unclear for several years.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 (the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)) brought all students under its requirements, increasing responsibilities for general educators (Fuchs & Stecker, 2010). This led to some misperceptions from districts that there was no longer a need for special education administration; yet, even with the increase in special education responsibilities for general educators, there was no substantial training for general education teachers and administrators (Pazey & Yates, 2012). In addition, response to intervention (RTI) fell under the responsibility of general educators, although its process to identify students with specific learning disabilities was perceived as a special education responsibility (Yates et al., 2010). This has led special education administration to a

“crossroads” (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003). As partners in RTI, special education administrators have become responsible for effective, research-based interventions for struggling general education students (Fuchs & Stecker, 2010), further blurring the lines between special education and general education. Overall, the responsibilities of special education administration has changed. Current special education leaders are expected to collaborate with their general education counterparts and provide personnel with the resources and expertise needed to support all students in receiving a high-quality education (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003).

Special Education Administration

Given the level of responsibility and the significance of effective special education leadership in supporting all students, and the expectations of providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), including students to the maximum amount possible with their typical peers, it would be expected that there would be a wealth of information about special education leadership. This has not been the case. Within their extensive review of abstracts from 1970-2009, Crockett et al. (2009) found that there continues to be a limited amount of data-based publications available to guide special education administration preparation.

Crockett et al. (2009) appeals to future researchers to address this deficit. In addition, expectations of how special education administrators are endorsed or certified is not consistent across states (Boscardin et al., 2010), making it difficult to generalize preparation programs. In their discussion of the 2009 Administrator of Special Education Standards, Boscardin et al. (2009) illuminate the purpose of the standards, which includes not only guidance for ongoing professional development, but for use in institutions of higher education. They highlighted the development of these standards as a collaborative effort, underscoring the combined input among

educational leaders, professional organizations, and policy makers (Boscardin et al., 2009). Their methodology included a literature review of evidence-based practices, Q-Sorts and surveys. Their participants included practitioners, policy specialists, and scholars who were considered to be experts in the field of education (Boscardin et al., 2009). They also called for more research, noting the importance of investigating the link between special education leadership standards and student outcomes (Boscardin et al., 2009).

In answer to the call for more research using special education leadership standards, Boscardin et al. (2018) investigated how special education administration prioritized statements based on the administrators of special education of one rocky mountain state. The results of their investigation led to the development of an action model for special education leadership. Using Q-sort methodology, they found movement between transactional and transformational leadership, with transitional leadership serving as a “catalyst that allows leaders to seamlessly move between and strategically engage varied leadership approaches” (Boscardin, et al., 2018).

In their study, Schulze and Boscardin (2018) focused on the perceptions of leadership by principals, with and without special education backgrounds. They found perceptions of leadership expand from more of a transactional/instructional form of leadership to more transformational/collaborative/distributed leadership model, as their repertoires expand and develop with time (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018). By using Q-sort methodology, they were able to discern that principals with less experience valued more structured leadership practices, i.e. transactional and instructional. The more experienced principals leaned towards more transformational or collaborative leadership styles. This shift across time with experience supports the idea of principals following a “developmental path” (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018, p. 4).

Ethical Practice

Thompson (2017), also noted the call for more research and shared his review of the literature regarding essential competencies for the leaders of special education programs and the themes that emerged. Thompson's (2017) own study focused on competency areas perceived as crucial to special education leadership, at the building level, in response to this dilemma. This Virginia study of 62 special education directors and school-based special education administrators (SBSEA), chosen by said special education directors' results, were consistent with the CEC (2009) preparation standards. The competencies rated as most important among the 25 items aligned with CEC's preparation standards (2009). The open-ended questions elicited responses that developed themes. The themes included developing positive relationships with families, effectively communicating with all stakeholders, managing time and funding, and fostering positive relationships with staff and students (Thompson, 2017). According to the participants in this study, communicating and demonstrating a high standard of ethical practice is the most critical competency in the effective leadership of special education programs (Thompson, 2017).

Most recently, Fan, et al. (2019) investigated special education directors and their stakeholders' perceptions of the level of importance of each item of the CEC Advanced Preparation Standards for Special Education Directors (2015). Legal and ethical practice, use of open communication, demonstration of conflict resolution and mentoring skills and facilitation of cross-field collaboration were found to be most important (Fan et al., 2019). Both the special education directors and their stakeholders agree that these specialty skills are critical for effective special education leadership (Fan et al., 2019). These findings also support Thompson's (2017) investigation, indicating that special education directors and their stakeholders believe

competencies of law and ethical practice, open communication, trust and mutual respect are important in order to ensure appropriate services to students with disabilities.

Keeping this in mind, both Fan et al. (2019) and Thompson (2017) agree that the competencies rated by each of their studies are consistently rated most important and align with the preparation standards developed by CEC (2009). With the responsibility of leading to ensure a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) along with their stakeholders, it is imperative that special education leaders are equipped with the skills necessary to effectively lead special education programs (Thompson, 2017).

Collaborative Practice

In agreement with the philosophy of appropriate preparation and skills being crucial in the success of special education leaders, Veale (2010) investigated two leadership styles. Recognizing the responsibility of ensuring students with disabilities are served in the Least Restrictive Environment, Veale (2010) compared and contrasted the literature on collaborative and authoritative leadership. As part of collaborative leadership, an inclusive culture is led by shared decision-making and embracing all voices (Veale, 2010), whereas an authoritative leadership requires decisions from the top down, leaving the leader in control. The more collaborative a special education leader is, the more productive the special education staff becomes (Veale, 2010). The role of a special education leader has changed, based on the need for an inclusive culture, and positive relationships and partnerships are necessary to provide the appropriate services that all students with disabilities deserve (Veale, 2010).

Distributed leadership was investigated through the lenses of special education leaders (Tudryn et al., 2016). This study identified special education leaders as both administrators and teacher leaders. Over time, leaders who have led for a more extended period of time embed

distributed leadership into their work and the culture of their given organization (i.e., school or district). Leaders who have led for a less extended period of time were aligned with planned distribution, and a deliberate assignment of staff and tasks based on skill level and competence (Tudryn et al., 2016). Within their discussion, Tudryn et al. (2016) provided examples of natural leadership as an “emerging distributed leadership model” (p. 18). “Examples of natural distributed leadership in special education include reassigning staff responsibilities based on effectiveness, problem-solving skills and follow through capabilities” (Tudryn et al., 2016, p. 18). Included as one of the eight distributed leadership items that special education leaders favored is an understanding that service delivery necessitates mutual support, advice and understanding, highlighting the importance of collaboration.

Cultivating special education teachers is paramount in the success of students with disabilities. The value of people, relationships and service, combined with expectations of teachers’ willingness to work hard using their professional knowledge and skills, intertwine to foster and maintain effective special education teachers (Bettini et al., 2017). With an ongoing shortage of qualified professional special education teachers (Brownell et al., 2019), it is imperative that local special education administrators (LSEA) take on responsibility for providing resources in a supportive culture that make special education teachers feel valued. Additionally, they must while collaborate to solve challenges, and facilitate systems that support the special education teachers’ roles, as was evidenced in Bettini et al.’s (2017) study of a high performing, inclusive district. The LSEAs in this study built relationships and spent time in classrooms creating opportunities to bridge the disconnect of school-based challenges and district-level supports (Bettini et al., 2017).

Current special education leaders are expected to collaborate with their general education counterparts and provide personnel with the resources and expertise needed to support all students in receiving a high-quality education (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003). Special education leaders can no longer work separately from general education leaders and must instead collaborate to ensure the success of all students (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Learning-focused partnerships between district leaders, including special education administration, should be developed to foster the work of principals to develop effective, inclusive schools (Billingsley et al., 2019). Recommendations are made for LEAs to breach the connection between special education and general education while servicing all students collectively (Crockett, 2019). As such, important considerations for leading inclusive environments include learning-focused partnerships (Billingsley et al., 2019), collaboration between special education and general education leaders (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003), shared resources and expertise (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003), Collectively serving all students (Crockett, 2019), and inclusive cultures, positive relationships, and partnerships (Veale, 2010). With recommendations for more collaboration and effective communication between special education leadership and building level administration and staff, understanding effective, inclusive schools and how they are led is paramount (Billingsley et al., 2019; Crockett, 2019; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Veale, 2010).

Chapter Summary

Special education administration is expected to lead, supervise, and manage the provision of special education and related services while ensuring that special education laws that provide students with disabilities a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) are implemented with fidelity (Boscardin & Lashley, 2003). They must

work together with their general education counterparts to ensure students with disabilities have access to rigorous curriculum and appropriately modified assessments, regardless of their degree of learning differences (DiPaola et al., 2004). It is their responsibility to provide students with disabilities an education that prepares them for a successful transition to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living (Crockett, 2009). In order to accomplish these lofty goals and meet reform expectations, the partnership between special education and general education leaders is imperative (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Veale, 2010).

CHAPTER 2 OVERVIEW OF EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Introduction

Teachers and students are impacted daily by an educational leader's effectiveness. Understanding leadership behaviors and approaches educate both leaders and those that support and train leaders in best practices. Leadership practices and approaches are recognized as key components to reaching the goal of building-level and districtwide leaders to influence and support effective, inclusive practices while maintaining academic rigor (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2015; Houser et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Witziers et al., 2003). Reinforcing the notion that effective principal leadership is key to an effective, inclusive school, McLeskey and Waldron (2015) reference one study of an effective, inclusive elementary school that indicated, "Schools that function inclusively do so for a reason... principals in these schools were the reason" (Salisbury, 2006, p. 79). Whether it is related to student achievement, strengthened instruction, leadership, or attitudes towards inclusive practices, leaders in education impact the schools and the districts they lead (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Peterson et al., 2009; Salisbury, 2006; Waldron, et al., 2011).

With ongoing pressure to increase student learning and improve learning outcomes, district leaders have countless challenges. "Administrators equipped with the knowledge and skills to support the implementation of evidence-based practices of teachers in inclusive and accessible instructional environments are poised to be effective advocates of improved educational outcomes of all students" (Boscardin, 2005, p. 21). Effective, educational leadership is a significant factor in successfully implementing inclusive practices (Harpell & Andrews, 2010). Due to the complexity of schools, it is difficult to attribute the effectiveness to any one dimension of organizational effectiveness, but leadership clearly owns a significant share of

responsibility for effectiveness in schools (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The responsibilities and influence of special education directors and principals can vary, depending on leadership expectations and approach. Commonalities were found across studies of effective, inclusive schools, including meaningful professional development, inclusive collaboration, shared decision making/distributed leadership/teacher leadership, data driven decision making and shared vision/moral purpose/core values (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Houser et al., 2011; Louis et al., 2010; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Salisbury, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

Inclusive Collaboration

Several studies found collaboration, whether it is framed as collaborative leadership, collaborative problem solving, or collaborative team building, is important amongst teachers and principals as a necessary component in an effective, inclusive school (Billingsley et al., 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Salisbury, 2016; Waldron et al., 2011). Hehir and Katzman (2012) categorize the principals in their study as leaders of collaborative, problem-solving organizations and identify key elements which support an effective, inclusive school. They found commonalities in all three principals in their study that collectively were identified as developing collaborative, problem-solving organizations. Collaborative problem-solving schools share six common factors (see Table 2.1), that are essential in their success.

Table 2.1

Collaborative Problem Solving

Table 2.1 Collaborative, Problem Solving Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internalized mission/embrace the vision • Celebrations of success • Organizational structures/use of resources to support the mission • External coalitions and collaborations

- Teacher leaders
- High quality professional development

Note: (Hehir & Katzman, 2012)

In their review of the connection between Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and collaborative leadership, Hoover and Teeters (2019) address the importance of collaborative teams with a diverse cultural lens in providing all students with the services they need (Hoover & Teeters, 2019). When developing a leadership team for MTSS, administrative leaders should not only support and participate, but model and build clearly defined goals to support collaborative decision-making. Providing clear structures and clear commitment in concert with meaningful professional development is necessary (Hoover & Teeters, 2019). They conclude that a proactive use of MTSS using a collaborative problem solving and decision-making model is important when addressing culturally diverse learners (Hoover & Teeters, 2019). They recommend five, collaborative decision-making processes (see table 2.2).

Table 2.2

Collaborative Decision Making

<p>Table 2.2 Recommended Collaborative Decision Making in MTSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the strengths, interests and expertise of school personnel, establishing a clear direction and commitment • Incorporate ongoing professional development to enhance educators’ capacity to provide appropriate instruction and ability to make informed decisions • Engage families in decision making • Recognize and value the contributions of culture and linguistic diversity in teaching and learning • Focus on students’ strengths and qualities
--

Note: (Hoover & Teeters, 2019)

DeMatthews’ (2015) case study reinforces the importance of a strong, active principal leader and involves an elementary principal in an urban district working with teachers from a school that is considered to be effective and inclusive. The principal introduced several different strategies (see Table 2.3) that contributed to the development of an effective, inclusive school,

including collaboration and an increase in teacher leadership, highlighting its importance (DeMatthews, 2015).

Table 2.3

Six Strategies

<p>Table 2.3 Six Strategies That Contribute to The Development of an Inclusive School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distributed approach to leadership • More school-wide support for the administrative responsibilities of special education • Opportunities to formally and informally discuss data • Strategies to address challenges and interventions • Meaningful professional development • Collaboration and an increase in teacher leadership
--

Note: (DeMatthews, 2015)

Although defined differently, Billingsley et al. (2019) also found collaboration to be an overarching component necessary when implementing a plan. An inclusive, collaborative, monitored plan supported by active participation from the principal, embracing a team perspective, has been shown to be effective (Billingsley et al., 2019). Hallinger and Heck (2010) focused their study on collaborative leadership. They found that collaborative leadership does in fact impact school performance through academic capacity (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Salisbury (2006) found commonalities with her study of *Principals' Perspectives on Inclusive Elementary Schools*. Within the four common findings of principal perspectives (see Table 2.4), a “collaborative governess” (Salisbury, 2006, p. 75) emerged as an important factor of inclusive schools. Support for general education and special education staff to collaborate was found in more inclusive schools (Salisbury, 2006). How the principal viewed LRE and inclusion made a difference in how inclusive the schools became. Support for collaboration between special educators and general educators was paramount in the level of inclusivity (Salisbury, 2006). Respect and acceptance of others as individuals was noted as a theme across schools.

Table 2.4

Principal Perspectives

Table 2.4 Four Findings of Principal Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principals are the reason for schools that function inclusively• A combination of characteristics advances inclusive educational reform• Important factors of inclusive schools include a collaborative governance, core values and the engagement and support of parents• The level of reported implementation of inclusive practices and program quality are unrelated

Note: (Salisbury, 2006)

Waldron et al. (2011) found the effective, inclusive leader in their study partially credited the success of her school to collaboration with teachers that set the direction for the school. In agreement, Houser et al. (2011) found successful inclusion is supported by collaborating and cooperating school principals. Collaboration is key in effective, inclusive schools. When implementing a plan or simply collaborating between special educators and general educators, collaboration as a philosophy impacts levels of inclusivity and academic capacity (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Houser et al., 2011; Salisbury 2006; Waldron et al., 2011).

Shared Vision/Moral Purpose/Core Values

Shared vision, moral purpose, and core values are essential in the development of effective, inclusive schools (Billingsley, et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). Effective, inclusive schools have strong, active principal leaders who ensure teachers share the core values of the school and are committed to developing an effective, inclusive school (Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). The principals in three, effective inclusive schools established a clear vision of inclusion and high expectations of all students across the entire school, not in isolation (Hehir & Katzman, 2012). In another study, at Hawksnest Elementary School, the principal “embraced a deeper moral conviction related to

improving his school by helping his teachers and students reach their full potential” (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013, p. 253). The principal in DeMatthew’s (2015) study brought a moral purpose to her school, creating an awareness of the importance of an inclusive school. For the principal and teachers in this effective, inclusive school, inclusion was non-negotiable, and grounded in civil rights. Taking it one step further, the principal in Waldron et al. (2011) and her staff had an absolute focus on their single, shared vision of high levels of achievement and inclusion for all students. Implementing and committing to an inclusive culture was also considered non-negotiable to both the principal of the school and the staff within it (Waldron et al., 2011). They believed that inclusion is not simply the idea of including students with disabilities in a classroom, but a belief that all students can be successful. In turn, this vision led the choices that were made across the school. As part of her practice, the principal intentionally hired teachers and paraprofessionals that shared the vision of the school, used their time effectively during the school day, and sought resources outside the district and the community to support the school (Waldron et al., 2011).

There are three must haves for effective, inclusive schools (see Table 2.5; McLeskey and Waldron 2015). Although transforming a school to be effective and inclusive is no easy task, it can be done with committed, strong, principal support. This support includes the ability to build a vision and set direction, developing staff and understanding the importance of supporting teachers through the design of the school (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015).

Table 2.5

Three Must-Haves

Table 2.5 Three Must Haves for Effective Inclusive Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, active principal leadership to ensure that teachers share core values and an institutional commitment to developing an effective inclusive school; • A data system that monitors student progress; and • A school-based system of learner-centered professional development to improve instruction

Note: (McLeskey and Waldron, 2015)

Hallinger (2011) reviewed 40 years of empirical research on leadership for learning. He concluded that a principal’s core values need to be connected to the vision and goals of the school community. He found “learning to use one’s values, beliefs, and expectations in concert with the values of the school is a requirement for leadership for learning” (Hallinger, 2011 p. 137). In turn, Billingsley et al. (2019) support four essential principal practices that effective leaders implement (see Table 2.6). Effective, inclusive principals not only have strong core values, they share these values with their teachers and collaboratively build a vision that supports all students (Billingsley et al., 2019). In addition to these four, essential principal practices, supporting and facilitating this work over time has been found to be effective.

Table 2.6

Essential Principal Practices

Table 2.6 Four Essential Principal Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates school-wide vision for inclusive education• Supports professional learning communities• Redesigns schools for inclusive education• Shares leadership with others

Note: (Billingsley et al., 2019)

Similarly, in their text, *Schooling by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe (2007) reference the importance of sustainability. If the school’s mission is clearly articulated and well understood, all other elements should support this mission, including a curriculum and assessment system, a result driven focus, emphasis on analysis of any gaps, structures and policies and the hiring, and supervising and training of staff. These mission-driven elements lead to a culture that reinforces all mission-driven actions resulting in sustainability (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). They identify six primary job functions of an affective school district leader (see Table 2.7).

Table 2.7

Six Primary Job Functions

Table 2.7 Six Primary Job Functions of a School District's Academic Leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mission and Learning principals• Curriculum• Results• Personnel• Structures• Policies• Culture

Note: (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007)

Houser, Dickens, and Hicks (2011) suggest there is a significant relationship between a principal's attitude about inclusive practices and transformational leadership behaviors by creating a vision, guiding through inspiration. The principal in Waldron's et al. (2011) study celebrated successes and supported the challenges, sharing responsibility when test scores did not meet expectations. When possible, she buffered her teachers from demands that would interfere with their instruction time. By holding her staff accountable and making difficult decisions around evaluations, scheduling, and hiring, she facilitated improved instruction across settings. Effective, inclusive schools have strong, active principal leaders who ensure teachers share the core values of the school and are committed to developing an effective, inclusive school (Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). The principals in three, effective inclusive schools established a clear vision of inclusion and high expectations of all students across the entire school, not in isolation (Hehir & Katzman, 2012). They considered their shared vision of high achievement and inclusion for all students as absolute. Important factors of inclusive schools included a collaborative system, core values, and parent involvement. Overall, strong, active principal leadership ensures teachers share core values and a school-wide commitment to develop an effective, inclusive school; creating school-wide vision for inclusive education; and sharing mission and learning principals (Billingsley, 2019; DeMatthews, 2015;

Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Houser et al., 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

Shared Decision Making/Distributed Leadership/Teacher Leadership

Involving teachers and staff in the decision-making process, promoting and encouraging teacher leaders and/or practicing a distributed leadership model are effective ways to create buy-in from stakeholders (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Louis et al., 2010; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). DeMatthews (2015) conducted a case study focusing on one principal. The principal in this study had a strong focus on the moral purpose underlining the importance of creating an inclusive school, while her strong leadership allowed her to embrace a distributed approach to how she led (DeMatthews, 2015). She felt strongly that “if teachers feel safe and feel like they have a voice they will collaborate, engage, and even lead” (DeMatthews, 2015, p. 101). As observed over the yearlong study, teachers did in fact take on leadership roles and ownership with the principal supporting them through the process. By setting up conditions that would encourage teacher leadership and supporting her staff through the process, the principal provided herself the time she needed to be highly visible throughout the school. In order to promote teacher leadership, hiring was and continued to be very selective, leadership was transparent, an open-door policy was the norm, and the principal engaged and coached teachers through participation and feedback in meetings and activities (DeMatthews, 2015).

By including teacher leaders in decision-making and valuing their input, it has been shown that teachers have more ownership of the vision and plan (Billingsley et al., 2019). Ongoing engagement with parents to include shared decision making is important, as well as alignment with the local special education administrator (LSEA) (Billingsley et al., 2019).

In a large-scale study using data from 8,391 teachers and 471 school administrators; interview data from 581 teachers and administrators, 304 district level informants, and 124 state personnel; and observational data from 312 classrooms, Louis, et al. (2010) found, “when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers’ working relationships with one another are stronger and student achievement is higher” (p. 282). These findings suggest that there is no single best way to share or distribute leadership, but that the goal drives the need for multiple sources of leadership. The more extensive the goal, the higher the need for multiple sources of leadership (Louis et al., 2010).

The responsibilities related to the six primary job functions of a school district’s academic leader by Wiggins and McTighe (2007) are noted (see Table 2.7). Their stance is that if these six job functions are adhered to in tune with shared understanding and leadership, sustainability will occur. The job of an academic leader is not to do it all, but to foster, encourage and inspire staff to share leadership through a mission focused on student and teacher learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). Rituals and ceremonies to reinforce core values, collaborative learning amongst teachers, results-driven approaches and an overarching shared sense of caring and respect will create a culture and climate that fosters learning for both the students and the staff (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). The key factor in all of these prescribed functions is the ability of the academic leader to “model, invite and ultimately demand learning about learning on a regular and formal basis” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007, p. 194).

A qualitative case study was conducted by Waldron, et al. (2011) over the 2009-2010 school year. By identifying a school that had both higher achievement levels and higher levels of inclusivity than both the state and national average at the time, Waldron et al. (2011) were able to label it as an effective, inclusive school for their study. Twenty-two individual interviews with

teachers and administrators were conducted across all grade levels, as well as observations and a review of documents. Out of this study emerged five, key concepts that were supported by the school principal (see Table 2.8). In addition, she created a culture where teachers felt empowered as they shared decisions about the design of the school. By adhering to these concepts, and willingness to share decision making with teachers, this principal solidified the success of her school (Waldron et al., 2011).

Table 2.8

Key Concepts

Table 2.8 Five Key Concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve work conditions • Organizational restructuring • Data informed decision making • Collaborate with teachers • Provide high quality instruction in all settings

Note: (Waldron et al., 2011)

Principals do not do it alone; the school community and culture have an impact on leadership and learning (DeMatthews, 2015; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). There is a connection between principals, teachers, and students as a community of learners. Although shared, collaborative, and distributed leadership have become the focus of many studies and has been supported as an effective leadership style. Hallinger (2011) warns leaders that there is a time and place for sharing leadership and that the role of the principal as leader is still important and relevant, even when sharing leadership. This article highlighted five themes across studies (see Table 2.9). These themes are identified as key findings that provide guidance to current administration (Hallinger, 2011).

Table 2.9

Key Findings

Table 2.9 Five Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principals are valued leaders• The principal is important, but s/he can only achieve success through the cooperation of others• Leadership should be aimed at building the school's capacity for improvement• Take time to understand the context first, then develop suitable leadership strategies• Leaders should seek to share leadership and empower others, but they must pick the right time and methods

Note: (Hallinger, 2011)

Meaningful Professional Development

Hehir and Katzman (2012) see a connection between district level leadership, principals, teachers, and parents in effective, inclusive schools. They purport that principals that are developed by supportive district leaders will in turn develop effective, inclusive schools. They maintain that there are several components that these effective, inclusive principals implemented as part of their practice; having a focused mission and collaborative problem-solving culture, and providing opportunities for meaningful professional development are essential in leading effective inclusive schools. Professional development provides opportunities to improve teaching practices that address the needs of an ever-growing, diverse population in the general education setting (Hehir & Katzman, 2012). Billingsley et al. (2019) agree that an effective, inclusive principal provides meaningful professional development and supports professional learning communities (PLC's), and acts as a participating member. When this is done effectively, there is a relationship to improved student learning in classrooms. Hehir and Katzman (2012) suggest implementing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in inclusive classrooms and collaborating and building relationships with colleagues. Finally, they envision parents as

advocates for their children, supporting full participation of their students in all facets of the school community.

The principal in Waldron et al. (2011) provided high quality, professional development, which included opportunities for teachers to learn from each other as well as attend conferences. She held the teachers accountable by expecting that information learned at conferences would be shared with colleagues. High quality instruction was frequently documented by the researchers throughout the study (Waldron et al., 2011). The results of this case study imply that an efficient use of resources, high quality professional development, the thoughtful and intentional use of data that guides practice and decision-making, and a principal that has the skill set and readiness to provide leadership to support and enact the shared vision are what is needed develop an effective, inclusive school (Waldron et al., 2011). Unlike some perceptions, it is not necessarily more resources and outside experts that establishes the foundation of effective, inclusive schools. In fact, the authors noted all of this was accomplished successfully with a typically funded school (Waldron, et al., 2011). As further evidence, DeMatthews (2015) found the principal of an effective, inclusive school supported the IEP team meeting processes, encouraged best practices to promote engagement at professional development activities, encouraged teachers to share their expertise and knowledge at administrative team meetings and supported parent partnerships.

By collectively analyzing the research, Billingsley et al. (2019) have identified nine steps necessary in creating an effective, inclusive school, including the importance of providing meaningful professional development and planning time (see Table 2.10). In addition, nineteen leadership dimensions with specific practices associated with each dimension are outlined. Within the leadership dimensions, specific practices were identified, including the principal's

role in providing learning opportunities and feedback and ensuring professional development is “relevant, meaningful, and delivered effectively” (Billingsley et al., 2019, p. 312).

Table 2.10

Nine Necessary Steps

Table 2.10 Nine Necessary Steps to Create an Effective Inclusive School
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form an inclusion planning team 2. Identify strengths that can support an inclusive setting and weaknesses to address any concerns 3. Visit other effective inclusive schools and observe their classrooms 4. Develop a plan 5. Encourage feedback from all staff regarding the plan 6. Revise plan based on feedback 7. Provide professional development and planning time 8. Plan implementation 9. Monitor, evaluate and change plan as it develops over time

Note: (Billingsley et al., 2019)

In addition to the relevant and meaningful professional development, the use of high-leverage practices that have been approved by CEC should be used to support students with disabilities (Billingsley et al., 2019). All of these systems and strategies are meant to differentiate in order to meet the needs of all students. Alongside these research-based interventions, it has been found that positive work environments support instructional effectiveness (Billingsley et al., 2019). Support with professional development to include coaches, peer modeling, and opportunities for collaboration with their peers has been shown effective in inclusive schools (Billingsley et al., 2019). There are three must haves for effective, inclusive schools (see Table 2.5), including an onsite system that is focused on learner-centered professional development to improve instruction (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015).

All of these pieces are part of the overall goal of improving student outcomes and have been found to be elements of effective, inclusive schools (Billingsley et al., 2019). These identified essential principal practices overlay with Hehir and Katzman (2012), Mcleskey and Waldron (2015) and Waldron et al. (2011) findings.

In turn, in their study of 124 students and alumni from the University of Colorado at Denver, School of Education and Human Development, Administrative Leadership and Policy Studies program, Garrison-Wade, Sobel, and Fulmer (2007) address the need for principals to come prepared to face the challenges of creating schools where all students can succeed. According to Garrison-Wade et al. (2007), in order to ensure that administrators and teachers are prepared for the challenges in today’s inclusive schools, higher education programs need to reflect on their own values, structures, student responsiveness and, ultimately, their expectations within their programs. Feedback from current administrators, as well as graduate students, provided insight into what critical skills are needed for effective, inclusive leadership, and more specifically principals. In addition, Garrison-Wade, et al. (2007), identify five critical skills administrators need for inclusive leadership (see Table 2.11), indicating the need for meaningful professional development.

Table 2.11

Five Critical Skills

Table 2.11 Five Critical Skills for Inclusive, Supportive Principals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable about differentiation of instruction • Assist teachers with attending meaningful professional development • Provide coaching • Arrange for teacher observations of each other • Field questions about special education practices from parents and families

Note: (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007)

Providing ongoing, relevant and meaningful professional development has been found to be essential for principals who lead effective, inclusive schools (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011).

Data Driven Decision-Making

In their review of case studies, McLeskey and Waldron (2015) found that in order to improve student outcomes, teachers and administrators need data to make informed, instructional decisions. In all of the effective, inclusive schools they investigated, development of school-based data systems were necessary to understand students' needs. They found the statewide, high-stakes accountability measures did not provide them with this information; therefore, they worked collaboratively to develop internal accountability systems such as Response to Intervention (RTI), informal evaluations, math facts and word identification (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015). DeMatthews (2015) also noted the importance of data to drive decisions. Within this effective, inclusive school the student support team was taken seriously. This data-driven process was used to identify students with disabilities and support general education students with challenges (DeMatthews, 2015).

Use of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), including RTI and School Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) are useful and necessary tool to monitor student progress once high-quality instruction is in place (Billingsley et al., 2019). Universal screening, progress monitoring and data decision-making are crucial parts of a successful MTSS model in an effective, inclusive school (Billingsley et al., 2019). Based on the literature, they prescribe the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) alongside an MTSS. Data taken from RTI and SWPBS should be used to screen and monitor progress to provide appropriate services to all students to meet their needs.

Waldron et al. (2011) agrees that the use of data as a tool is important. When reviewing the resources in an effective, inclusive school, in addition to being provided with high quality professional development, data was used to guide decisions around instruction, accountability and use of resources. Jointly, these practices support the principal's role in improving student

outcomes (Waldron et al., 2011). The significance of making data informed decisions is highlighted with their five key concepts in an effective, inclusive school (see Table 2.8). In agreement with the importance of data as a tool to gauge instruction and progress, Waters and Marzano (2006) include using evaluations to consistently monitor instructional practices and academic achievement as one of five, effective leadership practices that gleaned from their review. Whether it is to monitor progress, gauge instructional practices, identify students with disabilities or monitoring the use of resources, data is a significant tool in effective, inclusive schools (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Overall Effective Inclusive Leadership

Positive student outcomes are the driving force when measuring effective, inclusive practices. In their study, Ryndak et al. (2007) focused on sustainability of improved student outcomes for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Using a variety of quantitative measures over seven years, Ryndak et al. (2007) provided data that showed a decrease from 72 to 26 students placed in a substantially, separated classroom who had been identified as students with severe disabilities. In other words, there was a decrease of 64% in the seventh year compared to enrollment in the first year (5 years of interventions and 2 years of post-intervention data collection). This was calculated by measuring how much time students with disabilities participated in either instructional activities or non-instructional activities with same aged peers, in general education settings (Ryndak et al., 2007).

Initially, in the first year of the study, all students with severe disabilities were placed in one elementary school. Three years into the study, all of those students were located in their home schools. The only severely disabled students that remained at that particular elementary

school were there because it was their home school (Ryndak et al., 2007). These students were placed in general education classrooms. They eliminated substantially separate classrooms and incorporated appropriate supports and services in the general education setting to provide meaningful inclusion for all students (Ryndak, et al., 2007).

Sustainability was noted over time. Data showed improved outcomes for students with disabilities across the district who were being served in inclusive settings (Ryndak et al., 2007). Students not only made adequate yearly progress, but the grades of schools from the State Department of Education were sustained or improved, providing evidence to support this claim (see Table 2.12).

Table 2.12

Number of Schools per Letter Grade Received From the SDOE

School Grade	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6 (follow up)	Year 7 (follow up)
A	3	9	3	5	8	12	11
B	1	3	6	7	5	4	8
C	12	4	8	6	5	3	2
D	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
District Grade	No Grade	No Grade	No Grade	No Grade	B	B	A

Note: (Ryndak et al., 2007, p. 234)

Although the outcome was overall systematic change with support from the special education director around co-teaching, it was challenging. This district struggled with administration participation for the beginning years despite this support. In response, the superintendent wrote an article in the district newsletter noting the importance of inclusion and scheduled professional development under the heading of a 3-hour seminar specifically for administrators (Ryndak et al., 2007). It is unclear as to whether the improved participation rate from building administration was directly related to this communication, but 79% of administrators did attend

the seminar as recommended by the superintendent in the newsletter (Ryndak et al., 2007).

Despite these challenges, they noted seven, overall essential variables for facilitating sustainable systemic change (see Table 2.13).

Table 2.13

Seven Essential Variables

Table 2.13 Seven Essential Variables for Facilitating Sustainable Systemic Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share a common vision of the outcomes they desired and what those outcomes would look like in schools.• Participants had to share a common understanding of the change process, acknowledging that it takes 5 to 10 years to achieve systemic change and that efforts related to that systemic change need to be both constant and coordinated across those years requires a different level of commitment than sponsoring a series of professional development activities.• The district and the school personnel consistently had to "own" the change efforts.• Concurrent, and varied, efforts were required at multiple levels; that is, concurrent and varied efforts needed to reflect district, school, and education team personnel's understanding of any given concept related to the desired change.• Concurrent, and varied, efforts were required at multiple levels efforts needed to involve all types of constituents (e.g., parents; instructional, related services, administrative personnel, and support staff) as well all constituents in each type of constituency (e.g., related services providers at the school level and their supervisors at the district level; general educators involved on the School Inclusive Education Task Force and those not involved on the Task Force.• Established a process for communication among individuals in each constituency, the school task forces, and the district task force.• District and the school personnel identified and used Critical Friends for feedback, reflection, and strategic planning, especially related to areas in which additional expertise was needed.

Note: (Ryndak et al., 2007)

Reinforcing the notion that effective principal leadership is key to an effective, inclusive school, McLeskey and Waldron (2015) reference one study of an effective, inclusive elementary school that indicated “Schools that function inclusively do so for a reason... principals in these schools were the reason” (Salisbury, 2006, p. 79). Within their interviews of eight principals, Salisbury (2006) found that principals made the difference on how inclusive their schools were. They measure inclusivity by how much time students with disabilities spent outside of the general education setting in each of the eight schools that participated. They also found that effective leaders had a combination of characteristics that made them stand apart, not one in

isolation (Salisbury, 2006). These principals were willing to do whatever it took and were committed to inclusive education. The principal at Hawk's Nest Elementary school was also committed to the education of all students. His philosophy of caring and supporting his teachers while providing meaningful professional development and encouraging teacher leadership created a culture that resulted in a model inclusive school (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013).

In summary, to develop an effective, inclusive school an efficient use of resources, high quality professional development, the thoughtful and intentional use of data that guides practice and decision-making and a principal that has the skill set and readiness to provide leadership to support and enact the shared vision is needed (Billingsley, 2019; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011).

Aligning Special Education Administration and General Education Administration for Effective Inclusion

It is essential that today's special education leaders adhere to federal law and state regulations while collaborating with stakeholders to implement effective programming and services (Boscardin, 2005). "As inclusive practices and accountability continue to shape American education, special education and general education leaders will be challenged to join together in solving the problems of practice inherent in a diverse, complex, high-stakes educational environment" (Boscardin, 2011). The challenges that face special education administration today include the collaboration between special education and general education teachers and administrators in order to provide high quality instruction and programming for all students of all abilities (Lashley and Boscardin, 2003). General education leaders face the same challenge as they

redefine the leadership mission, transforming the dual system of general and special education administration to a distributed system of leadership that collaboratively supports the use of proven practices to achieve school-wide improvement for students with disabilities, as well as for all the students in their charge. (Boscardin, 2005, p. 24)

Shared and collaborative leadership practices have become necessary to bridge the gap between general education and special education student needs (Boscardin, 2007). This work is critical as leaders strive to implement research-driven, best practices. As directors of special education face today's ever-challenging mission to address the needs of all learners, there has become an expectation of ongoing collaboration with principals (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). This practice is meant to ensure best teaching practices to include the use of research-based interventions and services, providing access to the curriculum for all students (Boscardin, 2005).

Special education leaders can no longer work separately from general education leaders and must instead collaborate to ensure the success of all students (DiPaola, et al., 2004). Special education administrators must work together with their general education counterparts to ensure students with disabilities have access to rigorous curriculum and appropriately modified assessments, regardless of their degree of learning differences (DiPaola et al., 2004). Effective leaders "define themselves as advocates and change agents with a mission to increase their community's capacity to deliver academic success" (DiPaola et al., 2004, p. 4).

The principal in DeMatthews' (2015) study actively engaged in special education leadership. Although, she was not trained as a special educator, she understood the importance and value of special education. She took the time to expand her basic knowledge, taking on the responsibility to play an active role in the process rather than delegate those responsibilities to others. She learned over time by engaging in conversations and actively listening to others

(DeMatthews, 2015). This was noted as an important facet of the school culture's non-negotiable commitment to include all students with their typical peers.

In concert, Bateman et al. (2017) also recognize the need for a clear understanding of special education for principals as leaders of the entire school, including students with disabilities. In their review of the major accrediting groups, they indicate a lack of special education preparation for principals. They reviewed the accreditation standards from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2015), the Teacher Educational Accreditation Council (TEAC, 2015), the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC, 2015), the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2015), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 2015) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2015). They found that, although understanding special education is indicated as important, there are no specific guidelines around knowledge and understanding of special education (Bateman et al., 2017). Therefore, they have developed some recommended special education competencies for building leaders (see table 2.14). Given this list of competencies and possible implementation within principal preparation programs, a connection and understanding of special education between all stakeholders seems more reasonable. Within their review of past literature, Bateman et al. (2017) found that there has been a call for a more explicit understanding of what knowledge and skills leadership programs should be providing to address students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Table 2.14*Special Education Competencies for Principals*

1. Describe the six major parts of the IDEA and their purposes.	16. Describe a manifestation determination and its purpose.
2. Describe the child find requirement, and what is meant by an affirmative duty.	17. Describe a behavior intervention plan and what should be included.
3. Describe a nondiscriminatory evaluation and its components.	18. Describe the purpose of a functional behavioral assessment and when it should be conducted.
4. Describe an independent educational evaluation and what should be done when one is either requested or received.	19. Describe rules and factors considered in determining whether a series of suspensions would constitute a pattern of exclusions.
5. Describe the age requirements of students served by the IDEA.	20. Describe related services, including when they should be provided, and limitations on their service.
6. Describe a multidisciplinary team and its members.	21. Describe the factors an IEP team should consider in determining placement.
7. Describe school district responsibilities with respect to Free and appropriate public education.	22. Describe and explain the continuum of alternative placements.
8. Describe the purpose of the IEP and how it relates to communication, management, accountability, compliance and monitoring, and evaluation.	23. Describe how the general curriculum should be part of placement decisions.
9. Describe the persons required to attend an IEP meeting.	24. Describe supplementary aids or services that may be used to help a student to be educated in the least restrictive environment.
10. Describe the purpose of measurable annual goals.	25. Describe the purpose and expectations of the transition requirements (part C to B and from secondary to postsecondary) for a student with an IEP.
11. Describe progress monitoring and its importance in the IEP process.	26. Describe the information IDEA requires be supplied to parents of students with disabilities regarding student records.
12. Describe the steps as school district should take to ensure parental involvement in the IEP process.	27. Describe how a student can be no longer eligible for special education and related services.
13. Describe the purpose of Section 504.	28. Describe the IDEA's general procedural requirements.
14. Describe differences between the IDEA and Section 504.	29. Describe the stay-put provision.
15. Describe "major life activities" as defined by Section 504.	30. Describe how school districts can ensure that they do not discriminate against students with disabilities.

Note: (Bateman, Gervais, Thomas, & Cline, 2017).

A supplementary document was created for the PSEL (Professional Standards for Education Leaders): PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017). This document provides guidance for inclusive principal leadership, supplementing the ten PSEL standards (see table 2.15). The goal is to outline what inclusive principal leadership is for the success of students with disabilities, underscoring the importance of supporting the academic success and well-being of each student

(CCSO & CEEDAR, 2017). The creation of this document reinforces the importance of inclusion and supports CEC, SWIFT, DESE and other organizations and agencies call for leadership that engages in best practices to support all students.

Table 2.15

PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities

<p>Table 2.15 PSEL Standards</p>	<p>PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities; Effective Principals</p>
<p>Mission, Vision and Core Values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for their school that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities. • Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly. • Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work.
<p>Ethics and Professional Norms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to ethical and professional norms and uphold the moral imperative to acknowledge inequities and promote equality. • Possess an ethical mindset to identify, interpret, and manage the ethical dilemmas in leadership for students with disabilities and address them by embodying the values of justice and care, equality and equity, community in service of each student. • Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust.
<p>Equity and Cultural Responsiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the academic success and well-being of each student, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources. • Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities. • Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities.
<p>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multitiered system of support. • Work collaboratively with classroom teachers to help them develop their capacity for effective instruction.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs. • Promote appropriate, clear, and valid monitoring and assessment systems where teachers receive meaningful information about how students respond to instruction and where information is relevant to instructional improvement.
Community of Care and Support of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of each student and encourages them to be active, responsible members of their community. • Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate. • Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships. • Support teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the school.
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a schoolwide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. • Provide multiple sources of high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities, and participate alongside their staff. • Identify strategies to motivate their staff and encourage, recognize, and facilitate leadership opportunities for teachers and staff who effectively educate students with disabilities.
Professional Community for Teachers and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teachers to set high expectations for and engage in active self-assessment and reflective learning in order to promote mutual accountability. • Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism. • Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school, and for the success of students with disabilities. • Communicate clear expectations for collaboration within and among established teams of teachers without micromanaging, and encourage experimentation among teams. • Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff.
Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage families to provide insight about their children’s specific disabilities that allows teachers to better understand their needs, make educationally sound instructional decisions, and assist in interpreting and assessing student progress.
Operations and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage their budgets and develop strong relationships with central offices in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and that students with disabilities have access to appropriate transportation, classrooms, services, accommodations, and extracurricular activities. • Ensure that external resources are aligned with their schools’ goals and support core programs and services for all students. • Assign roles and responsibilities to optimize staff capacity to address each student’s learning needs, especially students with disabilities. • Develop and effectively manage school structures, operations, and administrative systems that support students with disabilities.
School Improvement	<p>Emphasize the “why” and “how” of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learning opportunities for teachers and staff to equip them to participate in strategic processes of improvement, and to take part in implementing effective programs and practices for students with disabilities. • Address teacher capacity needs around the identification, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based interventions, and ensure that necessary conditions for teaching and learning exist in order to prepare students with disabilities for success in college, career, and life. • Ensure that the particular needs of students with disabilities are intentionally addressed within the school’s broader plans for improvement.

Note: (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017, p. 3-19)

The PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017) was reviewed for its use by Billingsley et al. (2018). They concluded the use of this tool for principal preparation is appropriate due to its research-based foundation and timely publication. The expectations of principals as special education leaders have increased over the years, resulting in the need for principals to be prepared and knowledgeable to meet the needs of every student. They contend that this document provides an “explicit description of the dimensions of inclusive leadership and their relevance to a school leadership audience” (Billingsley et al., 2018, p. 77). Within the most recent version of the Handbook of Leadership and Administration for Special Education (2019), Crockett continues to call for local, special education administration (LSEA) to advise principals on the academic and lifetime learning of students with disabilities, supporting the LSEA core responsibilities as outlined by Bellamy and Iwaszuk (2017). He supports a model where more importance is placed on the role of the LSEA as a resource for school principals, as well as having district-wide influence, breaching the connection between special education and general education while servicing all students collectively. He supports eight LSEA core responsibilities and sub-responsibilities (see table 2.16).

Table 2.16

LSEA Responsibilities

LSEA Core Responsibilities	Sub-Responsibilities
Direction Setting	Setting Strategic Goals Participation and Communication Annual Plan Representation and Advocacy
System Design	Policies and Procedures Comprehensive and Effective System Budget
Instructional Practice	Curriculum Multi-Tiered System of Supports

	Instructional Improvement Adaptations Student Learning Data
Personnel Capacity and Support	Staffing Model Recruitment and Selection Professional Development Personnel Performance
Collaboration and Conflict Management	Frameworks for Collaboration Dispute Resolution
Student Support	Student Transition Student Access Coordination of Related Services
Family and Community Support	Family Communication Community Partnerships
Program Oversight and Improvement	Indicators Department Oversight Improvement Cycles

Note: (Bellamy & Iwaszuk, 2017)

Crockett (2019) states “...the central issue in developing educational leaders for the twenty-first century is not whether to address special education content, but rather how to provide relevant, research-based information and assess effective special education leadership practices across traditional and alternative pathways” (p. 75). He not only addressed the need for more prepared LSEAs, but also for school-based special education leadership. The more principals understand and are prepared, the more involved they become in making decisions about the special education programs that provide meaningful inclusion for students with disabilities (Crockett, 2019). Billingsley et al. (2019) identifies four, overarching, school leadership practices (see table 2.17) for principals of effective, inclusive schools.

Table 2.17

School Leadership Practices

Inclusive Leadership	Principals are committed to developing inclusive schools that value and support all students, including those with disabilities.
Instructional Leadership	Principals demonstrate instructional leadership with a focus on creating a school organization that supports learning to help students with disabilities achieve the outcomes expected of all students.
Supporting parents and families	Principals engage parents in home-school partnerships to foster shared decision-making with the goal of supporting students’ learning in inclusive environments.
Supporting School Leaders	Districts have central office administrators with expertise in special services and research-based practices for children with disabilities.

Note: (Billingsley et al., 2019)

As part of all-encompassing, special education leadership practices, supporting school leaders is essential (Crockett, 2019). This collaborative relationship between district-level special education administration and building-level administration continues to be essential as principals become more responsible for evidence-based practices and student outcomes (Billingsley et al., 2019). Although, traditionally, central office leaders have been expected to focus on rules and regulations, it is becoming more evident that their roles as consultants to principals are imperative in supporting principals in leading effective, inclusive schools that provide high-level instruction for all students (Billingsley et al., 2019). This includes LSEAs. LSEAs are positioned to support principals in four areas by “strengthening alignment across systems, decision making, instruction and relationships” (Billingsley et al., 2019, p. 326). With an understanding of the challenges principals face in providing high-level instruction and evidence-based practices for all students, providing them with support from the LSEAs with resources, including strengthening instruction, professional development, leadership practices and support with parent involvement is important (Billingsley et al., 2019). “Learning-focused partnerships” (Billingsley et al., 2019, p. 327), between principals and LSEAs are important as principals and LSEAs work towards more effective, inclusive schools.

Further research on special education leadership in general is still lacking. Although there has been an increase over time (Crockett et al., 2009), there is still a limited amount of data-based publications available to guide special education preparation. With leadership being pivotal in the success of inclusive schools, investigating the priorities of both special and general education leaders in this area is in need of further inquiry. “The addition of Q-statements representing other aspects of leadership, variation in participant selection, and the inclusion of

other types of general education school leaders (e.g., assistant principals, assistant superintendents, superintendents) also deserve future investigation” (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018). Although there have been studies that have investigated educational leadership using standards (Boscardin et al., 2018; Militello et al., 2013; Thompson, 2017), the existing research on special education leadership and general education leadership priorities does not include the use of the PSEL 2015 Standards and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017) as sources for a ready-made concourse.

Principal leadership is key in effective, inclusive schools (Hehir & Katzman, 2012; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007). With recommendations for special education leaders and general education leaders to share responsibility for all students in order to meet the requirements of providing them with a supported, high level educational experience (Boscardin, 2005; Crockett, 2007; Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Veale, 2010), investigating their inclusive leadership priorities is key. Recommendations have also been made to place more importance on the role of the LSEA as a resource for school principals, as well as having district-wide influence, breaching the connection between special education and general education while serving all students collectively (Billingsley, 2012; Crockett, 2019). The more principals understand and are prepared, the more involved they become in making decisions about the special education programs that provide meaningful inclusion for students with disabilities (Crockett, 2019; DiPaola et al., 2004).

Chapter Summary

Shared vision, building a vision, creating a compelling vision, moral purpose, core values, or however one frames it, several studies found that a true belief and clear vision of where the school is going is imperative in creating and maintaining effective, inclusive schools

(DeMatthews, 2015; Hehir and Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Osiname, 2018; Ryndak et. al., 2007; Waldron et.al., 2011). As such, non-negotiable vision and mission seems to be a theme across effective, inclusive schools (Waldron et al., 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Within their case study of an effective, inclusive school, Waldron et al. (2011) found implementing and committing to an inclusive culture was considered non-negotiable to both the principal of the school and the staff within it. The leaders in Hehir and Katzman's (2012) study "were clear about their schools' fundamental mission and actively imposed them on their organizations through a variety of symbolic actions. To them, inclusion was non-negotiable, grounded in civil rights" (p. 61). Waters and Marzano (2006) found, through their meta-analysis, that the goals outlined in the five leadership practices are more likely to have impact on student achievement if the goals themselves are focused on student achievement and are "first-order" initiatives (p. 17). Their findings suggest that effective superintendents provide non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction while also providing building-level administration the authority on how to carry out the implementation of those goals (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

From the perspective derived from a review of the literature, effective, inclusive schools that foster positive change for student achievement are led by supportive, building-level administration. These studies provide evidence of effective, inclusive schools, led by invested leaders that focus on a shared vision, trusting relationships and compassion for teachers using collaborative, shared or distributed leadership styles (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Houser et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Salisbury, 2006). Whether it is defined as distributed, shared or collaborative leadership, district or principal partnership, modeling, or a combination of

leadership styles (DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Houser et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Salisbury, 2006; Tudryn et al., 2016), special education leaders and general education leaders need to share responsibility for all students in order to meet the requirements of providing them with a supported, high level, educational experience (Veale, 2010).

As indicated previously, effective, educational leadership is a significant factor in successfully implementing inclusive practices (Harpell and Andrews, 2010). Due to the complexity of schools, it is difficult to attribute the effectiveness to any one dimension of organizational effectiveness, but leadership clearly owns a significant share of responsibility for effectiveness in schools (Hehir & Katzman, 2012). The responsibilities and influence of special education directors and principals can vary, depending on leadership expectations and approach. Commonalities were found across studies of effective, inclusive schools, including : (a) inclusive collaboration; (b) shared vision, moral purpose, and core values; (c) shared decision-making, distributed leadership, and teacher leadership; (d) meaningful professional development and; (e) data driven decision making (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Salisbury, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapters one and two reviewed the value and importance of special education administration working together with their general education counterparts to ensure students with disabilities have access to rigorous curriculum and appropriately modified assessments, regardless of their degree of learning differences (DiPaola et al., 2004). Those chapters outlined the expectations of special education administration to lead, supervise, and manage the provision of special education and related services while ensuring that special education laws that provide students with disabilities a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) are implemented with fidelity (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003), reiterating that this collaboration is vital. It is also the responsibility of all administration to provide students with disabilities an education that prepares them for a successful transition to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living (Crockett, 2019). In order to accomplish these lofty goals and meet reform expectations, the partnership between special education and general education leaders is imperative (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Veale, 2010). Understanding the priorities of both special education and general education leaders of more inclusive districts is monumental as their collaboration continues to be a pivotal factor in the ability of districts and schools to provide a challenging, diverse, accepting, safe, non-judgmental culture while adhering to high stakes accountability.

As was previously discussed, not all administrators are necessarily on the same page when it comes to including students in the general education setting. As noted by Hehir and Katzman (2012), not all special education leaders actively support effective, inclusive schools. Although overall, systemic change was achieved and sustained over time, there were challenges

along the way, which was noted in Ryndak et al.'s (2007) seven-year study of a district's journey with inclusive education. It was noted that administration did not necessarily see the importance of inclusive education as compared to other district initiatives. In contrast to Hehir and Katzman's (2012) study, the director of special education in this district made inclusive education a top priority. The director was supported by the superintendent and assistant superintendent in curriculum and instruction, which eventually brought about change in school participation (Ryndak et al., 2007). This lends to the question of whether or not there are differences or similarities between special education leaders' and general education leaders' priorities when it comes to inclusion. As the line becomes more and more blurred between general education and special education, in respect to effective, inclusive schools and districts, one wonders if special education administrator key leadership practice priorities align with general education administrators' priorities, calling for further inquiry. Based on the research, it is hypothesized general education leaders' key leadership practice priorities in more inclusive districts will more closely align with their special education counterparts. In this paper, the rationale for the study, participant selection, procedure, and data analysis are presented.

Rationale and Research Design

The primary purpose of this study was to explore and analyze general education and special education administrators' perceptions of leadership practices that support inclusivity of students with disabilities in local public school districts, by using a mixed methods approach. As stated earlier, there is an overall shortage of research conducted in the area of special education leadership (Crockett, 2009). It is the hope that this paper will add to the current literature, linking the importance of special education and general education partnerships to support more inclusive learning environments. If, as hypothesized, general education leaders' priorities in more inclusive

districts more closely align with their special education counterparts, there would be implications for both general education and special education leadership preparation.

Q Methodology

This investigation employed Q-sort methodology completed by both general education and special education administrators to analyze their key leadership practice priorities when it comes to inclusion. Q-methodology is a method used in research to study people's subjective viewpoints, and is used to understand the differing perspectives participants hold, by having participants rank and sort a series of statements (Brown, 1993). Q-methodology was developed as a response to issues with past practice that focused on "external standpoint of the investigator," where studies produced limited data for analysis (Brown, 1980, p.1). Q-methodology was designed to provide a subjective way of understanding multiple points of view (Damio, 2016).

In 1935, Sir Godfrey Thomson, a British factorist, published a paper unfolding the potential of calculating correlations between people instead of tests (VandenBosch, 2001). Thomson first introduced the technique, "Q," in effort to differentiate from the traditional R technique; however, Thomson was reluctant to pursue the Q-techniques further (Brown, 1980). Coincidentally, at the same time, William Stephenson was writing on the prospect of performing person correlations as a way of extrapolating intrapersonal relationships (Davis & Michelle, 2011). In 1935, he published a now famous letter to Nature that required a subjective approach by correlating people, not variables (Davis & Michelle, 2011). In doing so, Stephenson popularized the Q-methodology as a systematic research method of studying individuals' perspectives and attitudes on a certain topic or in a given situation (Brown, 1996; VandenBosch, 2001). It encompasses of a set of procedures informed by a philosophical orientation:

Q methodology is best understood as a type of research that identifies the operant subjectivity of individuals in regard to a particular subject. The methodology encompasses a broader philosophy of how subjectivity can best be studied, an inherent epistemology, and a method that includes a series of well-defined steps or phases (Brown et al., 2008, p. 722).

According to Brown (2004) Q-methodology can be used to uncover six different kinds of insight (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Uses for Q-Methodology (Brown, 2004, p. 1)

<p>Table 3.1 Six Possible Uses for Q-Methodology</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying important internal and external constituencies 2. Defining participant viewpoints and perceptions 3. Providing sharper insight into preferred management directions 4. Identifying criteria that are important to clusters of individuals 5. Examining areas of friction, consensus and conflict 6. Isolating gaps in shared understanding

Q-methodology is extremely different than the more commonly used R factor-analytic technique (see Table 3.2) in that R-methodology looks for correlations amongst variables within a sample of subjects and Q-methodology looks for correlations between subjects across variables. R-methodology looks to eliminate subjectivity and qualitative components, where Q-methodology focuses on the subjectivity and qualitative components (Thompson, 1998). Q-methodology is used across fields and “offers a powerful, theoretically grounded, and quantitative tool for examining opinions and attitudes” (Thomas & Watson, 2002, p. 142). The purpose of Q is to enable the participant to represent his or her subjective viewpoint in such a way that it can be held “constant for inspection and comparison” (Brown, 1993, p. 8). The Q-sort

procedure requires the participant to engage with the sample items in a “non-superficial way and make fine-grained judgements about where individual items in the sample sit in relation to one another from their personal point of view” (Woods, 2012, p. 897). Recently, Q-methodology has been identified as a mixed method, such that it could be described as a “qualitative-quantitative hybrid that fits into a qualitative-quantitative continuum” (Ramlo, 2015, p. 73). Although Q-methodology predates the mixed methods movement, it has become accepted as a mixed method by both mixed methods and Q communities (Ramlo, 2016). Since the varied methods research movement surfacing in the 1980s, there has been an increase in articles, journals and books using mixed methods (Ramlo, 2016). Historically, there have been mixed reviews about the Q-methodology, but it has continued to be a methodology used by many scholars.

Table 3.2

R Methodology Versus Q Methodology

R Methodology	Q Methodology
The correlation and factor analysis of traits	The correlation and factor analysis of persons
The focus is psychometrics, the objective measurement of traits	The focus is the scientific study of subjectivity
Items as variables, persons as cases	Persons as variables, items as cases

As noted, there have been several studies in the field of education that have used Q-methodology as their method of choice. In their study of 30 principals and assistant principals and other educational administrators, Provost et al. (2010) used Q-methodology to subjectively view the perceptions of *Principal Leadership Behaviors in Massachusetts in the Era of Education Reform*. Given 21 statements about principal leadership behavior to sort, they found “a shared understanding of the role of the principal and suggest that principal leadership aligns with the models of site-based management and instructional leadership that support educational

reform” (Provost et al., 2010, p. 532). As a result, they were able to conclude that principal leadership behavior descriptions align with the professional actions associated with instructional leadership and building-based management, as supported by the literature (Provost et al., 2010).

In their study of the state standards in North Carolina, Militello et al. (2013) used Q-methodology to find how principals used the standards in practice. Their use of Q-methodology provided them with the unique opportunity to subjectively examine the disconnect between the standards and principal practice (Militello et al., 2013). Through utilization of the Q-methodology, Militello et al. (2013) found empirical evidence that collaboration, policy, and vision frame the practice of principals and inform how professional standards may, in fact, complicate standardized practices of effective principals.

Tudryn et al. (2016) found that Q-methodology would bring them the most relevant results. In their study of distributed leadership and special education leaders, they investigated two types of leaders of special education administrators: special education administrators and teacher leaders using Q-methodology to prioritize distributed leadership statements. Both groups that participated in this study ranked, “ensuring there is a well-functioning special education leadership team,” highly (Tudryn et al., 2016, p. 11). They found that more veteran leaders’ perceptions tended to prefer an embedded distributed leadership, where newer leaders tended to prefer a planned distributed leadership model (Tudryn, et al., 2016).

More recently, a study using Q-methodology identified leadership as “a dynamic process in which leaders strategically use different approaches depending on leadership demand” (Boscardin et al., 2018, p. 61). Their guiding question of whether special education leaders share similar perceptions of standards guiding the leadership and administration of special education was investigated using 58 leadership statements sorted by least and most important to

participants' professional practice. Their findings support movement between two leadership styles (transitional and transactional), identified as transformational, relational distributed leaders.

Employing Q-methodology, Schulze and Boscardin (2018) focused on the perceptions of leadership by principals with and without special education backgrounds. They identified leadership as a continuum of development over time. They found perceptions of leadership expand from more of a transactional/instructional form of leadership to more transformational/collaborative/distributed leadership model, as their "repertoires expand" (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018, p. 24). Through Q-sort methodology, they were able to discern that principals with less experience valued more structured leadership practices, i.e. transactional and instructional. The more experienced principals leaned towards more transformational or collaborative leadership styles, supporting the idea of principals following a "developmental path" (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018, p. 4). The investigators of each of these studies valued the subjectivity of Q-methodology as a way to investigate educational leadership (Boscardin et al., 2018; Militello et al., 2013; Provost et al., 2010; Schulze & Boscardin, 2018; Tudryn et al., 2016). "Q methodology provides flexible procedures for the examination of subjectivity within an operant framework" (Brown, 1980, p. 6).

For this particular study, using a mixed method approach, the quantitative portion of the study was through the Q-sort process. Participants revealed their priorities on a modified version of the PSEL Key Leadership Practices for Supporting Students with Disabilities (CCSO & CEEDAR, 2017). The qualitative portion included a questionnaire describing their experience, what strategies they used and why they ranked statements the way they did during the Q-sort experience. It also provided an opportunity to describe any additional thoughts or issues. The

questionnaire was used to substantiate or contest the perspectives until it was possible to match the patterns within the sort with the explanations within the questionnaire. The finalization stage was to ensure that the description of the factors is “grounded” (Brown, 1980); in other words, labels applied to the perceptions are reflective of both the sorts and the answers to the questionnaire. “By mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and data, the researcher gains in breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration, while offsetting the weaknesses inherent to using each approach by itself” (Collins et al., 2006, p. 73).

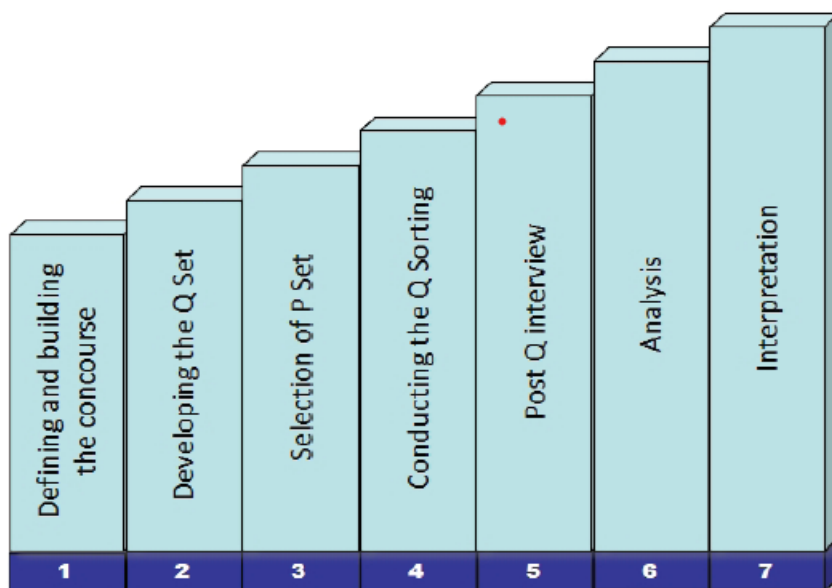
By understanding these priorities, this information supplements current literature to discern between more inclusive and less inclusive leaders’ perceptions, using a tool adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), aligned with the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Standards and the 2015 Model Principal Supervisor Standards. The rationale for undertaking this research is to investigate the priorities of special education and general education leaders of more inclusive districts using a mixed methods approach. This research adds to the current literature linking the importance of special education and general education partnerships to support more inclusive learning environments for students with disabilities.

Taking into account Brown’s (2004) possible uses for Q-Methodology and the purpose of this study, Q-methodology was the chosen method. Brown (2004) specifies its use to “define participant viewpoints and perceptions, provide sharper insight into preferred management directions, identify criteria that are important to clusters of individuals, examine areas of friction, consensus and conflict and isolate gaps in shared understanding” (p. 1). It uses a structured sample of participants relevant to the issue under consideration (Damio, 2016), which in this case, would be special education administration and general education administration. It

identifies criteria (key leadership practices) that are important to clusters of individuals (general and special education leaders). Q-methodology can be very helpful in unearthing perspectives without requiring participants to articulate these clearly themselves (Damio, 2018). Using a modified version of the PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities Key Leadership Practices (CCSO & CEEDAR, 2017) as a Q-sort unearthed general education and special education administrators' perspectives and priorities with an inclusive lens. With the intent to investigate whether general education administrators' key leadership practice priorities align with their special education administrator counterpart in districts that have a higher rate of inclusion for students with disabilities, clarify if there clusters of participants who ranked the key leadership practices priorities similarly, and identify themes based on key leadership practices' priority rankings, Q-methodology is especially suited and relevant to this research on points of view (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1

The Stages of Q Process (Damio, 2016, p. 107)



Research Questions

The primary purpose of this research is to acquire a deeper understanding of the priorities of both special education and general education administrators as inclusive leaders. As previously noted, this is monumental as their collaboration continues to be a pivotal factor in the ability of districts and schools to provide challenging, diverse, accepting, safe, non-judgmental culture while adhering to high stakes accountability. Will these prioritized leadership practices support the inclusion of students with disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017)? Will there be similarities between what the research shows effective as inclusive leadership practices and what elementary principals and special education directors and assistant directors prioritize within the key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities (CCSO & CEEDAR, 2017)? The research questions that guided this study are:

1. How are inclusive leadership practice statements ranked similarly and differently among participants?
2. How do participants describe rankings for most and least important inclusive leadership practice statements?
3. How are inclusive leadership practice statements ranked in relationship to participants roles?

Figure 3.2

Special Education and General Education Administration Priority Similarities and Differences



The Q-sort results and pre-sort data (level of inclusion) was used to compare special education and general education administrators' key leadership practice priorities in districts that have a higher rate of inclusion for students with disabilities. The pre-sort data and Q-sort results were used to establish groups of administrators or clusters. The additional insight provided by the follow-up questionnaire established any themes based on the key leadership practices priority rankings, as well as provide context into the reasoning behind participants' choices of their perceived leadership practices priorities.

Item Development and Selection

Technically, there is no “rule of thumb” for the appropriate number of items that should be included in a Q-sort, since sorts may include as few as 20 and as many as 60 items (Donner, 2001). According to Brown (1980), a general number of Q-samples is 30-60 and used with participants distributing their answers on a scale from -4 to +4 or -5 to +5. More specifically, Brown (1980) states,

As a rule, Q samples smaller than N=40 can safely utilize a range of +4 to -4; from 40 to 60, a range of +5 to -5 is generally employed; beyond 60, =6 to -6 is not untypical, although there are few occasions for a wider range to be utilized since Q samples exceeding 60 are rarely required; most Q samples contain 40 to 50 items and employ a range of +5 to -5 with a quasinormal flattened distribution. (p. 200)

Since people, not items, are grouped within Q, researchers must have a sufficient number of items to “determine differences among the participants, not a sufficient number of participants to determine differences among the items” (Newman & Ramlo, 2010, p. 508). After much contemplation, it is the belief of the researcher that 40 statements are an appropriate number of statements that will not overwhelm, confuse, or frustrate the participants; while also resulting in yielding valid results. As such, for this study, n=40 indicating 40 modified key leadership practice statements.

A crosswalk was developed to compare and contrast the PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Advanced Specialty Set: Special Education Administration Specialist (2015), the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Recognition Standards Building Level (2018), the Local Special Education Administrators (LSEA) Responsibilities (Bellamy & Iwaszuk, 2017) with the literature associated with effective, inclusive schools and districts (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Hoover & Teeters, 2019; Leithwood & Jantizi, 2008; McLeskey, & Waldron, 2015; Saisbury, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006; Witziers et al., 2003). The results support a ready-made concourse as the initial Q-sort concourse, the PSEL 2015 and

Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities Key Leadership Practices (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017). As such, it is the most relevant set of standards that specifically addresses effective, inclusive leadership. Concourse, as defined in Q-methodology, are the possible statements made about the particular topic (Damio, 2016). It is from a concourse that a “sample of statements is subsequently drawn for administration in a Q-sort” (Brown, 1993, p. 95). The key leadership practices, as outlined by these standards, fall in line with the literature of effective, inclusive schools and districts. By using these standards as a tool to prioritize inclusive leadership practices as a Q-sort, it specifically forces participants to prioritize higher or lower ranked practices as inclusive leaders. The NELP Program Recognition Standards Building Level (2018) align with the PSEL standards, but do not specify the leadership practices that support inclusion across standards. Out of the 40 statements from the PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017), 14 do not specify the inclusion of students with disabilities. This provides the opportunity to analyze the similarities and differences of educational leaders’ priorities, both specifically focused on students with disabilities and the overall inclusion of all students.

The 45 modified statements were piloted before being finalized for this study. The 45 modified statements generated from the PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities Key Leadership Practices (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017) were shared with a cohort of special education leaders and upcoming leaders that are currently enrolled in a special education leadership program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The cohort was asked to perform three activities. The cohort was asked to participate in a Q-sort activity using these 45 statements (see Table 3.3), as well as a follow-up questionnaire and group discussion.

Table 3.3

Key Leadership Practices

<u>Key Leadership Practices Statements</u>
<p><i>Sort statements from most important to the job as an inclusive leader to least important to the job as an inclusive leader...</i></p> <p>Statements generated from the <i>PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities</i> (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017, p. 3-19)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for your school and/or district that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities.2. Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly.3. Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work.4. Adhere to ethical and professional norms and uphold the moral imperative to acknowledge inequities and promote equality.5. Possess an ethical mindset to identify, interpret, and manage the ethical dilemmas in leadership for students with disabilities and address them by embodying the values of justice and care, equality and equity, community in service of all students.6. Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust.7. Ensure the academic success and well-being of all students, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources.8. Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities.9. Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities.10. Communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multitiered system of support.11. Work collaboratively with teachers to help them develop their capacity for effective instruction.12. Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs.13. Promote appropriate, clear, and valid monitoring and assessment systems where teachers receive meaningful information about how students respond to instruction and where information is relevant to instructional improvement.

14. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community.
15. Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.
16. Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships.
17. Support teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the schools.
18. Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/schoolwide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities.
19. Provide multiple sources of high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities, and participate alongside staff.
20. Identify strategies to motivate their staff and encourage, recognize, and facilitate leadership opportunities for teachers and staff who effectively educate students with disabilities.
21. Encourage teachers to set high expectations for and engage in active self-assessment and reflective learning in order to promote mutual accountability.
22. Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives principals and/or teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism.
23. Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school/district, and for the success of students with disabilities.
24. Communicate clear expectations for collaboration within and among established stakeholders without micromanaging, and encourage experimentation among teams.
25. Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff.
26. Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school.
27. Engage families to provide insight about their children's specific disabilities that allows teachers to better understand their needs, make educationally sound instructional decisions, and assist in interpreting and assessing student progress.
28. Manage budgets and develop strong relationships with all stakeholders in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and that students with disabilities have access to appropriate transportation, classrooms, services, accommodations, and extracurricular activities.
29. Ensure that external resources are aligned with their district/schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students.
30. Assign roles and responsibilities to optimize staff capacity to address each student's learning needs, especially students with disabilities.
31. Develop and effectively manage district/school structures, operations, and administrative systems that support students with disabilities.

32. Emphasize the “why” and “how of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered town improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success.
33. Provide learning opportunities for principals and/or teachers and staff to equip them to participate in strategic processes of improvement, and to take part in implementing effective programs and practices for students with disabilities.
34. Address teacher capacity needs around the identification, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based interventions, and ensure that necessary conditions for teaching and learning exist in order to prepare students with disabilities for success in college, career, and life.
35. Ensure that the particular needs of students with disabilities are intentionally addressed within the district/school’s broader plans for improvement.
36. Develop a general working knowledge and understanding of different types of disability and the individual needs of each student, and collaborate with principals/ special education administration and/or special education teachers and related service personnel toward that end.
37. Familiarize yourself with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law governing how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to students with disabilities, as well as different types of programs and services for students with disabilities, including but not limited to IEPs.
38. Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance *and* results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities.
39. Understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements, to comply with various regulations regarding students with disabilities.
40. Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities.
41. Possess self-knowledge to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases.
42. Critically analyze, infer, and identify areas of inequity; define problems with student identification and classification; and assess the effectiveness of programs and services for students with disabilities.
43. Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities.
44. Possess organizational and management skills including planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records, IEPs); and developing budgets and managing capital.
45. Possess skills of self-assessment, self-correction, and self-regulation applied to the evaluation of one’s own thinking, assumptions, and behaviors as well as philosophical and moral discretion to help manage ethical dilemmas.

This cohort was asked to rank the 45 inclusive leadership practices from +5 (highest priority within their job as an inclusive administrator) to -5 (lowest priority within their jobs as an inclusive administrator). The participants received an explanation of the Q-sort process. The participants were asked to order the Q-sort statements according to a grid (see Figure 3.3). For example, only two, key leadership practice statements can be assigned to the + 5 and -5 columns: two can be assigned to the +4 and – 4 columns, four to the +3 and -3 columns, four to the +2 and -2 columns, six to the +1 and -1 columns and six statements can be assigned to the 0 or neutral column. The participants completed the sorts individually. The researcher was present while participants completed the sorts, providing support and clarification of the directions only when requested.

The next activity required the cohort to fill out a follow-up questionnaire targeting their feedback about the Q-sort items. Each member of the cohort answered them individually and was asked to hold any questions until the whole group discussion. Once the written responses from the participants was completed, the group participated in a whole group discussion, guided by their responses. Feedback from the participants was taken into account for the development of the final Q-set. The participants reported several corrections to be made to fine tune the Q-sort items. Duplications were found within the items. Items 36, 37 and 39 were duplicates as were 41 and 45, along with 4 and 5. The duplication was corrected by the removal of four items and rewording of item 4. Items 10 and 11 were combined to make one statement. As a result of the whole group discussion, considering these outliers, the cohort felt the statements were clear, concise and relevant to the study. The consensus was that the sort was ready for use. The whole group discussion was recorded and the written responses reviewed. The researcher further

analyzed both the recording and written responses and concluded that 40 of the items would be the final Q-sort (see table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Pilot Follow-up Questionnaire

<u>Pilot Follow-up Questionnaire</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please list any statements that are duplicative. 2. Please list by number which statements you feel should be eliminated. Please explain. 3. Can any statements be combined? Please list any possible combinations. 4. What statements need changing (wording/language/relevance)? Please list any suggestions you may have to change these statements.

Therefore, the Q-sort items developed for this study are a modified version of the PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities Key Leadership Practices (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017), as tools to understand the priorities of special education and general education leadership of schools and districts with varying levels of inclusion (see Table 3.5). To date, this tool has not been used to measure priorities of special education and general education leaders. Utilizing this modified tool to analyze the priorities of school leaders is a vital next step in understanding both special education and general education leaders’ perspectives when it comes to inclusion.

Table 3.5

Final Q-sort Key Leadership Practice Statements

<u>Key Leadership Practices Statements</u>
<p><i>Please sort the following leadership statements as a leader who supports the needs of students with disabilities from least important to most important...</i></p> <p>Statements generated from the <i>PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017, p. 3-19)</i></p>

1. Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for your school and/or district that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities.
2. Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly.
3. Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work.
4. Apply ethical and professional norms and uphold the moral imperative to acknowledge inequities and promote equality.
5. Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust.
6. Ensure the academic success and well-being of all students, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources.
7. Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities.
8. Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities.
9. Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multitiered system of support.
10. Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs.
11. Promote appropriate, clear, and valid monitoring and assessment systems where teachers receive meaningful information about how students respond to instruction and where information is relevant to instructional improvement.
12. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community.
13. Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.
14. Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships.
15. Support teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the schools.
16. Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/schoolwide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities.
17. Provide multiple sources of high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities, and participate alongside staff.
18. Identify strategies to motivate your staff and encourage, recognize, and facilitate leadership opportunities for teachers and staff who effectively educate students with disabilities.

19. Encourage teachers to set high expectations for and engage in active self-assessment and reflective learning in order to promote mutual accountability.
20. Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives principals and/or teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism.
21. Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school/district, and for the success of students with disabilities.
22. Communicate clear expectations for collaboration within and among established stakeholders without micromanaging, and encourage experimentation among teams.
23. Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff.
24. Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school.
25. Engage families to provide insight about their children's specific disabilities that allows teachers to better understand their needs, make educationally sound instructional decisions, and assist in interpreting and assessing student progress.
26. Manage budgets and develop strong relationships with all stakeholders in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and that students with disabilities have access to appropriate transportation, classrooms, services, accommodations, and extracurricular activities.
27. Ensure that external resources are aligned with your district/schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students.
28. Assign roles and responsibilities to optimize staff capacity to address each student's learning needs, especially students with disabilities.
29. Develop and effectively manage district/school structures, operations, and administrative systems that support students with disabilities
30. Emphasize the "why" and "how of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success.
31. Provide learning opportunities for principals and/or teachers and staff to equip them to participate in strategic processes of improvement, and to take part in implementing effective programs and practices for students with disabilities.
32. Address teacher capacity needs around the identification, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based interventions, and ensure that necessary conditions for teaching and learning exist in order to prepare students with disabilities for success in college, career, and life.
33. Ensure that the particular needs of students with disabilities are intentionally addressed within the district/school's broader plans for improvement.
34. Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance *and* results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities.
35. Understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements, to comply with various regulations regarding students with disabilities.

36. Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities.
37. Possess self-knowledge to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases.
38. Critically analyze, infer, and identify areas of inequity; define problems with student identification and classification; and assess the effectiveness of programs and services for students with disabilities.
39. Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities.
40. Possess organizational and management skills including planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records, IEPs); and developing budgets and managing capital.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, a general education administrator is identified as holding the position of elementary principal, with initial or professional licensure, having met the requirements of DESE. A special education administrator is identified as a person who oversees district-wide special education programs and services to include special education directors and associate directors. The general education administrators that were chosen for this study were elementary principals. As is evident by previous research (DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katz, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Salisbury, 2006; Waldron et al., 2011) studies with a focus on elementary schools and leaders provide meaningful insight on effective inclusive schools and districts. By selecting elementary principals as the general education administrative participants, this study creates a baseline for future research focused specifically on meaningful secondary inclusive leadership priorities for both building level leadership and special education leadership. As is typical of the average district make-up, more elementary principals participated in this study than special education administrators. On average in Massachusetts there are 5 elementary principals to every 1 special education director on an administrative team, with 289

school districts and 1,479 public elementary schools overall (<https://elementaryschools.org/directory/ma/>). This more realistic representation provided a closer replication of the imbalance of the number of general education leaders versus special education leaders within districts in Massachusetts.

For the purposes of this study, ethnicity classification will include: African-American or Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, Multi-race/Non-Hispanic, Native American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or White/Caucasian. Gender is defined as either male or female, or which gender they identify at the time of the study. The number of total years as an administrator included number of years in current position and number of years in either the same position or another administrative position, either in the same district or other districts. Educational level will reflect the degrees the participants hold (i.e., bachelors, masters, CAGS, Ed.S., doctorate). The addition of masters plus 30 was included in the educational level to reflect an additional level to a master's degree that is often recognized by districts in Massachusetts as an additional step to the teachers' contract. All educational licenses held by the participants is, at the time of their participation, in this study. The sample included general education school and special education district leaders in a number of districts of various sizes, types and configurations.

The term inclusion was defined using The Special Education Counts and Rates for Educational Environment Report from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to identify level of inclusivity within the participants' districts. More specifically, the report was used to identify level of inclusivity (full inclusion, partial inclusion, substantially separate, public day, private day or residential) for students with disabilities who

have qualified for special education services. The state average for students who are fully included is 66.2%. This average was used as a measure of inclusivity.

Participants

Similar to other investigations (Boscardin et al., 2018; Provost et al., 2010; Schulze & Boscardin, 2018; Tudryn et al., 2016), the participants in this study were not chosen randomly. This research investigated the subjectivity of special education and general education leaders with respect to key leadership practice priorities. Q-methodology does not require a random sample of participants because the purpose is to intentionally access a range and diversity of relevant attitudes and perspectives on the topic being investigated (Brown, 1980). The people who are factored should be judiciously chosen and not random since Q-technique factor analysis specifically tests “typological premises” by studying a small group of people (Thompson, 1998, p. 28). According to both Brown (1980) and Stephenson (1953), random recruitment could result in over-representation of a particular perspective, introducing bias into the sorts. Q-methodology considers participants as variables rather than a sample. “Only a few participants are required (e.g., in the range of thirty participants) in a Q methodology. There needs to be enough to establish the existence of a factor for the purposes of comparing one factor to another” (Brown, 1980 p. 192). Q-methodology is well suited for small populations of participants as an “exploratory, interpretation-intensive” (Davis & Michelle, 2011, p. 561) methodology. As such, within Political Subjectivity (Brown, 1980) and A Primer in Q Methodology (Brown, 1993) it is discerned that;

Q-methodology research emphasizes the qualitative how and why people think the way they do; the methodology does not count how many people think a certain way. The goal of Q-methodology is, first and foremost, to uncover different patterns of thought, (not

their numerical distribution among the larger population). Studies using the Q-methodology typically use small sample sizes. The results of these studies are less influenced by low response rates compared with the results of survey studies. (Valenta & Wigger, 1997, p. 502)

Since this investigation was focused on priorities of general education and special education administration, principals and administrators of special education were the chosen as the participants (variables) for this study. Q-sort methodology is meant to be used for small scale research with the idea of understanding information subjectively. Since the number of Q participants are the variable, not the samples, the number of Q participants does not need to be very large, typically no more than 40 (Brown, 2004). Although in Q methodology the P set is usually smaller than the Q set, it is important to have a P set large enough to represent the subjective views pertaining to the topic under investigation. Keeping in mind, McKeown and Thomas' (2013) advice: "at a practical level, common sense offers the best counsel when determining the importance of factors, that is their contextual significance in light of the problems, purposes, and theoretical issues of the research project at hand" (p. 54). For this study, a total of 35 special education administrators and elementary principals were selected from a convenient sample in Western Massachusetts. Western Massachusetts consists of four counties, Franklin (95.40% white), Hampshire (91.10% white), Hampden (76.5% white) and Berkshire (95.02% white). Collectively, Western Massachusetts is 2,849.57 square miles and has a population of 827,043. The smallest town in Western Massachusetts is Monroe, with a population of 121 people and Springfield is the largest city, with a population of 153,606 (Census Summary File, 2010). There are 85 school districts and 114,287 students in Western Massachusetts and 19.7% of them are identified as special education students. The district with

the smallest number of students is Hancock with 47 students with 21.3% of those students being identified as special education students. The district with the largest number of students is Springfield with a student population of 25,007 with 24.4% of them identified as special education students(<http://www.doe.mass.edu>). Of the 35 participants from Western Massachusetts, twelve were special education administrators and twenty-three were elementary principals. Two of the participants had served as both a special education administrator and a general education administrator. These participants were judiciously chosen as recommended by Thompson (1998), to represent a realistic replication of the imbalance of the number of elementary principals versus special education directors within districts in Massachusetts.

To assure that the selection criteria were met, background information was gathered for both the participants and their districts via a combination of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE), and the participants' district website and a demographic questionnaire (see Table 3.6 & Table 3.7). The demographic data collected from the participants included (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) age, (d) current position, (e) years in current position, (f) years of special education administrative experience, (g) years of general education experience, (h) level of education, (i) level of teaching experience, (j) type of teaching experience, (k) years of teaching experience, and (l) years in other educational position (counselor, ETL, reading specialist). Overall, over 80% of the participants were female, and over 85% were Caucasian/white. The demographic data collected from DESE (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/>) included (a) district enrollment, (b) special education enrollment, (c) full inclusion of students with disabilities, (d) first language not English, (e) English language learner, (f) high needs, (g) economically disadvantaged, (h) special education students that meet or exceed expectations on MCAS Next Generation, and (i) accountability status (see Table 3.7).

The requirement to meet high needs status is based on two or more of the following; percentage of students in poverty, percentage of students who are eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch, percentage of students who receive social security and percentage of students who receive assistance under the Medicaid program (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>).

Table 3.6

Characteristics of Participants

Background Information	Group	Participants (35)
Gender	Male	7
	Female	28
Ethnicity	White	30
	African American	1
	Hispanic/Latino	4
Age	31-40	3
	41-50	14
	51-60	11
	61-70	7
Current Position	Elementary Principal	23
	Special Education Administrator	12
Years in Current Position	Less than 5 years	17
	Equal to or More than 5 years	18
Years of Special Education Administrative Experience	None	24
	Less than 5 years	2
	More than 5 years	3
	More than 10	7
Years of General Education Administrative Experience	None	9
	Less than 5 years	4
	More than 5 years	10

	More than 10	13
Both General and Special Education Administration		
	Experience	3
	Licensed	5
Level of Education		
	Master	15
	Master + 30	9
	CAGS/Ed.S.	5
	Doctorate	6
Level of Teaching Experience		
	Elementary	20
	Secondary	4
	Both Elementary and secondary	8
Type of Teaching Experience		
	None	3
	General Education	17
	Special Education	6
	Both general and special education	9
Years of Teaching Experience		
	None	3
	Less than five	4
	More than five	11
	More than ten	17
Years of other educational position (counselor, ETL, reading specialist, school psychologist, computer tech)		
	None	24
	Less than five	5
	More than five	2
	More than ten	4

Table 3.7

Participant District Information

		Participant District Information
District Enrollment	Less than 3,000	20
	More than or equal 3,000	15

Special Education Student Enrollment	Less than 18.6% (state average)	7
	More than or equal 18.6 % (state average)	28
Full Inclusion of Students with Disabilities	Less than 66.2% (state average)	27
	More than or equal 66.2% (state average)	8
First Language not English	Less than 23% (state average)	23
	More than or equal 23% (state average)	12
English Language Learner	Less than 10.8% (state average)	23
	More than or equal 10.8% (state average)	12
High Needs	less than 48.7% (state average)	17
	More than or equal 48.7% (state average)	18

Economically Disadvantaged	Less than 32.8% (state average)	18
	More than or equal 32.8% (state average)	17
Special Education Students that Meet or Exceed Expectations on MCAS Next Generation (2018-2019)	ELA Less than 16% (state average)	21
	ELA More than or equal 16% (state average)	12
	ELA Insufficient Data	2
	Math Less than 15% (state average)	27
	Math More than or equal 15% (state average)	6
	Insufficient Data	2
	Science Less than 17% (state average)	20
	Science More than or equal 17% (state average)	13
	Science Insufficient Data	2
Accountability Status	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	26

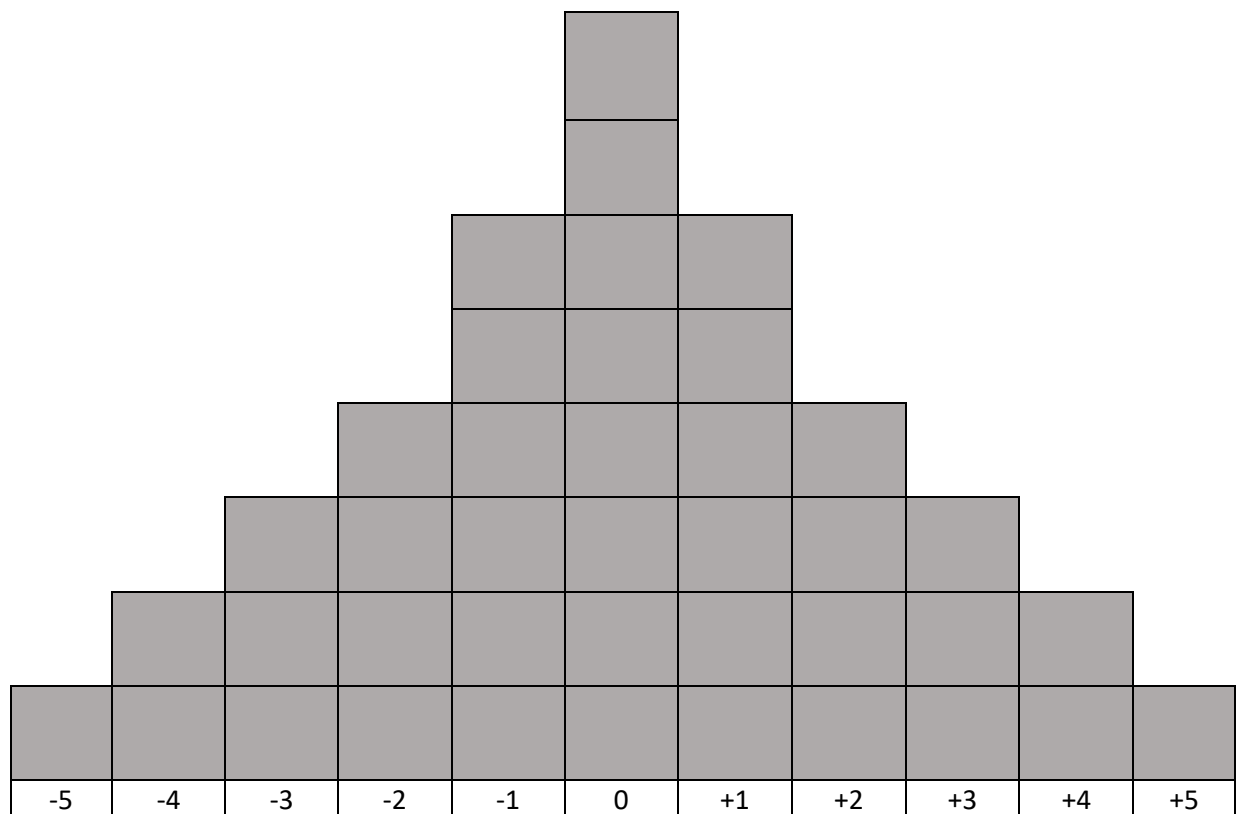
	Requiring Assistance or Intervention	7
	Insufficient Data	2

Procedures

Prior to sorting, the participants were asked to sign an informed consent approved by the University of Massachusetts Institutional Review Board (IRB). Next, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire identifying information about their backgrounds (i.e. years in the field, age, years as an administrator, licensure, educational level). Once these forms were completed, the participants received an explanation of the Q-sort process. The participants were asked to order the Q-sort statements according to a grid (see Figure 3.3). They were given specific directions. For example, only one key leadership practice statement can be assigned to the + 5 column, two can be assigned to the +4 column, three to the +3 column, four to the +2 column, six to the +1 column and eight statements can be assigned to the 0 or neutral column. Participants followed the same procedure for the negative side of the sort. The participants were asked to rank them in order of least important as a leader who supports the needs of students with disabilities to most important as a leader who supports the needs of students with disabilities.

Figure 3.3

Q-Sort Grid



Least important as a leader who supports the needs
of students with disabilities

Most important as a leader who supports
the needs of students with disabilities

Lastly, they were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Table 3.8) describing their experience, what strategies they used and why they ranked statements the way they did during the Q-sort experience. They were also given the opportunity to share any issues or thoughts that occurred while completing the activity (Damio, 2018). These responses influenced the overall interpretation of the Q-sort data. The Special Education Counts and Rates for Educational Environment Report, from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education, was used to identify level of inclusivity within the participants’ districts. As such, the data was triangulated due to the multiple data sources (i.e. pre-sort background questionnaire, Q-sorts, data from DESE and post sort questionnaires) utilized.

Table 3.8

Follow-up Questionnaire

<p>Follow-up Questionnaire</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefly describe what went into your choice of statement that is “highest priority within your job as an effective, inclusive administrator? (+5). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>What is the statement and what was your reason for placing it there?</i> 2. Briefly describe what went into your choice of statement that is “the least priority within your jobs as an effective inclusive administrator? (-5). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>What is the statement and what was your reason for placing it there?</i> 3. Were there specific statements that you had difficulty placing? 4. <i>Please list the number of the statements and describe your dilemma.</i> 5. What other issues/thoughts emerged for you while sorting the cards? 6. Describe how you arrived at your overall most important statements of your leadership. 7. Describe how you arrived at your overall least important statements of your leadership. 8. What factor(s), e.g., time, resources, your own knowledge, your skills, and/or your dispositions, contributed most to the sorting through the key leadership practices statements? 9. <i>Please give specific examples for each if applicable.</i>
--

Data Analysis

The data analysis consisted of several steps beginning with the collection of the Q-sort and survey data. The following steps were taken for the overall analysis;

Step1: Data was entered into SPSS and transposed with items from the Q-sort as rows and participants’ rankings in columns.

Step 2: A check for missing data was performed and corrected by inserting data from participants’ Q-sorts.

Step 3: An exploratory factor analysis of all participants using SPSS options (principal component analysis with varimax rotation). Based on the scree plot, this was repeated with various fixed number of factors (2-5).

Step 4: Number of factors was decided based on retention of the largest number of participants with pure factor loadings across both special education administrators and principals.

Step 5: Group members were identified using Schmolck's pre-flagging criterion.

Step 6: Patterns were analyzed within each factor to identify any similarities or differences within participant individual characteristics and participant's district characteristics.

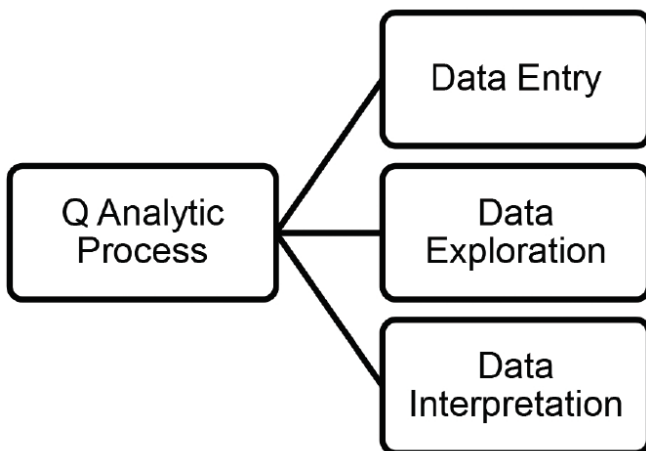
Step 7: A qualitative analysis of items in each factor was completed to characterize what the factor meant or exemplified.

Step 8: A qualitative analysis of the post-sort questionnaire and the follow up interview was completed to triangulate what the factors meant.

Simply put, the data from the Q-sorts was entered, explored and interpreted by the researcher (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4

The Three Main Stages of Q Analytic Process (Damio, 2018, p. 63)



As previously noted, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire prior to the Q-sort to supplement the information from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. They were also asked to rank 40, modified key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities. The researcher compared the sorts to determine if there were patterns, themes, similarities, or differences in the responses. This information provided the researcher with the ability to formulate inductions. Some possible inductions could be whether the statements were sorted randomly or whether there was a cluster of participants that sorted the statements in an identical manner. This could suggest that the participants that sorted in an identical way shared the same priorities, regarding key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities; whereas, if the sorts produce a random pattern, it may signify a difference in priorities regarding key leadership practices. Follow-up questionnaires provided qualitative data that will reflect reasoning behind the choices made regarding their key leadership practices priorities.

The pre-sort data, derived from the background information, provided essential information about the districts and participants. Comparisons were made between the Q-sort rankings and the pre-sort data in order to glean any relationships. The qualitative data collected through the follow-up questionnaires provided a description of how each participant perceived the key leadership practices that are necessary to be an inclusive leader. These data were incorporated into the written narrative and was very helpful in confirming the validity of the interpretation (Davis & Michelle, 2011), as well as provided insight into the rationale participants used to sort the Q-statements (Brown, 1980). More specifically, responses from the post-Q-sort questionnaire provided the researcher with deeper insights into which key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities are valued.

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), often used within social sciences, mathematics and statistics, was the software program chosen to analyze the data from the Q-sorts. Among other statistical applications, SPSS includes descriptive statistics, bivariate statistics, prediction of numerical outcomes and identifying groups. For this study, SPSS is valuable in classifying several descriptive statistics to evaluate the collected data. For instance, SPSS has the ability to quickly generate mean rank, factors, correlations, and z-scores. Thus, the mean rank calculation of the sorts will provide the researcher with the extent to which participants, as a group/cluster, perceived each key leadership practices statement as being characteristic of an effective attribute of inclusive administrators. The correlations among the Q-sorts also calculate any resultant factors scrutinized and extracted from the data, while factor analysis is employed to calculate the Z-scores of the key leadership practices statements.

Calculations were completed to provide the data needed for a version of a “pre-flagging algorithm,” developed by Schmolck (2012), to ascertain if a participant is a “pure” member of a factor group. Each of the rotated component factors, loading values (a) for each participant, were squared (a^2). These squared factor loadings were then summed (H^2) and divided by two ($H^2 / 2$) to explain more than half the common variance. For example, for P2 (see Table 4.1) had an a score of 0.09 under Factor A, which was squared (0.0081) and an a score 0.64 under Factor B, which was squared (0.4096). These two squared a scores were summed ($.0081 + .4096 = .4177$) and divided by two, $0.4177/2 = 0.20885$ ($H^2 / 2$). All final calculations were then rounded to the nearest hundredth as reported in Table 4.1. The a^2 for both Factor A (0.01, rounded to the nearest hundredth) and Factor B (0.41, rounded to the nearest hundredth) were then compared to the $H^2 / 2 = 0.21$ (rounded to the nearest hundredth). Since .01 was $< .21$, P2 did not meet the first

criteria for Factor A membership, however, since 0.41 was > 0.21 , P2 met the first criteria Factor B membership.

As part of the second criteria, participants' factor loading had to be greater than half of the overall variance, a version of Schmolck (2012): $a^2 > H^2 / 2$ and $|a| > .310$ ($p < .05$). In other words, if a^2 (the squared factor loading) is greater than $H^2/2$ (half of the common variance), then that factor explained more than half the variance in that participant's score, and if $|a| > .310$, then it is significant at the $p < .05$ level, meaning there is 95% confidence that the score loading on this factor is not due to chance. The standard error was calculated by dividing 1 by the square root of N (N=40, the number of statements) $1/\sqrt{40} = .158$ (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). The value for p was calculated by multiplying the standard error ($\sigma = .158$) by 1.96 for $p < .05$, $1.95 \times .158 = .3096$. In this example P2's squared factor loading was 0.01 for Factor A and 0.40 for Factor B. P2 met the standard error criteria for Factor B with a loading of $0.40 > .3096$. Thus, P2 met the two criteria for Factor B membership.

In order to ascertain rankings of key leadership practice items within each factor, calculated principle component scores were used. As a means to determine if there are any possible patterns in the way participants ranked their statements, statements ranked at the extreme ends, (highest priority within their job as an administrator who supports the needs of students with disabilities (+5) to lowest priority within their job as an administrator who supports the needs of students with disabilities (-5)) were examined. Further, for the purpose of extracting the extent of similarities between the different sorts, a correlation matrix was created, providing the opportunity to find any consistencies within the cluster of participants. According to Brown (1993), correlations that surpass two times the standard error in either direction are significant. In addition, the constant comparative method will be used.

The qualitative data elicited from the post Q-sort questionnaire brought meaning and depth to the data analyzed through SPSS. The constant comparative method “combines systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing” (Conrad et al., 1993, p. 280). This process allowed for the application of grounded theory. Within this study, the working labels assigned to the sorts were compared to participant quotes from the follow-up questionnaire, allowing the researcher to apply grounded theory to create labels with the qualitative data. Grounded theory methodologically gathers and analyzes data systematically (Kolb, 2012), which in the case of this study, created labels within the qualitative data. In interpreting and presenting the results, the researcher

synthesized all of the data to ‘tell the story’ of how individuals who loaded significantly on each factor ‘typically’ responded... addressing areas of strong agreement, disagreement, and neutrality and noting points of similarity and difference between the factors. In Q terms, these viewpoints usually do not represent the views of a particular individual. Rather, they are a constructed aggregate that represents the shared subjectivity of those who loaded significantly on that factor. (Davis & Michelle, 2011)

Labels, Dimensions, Descriptors and Hypotheses

The purpose of creating labels is to convert quantitative and qualitative data into meaningful concepts. For this mixed-methods study, the quantitative and qualitative data were successfully utilized to develop dimensions because the qualitative post-sort questions were designed to force the participants to provide rationale about the choices they made during their individual Q-sort. Overall, suitable labels were used to describe the sorts, using both item rankings and the post-sort qualitative statements from the participants. Much like labels,

descriptors isolate and then describe concepts that are revealed in the data. Descriptors are largely used to provide descriptive details for the labels themselves. As such, descriptors highlighting subcategories break down labels into an assortment of smaller parts. It is essentially “the identification of essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 229). It is important to stress that the post-sort answers to the questionnaires provide details about the participants’ personal beliefs and perceptions about the important qualities of key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities, essentially, providing the researcher with a deeper and richer understanding enhancing data interpretation.

By developing hypotheses that connect dimensions to labels, the subjectivity of participants can be explained more comprehensively (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Since several of the post-sort questions ask the participants to expand on their thinking processes they used to sort the statements, participants’ answers were useful when the researcher developed hypotheses about the criteria that led to the motivation to place the statements in a particular arrangement during the Q-sort exercise. In addition, the data was further analyzed to investigate the relationship between the participants most important leadership statements and the commonalities that were found across studies of effective, inclusive schools, including (a) inclusive collaboration; (b) shared vision, moral purpose, and core values; (c) shared decision-making, distributed leadership, and teacher leadership; (d) meaningful professional development and; (e) data driven decision making (Billingsley, et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade, et al., 2007; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Salisbury, 2006; Waldron, et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

Chapter Summary

Through a mixed method of Q-methodology, the priorities of both general education and special education administration in supporting students with disabilities was investigated. It is contended that by using Q-methodology, which encompasses both quantitative and qualitative components, this study found groups/clusters of people that demonstrate similar and different responses to the leadership practice statements in order to establish an understanding of the reasoning involved with their sorts, along with their perspectives on the key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities. Then, by developing labels and explaining the dimensions of participants' varying perspectives, it was determined if the sorts are similar or dissimilar based on level of inclusivity. This, supplemented by the questionnaires, elicited the specific value of the highest and lowest priorities of special and general education administration on the modified key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities. As a result, the researcher shed light on the similarities and differences of both special education and general education leaders' perceptions of leadership practices that support the needs of students with disabilities.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, several types of analyses were performed to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of participants' perceived leadership practices for supporting inclusive learning environments for students with disabilities. The results derived from this investigation resulted in determination of the number of factors emerging from the data, analysis for factor membership and factor item rankings, and interpretation of qualitative data collected in the follow-up questionnaires. This level of analysis (a) defines participant viewpoints and perceptions; (b) provides sharper insight into preferred management directions; (c) identifies criteria that are important to clusters of individuals; (d) examines areas of friction, consensus and conflict; and, (e) isolates gaps in shared understanding (Brown, 2004). This analysis is intended to identify criteria (key leadership practices) that are important to clusters of individuals (general and special education leaders) by unearthing perspectives that might not otherwise be readily apparent to participants or researchers (Damio, 2018).

Factor Determination

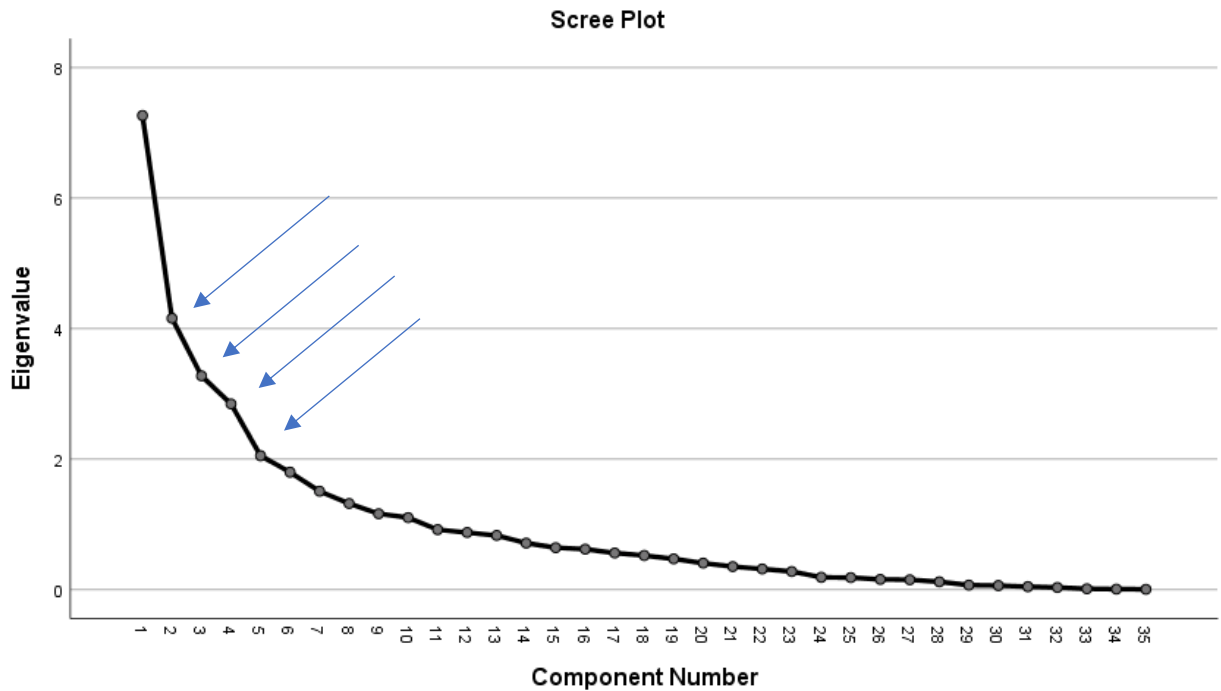
The first step was to determine the number of factors that emerged from the participant sorts. The number of factors is typically determined through visual inspection of the scree plot, as well as an analysis of the data, using criteria developed by Schmolck (2012). The scree plot for this study did not produce a clear result (see Figure 4.1). The largest drop in the scree plot occurred between data points one and two. Little difference in eigenvalues was seen between data points three and four. One elbow occurred at approximately the third data point and a second elbow occurring at the fifth data point, indicating that the appropriate number of factors would be somewhere between two and five. To determine the appropriate number of factors, two

steps were employed: (1) a preliminary exploratory analysis was performed with five factors (see Appendix E), four factors (see Appendix F), three factors (see Appendix G), and two factors (see Table 4.1) and (2) the number of members within each factor was assessed for each level of analysis.

As noted in the previous chapter, calculations were completed to provide the data needed for a version of a “pre-flagging algorithm,” developed by Schmolck (2012), to ascertain if a participant is a “pure” member of a factor group. Factor assignment was made based on the participants meeting the following conditions, a version of Schmolck (2012): $a^2 > H^2/2$ and $|a| > .310$ ($p < .05$). In other words, if a^2 is greater than $H^2/2$, then that factor explained more than half the variance in that participant’s score, and if $|a| > .310$, then it is significant at the $p < .05$ level, meaning there is 95% confidence that the score loading on this factor is not due to chance. Factor membership, which included the number and type of members belonging to each factor, was assessed, as well as the variance accounted for by each of the multiple factor solutions to determine the number of viable factors that would result in meaningful data for further analysis.

Figure 4.1

Eigenvalue by Principal Component Scree Plot



An analysis of five factors resulted in 55.9% of the explained variance. Although it explained a much higher percent of the variance, 15 out of 35 total participants (43%) were not members of any factor, including 7 special education administrators (58.33%) and 8 principals (34.78%). In addition, there were no members in one of the five factors, Factor C (see Appendix E), rendering the five factor solution untenable.

An analysis of four factors resulted in explaining 50.1% of the variance. In this model, a total of nine participants (25.71%) were not members of any factor, including six special education administrators (50%) and three principals (13.04%), leaving six special education administrators and 20 principals as part of the final analysis (see Appendix F). This meant only 26 out of 35 total participants (74.28%) factored into the four factor analysis, with even fewer special education administrators represented. Although 50.1% variance was explained in the four

factor solution, the small number of participants within each factor limited the amount of meaningful data.

An analysis of three factors resulted in explaining 41.9% of the variance in participant scores being explained by their association with the factors. In this model, a total of 9 participants were non-members of any factor (25.7%), including 7 special education administrators (58.33%) and 2 principals (8.69%), leaving only 5 special education administrators as part of the final analysis (see Appendix G).

An analysis of two factors resulted in explaining 32.63% of the variance. In this model, a total of six participants were not members of either of the two factors. The nonmembers included three special education administrators (25%) and three principals (13.04%), leaving nine special education administrators and 20 principals or 82.25% of the total participants for the final analysis (see Table 4.1). This two factor solution had the highest percentage of both groups in the overall analysis of the factor groups as well as a more proportional number of members within each group that factored out, which means it is a more authentic representation of the overall population that participated in the study. As such, this factor analysis provided enough meaningful information about which groups of participants sorted their items similarly and whether the demographic data in addition to the actual sorts distinguished one factor from another.

In summary, given the data, a five factor, four factor, and three factor analysis would not be consequential. A two factor analysis, on the other hand, possessed the potential to produce meaningful results due to increased factor membership. The two factor analysis retained the largest number of participants, across both special education administrators and principals, with pure factor loadings while not compromising the validity of the results.

Factor Results

Within the two-factor analysis, twenty-nine participants were identified to be members of either factor A or factor B, but not both. Factor naming will be reserved for data interpretation in the discussion section that follows. Sixteen participants were members of Factor A and thirteen participants were members of Factor B (see Table 4.1). As stated earlier, the two-factor solution explained 32.63% of the total variance, with Factor A explaining 18.247% of the variance in the sorts, and Factor B explaining 14.385% of the variance.

Table 4.1

Factor Membership

Participant #	Factor A		Factor B		H ² /2	Factor A	Factor B
	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score			
P1: F, ASE, 7.5, 10, BGASEL 5, 20, 67, D, W	0.27	0.07	-0.59	0.35	0.21		member
P2: M,P,8,10,2,10, 53, M30, W	0.09	0.01	0.64	0.40	0.21		member
P3: F, ASE, 4, 16, BGASEE , BGASEL 10, 3, 41, C/E, W	0.03	<0.01	-0.20	0.04	0.02		
P4: M, P,2.5.16,6,0 46, M, AA	0.36	0.13	0.39	0.15	0.14		member
P5: F, P, 7, 7, 21, 0, 49, M30, W	0.46	0.21	0.24	0.06	0.13	member	
P6: F, P, 7, 8, 11. 4, 48, M, W	0.26	0.07	0.54	0.30	0.18		member
P7: M, P, 1.5, 4, 5.5,0,37, M30, HL	0.38	0.15	-0.12	0.02	0.08	member	
P8: F, P, 1, 16, 8, 0, 46, M, HL	0.24	0.06	0.67	0.45	0.25		member
P9: F, ASE, 4, 14, BGASEE, BGASEL 3, 15, 53, M30, W	0.07	0.01	0.13	0.02	0.01		
P10: F, P, 3.5, 6, 14,0, 42, M30, W	0.47	0.22	0.53	0.29	0.25		member
P11: F, P, 11, 11, 5, 10, 62, C/E, W	0.30	0.09	0.16	0.03	0.06		
P12: F, ASE, 9, 13, 17, 0, 59, C/E, W	0.65	0.42	0.18	0.03	0.23	member	
P13: M, P, 9, 13, 7,0, 59, M, W	0.22	0.05	0.49	0.24	0.15		member
P14: F, ASE, 14, 14, 30, 0, 64, D, W	0.44	0.20	0.42	0.17	0.18	member	
P15: M, P, 8,13, 6,0, 43, M, W	0.5	0.25	0.14	0.02	0.14	member	
P16: M, ASE, 2.5, 3, 7, 0, 46, M, W	0.60	0.36	-0.18	0.03	0.19	member	
P17: F, ASE, 3, 8, 0, 7, 42, D, W	0.27	0.07	-0.08	0.01	0.04		
P18: F, P, 24, 29, 12,67, M, W	-0.21	0.05	0.281	0.08	0.06		
P19: F, P, 1, 6, 15, 8, 38, C/E, W	0.68	0.46	0.248	0.06	0.26	member	
P20: F, P, 7, 12, 23, 0, 54, M30, W	0.62	0.39	0.01	<0.01	0.19	member	
P21: F, P, 8,14,6,0,41, D, W	0.09	0.01	0.27	0.07	0.04		
P22: F, ASE, 2,12,0,2,55, D,W	0.28	0.08	-0.32	0.10	0.09		member

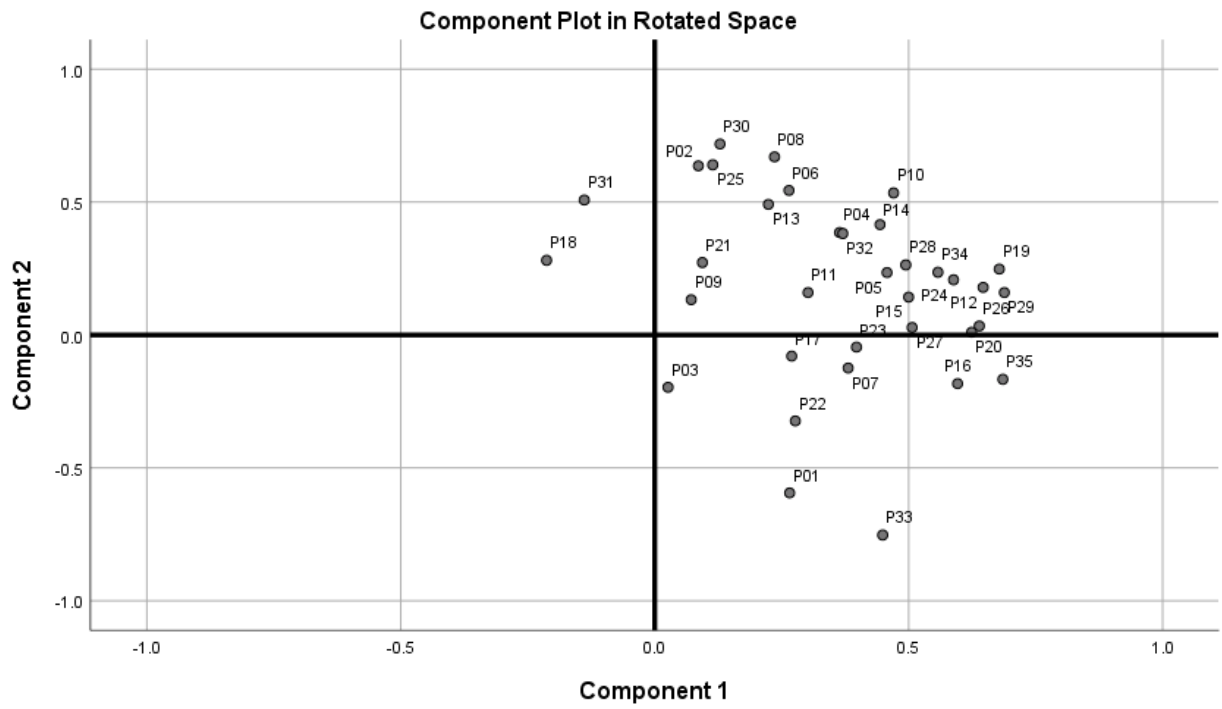
P23: M, P, 6,9, 12, 0, 38, M, W	0.40	0.16	-0.05	0.00	0.08	member	
P24: F, P, 1, 4, 21, 0, 42, M, W	0.59	0.35	0.207	0.04	0.19	member	
P25: F, P, 4, 7, 15, 0, 46, M30, W	0.11	0.02	0.64	0.40	0.21		member
P26: F, P, 2.5, 24, 9, 0, 52, M, W	0.64	0.41	0.03	<0.01	0.20	member	
P27: F, ASE, 3, 5, 14, 3.5, 56, C/E, W	0.51	0.26	0.03	<0.01	0.13	member	
P28: F, P, .5, 7, 7, 0, 43, M, W	0.49	0.24	0.26	0.07	0.16	member	
P29: F, P, 10, 15, 16, 0, 63, M, W	0.69	0.47	0.16	0.03	0.25	member	
P30: F, P, 5, 13, 9, 0, 61, M30, HL	0.13	0.02	0.72	0.52	0.27		member
P31: F, ASE, .5, 28, 6, 3, 58, D	-0.14	0.02	0.51	0.26	0.14		member
P32: F, P, 8, 11, 23, 0, 54, M	0.37	0.14	0.38	0.15	0.14		member
P33: F, ASE, 2,23, BGASEE, BGASEL, 10,0,66, M, W	0.45	0.20	-0.75	0.57	0.38		member
P34: F, P, 6, 6, 14, 0, 46, M, W	0.56	0.31	0.24	0.06	0.18	member	
P35: F, ASE, 12, 12, BGASEL, 14, 3, M, W	0.69	0.47	-0.17	0.03	0.25	member	

Note: The two following conditions must be met for factor membership: $a^2 > H^2 / 2$ and $|a| > .310$ ($p < .05$) at 95% confidence level. Participant characteristics are as follows: M: male, F: female, P: Principal, ASE: Administrator of Special Education. Years in current position. Years of administrative experience. BGASEE; Both General and Special Education Administrator Experience, BGASEL; Both General and Special Education Administrator License, Years of teaching experience. Years of other (counselor, ETF, school psychologist, SLP, reading specialist). Age. M: Masters, M30: Masters +30 credits, C/E: CAGS or Ed.S., D: Doctorate. AA: African American, HL: Hispanic/Latino, W: Caucasian/White. All districts in this study came from local school districts.

Six participants did not meet the criteria ($a^2 > H^2 / 2$ and $|a| > .310$ ($p < .05$) for 95% confidence intervals) for either factor, and of those six, three were special education administrators and three were general education administrators. Of the three special education administrators who were not members of any factor, two of them had both general and special education administrator experience. Three members of Factor B ranked their statements opposite from their other colleagues in Factor B, but were able to retain group membership since absolute values were used. A visual representation is shown within the component plot in rotated space (see Figure 4.2). The component plot in rotated space provided a visual depiction of participant sort proximity and factor clusters. The closer participants are to each other in space the more similar their sorts and participants who are closely clustered begin to represent possible factor membership (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2

Principal Component Analysis: Varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalization



Factor A and Factor B Member Demographic Composition

The demographic makeup of the group members varied. The membership demographics and professional make-up of Factor A included 11 elementary principals and five special education administrators (see Table 4.2). Of the 16 group members, almost all were Caucasian/white, with one Hispanic/Latino member. These primarily female members included participants that ranged from 37 to 64 years of age with three members under 40 and two members over 60. Their years of experience in their current position ranged from 1-14 years, with more participants being new to their position. Factor A was composed of reasonably experienced leaders, with general education administrator participants having 4 to 24 years of experience, including 4 members having 4-6 years' experience and 1 member having 24 years as a general education administrator. The years of special education administrative experience held by 5 participants were more evenly distributed, with three group members having 12 to 15 years of experience and two group members having 3-5 years of experience. One Factor A member was licensed in both general and special education administration, but did not have experience in both. Half of the members of Factor A had a master's degree, with the remaining split between masters +30 and C.A.G.S. or Ed.S. and one doctorate. Eleven of the 16 members were elementary principals, who had either elementary only or both elementary and secondary teaching experience. This left two Factor A members with secondary teaching experience. Three of the 5 special education administrators had special education teaching experience with one having both special education and general education teaching experience leaving one special education administrator with experience as other educational experience (counselor, ETL, reading specialist, school psychologist, SLP etc.). Two of the general education administrator

members had both special education and general education teaching experience, the remaining 9 had general education teaching experience. (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Demographic Information by Position from Factor A and Factor B

		Factor A		Factor B	
Gender		N=	%	N=	%
	Male	4	25%	3	23.07%
	Female	12	75%	10	76.92%
Ethnicity					
	White	15	93.75%	9	69.23%
	African American	0	0%	1	7.69%
	Hispanic/Latino	1	6.25%	3	23.07%
Age					
	31-40	3	18.75%	0	0%
	41-50	6	37.5%	5	38.46%
	51-60	5	31.25%	5	38.46%
	61-70	2	12.5%	3	15.38%
Current Position					
	Elementary Principal	11	68.75%	9	69.23%
	Special Education Administrator	5	31.25%	4	30.76%
Years in Current Position					
	Less than 5 years	7	43.75%	7	53.85%
	Equal to or More than 5 years	9	56.25%	6	46.15%
Years of Special Education Administrative Experience					
	None	11	68.75%	9	69.23%
	Less than 5 years	2	12.5%	0	0%
	More than 5 years	1	3.25%	0	0%
	More than 10	3	18.75%	4	30.76%
Years of General Education Administrative Experience					
	None	5	31.25%	2	15.38%
	Less than 5 years	2	12.5%	0	0%
	More than 5 years	4	25%	4	30.76%

	More than 10	5	31.25%	6	46.15%
Both General and Special Education Administration					
	Experience	0	0%	1	7.69%
	Licensed	1	3.25%	2	15.38%
Level of Education					
	Bachelor	0	0%	0	0%
	Master	8	50%	6	46.15%
	Master + 30	4	25%	4	30.76%
	CAGS/Ed.S.	3	18.75%	0	0%
	Doctorate	1	6.25%	3	23.07%
Level of Teaching Experience					
	Elementary	10	62.5%	7	53.85%
	Secondary	2	12.5%	2	15.38%
	Both Elementary and secondary	4	25%	2	15.38%
Type of Teaching Experience					
	None	1	6.25%	1	7.69%
	General Education	11	68.75%	5	38.46%
	Special Education	1	6.25%	2	15.38%
	Both general and special education	3	18.75%	5	38.46%
Years of Teaching Experience					
	None	1	6.25%	0	0%
	Less than five	0	0%	1	7.69%
	More than five	5	31.25%	8	61.54%
	More than ten	10	62.5%	4	30.77%
Years of other educational position (counselor, ETL, reading specialist, school psychologist, computer tech)					
	None	12	75%	7	53.84%
	Less than five	3	18.75%	3	23.07%
	More than five	1	6.25%	1	7.69%
	More than ten	0	0%	2	15.38%

The member demographics and professional makeup of Factor B included nine elementary principals and four special education administrators (see Table 4.2). Of the group members, nine were Caucasian/white, one African American, and three Hispanic/Latinx. The members of this group were slightly older, with no members under 40 years of age and three members over 60. Factor B members were primarily female. These members have held their current position from between 1-9 years. Overall, Factor B consisted of experienced

administrators, with nine general education administrators with 6-16 years of experience and four special education administrators with 10 to 34 years of experience. Factor B had 2 members that were licensed in both special education and general education administration with one of those two members having experience as both a general education and special education administrator. Factor B had four special education administrator participants, two had both special education and general education teaching experience, and one of them had experience in both general education teaching and other educational positions (counselor, ETL, reading specialist, etc.), with the remaining two special education administrators having other educational positions (counselor, ETL, reading specialist, school psychologist, SLP etc.). The Factor B general education administrators had 3 members that had both special education teaching experience and general education teaching experience, 2 with special education teaching experience and 4 with general education teaching experience, totaling 7 out of 13 Factor B members with special education teaching experience. Almost half of the members had a master's degree, leaving four with a Masters + 30 and three with a doctorate.

Demographic Similarities and Differences of Factor A and Factor B Members

There were demographic similarities and differences between the members of Factor A and Factor B. Although both factor groups had a high number of Caucasian/white members, Factor A had only one member of another ethnicity, while Factor B had four. Both Factor A and Factor B had a high representation of females. There was similar special education administrative representation across factors. Factor B had a higher percentage of members with special education teaching experience (53.84% versus 37.5%) and more special education administration experience (10-34 years versus 3-15 years) than Factor A, and Factor A and Factor B had similar representation of members (75% & 76.92%) with general education

experience. Another difference to note was the age of the participants. Factor A had three group members between the ages of 31-40 while Factor B did not have any members under 40-years-old. Although both factor groups had participants with doctorates, Factor A only had one member while Factor B had three members. Factor A and Factor B had somewhat similar percentages of members who had master's degrees; Factor A had three members with C.A.G.S./Ed.S. where Factor B had none. Factor A had one member with no teaching experience while all other members of both groups had varied years of teaching experience, with the majority having had more than 5 years teaching experience.

Participant District Demographic Representation by Factor

The participants district demographic representation was analyzed using information gathered from several different data bases located on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education web-site (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>), including students who met requirements to be qualified as high needs (see Chapter 3 for definition of high needs and Table 4.3). More than half of Factor A members worked in districts that had a high needs population (more than or equal to the state average) and whose economically disadvantaged population was above the state average. Most of Factor A members worked in districts with high special education student enrollment, but few worked in districts that fully included their students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers, more than the state average (66.2%). The majority of Factor A members represented districts that had populations of students (more than or equal to the state average) whose first language was not English and were English language learners (more than or equal to the state average). Few members of Factor A worked in districts that had an accountability status of requiring assistance or intervention. Further, most of them

worked in districts that had special education students who did not do well on MCAS Next Generation (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>).

Table 4.3

Participant District Demographic Representation by Factor A and Factor B

		Factor A		Factor B	
		N=16	%	N=13	%
District Enrollment	Less than 3,000	8	50%	7	53.85%
	More than or equal 3,000	8	50%	6	46.15%
Special Education Student Enrollment	Less than 18.6% (state average)	2	12.5%	3	23.07%
	More than or equal 18.6 % (state average)	14	87.75%	10	76.92%
Full Inclusion of Students with Disabilities	Less than 66.2% (state average)	14	87.5%	8	61.54%
	More than or equal 66.2% (state average)	2	12.5%	5	38.46%
First Language not English	Less than 23% (state average)	11	68.75%	7	53.84%
	More than or equal 23% (state average)	5	31.25%	6	46.15%
English Language Learner	Less than 10.8% (state average)	11	68.75%	7	53.84%
	More than or equal 10.8% (state average)	5	31.25%	6	46.15%
High Needs	less than 48.7% (state average)	7	43.75%	4	30.76%
	More than or equal 48.7% (state average)	9	56.25%	9	69.23%

Economically Disadvantaged	Less than 32.8% (state average)	7	43.75%	6	46.15%
	More than or equal 32.8% (state average)	9	56.25%	7	53.84%
Special Education Students that Meet or Exceed Expectations on MCAS Next Generation (2018-2019)	ELA Less than 16% (state average)	10	62.5%	10	76.92%
	ELA More than or equal 16% (state average)	5	31.25%	2	15.38%
	ELA Insufficient Data	1	6.25%	1	7.69%
	Math Less than 15% (state average)	13	81.25%	10	76.92%
	Math More than or equal 15% (state average)	2	12.5%	2	15.38%
	Insufficient Data	1	6.25%	1	7.69%
	Science Less than 17% (state average)	9	56.25%	10	76.92%
	Science More than or equal 17% (state average)	6	37.5%	2	15.38%
	Science Insufficient Data	1	6.25%	1	7.69%
	Accountability Status	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	12	75%	7
Requiring Assistance or Intervention		3	18.75%	3	23.07%
Insufficient Data		1	6.25%	1	7.69%

Most of the Factor B members worked in districts with high special education student enrollments, but over one third worked in districts that fully included their students with

disabilities with their non-disabled peers that exceeded the state average. Most of them worked in districts that had special education students who did not meet expectations on the MCAS Next Generation.

A little under half of Factor B members represented districts that had populations of students (more than or equal to the state average) whose first language was not English and were English language learners (more than or equal to the state average). Most of Factor B members worked in school districts whose families were considered high needs (more than or equal to the state average). A little over half of Factor B were working in districts whose economically disadvantaged population was above the state average. Few Factor B members worked in districts that had an accountability status of requiring assistance or intervention (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>).

Similarities and Differences in Factor A and Factor B Participants' District Demographics

There were a number of similarities between members of Factor A and Factor B, including student enrollment, high special education student enrollment, and below state average percentages of full inclusion for students with disabilities. The small number of special education students who met or exceeded expectations on the math portion of the MCAS Next Generation were similar, as well as the percent of members in each factor who worked in districts whose students were considered economically disadvantaged (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>).

There were only slight differences between Factor A and Factor B. These differences reflected the percentage of Factor A members and Factor B members who worked in school districts whose English language learner and English second language populations that were greater than the state average, as well as high needs populations. Factor B had participants worked in a slightly higher number of districts with high needs populations that were greater

than the state average in all three of these categories. In addition, only two (12.5%) members of Factor A worked in a district that fully included students with disabilities in general education settings more than or equal to the state average (66.2%) ,where five of Factor B members worked in a district that fully included students with disabilities in general education settings more than or equal to the state average (<http://www.doe.mass.edu>).

Statement Rankings by Factor

To answer the research questions of how inclusive leadership practice statements ranked similarly and differently among participants and roles, the inclusive leadership practice statements were ranked according to principle components scores by factor (see Table 4.4). The factor (F) score is the average rank given to an item within each factor. The rank order (RF) is the order items were rated from highest to lowest. Those statement rankings were further analyzed to identify the 10 highest ranked statements and the 10 lowest ranked statements. To answer the research question how participants describe rankings for most and least important inclusive leadership practice statements, the qualitative data collected through the follow-up questionnaire (see Appendix D) and the answers to clarifying questions provided additional data about the rationale participants used to rank inclusive leadership statements. As noted previously, all factor memberships were based on the absolute value of the “a” score rather than their real number values. The scores assigned to item rankings relied on real number values.

Table 4.4

Item Rankings by Factor

Item#	F1	RF1	F2	RF2
1	-0.25028	24	2.55676	1
2	-2.01616	39	2.37883	2
3	-0.68647	35	0.70203	11
4	0.32173	16	-0.37709	28
5	1.8215	1	-0.49525	30
6	1.35382	4	1.04421	4

7	-0.64591	34	0.23486	14
8	-2.67543	40	0.03122	20
9	1.28236	6	0.9248	7
10	-0.5335	31	0.29879	13
11	-0.12752	21	-0.26052	26
12	1.32919	5	1.13718	3
13	1.56784	2	0.87445	8
14	1.07715	7	0.96238	5
15	0.34806	14	0.86649	9
16	1.07226	8	0.82274	10
17	-0.33881	26	0.21657	15
18	-0.16707	22	-0.29962	27
19	0.33747	15	0.14003	18
20	-1.52941	37	0.15872	17
21	-0.04231	18	0.9573	6
22	-0.04986	19	0.16837	16
23	-0.42665	29	-1.62529	38
24	1.06698	9	-0.09194	23
25	0.47321	12	-0.08055	22
26	-0.10915	20	-1.31233	37
27	-1.89413	38	-1.09298	33
28	-0.6418	33	-0.39105	29
29	-0.40851	28	-0.1689	25
30	-0.58982	32	0.48496	12
31	-0.35324	27	-0.0095	21
32	0.46396	13	-0.14285	24
33	-0.18729	23	0.11227	19
34	-0.92124	36	-0.88667	32
35	-0.27593	25	-1.09783	34
36	0.75835	10	-1.14045	35
37	0.57462	11	-1.94068	40
38	0.10123	17	-0.63773	31
39	1.37157	3	-1.80541	39
40	-0.45078	30	-1.2163	36

Factor A Rankings

Factor A members' rankings of inclusive leadership practice statement items ranged from 1.568 to -2.675. Factor A participants' highest ten rated statements (5, 13, 39, 6, 12, 9, 14, 16, 24, 36) focused on (a) relationships and interpersonal skills as leaders; (b) the importance of ensuring students with disabilities have the opportunity to learn with their non-disabled peers; (c) equitable access of all students with culturally responsive learning, including students with

disabilities; (d) building and maintaining a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students; (e) working collaboratively with teachers to promote high academic expectations and providing opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum; (f) promoting an inclusive social environment; (g) hiring and retaining highly effective teachers; (h) creating partnerships with families of students with disabilities; and, (i) having the knowledge to lead instruction that supports students with disabilities (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Factor A Highest Statements

Highest Ranked Statements
1/ Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust. (5)
2/ Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate. (13)
3/ Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities. (39)
4/ Ensure the academic success and well-being of all students, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources. (6)
5/ Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community. (12)
6/ Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multi-tiered system of support. (9)
7/ Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships. (14)
8/ Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/school-wide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. (16)
9/ Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school. (24)
10/ Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities. (36)

Factor A participants’ ten lowest rated statements (8, 2, 27, 20, 34, 3, 7, 28, 30, 10) focused on (a) recognizing and confronting others regarding the historical struggles of students with disabilities; (b) ensuring a shared understanding and commitment to a mission and vision; (c) ensuring external resources are aligned with their district/school goals; (d) maintaining a just and democratic workplace; (e) focusing on compliance and results to support students with disabilities; (f) including parents and external stakeholders in the visioning process; (g) holding asset-based perspectives of students; (h) optimizing staff capacity, emphasizing the why and how of improvement and change; and, (i) ensuring evidence-based approaches to instruction (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6

Factor A Lowest Ranked Statements

Lowest Ranked Statements
40/ Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities. (8)
39/ Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly. (2)
38/ Ensure that external resources are aligned with their district/schools’ goals and support core programs and services for all students. (27)
37/ Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives principals and/or teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism. (20)
36/ Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance <i>and</i> results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities. (34)
35/ Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work. (3)
34/ Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities. (7)
33/ Assign roles and responsibilities to optimize staff capacity to address each student’s learning needs, especially students with disabilities. (28)
32/ Emphasize the “why” and “how of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success. (30)
31/ Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs. (10)

The qualitative data obtained through the follow-up questionnaire and clarifying interview questions provided insight into the reasoning behind Factor A participants’ highest and

lowest rankings. The responses from Factor A participants as to why they chose particular statements as most important reflected the importance of interpersonal relationships and trust, as well as supporting the whole child as an effective leader. Equity and the belief that all students, including students with disabilities, should have their needs met academically, socially and emotionally, through a supportive learning environment, was also important to Factor A participants. Emerging themes supported by the item rankings and qualitative rationale focused on relationships, instruction, equity, and inclusive leadership all with core values, educating the whole child. Factor A mentioned relationships in both their responses to the follow-up questionnaire and when answering clarifying questions. One special education administrator commented, “...my work as a sped administrator, the thing that was the most pivotal were our relationships with colleagues.” A second special education administrator said, “Developing relationships and trust... goes back to that.” Yet another special education administrator said, “Trust and interpersonal relationships are the key to effective leadership.” One principal shared, “Many of my choices for anything to the right of the grid included the human relationship with students and families,” while another commented, “I feel as though building a safe, warm, welcoming environment and creating strong relationships with students is the most important aspect of running a building.” One more principal stated, “...none of it is done without having relationships with all staff.” Although there were other commonalities, the importance of relationships was the most predominant, overarching theme.

Another theme that emerged was equity that included equity for all students and creating opportunities for kids to grow which aligned with key concepts support by leadership statements. Factor A members were clearly focused on equity for all students, and as one participant summed it, “... these aren't somebody else's kids.” A special education administrator mentioned,

“that being a promoter of equity is a priority.” One principal noted, *“ALL students learn from each other academically, socially, and emotionally; as a result, the WHOLE child is taught. Students feel like they belong when inclusion happens.”* One principal said, *“It is important to ensure that students with disabilities have learning opportunities with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible to ensure equity for all students;”* while another said, that she chose statement 6, Ensure the academic success and well-being of all students, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources because *“Making sure that all students needs are met- academically, socially and emotionally. Supporting the whole child. I felt it accurately described educating the whole child.”*

The qualitative relational values included communication and trust, interpersonal and socio-emotional competence, heart and passion, buy-in, and belonging. The corresponding statements supported these themes as they contained key concepts, such as, the instructional theme captured kids first, student-centered, high quality, intellectually challenging curricula, and an accepting and enriching learning community. One principal participant cited her reason for choosing statement 9; Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multi-tiered system of support,

All students are capable of thinking and showing their thinking... This to me felt like it encompassed what I would need to first do to establish the success of a school that would

lead to success for all students... So equity that's it right there, is that you truly believe all students... can be successful... That to me is, equity.

Another principal participant noted statement 9 “*discusses setting high expectations and addressing it through quality curriculum and instruction which goes to staff mindset (believing that all kids can do it) as well as equity.*” Finally, one more principal participant referenced all students in his response, “*Work collaboratively with teachers & staff and communicate high academic expectations for ALL students (b/c I believe in the growth mindset approach... believe they can until they prove us they can't, then modify).*” The rationale for each of the ten highest ranked statements for Factor A members reflected an overarching theme of the importance of interpersonal relationships to develop trust to support the promotion of equity for all students (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Rationale of Factor A Members for Highest Ranked Items

High Item #	Statement	Participants' Rationale for Ranking Items High
5	Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust.	<p>I feel that the most important aspect for me in my leadership position is communication and trust with all of my stakeholders: parents, students, staff, admin and the community.</p> <p>I feel that in my position, this is one of the most important things I do every day. All my stakeholders need to know they can come to whether or not I like what they have to say (ASE).</p> <p>So I guess in my work as a sped administrator, the thing that was the most pivotal were our relationships with families and our relationships with colleagues (ASE).</p> <p>As the leader of a school with students with disabilities, the entire staff of regular and special education students, needs to know that the leader has the skill to lead this population as well as the heart and passion to bring everyone else with him on that journey... that they know that the person in charge cares about kids of all needs and that that certain populations don't get left out of conversations don't get left out of decisions that they're always a part of... The rest of the staff needs to know that they understand what the needs of the</p>

		<p>population is and that they care enough to always make sure that that it's not somebody else's problem that these aren't somebody else's kids (P).</p> <p>I chose this as most important, as the above statement is the foundation of successful leadership, especially in uncertain times (ASE).</p> <p>That being able to develop important relationships are a priority. That being a promoter of equity is a priority. That it's easier to prioritize the macro issues rather than in the classroom oversight and more micro issues. I thought about why the success I have had happened. Relational and buy in were critical (ASE).</p> <p>Developing relationships and trust... goes back to that (P).</p>
13	<p>Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.</p>	<p>Students with disabilities have the same right to the education of their non-disabled peers (P).</p> <p>Working at an elementary level (in several schools and districts) I have seen the impact of inclusion when possible and it is GREAT in so many ways. ALL students learn from each other academically, socially, and emotionally; as a result, the WHOLE child is taught. Students feel like they belong when inclusion happens (P).</p> <p>It is important to ensure that students with disabilities have learning opportunities with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible to ensure equity for all students. I arrived at my overall most important statements of my leadership experience by including a look at the whole process. (Inclusive environment, partnerships with families, structures for support, finding inequities that exist, promote equality, promoting collaborative cultures and positive communication, equitable access to teachers) (P).</p> <p>b/c I believe in inclusion... it works... students learn best from their peers (P).</p>
39	<p>Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Trust and interpersonal relationships are the key to effective leadership. It allows for change, mistakes, and the ability to push individuals outside of their comfort zone (ASE).</p>
6	<p>Ensure the academic success and well-being of all students, including students with disabilities, through</p>	<p>Making sure that all students needs are met- academically, socially and emotionally. Supporting the whole child. I felt it accurately described educating the whole child. Additionally, many of my choices for anything to the right of the grid included the human relationship with students and families. Putting kids first, creating</p>

	equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources.	environments where high quality teachers can teach with passion and having the resources are all crucial ingredients for all students (P). You know, this is why we're here, we're teachers, and what is our job is to create and provide opportunities for children to grow (P).
12	Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community.	I feel as though building a safe, warm, welcoming environment and creating strong relationships with students is the most important aspect of running a building. If students know that you truly care about them and their learning, they will be more open and available for learning. Also, school is the only safe place for some of students and it is their community and their home (P). I just feel like it doesn't matter if it's a special education student or if it's a gen ed students, you know, building those relationships is most important thing letting them know that they're part of a family and part of a community that's beyond what they have at home (P). I believe that the most important aspect of my job is to create an accepting and enriching learning community for students, families and staff. Regardless of everything else you have in place, if you don't have that, you have nothing (P).
9	Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multi-tiered system of support.	It is important to promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction, through a lens of diverse learning using multitiereis of support and a UDL approach (P). All students are capable of thinking and showing their thinking. It is up to teachers and support staff to provide students with an instruction model that best supports students' styles of learning and demonstration of knowledge learned and applied a Universal Design for Learning approach (P). This to me felt like it encompassed what I would need to first do to establish the success of a school that would lead to success for all students. It includes the idea of high expectations, quality curriculum and instruction, and opportunities for students to engage in the curriculum and providing interventions along the way. So equity that's it right there is that you truly believe all students with education, health students of color are very can be successful, given the right quality instruction, the right quality curriculum, and that there is tears and interventions to make sure that they have access to all that quality curriculum. That to me is, equity. In a nutshell, right, because equity is about instruction it's not about helping the kids of color, get out of the right like that's what it's about (ASE). Choice 9 discusses setting high expectations and addressing it through quality curriculum and instruction which goes to staff mindset (believing that all kids can do it) as well as equity. However, none of it is done without having relationships with all staff "if you love someone you have high expectations for them" (P).

		Work collaboratively with teachers & staff and communicate high academic expectations for ALL students (b/c I believe in the growth mindset approach...believe they can until they prove us they can't, then modify) (P).
14	Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships	I truly believe that we must put the social and emotional needs of a child first and foremost (P). Working at an elementary level (in several schools and districts) I have seen the impact of inclusion when possible and it is GREAT in so many ways. ALL students learn from each other academically, socially, and emotionally; as a result, the WHOLE child is taught. Students feel like they belong when inclusion happens (P).
16	Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/school-wide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities.	If that was in place then the management, structures, and operations would come from within and would not have to be "managed" (P). ...had core values of mine as a leader in their statements: define the why, productive relationships, collaboration and risk (experimentation), motivation, hiring and providing a structure to make it all work (P). The number one factor for my sorts focused on the most important statements that had to do with my educational core leadership values, what we believe can and should be accomplished for all students to be effectively included and for teachers to be motivated to do so (P).
24	Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school.	I arrived at my overall most important statements of my leadership experience by including a look at the whole process. (Inclusive environment, partnerships with families, structures for support, finding inequities that exist, promote equality, promoting collaborative cultures and positive communication, equitable access to teachers) (P).
36	Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities.	These are conditions, that if not in place, make success for all students very difficult (P).

Factor A participants attributed their low rankings of the statements to their lack of impact on day-to-day operations of schooling and their inability to control outside circumstances.

Emerging themes supported by the lowest item rankings and qualitative rationale focused on compliance, the responsibility to educate others about the historical underpinnings of equitable education for all students and family engagement. One principal participant commented, *“External partnerships are important but the impact on the school's day to day success is small.”* One special education administrator participant, in response to her choice of least important, said, *“This is important, but not to the point that I have to worry about this on a daily basis.”* In regards to a shared understanding of a mission and vision, one principal shared,

So, they're great but in when you're in the trenches and when you're teaching every day that mission statement or that vision statement of your school, your district even your department doesn't really become the focal point of your here and now when you have kids in front of you.

When it came to circumstances out of their control, several Factor A members commented. In regards to recognizing, confronting and educating others about the historical underpinnings of equitable education, one special education administrator said *“But in the end, you know it's not something I can really dwell ... we have to kind of move forward and you know the law's law”*. A principal stated, ... *“b/c effective leaders lead by example rather than dwell on what we cannot change (the past)”*. Family engagement was also considered something they could not control, one principal shared, *“I think the family engagement piece is so important, but you can't always ensure that you can do that, you can do everything you can to keep families engaged”*. Overall, relationship, equity for all students, and educating the whole child far outweighed more overarching statements that referenced historical underpinnings, missions and external resources that did not have a direct impact on the day-to-day educating of students with and without disabilities (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8*Rationale of Factor A Members for Lowest Ranked Items*

Low Item #	Statement	Participants' Rationale for Ranking Items Low
8	Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities.	<p>I feel that I don't need to educate others about historical issues about students with disabilities. This is important, but not to the point that I have to worry about this on a daily basis (ASE).</p> <p>Although I have a great interest in the topic of historical perspective, I cannot expect others to share this. It drives what I do, but I cannot expect others to take the same approach. But in the end, you know it's it's not something I can really dwell ... we have to kind of move forward and you know the law's law. That should guide, everything, everything that we do every decision that we make (ASE).</p> <p>While I do believe that it is to be knowledgeable regarding the historical struggles, I feel that school culture, staffing needs, and including families were more important than this particular statement (P).</p> <p>It is not my job to convince others that what we do in spec. ed. Is the right thing to do because of historical wrongs. Encouraging equity can be done through visioning rather than a fix (ASE).</p> <p>b/c effective leaders lead by example rather than dwell on what we cannot change (the past). With that said, there is value in history and at times I feel it appropriate to highlight but not for this purpose (P).</p> <p>There were many statements that were close to this in the packet that better defined my approach to leadership at this point in my career. However, it is also a foundation of my work (ASE).</p> <p>It was more of that's good information, but not a need or necessary to build a learning community that is accessible and equitable for all (P).</p>
2	Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly.	<p>There was a visioning statement card that was more specific for students with disabilities that was stronger and more impactful than "shaping" practice. I felt the statement was vague and not specific to my leadership for students with disabilities (P).</p> <p>So that's, that's the day to day right the strong instruction for everybody is. That's what has to happen every day so not some missionary statement that you know we all try but the meat of it every day is to make sure that students are getting what they need every day and teachers know how to do that (P).</p> <p>So they're great but in when you're in the trenches and when you're teaching every day that mission statement or that vision statement of</p>

		your school, your district even your department doesn't really become the focal point of your here and now when you have kids in front of you (P).
27	Ensure that external resources are aligned with their district/schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students.	<p>The focus has to be first on getting the internal structures and resources aligned to providing and supporting core programs and services for all cohorts of students. Once that is in place external resources can be evaluated and matched to what is needed to supplement or enhance what is there (P).</p> <p>External partnerships are important but the impact on the school's day to day success is small. Additionally, this mentioned "district" and goals. Sometimes the goals impact special education but not specific to special education (P).</p>
20	Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives principals and/or teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism.	I rated my -5 choice based on what has been the most challenging component to work To support students with disabilities (ASE).
34	Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance <i>and</i> results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities.	So I'm thinking about, you know, involving all of the staff making that an expectation that all staff would be included, to the maximum extent possible and then considering the strengths and weaknesses of our families, and what they're actually going to be able to do, and then kind of lining the two of those up (ASE).
3	Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work.	I think the family engagement piece is so important, but you can't always ensure that you can do that, you can do everything you can to keep families engaged (P).
7	Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities.	I found this difficult to place and it should be higher on the grid as we have a responsibility to shift to this but systems in place are not set up this way (P).
28	Assign roles and responsibilities to optimize staff capacity to address each student's learning needs, especially	How important it is to weigh the roles of all stakeholders when developing and maintaining programming, but ultimately that the buck will always stop with me (as I'm learning all too well, now) (ASE).

	students with disabilities.	
30	Emphasize the “why” and “how of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success.	There were just a lot of buzz words that are sometimes hard to put into practice (P).
10	Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs.	I felt like this statement was embedded within some of the others statements that spoke to the teaching and learning data cycle (P).

Factor B Rankings

Factor B overall members’ rankings of inclusive leadership practice statement items ranged from 2.5567 to -0.2996. Factor B participants’ highest ten ranked statements (1, 2, 12, 21, 14, 21, 9, 13, 15, 16) focused on (a) collaboratively developing a mission and vision that supports the success of all students; (b) maintaining a safe, caring, and healthy environment; (c) ensuring the academic success of all students; (d) promoting inclusive social environments and collaborative cultures; (e) ensuring students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers; and, (f) hiring, retaining and supporting teachers and support them in creating productive and inclusive environments.

Table 4.9

Factor B Highest Ranked Statements

Highest Ranked Statements
1/ Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for your school and/or district that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities. (1)
2/ Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly. (2)
3/ Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community. (12)
4/ Ensure the academic success and well-being of all students, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources. (6)
5/ Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships. (14)
6/ Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school/district, and for the success of students with disabilities. (21)
7/ Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multi-tiered system of support. (9)
8/ Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate. (13)
9/ Support teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the schools. (15)
10/ Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/school-wide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. (16)

Factor B participants' ten lowest rated statements (37,39, 23, 26, 40, 36, 35, 27, 34, 38) focused on (a) self-knowledge and interpersonal skills; (b) managing tensions and conflicts (c) managing budgets; (d) possessing organizational and management skills; (e) knowing how to lead and monitor instruction using data; (f) understanding legal obligations; (g) ensuring external resources are aligned with their district/school goals; (h) shifting from compliance to compliance with results; and, (i) analyzing, inferring and identifying areas of inequity (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10

Factor B Lowest Ranked Statements

Lowest Ranked Statements
40/ Possess self-knowledge to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases. (37)
39/ Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities. (39)
38/ Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff. (23)
37/ Manage budgets and develop strong relationships with all stakeholders in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and that students with disabilities have access to appropriate transportation, classrooms, services, accommodations, and extracurricular activities. (26)
36/ Possess organizational and management skills including planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records, IEPs); and developing budgets and managing capital. (40)
35/ Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities. (36)
34/ Understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements, to comply with various regulations regarding students with disabilities. (35)
33/ Ensure that external resources are aligned with their district/schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students. (27)
32/ Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance <i>and</i> results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities. (34)
31/ Critically analyze, infer, and identify areas of inequity; define problems with student identification and classification; and assess the effectiveness of programs and services for students with disabilities. (38)

The qualitative data obtained through the follow-up questionnaire and clarifying interview questions provided insight into the reasoning behind Factor B participants' highest and lowest rankings. Emerging themes supported by the item rankings and qualitative rationale focused on a clear collaborative vision that is culture driven throughout the system with a direction and purpose focused on the core values of equal access and opportunities for all students. The corresponding statements supported these themes as they contained key concepts such as vision, relationships, collaboration, cultural responsiveness, and equity within a mission driven system supported by leadership statements. These special education administrators and elementary principals spoke of collaboration and relationships as a way to work towards a similar goal, setting a collaborative vision to support the success of all students.

The number one ranked statement for Factor B, focused on collaboratively working on developing a mission and vision. This theme of collaboration surfaced as participants answered questions about their sorts. One principal participant commented, *“Setting a collaborative vision and making sure you lead according to that vision are important.”* Another principal participant shared, *“...it also is important to have a collaborative vision so that culturally and systematically people are on the same page.”* One special education administrator participant said,

Setting a clear mission and vision among all stakeholders and working collaboratively with the various stakeholders/partners is a way to engender buy-in. That and the work that follows from that, ensuring that all students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to make effective progress alongside same-age peers.

The theme of collaboration reached beyond statement number one. Comments around the importance of collaboration were made in reference to many of the top ten Factor B statements. In regards to statement 2, Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly, one principal participant contended, *“All of our faculty and staff need to be involved in deciding what is important.”* In regards to her overall highest choices, one principal participant commented, *“I looked for statements that were collaborative in nature: ensure, build, encourage... these seemed more comfortable for me vs. “telling” people how to do things.”* She also commented on her choice of statement 12, Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community, *“I used to be a sped. teacher/supervisor, so this, helps in decision making and helping to ensure/collaborate with others the need for equity for all of our students.”* Personal interactions

and positive relationships were also mentioned; *“The most collaboration or cooperation I gather is through those I have a relationship with.”* Another principal participant said, *“I tried to place the personal interaction statements toward the positive end of the Q-sort.”* Regarding statement 21’s reference to a collaborative culture, one principal participant indicated, *“It’s easier to reach your goals if you have those positive relationships with people.”* The rationale for each of the ten highest ranked statements for Factor B members reflected an overarching theme of the importance of a collaborative vision developed through positive relationships with a focus on equal access and opportunities for all students (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11

Rationale for Factor B Members Highest Ranked Items

High Item #	Statement	Participants’ Rationale for Ranking Items High
1	Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for your school and/or district that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities.	<p>I have found that to be an effective leader you must have a clear vision that can be articulated to all stakeholders. I placed it there because if you do not have that nothing else can effectively happen in terms of supporting students with disabilities, it also is important to have a collaborative vision so that culturally and systematically people are on the same page (P).</p> <p>Setting a collaborative vision and making sure you lead according to that vision are important. I have observed and participated with leadership teams with and without strong visions and have seen the impact on student learning (P).</p> <p>Mission, vision, FOCUS, hire, train, educate staff, involve community, get to the work (P).</p> <p>It sets the direction and purpose of your work in a school. Faculty know where they are going and what you value as an administrator (P).</p> <p>The impetus to change has to start with the district and flow to the administrators, teachers, staff, families, stakeholders, and finally to the students. The culture within the school is important, as it permeates to all staff if it’s consistently communicated. The process for inclusion starts with all leaders (P).</p>

		<p>Setting a clear mission and vision among all stakeholders and working collaboratively with the various stakeholders/partners is a way to engender buy-in the that and the work that follows from that, ensuring that all students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to make effective progress alongside same-age peers (ASE).</p> <p>Without a clear mission and vision created with the involvement of all stakeholders, leading work toward them becomes more challenging. It is much more effective to start with those and with buy-in from all partners (parents, school committee, administration, teachers, etc.) and then to apply the specific expertise to the tasks needed for implementation, using staff and consultant expertise to further the vision and mission (ASE).</p> <p>It is the framework for the work of all stakeholders involved (P).</p>
2	Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly.	<p>All of our faculty and staff need to be involved in deciding what is important (P).</p> <p>You need a strong TEAM to get to those 40 statements (P).</p>
12	Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community.	<p>I believe that as a school leader my number 1 priority is to build and maintain a safe, caring and healthy environment for my student. If this is in place the ground is set to put all other aspects in place. This is the foundation in which everything else can be built (P).</p> <p>Safe - refers to physical, emotional and academic safety. It stems from a strong culture, one where kindness is valued. My mantra - ask any of my staff - "Always, remember, kindness counts" - this was the only statement that really spoke to safety (P).</p> <p>I Looked for statements that were collaborative in. nature: ensure, build, encourage... these seemed more comfortable for me vs. "telling" people how to do things; I model all that I expect from staff; I used to be a. sped. teacher/supervisor, so this. helps in decision making and helping to ensure/collaborate with others the need for equity for all of our students (P).</p> <p>The most collaboration or cooperation I gather is through those I have a relationship with. They know that I care for them as a person and that my intentions are to do what's best for our students (P).</p> <p>I thought about my own core values about students and their learning and also about all of the stakeholders involved in educating students. I also thought about how relationships with each and every student matters most in schools (P).</p>
6	Ensure the academic success and well-being of	<p>I believe this statement encompasses the importance and implications that equity, culturally responsive teaching and</p>

	all students, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources.	accessibility to resources has to educating ALL children. I think an effective teacher needs to have an interpersonal skills and communication skills in order to build relationships with the kids. They need to be culturally responsive (P).
14	Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships.	I tried to place the personal interaction statements toward the positive end of the Q-sort. I feel that personal interactions hold more weight when dealing with any population whether student of any ability, staff, peers, and stakeholders (P).
21	Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school/district, and for the success of students with disabilities.	It's easier to reach your goals if you have those positive relationships with people (P).
9	Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multi-tiered system of support.	It doesn't matter who you are we have high expectations that's it (P).
13	Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.	I believe that ensuring that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with peers mirrors our ideal societal expectation (P). Setting a clear mission and vision among all stakeholders and working collaboratively with the various stakeholders/partners is a way to engender buy-in the that and the work that follows from that, ensuring that all students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to make effective progress along side same-age peers.
15	Support teachers as they create productive and	My highest performing teachers consistently reflect on their lessons and their teaching and work to make it more effectively

	inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the schools.	(they do not believe they have arrived.) My highest performing teachers are open to feedback from the instructional coaches, administration and their colleagues. My highest performing teachers actively look at what the students has learned and not just at what they taught (P).
16	Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/school-wide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities.	<p>Mission, vision, FOCUS, hire, train, educate staff, involve community, get to the work (P).</p> <p>One of the most important roles we have is the hiring of exceptional staff. Every time we hire a highly effective teacher we raise the level of teaching and learning in our building. One of the most important factors of student achievement is who the individual standing/teaching in front of them is (P).</p> <p>Reason- we need to provide our most talented and gifted teachers with our students that are behind academically so they can close the gap (P).</p>

Emerging themes supported by the lowest item rankings and qualitative rationale focused on less personal and more global perspectives. Managing budgets, external resources and tensions were considered either someone else’s responsibility or less important than positive relationships. Many Factor B participants felt that the items they chose as least important were either something that was done by others or out of their control. They acknowledged their importance, but felt other statements had a more direct impact on student learning and their responsibilities. *“Managing budgets can often be out of my control,”* and *“Having a strong CO unit really allows 26 to drift far away.”* At times, participants commented that leaders do not have much say in the budgeting of building (in respect to student to staff ratio). In addition, one participant said, *“As I look at those statements, I see that I have colleagues and staff who are really strong in those areas. I have their guidance and support, so I don't do much thinking for those domains - but I do care about them!”* Finally, another participant shared, *“While I understand the importance of ‘stakeholders,’ I often do not see them as directly impacting student learning.”* Overall, collaboration, personal interactions and positive relationships far outweighed more logistical aspects of education. As one participant contended, *“Managing a*

budget is important, however the personal aspects of working with students with disabilities is much more important.” The rationale for each of the ten lowest ranked statements for Factor B members reflected an overarching theme of less personal and more technical aspects with a belief that many of them are someone else’s responsibility (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12

Rationale for Factor B Members for Lowest Ranked Items

Low Item #	Statement	Reason
37	Possess self-knowledge to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases.	<p>The statement was more personal compared to the other statements posed. It still is an important question, but it has more to do with reflective practices as a leader. It was more personal than the other statements. I felt the other statements had a more global impact on many people rather than just oneself (P).</p> <p>All of the statements on the cards were important for a leader in special education. I think this statement is important but recognized that there are good leaders for whom this is not their primary or most important quality or skill. As a result, I thought it was the least important item for good leadership. I've seen very good leaders who don't do that and they're good leaders (ASE).</p>
39	Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities.	While I understand the importance of ‘stakeholders,’ I often do not see them as directly impacting student learning (P).
23	Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff.	<p>Managing tensions is helpful but not the most important task of the leader (ASE).</p> <p>I don’t think tension is always a negative aspect of our work with students; staff need to work together, trusting that they all are working for the same cause/reasons (student success)- they have to work some negativity out among themselves. I have had to facilitate difficult conversations, but I try not to "manage" this; it never alleviates the problem of teams working together; I have had to manage this, however - moving staff, getting rid of staff - and this is never easy (P).</p>

		<p>If you support a collaborative, caring environment, part of the process is maintaining healthy means of disagreement. If all the other factors are in place, there should be minimal tensions and conflict. It's important to acknowledge and take care of tensions, but most important to monitor consistently prior to getting to the point that they are described as 'tensions and conflict' (P).</p>
26	<p>Manage budgets and develop strong relationships with all stakeholders in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and that students with disabilities have access to appropriate transportation, classrooms, services, accommodations, and extracurricular activities.</p>	<p>Having a strong CO unit really allows 26 to drift far away (P).</p> <p>Managing a budget is important, however the personal aspects of working with students with disabilities is much more important (P).</p> <p>Managing budgets can often be out of my control. But when I can inform funding it can be a very important part of my work (P).</p> <p>While I understand the importance of "stakeholders" I often do not see them as directly impacting student learning. Community/Stakeholders are a valued member of the school community but has no direct impact on student learning (P).</p> <p>As I look at those statements, I see that I have colleagues and staff who are really strong in those areas. I have their guidance and support, so I don't do much thinking for those domains - but I do care about them! (P)</p>
40	<p>Possess organizational and management skills including planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records, IEPs); and developing budgets and managing capital.</p>	<p>At times, leaders do not have much say in the budgeting of building (in respect to student to staff ratio). You can train a person to sharpen their organization skills easier than training for awareness or cultural competency (P).</p>
36	<p>Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities.</p>	<p>I believe I placed the less personal, or more technical statements toward the least important boxes on the grid. Rather than being a tech guy who's into the numbers and such, that's extremely important of course data is extremely important and such, but I think it's the person relationships that outweigh that (P).</p>
35	<p>Understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements, to comply with various</p>	<p>Although not referencing this statement specifically, but more of an overarching statement...I rely on my team to help make these decisions (sped director, sped supervisor) - so it isn't that this is not important, I just know that I have amazing teammates who ensure that this happens (P).</p>

	regulations regarding students with disabilities.	
27	Ensure that external resources are aligned with their district/schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students.	The -5 had to do with external resources - I rely on my team to help make these decisions (sped director, sped supervisor) - so it isn't that this is not important, I just know that I have amazing teammates who ensure that this happens (P). The current level of resources available to us have lessened the need for external resources over the year (P).
34	Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance <i>and</i> results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities.	This is difficult because I feel the State and our community are very focused on results and compliance; we also have an expectation that some kids will just do better than others because they are "smarter" or come from influential families; need reminders to focus on every child, the whole child; and compliance does not always ensure progress or success (P).
38	Critically analyze, infer, and identify areas of inequity; define problems with student identification and classification; and assess the effectiveness of programs and services for students with disabilities.	I looked at things that were important but I did not spend that much of my day-to-day time on them (P). I believe I placed the less personal, or more technical statements toward the least important boxes on the grid (P).

Factor B Members Negative Cases

As mentioned earlier, absolute $|a|$ was used to establish factor membership, however, once membership was determined, real values were used to interpret findings. As such, Factor B included three members with negative “ a ” scores. These are known as negative cases. A negative case is “one in which respondents’ experiences or viewpoints differ from the main body of evidence. When a negative case can be explained, the general explanation for the typical case is strengthened” (Hsiung, 2010), as is the case in this study. To better understand the item rankings by these three members, the items were disaggregated to investigate how their perspectives differed from the group (see Table 4.13). These three Factor B participants chose statement 39 as most important, while on average the remainder of Factor B members ranked this statement as their second lowest out of the 40 statements in the q set. In reference to this statement: “possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and

communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities”, one of the three Factor B members stated, “*Connections with others is critically important for others to find value and meaning in one's messaging.*”

Another shared,

Having positive relationships with stakeholders is key. Without such positive relationships, the leader's message will fail to meet its intended target. Worse, negative relationships will substantively impact the work of the stakeholders and could subsequently negatively affect sped student outcomes.

The third stated, “*Not only are strong communication skills essential but the ability to build trust in order to then build consensus about a student's needs and plan - all necessary.*” Although their views of what statements were most important differed, their reasoning was aligned with the other members of Factor B, in that relationships and collaboration were designated as key elements in supporting students with disabilities.

Table 4.13

Factor B Members Negative Cases High and Low Item Rankings

High Ranking/ Statements	Low Ranking/Statements
1/ Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities. (39)	40/ Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly. (2)
2/ Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance <i>and</i> results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities. (34)	39/ Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for your school and/or district that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities. (1)
3/ Possess self-knowledge to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases. (37)	38/ Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities. (7)
4/ Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff. (23)	37/ Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work. (3)

5/ Understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements, to comply with various regulations regarding students with disabilities. (35)	36/ Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multitiered system of support. (9)
6/ Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities. (36)	35/ Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives principals and/or teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism. (20)
7/ Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust. (5)	34/ Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs. (10)
8/ Possess organizational and management skills including planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records, IEPs); and developing budgets and managing capital. (40)	33/ Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities. (8)
9/ Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/schoolwide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. (16)	32/ Identify strategies to motivate your staff and encourage, recognize, and facilitate leadership opportunities for teachers and staff who effectively educate students with disabilities. (18)
10/ Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school. (24)	31/ Ensure that external resources are aligned with your district/schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students. (27)

Although these three Factor B members chose the statements about mission and vision as least important, which is the opposite of the majority of Factor B members, their reasoning was similar overall. One participant who chose statements 1 and 2 (mission and vision focused) as their least important statements stated, *“This is important and systems and structures can be put into place so that this is done by others- higher ed, PD, personnel working directly with students, and families.”* Another Factor B member, whose least important statements were the opposite of the majority of Factor B members, stated, *“I see #-5 as more of the shared responsibility of the*

whole district administrative team” when asked about her least important statement that reflected mission and vision. Lastly a third stated, “*Many of them are really the responsibility of the admin team and/or the building administrator.*” As with the remainder of the Factor B members, these three negative cases found that the items they chose as least important were either something that was done by others or out of their control.

Participant Similarities and Differences in Ranking Leadership Practice Statements

Although both Factor A and Factor B members’ highest-ranking statements correlated with previous literature, there were differences in each factors’ area of focus. Those similarities reflected views of inclusive collaboration and shared vision, moral purpose, and core values as overarching themes that correspond with previous research, as was noted in their highest 10 ranked statements. Six of each of Factor A and Factor B, overall, highest 10 ranked statements, were the same with varying levels of importance. Three of the statements that spoke directly to the importance of inclusivity, including one statement that was essentially least restrictive environment (LRE) fell within both Factor A and Factor B members’ 10 most important statements as leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities. Factor A ranked this statement, overall, as the 2nd most important leadership statement out of 40, indicating the statement as a priority for leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities.

Overall, Factor A members’ highest ranked statements fell under the research-supported category of inclusive collaboration. Within each of the statements that fell under the category of inclusive collaboration, Factor A members spoke about interpersonal relationships as being the reasoning behind their choices. One Factor A member said, “*Trust and interpersonal relationships are the key to effective leadership,*” related to the statement (39) that referenced the importance of possessing interpersonal skills to build trust with stakeholders. Factor A members’

overall, most important statement, number 5, focused on interpersonal skills as did statement 39, which they gave a ranking of 3. In addition, Factor A members also noted data driven decision making within their 10 most important statements. The statement that supported this research-supported category was ranked 10th most important for these leaders.

Factor B members did not choose any interpersonal skills statements within their 10 most important leadership statements, while Factor A members chose statements about interpersonal skills within their 10 most important leadership statements. Factor A members also were clearly focused on equity for all students. They related their most important statements to educating the whole child. One special education administrator in Factor A shared, *“That being able to develop important relationships are a priority. That being a promoter of equity is a priority.”* Several other Factor A members spoke about equity and its importance, framing it as educating and supporting all children, as well as the whole child.

Overall, Factor B members’ highest ranked statements fell under the research-supported category of shared vision, moral purpose, and core values. The lens that this group of educators ranked their most important statements was through collaboration. When asked why they picked their most important statements, collaboration as a theme emerged. One principal participant commented, *“I looked for statements that were collaborative in nature.”* Their connection to their most important statements about vision and mission was through collaboration. When asked why she placed statement 1 as most important, one principal member responded,

“I have found that to be an effective leader you must have a clear vision that can be articulated to all stakeholders. I placed it there because if you do not have that, nothing else can effectively happen in terms of supporting students with disabilities; it also is

important to have a collaborative vision so that culturally and systematically people are on the same page.”

A special education administrator, Factor B member, responded,

“Setting a clear mission and vision among all stakeholders and working collaboratively with the various stakeholders/partners is a way to engender buy-in and the work that follows from that, ensuring that all students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to make effective progress alongside same-age peers.”

None of Factor A members’ highest 10 rankings included the statements that focused primarily on mission and vision, where Factor B ranked them within their two most important as leaders who support students with disabilities.

With overarching themes of relationship and equity for Factor A members and themes of collaboration and vision and mission for Factor B members, it is apparent that the members of Factor A and the members of Factor B are in agreement within their factor membership when it comes to their roles as leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities. Although differences on how they came to those similarities surfaced when asked specific questions about their rankings within the follow-up questionnaires and interviews, it is still apparent that these participants agree with their factor members within the themes that emerged. Overall, quantitatively there were no differences in rankings in relationship to participant roles. Both special education administrators and general education administrators factored into the two factors within this analysis, indicating that there are quantitative similarities across roles.

Overall Connections to the Literature

The data was further analyzed to investigate the relationship between the participants’ 10 most important leadership statements and the commonalities that were found across studies of

effective, inclusive schools, including (a) inclusive collaboration (Billingsley et al., 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Salisbury, 2016; Waldron et al., 2011); (b) shared vision, moral purpose, and core values (Billingsley, et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007); (c) shared decision-making, distributed leadership, and teacher leadership (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Louis et al., 2010; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007); (d) meaningful professional development (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011) and; (e) data driven decision making (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

In examining Factor A and Factor B, ten highest ranked statements, similarities to the research emerged. Two of the categories were found across studies of effective, inclusive schools; inclusive collaboration, shared vision, moral purpose, and core values and data driven decision making were most important to the participants (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14

Connecting Statement Rankings with the Literature Themes

Shared Vision/Moral Purpose/Core Values (Billingsley, et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007)		
Statement	Factor A Ranking	Factor B Ranking
1. Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for their school that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities.		1
2. Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly.		2

12. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of each student and encourages them to be active, responsible members of their community.	5	3
13. Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.	2	8
14. Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships.	7	5
15. Support teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the school.		9
16. Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/school-wide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities.	8	10
Inclusive Collaboration (Billingsley et al., 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Salisbury, 2016; Waldron et al., 2011)		
5. Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust.	1	
6. Ensure the academic success and well-being of each student, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources.	4	4
21. Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school, and for the success of students with disabilities.		6
24. Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school.	9	
39. Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities.	3	
9. Work Collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multi-tiered system of support.	6	7
Data Driven Decision Making (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006).		
36. Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities.	10	

None of Factor A members' highest 10 rankings included the statements that focused primarily on mission and vision, where Factor B ranked them within their two most important as leaders who support students with disabilities. When considering the moral purpose and core

values that support the inclusion of students with disabilities with their typical peers in an inclusive setting, both Factor A and Factor B agree that it is important. The statement that outlines least restrictive environment (LRE) was considered to be important to both Factor A and Factor B members, although Factor A members ranked it much higher, ranking it second most important overall. Other statements that reference the values of an inclusive school were also rated highly by both Factor A and Factor B members. In fact, hiring teachers with a set of core values that support improving outcomes for students with disabilities; supporting teachers in inclusive environments; fostering adult-student and student peer relationships; as well as the building and maintaining of a safe, caring and healthy environment were ranked as important to both Factor A and Factor B members. As such, where Factor A members had four of their most important statements that fell under the category shared vision, moral purpose, and core values, Factor B members had seven, suggesting the statements within this category were considered extremely important to Factor B members as leaders who support students with disabilities.

Even though both Factor A and Factor B members had statements that fell under the category of inclusive collaboration, the number of statements Factor A members included were half of their 10 most important statements, where Factor B included only two. Within their 10 most important statements, Factor A members had a stronger focus on inclusive collaboration overall. These educators found interpersonal skills that foster productive relationships, and building trust among stakeholders with the ability to create partnerships with families of students with disabilities to be important. Where both Factor A and Factor B members found equitable access to effective teachers for all students, with culturally responsive learning opportunities and support to be important, Factor B members found the promotion of collaborative cultures

focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school important, while Factor A did not.

Overall, neither Factor A members nor Factor B members ranked statements that fell under the research-supported categories of shared decision making/distributed leadership/teacher leadership or meaningful professional development within their 10 most important. The statement that addressed teacher leadership, statement 18, Identify strategies to motivate your staff and encourage, recognize, and facilitate leadership opportunities for teachers and staff who effectively educate students with disabilities ranked 22nd out of 40 for Factor A members and 27th out of 40 for Factor B members. The other statement that addresses sharing responsibility, statement 30, Emphasize the “why” and “how of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success was ranked within Factor A members 10 least important statements, where it ranked 12th most important for Factor B members. The statement that specifically addressed teacher leadership was ranked equally less important for both Factor A members and Factor B members. Factor A members did not find the expectation of staff to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability as important much more so than Factor B members. The members of Factor A and Factor B principals and special education administrators were both very similar within their choices of importance. The overall ranking of these statements was equally reflective of both principals and special education administrators.

Conversely, it was interesting to note, one Factor B principal member commented, “*All of our faculty and staff need to be involved in deciding what is important. Distributive leadership. School Instructional Leadership Team, they help frame the work. You need a strong TEAM to get to those 40 statements.*” In addition, the statement that spoke directly to

professional development, statement 17, Provide multiple sources of high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities, and participate alongside staff was ranked 26th out of 40 for Factor A members and 15th out of 40 for Factor B members. Although the overall ranking of statement 17 was not within Factor A's 10 most important statements, one principal in Factor A commented on its importance;

What I feel are the most important statements that support the needs of students with disabilities is: asset-based and the belief system that students with disabilities can succeed in high achievement. It is the relationship, the teaching skill (knowledge, professional development & support), and the engagement and motivation that is needed to make it happen.

Although one principal member of Factor B stated, "*The importance of strong professional development to improve teaching for all teachers, special education and general education is paramount;*" and another shared, "*The research on students who have experienced poor instruction for one year and the damage and lack of progress with their learning has helped form my strong belief in the importance of effective professional development,*" the overall ranking of statement 17 for Factor B was not within the 10 most important statements.

Essentially, there were some Factor A and Factor B members who spoke of meaningful professional development and shared decision making/distributed leadership/teacher leadership as important, but overall, they were not rated highly within either Factor group. One principal Factor B member cited her lower statements as important, but not necessarily something she does, having rated statement 17 as 1 on the continuum.

As I look at those statements, I see that I have colleagues and staff who are really strong in those areas. I have their guidance and support, so I don't do much thinking for those domains - but I do care about them!

One of Factor A members' most important 10 statements fell under the data driven decision-making category. Statement 36, Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities was ranked as 10th most important for Factor A members, and as one Factor A member stated in reference to statement 36; *“These are conditions, that if not in place, make success for all students very difficult.”* The statement ranked 35th of 40 for Factor B members, making statement 36 part of their 10 least important statements, and indicated that it was not a priority for them.

The one other statement that addressed data driven decision-making, statement 11, Promote appropriate, clear, and valid monitoring and assessment systems where teachers receive meaningful information about how students respond to instruction and where information is relevant to instructional improvement was ranked as 21st out of 40 for Factor A members and 26th out of 40 for Factor B members. Therefore, Factor A and Factor B's top 10 ranked statements mostly fell under the categories inclusive collaboration, shared vision, moral purpose and core values, and data driven decision-making.

Summary

The data collected for this study was analyzed using a version of Schmolck's (2012) pre-flagging algorithm to determine factor membership. It was determined that Factor A explained 18.247% of the variance in the sorts, and Factor B explained 14.385% of the variance in the sorts, with both factors explaining 32.632% of the total variance. The resulting factor

membership consisted of two factors, with Factor A membership representing 16 participants, including five special education administrators and 11 general education administrators (elementary principals); and Factor B membership representing 13 participants, including four special education administrators and nine general education administrators (elementary principals). The majority of factor members were Caucasian/white females. Overall, Factor B had more veteran, more diverse educators, with more special education teaching experience, as well as more general education administrator experience. Although the number of members in Factor A and Factor B who worked in districts that included students with disabilities in general education setting with their non-disabled peers was low for both groups, Factor B did have higher representation.

Although there were other commonalities, the importance of relationships was the most predominant, overarching theme for Factor A members. Factor A members were also clearly focused on equity for all students. Factor A participants attributed their low rankings of the statements to their lack of impact on day-to-day operations of schooling. The responses from Factor A participants as to why they chose particular statements as most important reflected the importance of relationship and trust, as well as supporting the whole child. Equity and the belief that all students, including students with disabilities, should have their needs met academically, socially and emotionally, through a supportive learning environment, was also important to Factor A participants.

The number one ranked statement for Factor B focused on collaboratively working on developing a mission and vision. This theme of collaboration surfaced as participants answered questions about their sorts. Comments around the importance of collaboration were made in reference to many of the top ten Factor B statements. Many of the participant members of Factor

B felt that the statements they chose as least important were either something that was done by others or out of their control. They acknowledged their importance, but felt other statements had a more direct impact on student learning and their responsibilities. The top rankings of the three Factor B members with negative “*a*” scores, otherwise known as negative cases were disaggregated to illustrate their alternate perspective from the group. Although their views of what statements were most important differed, their reasoning was aligned with the other members of Factor B, in that relationships and collaboration were designated as key elements in supporting students with disabilities.

In examining Factor A and Factor B’s ten highest ranked statements, similarities to the research emerged. Two of the categories found across studies of effective, inclusive schools; inclusive collaboration and shared vision, moral purpose, and core values were most important to the participants while Factor A found one statement about data driven decision-making as 10th most important. Where Factor A members’ highest ranked statements fell under the research-supported category of inclusive collaboration, focusing on interpersonal relationships, Factor B did not choose any interpersonal skills statements within their 10 most important leadership statements. Overall, Factor B members’ highest ranked statements fell under the research-supported category of shared vision, moral purpose, and core values. The lens that this group of educators ranked their most important statements was through collaboration, with a focus on a clear vision and mission, supporting the core values of their schools and districts.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this investigation was to acquire a deeper understanding of how special education and general education administrators perceive inclusive leadership practices. These perceptions affect implementation of initiatives, responsive to the needs of all students. By better understanding similarities between what the research shows as effective, inclusive leadership practices and how practicing administrators align with the key inclusive leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities (CCSO & CEEDAR, 2017), creating and sustaining responsive learning environments becomes a possibility. This investigation was framed by the following research questions:

1. How are inclusive leadership practice statements ranked similarly and differently among participants?
2. How do participants describe rankings for most and least important inclusive leadership practice statements?
3. How are inclusive leadership practice statements ranked in relationship to participants' roles?

Interpretation of the findings from this study will be guided by the research questions that include consideration of demographics, ranking responses to inclusive leadership practice statements and participant rationale supporting item rankings for each factor. The major themes of inclusive leadership, as identified in the literature, will further fortify data interpretation in this mixed method design. In this chapter, data and literature from the previous chapters will be used to name and characterize each factor. This facilitates the development of an emerging framework

for thinking about distinct and over-lapping features that capture key inclusive leadership concepts.

Transactional Equity Driven Relational Leaders Themes

These novice, less experienced, less educated, less diverse participants can best be described as transactional-equity driven- relational leaders. This interpretation is supported by the item rankings and thematic qualitative analysis where emerging themes focused on interpersonal relationships, equity, core values and high expectations that valued educating the whole child (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

Transactional Equity Driven Relational Leaders Themes

Key Words and Phrases from 10 Highest Ranked Statements from the Q-Sort	Themes	Key Qualitative Words and Phrases from 10 Highest Ranked Statements from the Questionnaires and the Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interpersonal & Social Emotional Competence -Relationships and Interpersonal Skills, Communication, Trust -Acceptance, Care, Value, Belonging 	Interpersonal Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relationships with Colleagues -Trust and Interpersonal Relationships -Relational Critical -Building Relationships/Accepting, Enriching, Learning Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inclusion -Inclusive Social Environment -High Expectations for ALL/Include -Intellectually Challenging Curricula for ALL -Safe, Caring Environment for ALL Students -Equitable Access -Lead instruction/Support Students with Disabilities 	Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Right to Inclusion -ALL students are capable Core Values/ALL students -ALL students learn from each other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Safe, Caring Environment for All Students -Inclusion -Equitable Access -Hire/Retain Highly Effective Teachers with Core Values 	Core Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Right to Inclusion -ALL Students capable -Core Values/ALL students

-High Expectations for ALL/Included -Intellectually challenging Curricula	High Expectations	ALL Students Capable
-Safe, Caring Environment for ALL Students -Inclusive Social Environment -Acceptance, Care, Value, Belonging	Whole Child	-Teach Whole Child -Social/Emotional Needs First -Opportunities for Growth

Although there were other commonalities, the importance of relationships was the most predominant, overarching theme for these members. This transactional equity driven relational leaders were also clearly focused on equity for all students. These participants attributed their low rankings of the statements to their lack of impact on day-to-day operations of schooling. The responses from these participants as to why they chose particular statements as most important reflected the importance of relationship and trust, as well as supporting the whole child. Equity and the belief that all students, including students with disabilities, should have their needs met academically, socially and emotionally, through a supportive learning environment, was also important to these participants. They are considered to be transactional, equity-driven relational leaders and share similarities with research on transactional leadership practices (Nyenembe et al., 2016).

Although these transactional leaders rankings demonstrated characteristics of research on inclusive collaboration and data driven decision making the underlying theme within their responses to the follow-up questionnaire and interview questions was relationship. These participants were also clearly focused on equity for all students and the importance of all students feeling a sense of belonging by including them as often as possible with their peers. These novice, less experienced, slightly less educated, less diverse administrators spoke often about their rankings from the lens of day-to-day operations, which coincides with the concept of

transactional leadership practices. Although they acted in the capacity of transactional leaders, these educators went beyond the concept of transactional leadership by noting the importance of relationship, communication and trust within their daily interactions. These transactional, equity-driven, relational leaders (see Figure 5.1) expressed the importance of interpersonal relationships as an effective tool to create buy-in from teachers and staff; relying on their own skills as leaders versus a shared vision to move their schools and districts towards more inclusivity.

Interpersonal relationships were important to these transactional, equity-driven, relational leaders. As part of all-encompassing, special education leadership practices, supporting school leaders is essential (Crockett, 2019). This relationship between district-level special education administration and building-level administration continues to be essential as principals become more responsible for evidence-based practices and student outcomes (Billingsley et al., 2019). The participants in this study agreed. In fact, they spoke often about the importance of relationship when discussing their choice of statements. These transactional leaders' most important statements, on average, also spoke to their interpersonal skills as leaders. One participant stated, "*Trust and interpersonal relationships are key to effective leadership.*" This ability to communicate effectively and develop productive relationships is important in effective schools and districts. As noted previously, the literature agrees that relationships and communication are necessary for effective special education leadership and the ability to foster an inclusive culture (Thompson, 2017; Veal, 2010). As such, special education leaders can no longer work separately from general education leaders and must instead collaborate to ensure the success of all students (DiPaola, et al., 2004). Special education administrators must work together with their general education counterparts to ensure students with disabilities have access to rigorous curriculum and appropriately modified assessments, regardless of their degree of

learning differences (DiPaola et al., 2004). In her study of elementary principal perspectives on inclusive schools, Salisbury (2006) found support for collaborative relationships between special educators and general educators was paramount in the level of inclusivity.

This transactional equity driven relational leaders were clearly focused on equity for all students, and as one participant summed it, "... *these aren't somebody else's kids.*" The moral purpose and core values that encompassed equality and inclusion were shared by many of these leaders. One special education administrator mentioned, "*that being a promoter of equity is a priority.*" Other members of this group spoke of teaching the whole child, ensuring all students learn from each other. "*Students feel like they belong when inclusion happens.*" Within their 10 highest ranked statements, the concept of least restrictive environment (LRE) was the second most important statement to these leaders. This core value of inclusivity is key in effective, inclusive schools and districts. Within their case study of an effective, inclusive school, Waldron et al. (2011) found implementing and committing to an inclusive culture was considered non-negotiable to both the principal of the school and the staff within it. The effective, inclusive leaders in Hehir and Katzman's (2012) study "were clear about their schools' fundamental mission and actively imposed them on their organizations through a variety of symbolic actions. To them, inclusion was non-negotiable, grounded in civil rights" (p. 61). One study on meaningful inclusion found that how the principal viewed least restrictive environment (LRE) and inclusion made a difference in how inclusive the schools became (Salisbury, 2006). Within this study, one leader stated, "*Students with disabilities have the same right to the education of their non-disabled peers*" while another said, "*It is important to ensure that students with disabilities have learning opportunities with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible to ensure equity for all students.*"

Not only did these leaders have a strong belief system that supports the concept of LRE, they also spoke of interpersonal skills that focused on their core values to create a culture that supports inclusivity, ranking the statements focused on their skills as leaders as important. One participant shared,

As the leader of a school with students with disabilities, the entire staff of regular and special education students, needs to know that the leader has the skill to lead this population as well as the heart and passion to bring everyone else with him on that journey.

They spoke often about the importance of core values, stating that they chose particular statements as important because they were based on their educational core leadership values. Effective, inclusive schools have strong, active principal leaders who ensure teachers share the core values of the school and are committed to developing an effective, inclusive school (Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). Within their highest ranked statements, these educators chose hiring and retaining effective teachers with core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities. These leaders' core values coincided with the strong belief system that all students are capable, and as one participant shared, her responses were *“based on what my core values are and how you structure systems to work for all students.”*

These transactional leaders also spoke about the importance of high expectations for all students, being culturally responsive, supporting the whole child and putting kids first, and creating opportunities for students to grow; as one participant stated, *“...” believe they can until they prove to us they can't, then modify.*” They specified that collaborating with teachers and communicating their belief in high expectations for students is essential in providing high-

quality, intellectually-challenging curricula. The experiences of these leaders were a pivotal factor on how they viewed their roles as leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities. Special education administrators rely heavily on their relationships with principals in order to provide the supports and services for the students that they are responsible for at a more global level. The principals rely heavily on their relationships with teachers and staff to ensure all students are given high quality instruction. These collaborative relationships were recognized as important. These leaders ranked the statement that specified collaboration with teachers to provide high-quality, intellectually challenging curricula and instruction, while providing opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve using MTSS within the general education setting, within their 10 most important statements as leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities. The literature agrees. More specifically, in one study, the principals in three, effective inclusive schools established a clear vision of inclusion and high expectations of all students across the entire school, not in isolation (Hehir & Katzman, 2012).

The importance of educating the whole child surfaced as one of the reasons behind what these leaders deemed as important. Educating students and supporting them beyond the curriculum to support them socially and emotionally, ensuring the well-being of all students through equitable access to effective teachers, as well as culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports was important to these leaders as leaders who support the needs of all students, including students with disabilities. They believed that inclusivity facilitates “*all students learning from each other academically, socially, and emotionally; as a result the whole child is taught.*” According to their article about educating the whole child, Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018) agreed: “Environments that are relationship-rich and attuned to

students' learning and developmental needs can buffer students' stress, foster engagement, and support learning" (p. 9).

Themes supported by the lowest item rankings and qualitative rationale focused on compliance, the responsibility to educate others about the historical underpinnings of equitable education for all students and family engagement. One participant commented, "*External partnerships are important but the impact on the school's day to day success is small.*" One special education administrator participant, in response to her choice of least important, said, "*This is important, but not to the point that I have to worry about this on a daily basis.* The lowest ranked statements for these leaders were perceived to be either beyond their control or not their responsibility.

Both their ten most important statements and the rationale behind them coincide with many of the characteristics of transactional leaders, with an emphasis on their skills, to lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence as a venue to get the work done; "*the value of relationships and trust which allows us to do the work.*" These interpersonal skills were considered "*the foundation of successful leadership, especially in uncertain times.*" With a focus on day-to-day operations, these relational leaders had a commitment to providing high quality, intellectually challenging curricula for all students, fostering a culture of equality while educating the whole child.

Much like the members of this group, transactional leaders focus on daily operations and maintaining a desired level of performance within their organizations. Generally, transactional leaders are not concerned with achieving long term growth, but instead seek to retain the status quo (Nyenembe et al., 2016). This leadership style coincides with this groups' responses that

combine the importance of high academic expectations for all students and the need to collaborate and support teachers with a focus on day-to-day operations.

The overall themes of most important and least important inclusive practices reflect leaders that deeply care about their students, their success and equality, with a focus on their own interpersonal skills as leaders, versus an overall global view of a collaborative vision. These novice, less experienced, slightly less educated, less diverse leaders reflect previous research in that they focus more on day-to-day operations and instructional leadership than an overall collaborative leadership style. As such, this study supports the research that found leadership to be a dynamic process where leaders mature from a transactional/instructional leader to a more collaborative/transformational leadership style as they acquire more experience over time (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018).

Transformational Culture Driven Collaborative Leaders Themes

These veteran, more experienced, slightly more educated, more diverse leaders can best be described as transformational culture driven collaborative leaders. This interpretation is supported by the item rankings and thematic qualitative analysis where emerging themes focused on collaboration, vision, equity, a strong culture and the hiring, retaining and supporting of effective teachers within a mission driven system (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2

Transformational Culture-Driven Collaborative Leaders Themes

Key Words and Phrases from 10 Highest Ranked Statements from the Q-sorts	Themes	Key Qualitative Words and Phrases from the Questionnaires and Interviews aligned with the 10 Highest Ranked Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collaborative Mission/Vision to support ALL students -Inclusive Social Environment/Collaborative Culture -Mission/Vision/Collaborative Culture 	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collaborative Vision -Set and Lead Collaborative Vision -Set Collaborative Vision with Stakeholders -Collaborate/Equity/Core Values -Collaboration/Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collaborative Mission/Vision to support ALL students -Shared Understanding/Mutual Commitment to Mission/Vision -Mission/Vision/Collaborative Culture 	Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collaborative Vision -Clear Vision -Set and Lead Collaborative Vision -Mission, Vision, Focus, Hire, Train -Vision Sets Direction -Set Collaborative Vision with Stakeholders -Begin with Vision/Effective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Safe, Caring Environment for ALL students -Inclusion -Equitable -Access/Culturally Responsive -Inclusive Social Environment/Collaborative Culture Support Inclusion 	Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Safe, Caring Environment for ALL/Foundation -Caring/Best for ALL Students Inclusion Ideal Societal Expectation/Equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Safe, Caring Environment for ALL students -Equitable Access/Culturally Responsive -Mission/Vision/Collaborative Culture 	Strong Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Safe, Caring Environment for ALL/Foundation -Teachers Culturally Responsive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hire/Retain Highly Effective Teachers with core values -Support Teachers/Inclusion 	Effective Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hire Exceptional Staff -Hire Effective Teachers

The number one ranked statement for these transformational leaders focused on collaboratively working on developing a mission and vision. This theme of collaboration surfaced as participants answered questions about their sorts. Comments around the importance of collaboration were made in reference to many of their top statements. The top rankings of the three Factor B members with negative “*a*” scores, otherwise known as negative cases, were disaggregated to illustrate their alternate perspective from the group. Although their views of what statements were most important differed, their reasoning was aligned with the other members of this group, in that relationships and collaboration were designated as key elements in supporting students with disabilities. Overall, these rankings demonstrated characteristics of research on shared vision, moral purpose, and core values and their reasoning was based on collaboratively working on developing a mission and vision, based on the core values and moral purpose of equality. These leaders found a shared understanding and mutual commitment to this mission and vision to be the basis for shaping their practice. They are considered to be transformational culture-driven collaborative leaders and share similarities with research on transformational leadership practices (Nyenyembe et al., 2016).

The lens of these veteran, more experienced, more educated, more diverse administrators, was through collaboration, with a focus on a clear vision and mission, supporting the core values and moral purpose of equality within their schools and districts to build strong cultures that support effective, inclusive teachers. Several studies found collaboration, whether it is framed as collaborative leadership, collaborative problem solving, or collaborative team building, is important amongst teachers and principals as a necessary component in an effective, inclusive school (Billingsley et al., 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Salisbury, 2016; Waldron et al., 2011). Leadership for inclusion is complex and multifaceted (Coleman &

Pepper, 2010; Carter & Abawi, 2018). It requires a “consciously targeted effort, advocacy, and particular ways of leading... a constant journey toward a shared vision” (Carter & Abawi, 2018, p. 49).

As an overarching theme, these transformational leaders not only chose developing a collaborative mission and vision to support all students as most important, they spoke often about the importance of a strong, clear vision to set the direction and purpose of their work. The literature agrees with these veteran, more experienced, more diverse, collaborative, visionary leaders with strong core values who stressed their commitment to collaboratively creating a clear vision that supports the needs of students with disabilities. They also identified positive relationships and a shared commitment to this vision as important. Effective, inclusive principals not only have strong core values; they share these values with their teachers and collaboratively build a vision that supports all students (Billingsley et al., 2019). Overall, strong, active principal leadership ensures teachers share core values and a school-wide commitment to develop an effective, inclusive school; creating school-wide vision for inclusive education; and sharing mission and learning principles (Billingsley, 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Houser et al., 2011; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

There were mixed feelings amongst both special education and general education administrators about the importance of a collaborative mission and vision. As noted, although on average, the ranking for statements about mission and vision to guide their practice were important to the majority of these transformational leaders, there was a difference in opinion when it came to the negative case participants. These differing views ranged from the absolute importance of a collaborative mission and vision in order to effectively lead an inclusive

environment to its lack of importance within the realities of the day-to-day operations of an educational environment. While the perceptions of Factor B principals were similar when interpreting the statement about mission and vision, citing the importance of stakeholders and viewing a collaborative mission and vision as a tool to “mobilize” stakeholders by creating a framework that can be articulated to all stakeholders, the three special education administrators who were representatives of negative cases were not the same.

As the findings of this study suggest, when it comes to the importance of a collaborative mission and vision, views vary at both the building level and at the district level. Although the research indicates that effective, inclusive schools and districts have a clear vision, not all administrators agreed. As such, non-negotiable vision and mission seems to be a theme across effective, inclusive schools (Waldron et al., 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Shared vision, moral purpose, and core values are essential in the development of effective, inclusive schools (Billingsley, et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). Although transforming a school to be effective and inclusive is no easy task, it can be done with committed, strong, principal support. This support includes the ability to build a vision and set direction, develop staff and understand the importance of supporting teachers through the design of the school (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015).

According to the three negative cases who did not find this to be of importance, their experiences have been in schools and districts that did not embrace their mission and vision, which would lead one to believe it is more of a systemic challenge. Although, overall, these transformational leaders found the mission and vision collaborative process to be important, the more seasoned special education administrators did not rank mission and vision as important.

Based on their feedback, these special education administrators did not have positive experiences where the districts they worked in did not embrace the district-wide mission and vision, nor actively invested in them.

The experiences of the majority of this group of transitional culture-driven collaborative leaders who did find the mission and vision important had worked in schools and districts that embraced them. One participant spoke of her experiences in both a district that did not embrace an inclusive mission and vision and one that did. Although, as a building leader, she believed in inclusion, the district as a whole did not embrace the same vision, leaving her without the resources and support to build and maintain an effective, inclusive school. She then moved into a district whose mission and vision embraced inclusivity, giving her the opportunity to meaningfully include her students, which she linked to high scores for her special education students on the MCAS Next Generation assessment. It is notable that the transformational leaders whose members overall valued the importance of developing and maintaining a collaborative mission and vision, had more members in districts that fully included their special education students in general education settings with their typical peers. As this study would suggest and the literature supports, high-performing districts “ensure that the necessary resources, including time, money, personnel, and materials are allocated to accomplish the district’s goals” (Waters, et al., 2006, p. 4).

Equitable access and culturally responsive learning opportunities in a safe, caring environment that supports the needs of all students was important to these transformational leaders. They spoke about ensuring that “*all students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to make effective progress alongside same-age peers.*” This belief of equity was mirrored in many of their responses. The issue of equity and access to a fair education coupled

with an awareness of varying abilities was noted. They found “*ensuring that all students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to make effective progress alongside same-age peers*” important. The effective, inclusive principal in DeMathews’ (2015) study agreed. This was noted as an important facet of her school culture’s non-negotiable commitment to include all students with their typical peers.

These transformational, culture-driven, collaborative leaders spoke about the importance of a strong culture within the school, “*the culture within the school is important as it permeates to all staff if it’s consistently communicated.*” With the lens of collaborative culture, these leaders felt it is important to have a “*collaborative vision so that culturally and systematically people are on the same page.*” If the school’s mission is clearly articulated and well understood, all other elements should support this mission. These mission-driven elements lead to a culture that reinforces all mission-driven actions, resulting in sustainability (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

They found the statement about hiring and retaining highly effective teachers with a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities important. They spoke about hiring exceptional and effective teachers. As one Factor B member shared, “*One of the most important factors of student achievement is who the individual standing/teaching in front of them is.*” They considered both the concept of least restrictive environment (LRE) and supporting teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments as important. Within this culture of inclusivity, these transformational leaders not only believed in providing students with disabilities the opportunity to achieve within the general education curriculum, but they also had high expectations of all students. One principal member stated, “*It doesn’t matter who you are we have high expectations, that’s it.*” The effective, inclusive principal in Waldron et al. (2011) and her staff had an absolute focus on their single,

shared vision of high levels of achievement and inclusion for all students. Implementing and committing to an inclusive culture was also considered non-negotiable to both the principal of the school and the staff within it (Waldron et al., 2011). They believed that inclusion is not simply the idea of including students with disabilities in a classroom, but a belief that all students can be successful. In turn, this vision led the choices that were made across the school. As part of her practice, the principal intentionally hired teachers and paraprofessionals that shared the vision of the school, used their time effectively during the school day, and sought resources outside the district and the community to support the school (Waldron et al., 2011).

Themes supported by the lowest item rankings and qualitative rationale focused on less personal and more global perspectives. Managing budgets, external resources and tensions were considered either someone else's responsibility or less important than positive relationships. Many Factor B participants felt that the items they chose as least important were either something that was done by others or out of their control. The demographic make-up of the participants in this study may account for this perspective. Participants came from a geographically limited area in Western Massachusetts where budgets and external resources are often allocated by central office versus individual schools and even special education administration.

This groups' ten most important statements and the rationale behind them coincide with many of the characteristics of a transformational leadership style. Transformational leaders focus on "facilitating organizational collaboration that drives a vision forward" (Nyenyebe, et al., 2016). Transformational leadership is a leadership theory where a leader works with staff to identify the changes needed, create a vision through inspiration, and execute the change with a group of highly committed staff (Northouse, 2016). These veteran, culture-driven, collaborative

leaders shared that a collaborative mission and vision, based on a set of core values, set the direction and purpose of their work. Although Factor B members' rankings fell under the research supported theme of shared vision, moral purpose, and core values; the underlying theme within their responses to the follow-up questionnaire and interview questions was working collaboratively to develop this mission and vision. These special education administrators and elementary principals spoke of collaboration and relationships as a way to work towards a similar goal, setting a collaborative vision to support the success of all students. One leader in reference to her most important statements, stated, *I looked for statements that were collaborative in nature; ensure, build, encourage.*"

As noted, the overall responses from these leaders support a transformational leadership style with a focus on collaboration and vision. This coincides with previous research. Schulze & Boscardin (2018) found perceptions of leadership expand from more of a transactional/instructional form of leadership to more transformational/collaborative/distributed leadership model, as leaders' repertoires expand and develop with time (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018). By using Q-sort methodology, they were able to discern that principals with less experience valued more structured leadership practices, i.e., transactional and instructional. The more experienced principals leaned towards more transformational or collaborative leadership styles. This shift across time, with experience, supports the idea of principals following a "developmental path" (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018, p. 4). These various leadership styles were interweaved throughout the participants' responses as they not only ranked statements as leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities, but also discussed their reasoning behind their choices. The transformational, culture-driven, collaborative leaders in this study found working towards a similar goal, based on the core values of inclusivity and equality, to be

important as leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities. As one member stated, *“I believe that ensuring that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with peers mirrors our ideal societal expectation.”*

Inclusive Leadership

For these transactional, equity-driven relational and transformational, culture-driven collaborative leaders, (a) relationships, (b) equity, (c) core values, (d) high expectations of all students, (e) educating the whole child, (f) a shared, collaborative vision, (g) a strong culture and (h) effective teachers were the elements they believe are important as inclusive leaders (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

Inclusive Leadership



Although the transactional, equity-driven relational leaders' perspective was through the lens of interpersonal skills to develop positive relationships and collaboration; and the transformational, culture-driven collaborative leaders viewed focusing on a collaborative vision that fostered positive relationships; relationships and collaboration were important to both groups. Waldron et al. (2011) found the effective, inclusive leader in their study partially credited the success of her school to collaboration with teachers that set the direction for the school. In agreement, Houser et al. (2011) found successful inclusion is supported by collaborating and cooperating school principals. Collaboration is key in effective, inclusive schools. When implementing a plan or simply collaborating between special educators and general educators, collaboration as a philosophy impacts levels of inclusivity and academic capacity (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Houser et al., 2011; Salisbury 2006; Waldron et al., 2011). In addition, the role of a special education leader has changed, based on the need for an inclusive culture, and positive relationships and partnerships are necessary to provide the appropriate services that all students with disabilities deserve (Veale, 2010).

Both the transactional, equity-driven, relational leaders and the transformational, culture-driven, collaborative leaders in placed high values on a strong belief system of equality. The Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Center (2017) agrees:

Equity-based inclusive education means all students, including those with the most significant support needs, are educated in age-appropriate classes in their neighborhood schools. Students receive the help they need to be full members of their general education classrooms. Every member of the school community is welcomed, valued, and participates in learning. Inclusive education means that districts support schools, and

schools and families support one another as ALL students are welcomed and included in their communities. (SWIFT Center, 2017, p. 1)

In addition, both groups valued the concept of least restrictive environment, sharing the belief that students with disabilities should have as many opportunities as possible to learn with their non-disabled peers. As indicated by Salisbury's (2016) research on inclusive schools, support for general education and special education staff to collaborate was found in more inclusive schools. How the principal viewed LRE and inclusion made a difference in how inclusive the schools became. Support for collaboration between special educators and general educators was paramount in the level of inclusivity (Salisbury, 2006).

The transactional, equity-driven, relational leaders in this study spoke often about the importance of core values, stating that they chose particular statements as important because they were based on their educational core leadership values. Effective, inclusive schools have strong, active principal leaders who ensure teachers share the core values of the school and are committed to developing an effective, inclusive school (Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Waldron et al., 2011). These leaders core values coincided with the strong belief system that all students are capable and as one participant shared, her responses were "*based on what my core values are and how you structure systems to work for all students.*" These leaders also spoke about the importance of high expectations for all students, being culturally responsive, supporting the whole child and putting kids first, and creating opportunities for students to grow.

The transformational leaders in this study had a strong focus on developing a collaborative vision that set the direction and purpose of their work. Shared vision, building a vision, creating a compelling vision, moral purpose, core values, or however one frames it, several studies found that a true belief and clear vision of where the school is going is imperative

in creating and maintaining effective, inclusive schools (DeMatthews, 2015; Hehir and Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Osiname, 2018; Ryndak et. al., 2007; Waldron et.al., 2011). Although the more transactional leaders did specify that they did not necessarily value the concept of a mission and vision, they still held the beliefs and core values that inclusive missions and visions are based on. A strong culture that supports all students in a safe, caring environment was a foundation for the work of the transformational leaders in this study. Effective, inclusive, culturally responsive teachers who shared the core values of their schools and districts were key in their perceptions of inclusive leadership.

In summary, the focus on collaboration, relationships and equity as important components of inclusive leadership was consistent amongst all participants in some capacity. Core values, high expectation of all students, educating the whole child, a shared, collaborative vision, a strong culture and effective, inclusive teachers are the elements they collectively believed are important as inclusive leaders.

Extending the Model for Effective Inclusive Leadership

The major themes of effective, inclusive leadership as identified in this study, transactional equity-driven relational leaders embraced inclusive collaboration and data driven decision making and the transformational culture-driven collaborative leaders embraced shared vision, moral purpose, and core values theme only identify a fraction of what is required to be an affective inclusive leader. The literature joined with the findings of this study suggest a framework that is more expansive. Figure 5.2 offers a more comprehensive framework for a building stronger, inclusive leadership model that support students with disabilities. The literature suggests two additional themes beyond the findings of this investigation: (a) shared

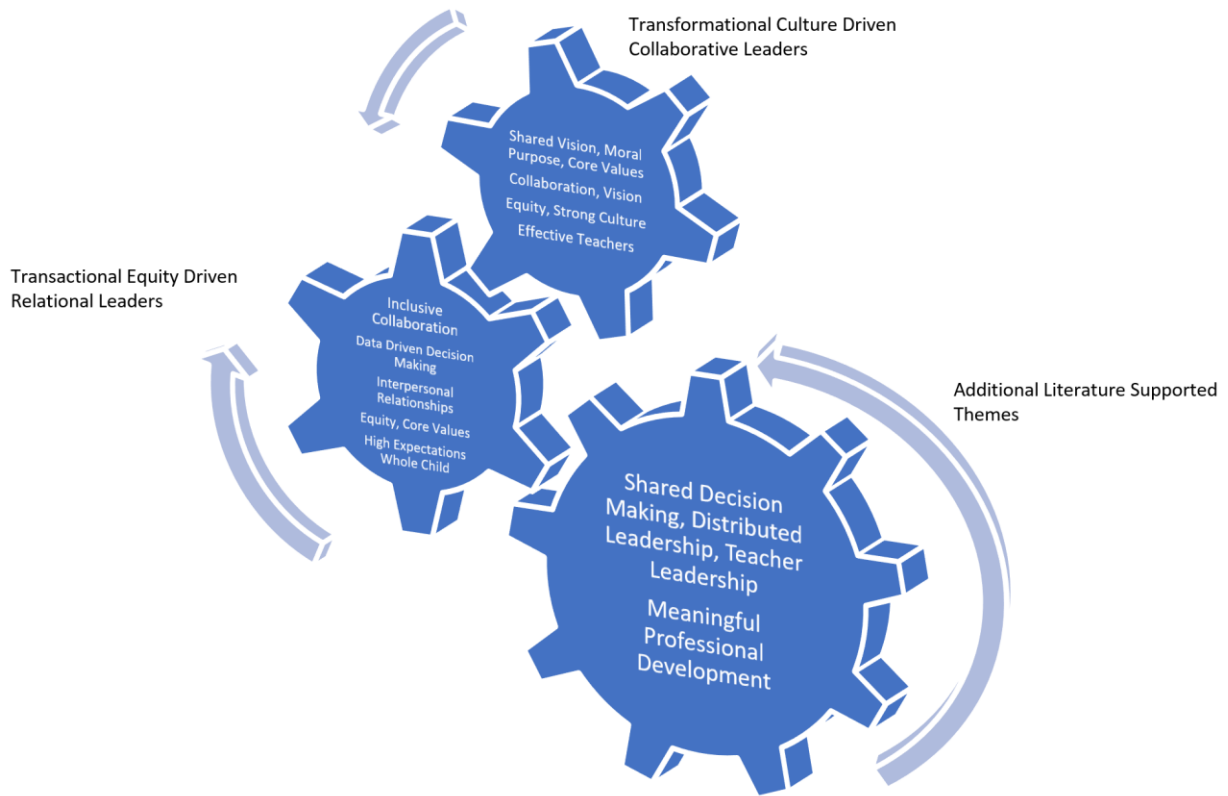
decision making, distributed and teacher leadership (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Louis et al., 2010; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007); (b) meaningful professional development (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011) that are needed to develop and sustain effective, inclusive schools and districts. As a result, an action model for effective, inclusive leadership suggests leadership is a dynamic process, where leaders incorporate all aspects of the model, but purposefully focus on specific components as the needs of their teachers and staff in their schools and districts fluctuate over time. This framework for stronger inclusive leadership guided by this study and the literature supports a framework for building stronger inclusive learning environments that support students with disabilities.

Hersey et al. (2012) point out that no one leadership approach is ideal for all situations. This is true when leading inclusive schools; schools that embrace disability and weave it into every aspect of education. Leaders must be agile, flexible, and nimble so they are able to respond to the contextual demands of inclusive environments. The leadership that embraces the concept of flexibility is a leadership approach that adapts to the situation, allowing for leaders to engage in more than one approach to leadership (Boscardin & Shepherd, 2020) based on the needs of those they are leading. As such, there is no one “best” style of leadership. Adapting leadership approaches according to the situation would likely embrace all categories. Effective leadership is “task-relevant” (Ireh & Bailey, 1999, p. 24), and the most successful leaders are those who adapt their leadership style reflective of the ability and willingness of the person or group they are leading or influencing (Ireh & Bailey, 1999). According to Hersey et al. (2012) effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also is dependent on what needs to be accomplished. Figure 5.2 represents the meshing of leadership

approaches in accordance to the needs of schools and districts. As such, effective inclusive leaders incorporate aspects of Transactional Equity Driven Relational Leaders, Transformational Culture Driven Collaborative Leaders, and the literature supported themes to provide effective inclusive leadership that supports the needs of their students and staff.

Figure 5.2

Model for Effective Inclusive Leadership



In addition to the themes generated from the two factors, the literature supports the idea of distributed leadership, more specifically teacher leadership. Involving teachers as leaders in the decision-making process and collaborative leadership practices bridges the gap between general education and special education student needs (Boscardin, 2007). As directors of special education face today’s ever-challenging mission to address the needs of all learners, effective,

inclusive schools and districts necessitates ongoing collaboration with principals (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Louis, et al. (2010) found, “when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers’ working relationships with one another are stronger and student achievement is higher” (p. 282).

Involving teachers and staff in the decision-making process, promoting and encouraging teacher leaders and/or practicing a distributed leadership model are effective ways to create buy-in from stakeholders (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Louis et al., 2010; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). From the perspective derived from a review of the literature, effective, inclusive schools that foster positive change for student achievement are led by supportive, building-level administration. These studies provide evidence of effective, inclusive schools, led by invested leaders that focus on a shared vision, trusting relationships and compassion for teachers using collaborative, shared or distributed leadership styles (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Houser et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Salisbury, 2006).

By including teacher leaders in decision-making and valuing their input, it has been shown that teachers have more ownership of the vision and plan (Billingsley et al., 2019). Perhaps the connection between teacher leadership and teacher ownership of the vision was not made when statements were being ranked by importance. Although participants in this study did not specifically address why they placed these particular statements where they did, one transformational leader did share having difficulty choosing staff-based statements versus student-based statements. By asking the participants to sort the leadership statements as a leader who supports the needs of students with disabilities from least important to most important, it is

possible that these leaders were reading the statements through a student-focused lens versus staff.

Conversely, more than one transformational member spoke about the importance of distributed leadership. More specifically, one principal felt that all of his faculty and staff need to be a part of all decisions. He stated, “Distributive leadership. School Instructional Leadership Team they help frame the work. You need a strong TEAM to get to those 40 statements.” Another principal viewed her least important rankings reflective of what can be done by others. Her perspective was that “distributing leadership is an important skill.”

Although meaningful professional development is supported through the literature as important in effective, inclusive schools and districts, the transactional leaders in this study did not rank the statement that reflected high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development as important. Within the leadership dimensions identified by Billingsley et al. (2019), specific practices were identified, including the principal’s role in providing learning opportunities and feedback and ensuring professional development is “relevant, meaningful, and delivered effectively” (Billingsley et al., 2019, p. 312). Providing ongoing, relevant and meaningful professional development has been found to be essential for principals who lead effective, inclusive schools (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011).

Participants did mention the importance of professional development when discussing other statements but did not rank the specific professional development statement as important. One transactional leader did comment on its importance when talking about her most important ranked statements, pointing out the importance of not only professional development and support, but knowledge, relationships and teaching skills as imperative when supporting the

needs of students with disabilities. The ranking of this one particular statement may have a direct relationship to the participants' specific leadership responsibilities versus its lack of importance overall. Many of the transactional leaders cited their lowest ranked responses due to their content not necessarily being their responsibility, but they still felt they were important. Considering that this study took place in a specific area, Western Massachusetts, it is feasible that the principals in this study, as well as the special education administrators, were not responsible for professional development for their staff. In this geographic area, it is common that professional development is coordinated by the director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, which in some districts is the assistant superintendent.

Although, quantitatively, the transformational leaders in this study did not rank the statement that reflected high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development as important, they did briefly note it within the follow-up questionnaire and interviews. More specifically, two principals identified a strong belief in the importance of effective professional development and another contending that strong professional development is paramount for both special and general education teachers. As with the transactional leaders, the ranking of this one particular statement may have a direct relationship to the participants' specific leadership responsibilities versus its lack of importance overall. Many of the transformational leaders also cited their lowest ranked responses due to their content not necessarily being their responsibility.

Although the transformational leaders, overall, did not find data driven decision making to be important, the transactional leaders included it in their 10 most important statements. This research supported theme was the only theme that the two groups did not share any commonalities. The statement that the transactional leaders deemed as important in relationship to data was in the transformational leaders least important statements. The literature supports the

transactional leaders who valued the importance of data driven decision-making. As such, it has been found that making data informed decisions is a relevant and key component of effective, inclusive schools and districts. To develop an effective, inclusive school, an efficient use of resources, high quality professional development, the thoughtful and intentional use of data that guides practice and decision-making and a principal that has the skill set and readiness to provide leadership to support and enact the shared vision is needed (Billingsley, 2019; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Waldron et al., 2011).

Limitations

There were several limitations within the study. The use of Q-methodology and factor analysis limited the number of participants that factored into the study. With an original representation of 35 participants, including 12 special education administrators and 23 elementary principals, the factor analysis resulted in only nine special education administrators and 20 elementary principals factoring in and being included in the data analysis, thus limiting the resulting data. This study was limited in that representation of special education administration was less than elementary principals, as is typical in administrative teams in Massachusetts. On average, there are five elementary principals to one special education director in districts in Massachusetts. This study is reflective of this typical administrative makeup.

Q-methodology encompasses the purposeful choice of a nonrandom sample of participants to elicit subjective points of view, using factor analysis to provide quantitative data to explain diverse points of view (Ramlo, 2015). In this study, participants were administrators chosen from several districts in Western Massachusetts, which is not a reflection of the general population or leadership overall, but a “structured sample of respondents... relevant to the problem under consideration” (Damio, 2006, p. 112). Although there are limitations within Q-

methodology, including the forced choice within the Q-sort that limits the participant's ability to express their own opinion (McKeown & Thomas, 2013), the participants were able to express their views within the follow-up questionnaire and when answering clarifying questions, producing themes across factor members. The study was also limited demographically, with only four participants with doctorate degrees and only five non-white participants, as is representative of typical district leadership in this area. The study could have included a more diverse group of participants, with advanced degrees, to provide further, more diverse insight had it been more national versus local. Another limitation, due to the non-random sample, was the variation in student enrollment numbers. The participants in this study worked in districts that ranged in student enrollment from 88 to 5,437, with a rather large difference in resources and diversity

There was also a challenge within the q-set itself. There were items as part of the ranking sort that may or may not pertain to all of the participants. For example, non-relevant statements included managing budgets and transportation (statement 26) and managing capital and planning, organizing and retrieving information (statement 40). When asked what their reasons were for placing their lowest ranked statements, principals on more than one occasion mentioned that, although these are important responsibilities, they are not necessarily theirs. Another limitation within the q-sort itself were the number of statements regarding professional development and shared leadership. With research supporting the five overall themes of (a) inclusive collaboration (Billingsley et al., 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Salisbury, 2016; Waldron et al., 2011); (b) shared vision, moral purpose, and core values (Billingsley, et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Hallinger, 2011; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007); (c) shared decision making/distributed leadership/teacher leadership (Billingsley et al.,

2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Louis et al., 2010; Waldron et al., 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007); (d) meaningful professional development (Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2007; Hehir & Katzman, 2012; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; and (e) data driven decision making(Billingsley et al., 2019; DeMatthews, 2015; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015; Waldron et al., 2011; Waters & Marzano, 2006) as components of effective inclusive schools; only one statement addressed professional development (statement 17). This limited the participants' ability to have more than one choice for that area to support the needs of students with disabilities.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although, the strengths of this study are in its ability to compare priorities between special education administration across a total of 11 districts and general education administrators, represented by elementary principals across 10 districts, the number of elementary principals versus special education administrators were reflective of this state specifically. This study could be replicated across states to show a more global representation of participants.

This study could be replicated by using a different methodology to elicit more detailed responses and eliminate the number of participants that were not members of any factor. It could also be replicated by teasing out the participants by role and factoring them as independent groups, perhaps lowering the number of participants that were not members of any factor. In addition, if possible, this study could be replicated using some measure of effective inclusion of students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers, in the general education setting, other than the state average that was used in this study. Perhaps an investigation that analyzes the effectiveness of inclusivity versus the state average, to include both general education and

special education leadership practice priorities, could glean meaningful results. In addition, future research should consider a more diverse population of educators to include varying levels of building principals, as well as superintendents and assistant superintendents to provide a wider lens within a district.

Conclusions

Two factors emerged from the data collected for this study. As stated previously, overall, the transformational, culture-driven, collaborative leaders had veteran, more diverse educators with more special education teaching experience, as well as more general and special education administrator experience

In summary, this study did answer the question of whether inclusive leadership practice statements were ranked similarly and differently among participants, as well as how the participants described their rankings for most and least important inclusive leadership practice statements. The similarities reflected views of inclusive collaboration and shared vision, moral purpose, and core values as overarching themes that correlate with previous research, as was noted in the highest 10 ranked statements for both groups (see Table 4.14). Both groups fostered the idea of inclusivity. The novice, less experienced, less diverse, slightly less educated transactional leaders favored statements they perceived to emphasize the importance of relationships and trust. This would suggest that developing interpersonal relationships and trust are key components of how they lead their schools and districts. The veteran, more experienced, more educated, more diverse transformational leaders favored statements they perceived to emphasize the importance of collaboration. This would suggest that they strongly believe in a mission and vision collaboratively developed to support all students to be successful. More specifically, with overarching themes of relationship and equity for the transactional leaders and

themes of collaboration and vision and mission for the transformational leaders, it is apparent that the members of both groups are on the same page within their factor membership when it comes to their roles as leaders who support the needs of students with disabilities. The difference that was noted was under the research supported theme of data driven decision making. Although it was 10th most important to the transactional equity driven relational leaders, it was ranked as one of the least important statements for the transformational culture driven collaborative leaders. This was the most striking difference between the groups.

Within both groups, the reasoning behind their least important statements was similar, although their choice of least important statements was different. Both groups of educators ranked their least important statements as being someone else's responsibility. Although differences on how they came to those similarities surfaced when asked specific questions about their rankings within the follow-up questionnaires and interviews, it is still apparent that these participants agree with their factor members within the themes that emerged. By representing both special education and general education administrators in both factors, this study also supports the research that the acquirement of leadership skills is more likely the result of a developmental continuum versus a specific association with position or role (Mosley et al., 2014; Tudryn et al., 2016; Shulze & Boscardin, 2018), answering the question how inclusive leadership practice statements ranked in relationship to role.

While the novice, less experienced, less educated group reflected a transactional leadership style, the older, more experienced, more educated members reflected a transformational style of leadership. As such, this study supports the research that found leadership to be a dynamic process where leaders mature from a transactional/instructional leader to a more collaborative/transformational leadership style as they acquire more experience over

time (Schulze & Boscardin, 2018). Leadership is a growth-oriented process with novice leaders being more transactional and veteran leaders being more transformational. The role of situational and transitional leadership is necessary for moving from novice to veteran leadership. The dynamic framework developed, guided by the literature and data supporting this study, represents an action-oriented model for building stronger inclusive leadership.

Keeping in mind, with only one measure of inclusivity, the state average, it is difficult to generalize these results to represent effective, inclusive schools and districts without all five of the components represented in all of the participants' responses. While case studies are a useful research methodology to gauge meaningful inclusion, and Q-methodology is able to qualify the rationale leaders have for ranking inclusive statements, there continues to be a need for a more global, quantitative measure of meaningful inclusivity to compare across districts and states.

APPENDIX:
INSTRUMENTATION

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher(s): Kimberly B. Cass, Dr. Mary Lynn Boscardin, Professor, College of Education

Study Title: **Special Education and General Education Administration Key Leadership Practice Priorities: A Comparison**

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research. We encourage you to take some time to think this over and ask questions now and at any other time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy for your records.

2. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY THAT I SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

By participating in this study, you will be helping the researcher complete her dissertation. Your commentary and responses that you provide will assist with the documentation of the key leadership practices special education administrators and general education administrators view as most important and least important to their job. Your participation will also assist the researcher with developing a stronger understanding of the priorities and practices associated with the profession of special education and general education administrators.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential to the maximum extent allowable under federal, state, and local laws. All the information gathered in this study will be kept confidential and secured.

Your participation in this study will be contributing to the advancement of understanding special education and general education leadership and administration.

3. WHY ARE WE DOING THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

The purpose of this research is to acquire a deeper understanding of the priorities of both special education and general education administrators as inclusive leaders.

4. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

Special education and general education administration can participate in this study.

5. WHERE WILL THIS RESEARCH STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

The research will take place either at the participants district or a mutually agreed upon location that is convenient for the participant. Thirty to forty participants are expected to be enrolled.

6. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO AND HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?

If you agree to take part in this study, participation will take approximately 45 minutes and involves a brief background questionnaire, sorting statements around inclusion, and answering questions about the sorting activity. Clarifying questions about your answers will be audio recorded. You may skip any question you feel uncomfortable answering.

7. WILL BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY HELP ME IN ANY WAY?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, we hope that your participation in the study may refamiliarize you with the key leadership practices for supporting students with disabilities.

8. WHAT ARE MY RISKS OF BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

There are little to no negative consequences if you choose not to participate and participation is confidential. By agreeing to participate in this study, you allow the researcher to quote you through complete anonymity because your name and titled will be redacted. In addition, we will make every effort to protect your privacy for example we will not use your name in any publications. We believe there are minimal risks associated with this research study; however, a risk of breach of confidentiality always exists and we have taken the steps to minimize this risk as outlined in section 9 below.

9. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

Your privacy and confidentiality is important to us. The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records. The researchers will keep all study records, including any codes to your data, in a secure location, a locked file cabinet. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location. The master key and audiotapes will be destroyed 3 years after the close of the study.

All electronic files (databases, and spreadsheets) containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the members of the research staff will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researchers may publish their findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations. Your privacy will be protected. You will only meet with authorized research staff; in this case it is the researcher.

Signed consent documents will be stored securely and separately from the research data.

10. WILL I BE GIVEN ANY MONEY OR OTHER COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

You will not be compensated for being in this research study by the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

11. WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the researcher(s), Kimberly Cass 413-726-4316 or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Mary Lynn Boscardin 413-545-1193. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

12. WHAT HAPPENS IF I SAY YES, BUT I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

13. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

14. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form, I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I have been informed that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Participant Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

By signing below, I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of Person
Obtaining Consent

Print Name:

Date:

PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Printed Name: _____

Current Position: _____

1. Gender: _____ Female _____ Male
2. Year of Birth: _____
3. Ethnicity (*please circle one*):
 - a. African American/Black
 - b. Asian
 - c. Hispanic/Latino
 - d. Multi-race/Non-Hispanic
 - e. Native American
 - f. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - g. Caucasian/White
4. Years you have been in your current position: _____
 - a. If none, what was your previous position? _____
5. Total years you have been an administrator _____
6. Positions you have had as an administrator _____
7. What is the type of district you currently work in (*please circle one*)
 - a. Local School
 - b. Institutional School
 - c. County Agricultural
 - d. Independent Public
 - e. Independent Vocational
 - f. Regional Academic
 - g. Regional Vocational Technical
8. Current Educational Level (*please circle one*):
 - a. Bachelor
 - b. Master
 - c. Master +30
 - d. CAGS/ Ed.S.
 - e. Doctorate
9. How many years of general education teaching experience did you have at the following levels?
 - a. _____ Pre-School
 - b. _____ Elementary
 - c. _____ Secondary
 - d. _____ Post-secondary
10. How many years of special education teaching did you have at the following levels?
 - a. _____ Pre-School
 - b. _____ Elementary
 - c. _____ Secondary

- d. _____ Post-secondary
11. How many years have you been an educator as a _____ (i.e. counselor, educational team facilitator, behavior interventionist etc.)
- a. _____ Pre-School
- b. _____ Elementary
- c. _____ Secondary
- d. _____ Post-secondary
12. How many years of general education administrative experience do you have at the following levels?
- a. _____ Pre-School
- b. _____ Elementary
- c. _____ Secondary
- d. _____ Post-secondary
- e. _____ Central Office/District
13. How many years of special education administrative experience do you have at the following levels?
- a. _____ Pre-School
- b. _____ Elementary
- c. _____ Secondary
- d. _____ Post-secondary
14. Which general education certificates/licenses and levels do you hold?
- a. _____ Teacher/Level(s) _____
- b. _____ Principal/Level(s) _____
- c. _____ Superintendent
- d. _____ Other _____
15. Which special education certificates/licenses and levels do you hold?
- a. _____ Teacher/Level(s) _____
- b. _____ Special Education Administrator
- c. _____ Other _____

KEY LEADERSHIP PRACTICES STATEMENTS

Key Leadership Practices Statements

Please sort the following leadership statements as a leader who supports the needs of students with disabilities from least important to most important...

Statements generated from the *PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities (CCSSO & CEEDAR, 2017, p. 3-19)*

1. Work collaboratively to develop a mission and vision for your school and/or district that supports the success of all students, including students with disabilities.
2. Ensure a shared understanding of and mutual commitment to this mission and vision among faculty, and shape practice accordingly.
3. Include parents and other external stakeholders in the visioning process and consistently engage them as partners in this work.
4. Apply ethical and professional norms and uphold the moral imperative to acknowledge inequities and promote equality.
5. Lead with interpersonal and social-emotional competence, and develop productive relationships by communicating effectively, cultivating interpersonal awareness, and building trust
6. Ensure the academic success and well-being of all students, including students with disabilities, through equitable access to effective teachers, culturally responsive learning opportunities and supports, and necessary resources.
7. Hold asset-based rather than deficit-based perspectives of students, and recognize relationships among disability, cultural differences, and social inequities.
8. Recognize, confront, and educate others about the institutional forces and historical struggles that have impeded equitable educational opportunities for students with disabilities
9. Work collaboratively with teachers and staff and communicate high academic expectations for all students, including students with disabilities; promote high-quality, intellectually-challenging curricula and instruction; and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve within the general education curriculum using a multitiered system of support.
10. Ensure that evidence-based approaches to instruction and assessment are implemented with integrity and are adapted to local needs.
11. Promote appropriate, clear, and valid monitoring and assessment systems where teachers receive meaningful information about how students respond to instruction and where information is relevant to instructional improvement.
12. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy environment that meets the needs of all students and encourage them to be active, responsible members of their community.
13. Ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to learn with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.
14. Promote inclusive social environments that foster acceptance, care, and sense of value and belonging in adult-student and student peer relationships.

15. Support teachers as they create productive and inclusive environments in their classrooms and throughout the schools.
16. Hire and retain highly effective special education and general education teachers with a district/schoolwide vision and a set of core values that support improving achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities.
17. Provide multiple sources of high-quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities, and participate alongside staff.
18. Identify strategies to motivate your staff and encourage, recognize, and facilitate leadership opportunities for teachers and staff who effectively educate students with disabilities.
19. Encourage teachers to set high expectations for and engage in active self-assessment and reflective learning in order to promote mutual accountability.
20. Maintain a just and democratic workplace that gives principals and/or teachers the confidence to exercise responsible discretion and be open to criticism.
21. Promote collaborative cultures focused on shared responsibility for achieving the mission and vision of the school/district, and for the success of students with disabilities.
22. Communicate clear expectations for collaboration within and among established stakeholders without micromanaging, and encourage experimentation among teams.
23. Manage tensions and conflict while developing conditions for productivity, including effective professional development, practice, and support to staff.
24. Create partnerships with families of students with disabilities and engage them purposefully and productively in the learning and development of their children in and out of school.
25. Engage families to provide insight about their children's specific disabilities that allows teachers to better understand their needs, make educationally sound instructional decisions, and assist in interpreting and assessing student progress.
26. Manage budgets and develop strong relationships with all stakeholders in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and that students with disabilities have access to appropriate transportation, classrooms, services, accommodations, and extracurricular activities.
27. Ensure that external resources are aligned with your district/schools' goals and support core programs and services for all students.
28. Assign roles and responsibilities to optimize staff capacity to address each student's learning needs, especially students with disabilities.
29. Develop and effectively manage district/school structures, operations, and administrative systems that support students with disabilities
30. Emphasize the "why" and "how of improvement and change; staff should be motivated and empowered to own improvement initiatives and share responsibility and accountability for their success.
31. Provide learning opportunities for principals and/or teachers and staff to equip them to participate in strategic processes of improvement, and to take part in implementing effective programs and practices for students with disabilities.
32. Address teacher capacity needs around the identification, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based interventions, and ensure that necessary conditions for

teaching and learning exist in order to prepare students with disabilities for success in college, career, and life.

33. Ensure that the particular needs of students with disabilities are intentionally addressed within the district/school's broader plans for improvement.
34. Shift from compliance towards a more balanced focus on compliance *and* results in order to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities.
35. Understand legal obligations, including timelines and various substantive and procedural requirements, to comply with various regulations regarding students with disabilities.
36. Know how to lead instruction, monitor instructional progress including data analysis, and create organizational conditions to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities.
37. Possess self-knowledge to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses, personal and professional identities, self-interests, assumptions, and biases.
38. Critically analyze, infer, and identify areas of inequity; define problems with student identification and classification; and assess the effectiveness of programs and services for students with disabilities.
39. Possess necessary interpersonal skills to build trust among stakeholders and communicate effectively with teachers and/or principals, families, and staff about matters concerning students with disabilities.
40. Possess organizational and management skills including planning, coordinating, and multi-tasking; organizing and retrieving information (e.g., data, records, IEPs); and developing budgets and managing capital.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Briefly describe what went into your choice of statement that is “highest priority within your job as an effective, inclusive administrator? (+5).
 - a. *What is the statement and what was your reason for placing it there?*

2. Briefly describe what went into your choice of statement that is “the least priority within your jobs as an effective inclusive administrator? (-5).
 - a. *What is the statement and what was your reason for placing it there?*

3. Were there specific statements that you had difficulty placing?

4. *Please list the number of the statements and describe your dilemma.*

5. What other issues/thoughts emerged for you while sorting the cards?

6. Describe how you arrived at your overall most important statements of your leadership.

7. Describe how you arrived at your overall least important statements of your leadership.

8. What factor(s), e.g., time, resources, your own knowledge, your skills, and/or your dispositions, contributed most to the sorting through the key leadership practices statements?

9. *Please give specific examples for each if applicable.*

FIVE FACTOR MEMBERSHIP

#	Factor A		Factor B		Factor C		Factor D		Factor E		H ² /2	Factor A	Factor B	Factor C	Factor D	Factor E
	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score						
P1	.123	0.015	.026	0.001	-.158	0.000	-.020	0.000	-.764	0.584	.3					member
P2	-.043	0.002	.464	0.215	.342	0.004	.065	0.004	.394	0.155	.19		member			
P3	.024	0.001	.041	0.002	-.200	0.053	-.230	0.053	-.051	0.003	.056					
P4	.128	0.016	.675	0.456	.037	0.011	-.104	0.011	.260	0.068	.281		member			
P5	.427	0.182	-.050	0.003	.152	0.464	.681	0.464	-.003	0.000	.348				member	
P6	.475	0.226	.013	0.000	.278	0.010	.098	0.010	.481	0.231	.239					
P7	.461	0.213	-.150	0.023	-.212	0.048	.219	0.048	-.003	0.000	.167	member				
P8	.292	0.085	.238	0.057	.066	0.018	.135	0.018	.787	0.619	.399					member
P9	.045	0.002	.144	0.021	.390	0.000	-.016	0.000	-.258	0.067	.045					
P10	.362	0.131	.304	0.092	.111	0.220	.469	0.220	.400	0.16	.412					
P11	-.116	0.013	.794	0.630	-.138	0.014	-.117	0.014	.057	0.003	.337		member			
P12	.282	0.080	.761	0.579	.024	0.005	.072	0.005	-.146	0.021	.345		member			
P13	.019	0.000	.548	0.300	.184	0.003	.058	0.003	.291	0.085	.196		member			
P14	.586	0.343	.196	0.038	.276	0.003	-.059	0.003	.240	0.058	.223	member				
P15	.078	0.006	.475	0.226	-.228	0.362	.602	0.362	.045	0.002	.298				member	
P16	.591	0.349	.231	0.053	-.168	0.033	-.181	0.033	-.206	0.042	.255	member				
P17	.504	0.254	.133	0.018	.023	0.510	-.714	0.510	-.033	0.001	.647					
P18	-.190	0.036	.099	0.010	-.221	0.028	-.167	0.028	.670	0.449	.276					member
P19	.590	0.348	.424	0.180	.038	0.009	.093	0.009	.074	0.005	.276	member				
P20	.728	0.530	.012	0.000	-.182	0.018	.135	0.018	.104	0.011	.289	member				
P21	.155	0.024	.345	0.119	.068	0.252	-.502	0.252	.324	0.105	.376					
P22	.112	0.013	.210	0.044	-.500	0.010	-.099	0.010	-.063	0.004	.041					
P23	.099	0.010	.415	0.172	-.536	0.026	.160	0.026	.227	0.051	.143		member			
P24	.250	0.063	.674	0.454	.063	0.024	.156	0.024	-.125	0.016	.291		member			
P25	.268	0.072	.179	0.032	.629	0.004	-.065	0.004	.257	0.066	.089					
P26	.248	0.062	.485	0.235	-.319	0.255	.505	0.255	-.016	0.000	.404					
P27	.543	0.295	.213	0.045	.270	0.011	-.106	0.011	-.338	0.114	.238	member				
P28	.679	0.461	-.086	0.007	.285	0.073	.271	0.073	.026	0.001	.308	member				
P29	.430	0.185	.399	0.159	.015	0.244	.494	0.244	-.133	0.018	.425					
P30	.132	0.017	.278	0.077	.738	0.042	.205	0.042	.150	0.023	.101					

P31	.023	0.001	-.021	0.000	.719	0.000	.013	0.000	.051	0.003	.00					
P32	.208	0.043	.131	0.017	.194	0.545	.738	0.545	.094	0.009	.580					
P33	.375	0.141	-.045	0.002	-.558	0.009	-.093	0.009	-.563	0.317	.239					member
P34	.591	0.349	.160	0.026	.308	0.044	.209	0.044	-.130	0.017	.24	member				
P35	.657	0.432	.225	0.051	-.294	0.002	-.046	0.002	-.094	0.009	.248	member				

FOUR FACTOR MEMBERSHIPS

#	Factor A		Factor B		Factor C		Factor D		H ² /2	Factor A	Factor B	Factor C	Factor D
	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score					
P1	.414	0.171	-.457	0.209	-.309	0.095	-.036	0.001	.238				
P2	-.083	0.007	.600	0.36	.305	0.093	.101	0.010	.235		member		
P3	.090	0.008	.021	0.000	-.203	0.041	-.214	0.046	.048				
P4	.213	0.045	.695	0.483	-.014	0.000	-.021	0.000	.264		member		
P5	.274	0.075	-.102	0.010	.263	0.069	.713	0.508	.331				member
P6	.210	0.044	.309	0.095	.484	0.234	.169	0.029	.201			member	
P7	.349	0.122	-.135	0.018	-.050	0.003	.270	0.073	.108	member			
P8	.007	0.000	.668	0.446	.276	0.076	.226	0.051	.287		member		
P9	.155	0.024	-.047	0.002	.274	0.075	-.031	0.001	.051				
P10	.191	0.036	.445	0.198	.231	0.053	.547	0.299	.293				member
P11	.122	0.015	.658	0.433	-.307	0.094	-.057	0.003	.273		member		
P12	.505	0.255	.492	0.242	-.104	0.011	.157	0.025	.267				
P13	.044	0.002	.601	0.361	.132	0.017	.110	0.012	.196		member		
P14	.467	0.218	.315	0.099	.409	0.167	.029	0.001	.243				
P15	.130	0.017	.336	0.113	-.267	0.071	.655	0.429	.315				member
P16	.690	0.476	.072	0.005	-.115	0.013	-.091	0.008	.251	member			
P17	.569	0.324	.157	0.025	.092	0.008	-.635	0.403	.38				member
P18	-.358	0.128	.511	0.261	-.106	0.011	-.134	0.018	.209		member		
P19	.594	0.353	.371	0.138	.106	0.011	.200	0.04	.271	member			
P20	.595	0.354	.068	0.005	.031	0.001	.237	0.056	.208	member			
P21	.163	0.027	.521	0.271	.098	0.010	-.435	0.189	.249		member		
P22	.222	0.049	.130	0.017	-.493	0.243	-.047	0.002	.156			member	
P23	.131	0.017	.445	0.198	-.495	0.245	.240	0.058	.260				
P24	.433	0.187	.430	0.185	-.051	0.003	.229	0.052	.214				
P25	.157	0.025	.312	0.097	.665	0.442	-.033	0.001	.283			member	
P26	.320	0.102	.316	0.100	-.329	0.108	.581	0.338	.324				member
P27	.658	0.433	-.031	0.001	.247	0.061	-.052	0.003	.249	member			
P28	.512	0.262	-.068	0.005	.451	0.203	.332	0.110	.290				
P29	.481	0.231	.181	0.033	.009	0.000	.564	0.318	.291				member
P30	.070	0.005	.295	0.087	.691	0.477	.213	0.045	.307			member	

P31	-.049	0.002	.019	0.000	.681	0.464	-.017	0.000	.233			member	
P32	.088	0.008	.091	0.008	.236	0.056	.760	0.578	.325				member
P33	.570	0.325	-.379	0.144	-.553	0.306	-.053	0.003	.389				
P34	.569	0.324	.030	0.001	.361	0.130	.269	0.072	.264	member			
P35	.695	0.483	.124	0.015	-.184	0.034	.061	0.004	.268	member			

Note: $a^2 > H^2 / 2$ and $|a| > .310$ ($p < .05$) at 95% confidence level

THREE FACTOR MEMBERSHIP

Participant #	Factor A		Factor B		Factor C		H ² /2	Factor A	Factor B	Factor C
	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score	a score	a ² score				
P1	0.381	0.145	-0.305	0.093	-0.484	0.234	0.236			
P2	-0.046	0.002	0.34	0.116	0.594	0.353	0.235			member
P3	0.036	0.001	-0.26	0.068	0.015	0.000	0.035			
P4	0.239	0.057	0.012	0.000	0.669	0.448	0.252			member
P5	0.467	0.218	0.499	0.249	-0.121	0.015	0.241		member	
P6	0.191	0.036	0.531	0.282	0.268	0.072	0.195		member	
P7	0.418	0.174	0.054	0.003	-0.16	0.026	0.102	member		
P8	0.094	0.009	0.362	0.131	0.657	0.432	0.286			member
P9	0.076	0.006	0.249	0.062	-0.076	0.006	0.037			
P10	0.375	0.141	0.429	0.184	0.426	0.181	0.253			
P11	0.193	0.037	-0.279	0.078	0.653	0.426	0.271			member
P12	0.572	0.327	-0.008	0.000	0.445	0.198	0.263	member		
P13	0.103	0.011	0.186	0.035	0.589	0.347	0.196		member	
P14	0.384	0.147	0.421	0.177	0.247	0.061	0.193			
P15	0.441	0.195	-0.006	0.000	0.351	0.123	0.159	member		
P16	0.613	0.376	-0.114	0.013	0.003	0.000	0.194	member		
P17	0.266	0.071	-0.109	0.012	0.075	0.006	0.044			
P18	-0.318	0.101	-0.139	0.019	0.545	0.297	0.209			member
P19	0.622	0.387	0.203	0.041	0.308	0.095	0.261	member		
P20	0.628	0.394	0.134	0.018	0.011	0.000	0.206	member		
P21	0.002	0.000	-0.035	0.001	0.484	0.234	0.118			member
P22	0.280	0.078	-0.466	0.217	0.128	0.016	0.156		member	
P23	0.332	0.110	-0.36	0.130	0.458	0.210	0.225			
P24	0.520	0.270	0.063	0.004	0.391	0.153	0.214	member		
P25	0.035	0.001	0.628	0.394	0.263	0.069	0.232		member	
P26	0.595	0.354	-0.084	0.007	0.312	0.097	0.229	member		
P27	0.528	0.279	0.235	0.055	-0.111	0.012	0.173	member		
P28	0.504	0.254	0.552	0.305	-0.131	0.017	0.288		member	
P29	0.663	0.440	0.227	0.052	0.146	0.021	0.256	member		
P30	0.045	0.002	0.734	0.539	0.26	0.068	0.304		member	

P31	-0.170	0.029	0.631	0.398	-0.008	0.000	0.214		member	
P32	0.336	0.113	0.492	0.242	0.092	0.008	0.182		member	
P33	0.564	0.318	-0.531	0.282	-0.411	0.169	0.384			
P34	0.555	0.308	0.452	0.204	-0.038	0.001	0.257	member		
P35	0.693	0.480	-0.123	0.015	0.061	0.004	0.250	member		

Note: $a^2 > H^2 / 2$ and $|a| > .310$ ($p < .05$) at 95% confidence lev

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Nuclear Guinea Pigs: Three Decades of Radiation Experiments on U.S. Citizens.

United States Congress House of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Subcommittee on Energy Conservation and Power, published by U.S. Government

Printing Office, 1986, Identifier Y 4. En 2/3:99-NN, Electronic Publication Date 2010, at

the University of Nevada, Reno, unr.edu

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts on behalf of the Federal Judiciary (2019). *United States Courts.*

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Pub. L. No. 101-336.

Bateman, D., Wysocki, T., Gervais, A., & Cline, J.L. (2017). Special education competencies for principals. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 30(1), 48-56.

Bellamy, G. T., & Iwaszuk, W. (2017). *Responding to the need for new local special education administrators: A case study* [unpublished manuscript]. University of Washington.

<https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Case-Study-SPED-Admin-DRAFT.pdf>

Bettini, E., Benedict, A., Thomas, R., Kimberling, J., Choi, N., & McLeskey. (2017). Cultivating a community of effective special education teachers: Local special education administrators' roles. *Remedial and Special Education*, 38(2), 111-126.

Billingsley, B. S. (2012). Inclusive school reform: Distributed leadership across the change process. In J. B. Crockett, B. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 170-190). Routledge.

- Billingsley, B., & Banks, A. (2019). Leadership for inclusive schools 1995-2015. In J. B. Crockett, B. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 196-220). Routledge.
- Billingsley, B., DeMatthews, D., Connally, K., & McLeskey, J. (2018). Leadership for effective inclusive schools: Considerations for preparation and reform. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education, 42*, 65-81.
- Billingsley, B., McLeskey, J., & Crockett, J.B. (2019). Conceptualizing principal leadership for effective inclusive schools. In J. B. Crockett, B. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 306-332). Routledge.
- Boscardin, M. L. (2005). The administrative role in transforming secondary schools to support inclusive evidence-based practices. *American Secondary Education, 33*(3), 21-31.
- Boscardin, M. L. (2007). What is so special about special education administration? Considerations for school leadership. *Exceptionality, 15*(3), 189-200.
- Boscardin, M. L. (2011). Using professional standards to inform leadership in special education. In J. M. Kauffman, & D. P. Hallahan (Eds.), *Handbook of special education* (pp. 378-390). Routledge.
- Boscardin, M. L. & Lashely, C. (2019). Expanding the leadership framework to support socially just special education policy, preparation, and standards. In J. B. Crockett, B.
- Boscardin, M.L. & Sheperd, K.G. (2020). Leadership for evaluations responsive to disability and culture. *Journal of Educational Administration. 58* (5), 555-570.
- Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special*

- education* (pp. 39-59). Routledge.
- Boscardin, M. L., McCarthy, E., & Delgado, R. (2009). An integrated research-based approach to creating standards for special education leadership. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 22(2), 68-84.
- Boscardin, M. L., Rude, H., Schulze, R., & Tudryn, P. (2018). Do leaders of special education share similar perceptions of standards guiding the leadership and administration of special education? *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 31(2).
- Boscardin, M. L., Weir, K., & Kusek, C. (2010). A national study of state credentialing requirements for administrators of special education. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 23(2), 61–75.
- Brown, S. R. (1993). A primer of Q-methodology. *Operant Subjectivity*, 16(3), 91-138.
- Brown, S. R. (1980). *Political subjectivity*. Yale University Press.
- Brown, S. R. (2004). Q methodology. In M.S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman & T.F. Liao (Eds.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of social science research methods* (Vol. 3, pp. 887-888). Sage.
- Brown, S. R., Selden, S.C., & Durning, D.W. (2008). Q Methodology. In G. J. Miller, & K. Yang. *Handbook of research methods in public administration* (2nd ed., pp. 721-764). CRC Press.
- Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
- Brownell, M. T., Bettini, E., Pua, D., Peyton, D., & Benedict, A. (2019). Special education teacher effectiveness in an era of reduced federal mandates and increasing teacher shortages. In J. B. Crockett, B. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 333-352). Routledge

- Carter, S. & Abawi, L.A. (2018). Leadership, inclusion and quality education for all. *Australian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education* 42 (1), 49-64.
- Collins, K. M. T., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Sutton, I. L. (2006). A model incorporating the rationale and purpose for conducting mixed-methods research in special education and beyond. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, 4(1), 67-100.
- CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge. (2009). *Policy advisory: The law on inclusive education*. The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.
- Conrad, C., Neumann, A., Haworth, J. G., & Scott, P. (1993). *Qualitative research in higher education: Experiencing alternative perspective and approaches*. Ginn Press.
- Council of Chief State School Officers & The Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform Center. (2017). *PSEL 2015 and promoting principal leadership for the success of students with disabilities*.
- Council for Exceptional Children. (2016). <https://www.cec.sped.org/>
- Crockett, J. B. (2007). The changing landscape of special education administration. *Exceptionality*, 15(3), 139-142.
- Crockett, J. B. (2019). The preparation of leaders for special education in the twenty-first century. In J. B. Crockett, B. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 60-78). Routledge.
- Crockett, J. B., Becker, M. K., & Quinn, D. (2009). Reviewing the knowledge base of special education leadership and administration from 1970-2009. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 22(2), 55-67.

- Damio, S. M. (2016). Q methodology: An overview and steps to implementation. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 105-122.
- Damio, S. M. (2018). The analytic process of q methodology. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 59-75.
- Darling-Hammond, L. & Cook-Harvey, C.M. (2018). Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success. *Learning Policy Institute*, 1-81.
- Davis, C. H. & Michelle, C. (2011). Q methodology in audience research: Bridging the qualitative/quantitative 'divide'? *Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, 8(2), 559-593.
- DeMatthews, D. E. (2015). Clearing a path for inclusion: Distributing leadership in a high performing elementary school. *Journal of School Leadership*, 25(6), 1000-1038.
- DiPaola, M. & Walther-Thomas, C. (2003). Principals and special education: the critical role of school leaders. *Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education and the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education*.
- DiPaola, M., Tschannen-Moran, M., & Walther-Thomas, C. (2004). School principals and special education: Creating the context for academic success. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 37(1).
- Donner, S. (2001). Using Q-sorts in participatory process: An introduction to the methodology. *Social analysis: Selected tools and techniques*, 24-49.
- Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. 20, U.S.C. § 1401 et seq, S. 6 (94th).
- Education Laws and Regulations. (2015, March 13). <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/>
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EASA) of 1965, 20, U.S.C. § 16301 et seq.
- Executive Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (2004).

<http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/overview/execsumm.html>

- Fan, C. H., Gallup, J. L. & Bocanegra, J. O. (2019). Using the CEC advanced preparation standards for special education administration to examine competencies for special education directors. *Journal of Education Leadership*, 32(1), 39-56.
- Fernandez, C.F & Vecchio, R. P. (1997). "Situational leadership theory revisited: A test of an across-jobs perspective". *The Leadership Quarterly*. 8 (1): 67–84
- Fuchs, L. S., & Stecker, P. M. (2010). The “blurring” of special education in a new continuum of general education placements and services. *Council for Exceptional Children*, 76(3), 301-323.
- Gartner, A., Lipsky, D. K. (1998). The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. *NCERI bulletin*, Spring.
- Garrison-Wade, D., Sobel, D., & Fulmer, C. L. (2007). Inclusive leadership: Preparing principals for the role that awaits them. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development*, 19, 117-132.
- Geographic Identifiers. (2010). *Census Summary File 1 (G001)*. *American Factfinder*, U.S. Census Bureau.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33, 329-351.
- Hallinger, P. (2011). Leadership for learning: lessons from 40 years of empirical research. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(2), 125-142.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative leadership make a difference in school improvement? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(6), 654-678.

- Harpell, J. V., & Andrews, J. W. (2010). Administrative leadership in the age of inclusion: Promoting best practices and teacher empowerment. *The Journal of Educational Thought, 44*(2), 189-210.
- Hehir, T., & Katzman, L. I. (2012). *Effective inclusive schools: designing successful schoolwide programs*. Jossey-Bass.
- Hersey, P., Blandard, K.H. & Johnson, D.E. (2012). *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*, 10th Edl, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Hitt, D. H., & Tucker, P. D. (2016). Systematic review of key leader practices found to influence student achievement: A unified framework. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(2), 531-569.
- Hoover, J. J., & Teeters, L. (2019). Collaborative decision-making in multicultural contexts. In J. B. Crockett, B. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (2nd ed., pp. 221-242). Routledge.
- Hoppey, D., & Mcleskey, J. (2010). A case study of principal leadership in an effective inclusive school. *The Journal of Special Education, 46*(4), 245-256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466910390507>
- Houser, M. A., Dickens, V., & Hicks, T. (2011). Correlates of attitudes toward academic and physical inclusive practices for students with disabilities and selected leadership behaviors among middle school principals in North Carolina. *Journal of The American Academy of Special Education Professionals, 56-67*.
- Hsiung, P.C., & Raddon, M.B. (2010). Lives and legacies: A guide to qualitative interviewing. *Unpublished Manuscript*.
- IBM Corp. (2012). *IBM SPSS statistics for windows, Version 6.0*. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.

IDEA - Building the Legacy of IDEA 2004. (n.d.). <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>

Improving America's School Act (IASA) of 1994, 20 U.S.C. 20, U.S.C. § 16301 et seq.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, 20 U.S.C. 20, U.S.C. § 1401 et seq. Pub. L. No. 105-17, 105th Cong., 1st sess.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, 20 U.S.C. 20, U.S.C. § 1401 et seq.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Regulations, 34 C.F.R. 20, U.S.C. § 300 et seq.

Ireh, M. & Bailey, J. (1999). A student of superintendents' change leadership styles using the situational leadership model. *American Secondary Education*, 27 (4), 22-32.

Johnson, S. M., Kardos, S. M., Kauffman, D., Liu, E., & Donaldson, M. L. (2004). The support gap: New teachers' early experiences in high-income and low-income schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 12(61), 1-25.

Kolb, S. M., (2012). Grounded theory and the constant comparative method: valid research strategies for educators. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(1), 83-86.

Lashley, C., & Boscardin, M. L., (2003). Special education administration at a crossroads, *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 16, 63-75.

Leithwood K., & Jantzi D. (2008). Linking leadership to student learning: The contributions of leader efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(4), 496-528.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1), 27-42.

Lotus Leadership Institute (2017), "Transitional leadership model", retrieved from available at: [http:// www.lotusleadership.net/the-difference/transitional-leadership-model/](http://www.lotusleadership.net/the-difference/transitional-leadership-model/).

- Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., Anderson, S. (2010). Investigating the links to improved student learning: final report of research findings. *The Wallace Foundation*. <http://hdl.handle.net/11299/140885>.
- Marks, H.M. & Printy, S.M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance. An integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39, 370-397.
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2017). *Educator effectiveness guidebook for inclusive practice*. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/effectiveness-guidebook-for-inclusive-practice>.
- Massachusetts Elementary Schools. (2020). *A list of public elementary and private elementary school data*. <https://elementaryschools.org/directory/ma/>.
- McDonnell, L. M., McLaughlin, M. J., & Morison, P. (1997). *Educating one and all: Students with disabilities and standard-base reform*. National Academy.
- McKeown, B., & Thomas, D. B. (2013). *Q Methodology series: Quantitative applications in the social sciences* (2nd ed.) Sage.
- McLeskey, J., Waldron, N. L., & Redd, L. (2014). A case study of a highly effective, inclusive elementary school. *The Journal of Special Education*, 48, 59–70.
- McLeskey, J., Waldron, N. L., Spooner, F., & Algozzine, B. (2014). What are effective inclusive schools and why are they important? In McLeskey, J., Waldron, N. L., Spooner, F., & Algozzine, B. (Eds.), *Handbook of effective inclusive schools: Research and practice* (pp. 3–16).
- McLeskey J. & Waldron N. L. (1996). Responses to questions teachers and administrators frequently ask about inclusive school programs. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 2, 150.

- McLeskey J. & Waldron N. L. (2015). Effective leadership makes schools truly inclusive. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96(5), 68-73.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Wiley.
- Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (2019). *From the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) through the ADA Title II to the Most Integrated Setting*.
<https://mn.gov/mnddc/>
- Militello, M., Alsbury, T., & Warren, T. P. (2013). How professional standards guide practice for school principals. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 27(1), 74-90.
- Mosley, J., Boscardin, M.L., & Wells, C. (2014). Perceptions of principal attributes in the era of accountability. *Journal of School Leadership*, 24(6), 35-58.
- National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015). *Professional standards for educational leaders*. Author. <https://www.npbea.org/>
- Newman, I. & Ramlo, S. (2010). Using Q methodology and Q factor analysis in mixed methods research. In A. M. Tashakkori, & C. B. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (2nd ed., pp. 505-530.). SAGE.
- Northouse, P.G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and Practice. 7th Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications*
- Nyenyembe, F. W., Maslowski, R., Nimrod, B. S., & Peter, L. (2016). Leadership Styles and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Tanzanian Public Secondary Schools. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(5), 980-988.
- Osiname (2018). Utilizing the critical inclusive praxis: The voyage of five selected school principals in building inclusive school cultures. *Improving Schools*, 2(1), 63-83.

- Pazey, B. L. & Yates, J. R. (2012). Conceptual and historical foundations of special education administration. In J. B. Crockett, B. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 17-36). Routledge.
- Petersen, G. J., Kelly, V. L., Reimer, C. N., Mosunich, D., & Thompson, D. (2009). An investigation of district leaders' perceptions of forces that complicate efforts to succeed. *Journal of School Public Relations, 30*(4), 281+.
- Provost, J., Boscardin, M. L., & Wells, C. (2010). Perceptions of principal leadership behaviors in Massachusetts in the era of education reform. *Journal of School Leadership, 20*(5).
- Ramlo, S. (2015). Theoretical significance in q methodology: A qualitative approach to a mixed method. *Research in Schools, 22*(1), 73-87.
- Ramlo, S. (2016). Mixed method lessons learned from 80 years of q methodology. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 10*(1), 28-45.
- Ryndak, D. L., Reardon R., Benner S. R., & Ward T. (2007). Transitioning to and sustaining district-wide inclusive services: A 7-year study of a district's ongoing journey and its accompanying complexities. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 32*(4), 228-246.
- Salisbury, C. (2006). Principals' perspectives on inclusive elementary schools. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 31*(1), 70-82.
- Schmolck, P. (2012). *PQMethod manual*.
<http://schmolck.userweb.mwn.de/qmethod/pqmanual.htm#algorithms>
- Schulze, R., & Boscardin, M. L. (2018). Leadership perceptions of principals with and without special education backgrounds. *Journal of Special Education Leadership, 28*(1), 4-30.

- Stephenson, W. (1953). *The study of behavior: Q-technique and its methodology*. The University of Chicago Press.
- SWIFT Center (2014). Domain5: Inclusive policy structure and practice. In *SWIFT in 60 video transcripts*. www.swiftschools.org/Common/Cms/Documents/SWIFTin60/SWIFTin60scripts.pdf
- The ARC (2020). *Our history*. <https://thearc.org/about-us/history/>
- Thomas, W., & Watson, R. (2002). Q-sorting and MIS research: A primer. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 8, 141-156.
- Thompson, P. (2017). Effective leadership competencies of school-based special education administrators. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 30(1), 31-47.
- Thompson, B. (1998). *Using q-technique factor analysis in education program evaluations or research: An introductory primer* (ED422389). ERIC.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED422389.pdf>
- Thompson, E., & France, R. G. (2015). Suburban district leadership does matter. *Journal for Leadership and Instruction*, 14(1), 5-8.
- Tudryn, P., Boscardin, M. L., & Wells, C. (2016). Distributed leadership through the lenses of special education leaders. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 29(1), 3-21.
- Valenta, A. L., & Wigger, U. (1997). Q-methodology: definition and application in health care informatics. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, 4(6), 501-510.
- VandenBosch, D. (2001). *Why do we factor variables when we care about types of people? Q and other two-mode factor analytic models* (ED449217). ERIC.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED449217>
- Veale, N. W. (2010). A comparison between collaborative and authoritative leadership styles of

- special education administrators. *Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals*, 147-156.
- Waldron, N. L., McLeskey, J., & Reed, L. (2011). Setting the direction: The role of the principal in developing an effective, inclusive school. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 24(2), 51-60
- Waters, T. J., & Marzano, R. J. (2006). *School district leadership that works: The effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement* [Working paper].
- Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2007). *Schooling by design: Mission, action, and achievement*. Ascd.
- Witziers, B., Bosker, R., & Kruger, M. (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement: The elusive search for an association. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 398–425.
- Woods, C. (2012). Exploring emotion in the higher education workplace: Capturing contrasting perspectives using Q methodology. *Journal of Higher Education*, 64, 891-909.
- Wright, P. W. D., & Wright, P. D. (2016). *Wrightslaw: Special education law* (2nd ed.). Harbor House Law Press.
- Yates, J. R., Shelby, E., Blount, C., Fugate, K., Altobelli, J., Cadle, S., Sumbera, M., & Williams, J. (2010). RTI's effect on changing roles in education. Paper presented at the meeting of Council for Exceptional Children, Division for CEDS, San Antonio, Texas.