

# Perceptions and knowledge of special education law among building administrators in a selected Georgia school district

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## DISSERTATIONS

### Perceptions and Knowledge of Special Education Law among Building Administrators in a Selected Georgia School District

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#### Degree Name

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

#### Department

Educational Leadership and Research

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#### Abstract

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has impacted every school district in the United States and significantly altered the role of administrators. Requirements for the administration and supervision of special education have developed exponentially since the enactment of Public Law 94- 142 and its reauthorization as the IDEA.

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions and knowledge of building administrators regarding special education law. The following research questions were developed to facilitate this study: (a) is there a difference in the level of knowledge about special education law among building administrators regarding the seven provisions of the IDEA; (b) is there a difference between principals and assistant principals and their level of knowledge in the areas of special education law; (c) what are the relationships between the building administrators' level of knowledge of the areas of special education law; and (d) is there a difference between the building administrators' level of knowledge of special education law related to years of classroom teaching experience and years of experience as an administrator?

Results of the study suggest administrators perceive they did have sufficient knowledge of the IDEA and had received adequate training in school law. However, administrators' perceptions of knowledge and adequate training were not substantiated through data analysis. In addition, the majority of the administrators were not aware of this deficit in knowledge.

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Some districts categorize special education administrators by specific skill sets; for example, some districts have coordinators that primarily provide mentoring and support to new teachers. Coordinators can also be in charge of technology, including computerized IEP systems and cloud-based file storage. Some districts even hire special education administrators to strictly monitor and evaluate IEP compliance. Special Education Administrators on the Career Path. This background creates a strong foundation upon which they can build their knowledge of the complex legal and compliance issues that administrators oversee. Others find their way into special education administration after serving as school principals and vice principals. Schools must provide students who earn only a CDOS written confirmation that they are eligible to return and earn a diploma until they reach age 21. Child Find. New York City has an obligation to identify, locate, and evaluate each child attending a New York City school who has a disability or is suspected of being a child with a disability, regardless of the severity of the disability. This is called the "Child Find" obligation. The obligation of the DOE to maintain the student's special education records in a manner that ensures that only appropriate staff has access. Consent. General Education Curriculum. The body of knowledge and range of skills that all students, including students with disabilities, are expected to master. H. Home Instruction. Special Education Law – Job Duties. The work of the special education attorney spans the entire litigation spectrum from basic administrative proceedings to complex state and federal litigation. On the plaintiff side, special education attorneys and paralegals assist in meeting the educational needs of children and protecting their constitutional rights. They must have knowledge of the education options available and be familiar with IEP issues, disabilities, discipline issues and behavioral supports. On the defense side, special education attorneys represent school districts, school boards, teachers, administrators, and other school employees to defend a variety of claims. Building administrators in a selected georgia school district by. Patricia Claire Grasso A Dissertation. Submitted to the Graduate Studies Officer of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. 4 Purpose of the Study The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and knowledge of special education law among building administrators. The seven principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were examined: (a) zero reject, (b) related services, (c) appropriate evaluation, (d) least restrictive environment (LRE), (e) procedural safeguard, (f) Individual education program (IEP), and (g) parent participation (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000; Yell, 1998).