

THE VALUE OF ADMINISTRATIVE BEHAVIORS: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND BUILDING
ADMINISTRATORS IN KANSAS

by

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B.S., Kansas State University, 1995
M.S., Kansas State University, 2000

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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College of Education

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Abstract

Finding qualified teachers is a growing concern to school districts nationwide. Special Education is one of those areas that is highly in need. Researchers have suggested the reason for these shortages is not recruitment of special education teachers, but the retention of special education teachers. The research has also shown that lack of effective building administrative support may be a critical factor in a teachers' decision to stay or leave the field. This study was developed to determine what administrative behavior special education teachers value the most. Additionally, this study sought to find out if there were differences in the administrative behaviors that special education teachers value and what building administrators perceive to be of value.

A survey was sent electronically to a random sample of convenience to 200 special education teachers and 200 building administrators in the state of Kansas; 276 surveys were returned. The survey collected data to determine the perceived value of administrative support behaviors by the special education teachers, and any differences of the perceived value of administrative supports by the building administrators. The survey items were categorized into four subgroups of administrative behaviors: emotional, environmental, technical, and instructional.

The administrative behaviors of most value to the special education teachers were those that were emotional in nature. Respondents reported that the most valued support actions included providing praise and acknowledging that the

teacher makes a difference, supporting the teacher in front of parents, and trusting the teacher's judgment. Findings also indicated that there were statistically significant differences between what administrative supports special education teachers valued and what building administrators perceive to be of value to special education teachers, with the exception of the technical administrative support actions.

These findings suggested that it would benefit school districts positively to implement strategies to evaluate the emotional support provided and desired by their special education teachers as one method to reduce special education teacher attrition. One way of ensuring administrators provide these supports is to hold them accountable, perhaps through policy change in the evaluation process. With recent legislation such as No Child Left Behind, mandating all students receive a quality education from qualified teachers despite the current shortage of special education teachers; administrators must implement strategies to reduce teacher attrition.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

With the movement for more accountability within education, finding quality educators is a growing concern. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, between 2001 and 2013, the number of teachers in elementary and secondary schools is expected to rise. Schools are having difficulty finding quality educators (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2006). The shortage of educators has been attributed to family discouragement, lack of financial incentives, poor working conditions, competition from other fields, and lack of respect by the students and for the profession (Futrell, 2000). Researchers have offered several solutions to reduce the teacher shortage: increase pay, implement strategic recruiting efforts, offer mentor programs, and increase training programs (Bradley, 1999).

There is also a growing shortage of qualified teachers. The National Center for Education Statistics (2006) estimated that in the United States, more than 12% of all newly hired teachers enter the workforce without any training at all. Though the need for highly qualified educators varies by region and discipline, this need is especially high in science, math, and special education (Merrow, 1999). The special education teacher shortage and retention problem contains many variables. Attrition, rather than a lack of teacher candidates, is a

major contributing factor to the dwindling supply of educators (Ingersoll, 2002). Researchers have offered many explanations for teacher attrition, including role problems, excessive paperwork, and lack of job satisfaction (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, & Barkanci, 1998; Boe, Cook, Bobbitt, & Weber, 1996; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997).

Researchers have also suggested that teachers leave because of low job satisfaction (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997; Coleman, 2001; Council for Exceptional Children, 2001; Embich, 2001). According to the National Education Association (2005), teachers leave the profession because they feel overwhelmed by the expectations and the lack of support in the classroom. Only 11% of public school public school teachers were highly satisfied with their positions, as reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics (2006). Teachers most often cited lack of administrative support as a reason for dissatisfaction with their positions (Bruton, 2001; Levine, B., 2001). However, a positive work environment characterized by communication and collaboration with building-level administration reduces special education teacher attrition (Weiss, 2001).

The accumulated research has shown that administrative support is a contributing factor to teacher attrition; therefore, actions that teachers consider valuable should be identified. This study attempted to identify the types of administrative supports special education teachers value. The study also compared

the administrative supports that special education teachers value with the supports that building administrators perceive as being valuable to special education teachers.

Having such research data can help to create policies and programs to increase the administrative supports identified as valuable. Researchers have directly linked administrative support to teacher job satisfaction and working conditions (Coleman, 2001; Council for Exceptional Children, 2001; Embich, 2001; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001). Therefore, increased support may contribute to a reduction in teacher attrition, including special education teacher attrition (Fore, Martin, & Bender, 2002). Building administrators may not realize exactly what supports special education teachers value and may be focusing their efforts on items that have little value to special educators.

Statement of the Problem

Special education teachers have left in substantial numbers when compared to general education teachers (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, & Barkanci, 1998; Boe, Cook, et al. 1996; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). Attrition in special education accounted for 10% of all educator attrition; nearly double that of general educators who leave

the special education teaching field (Fore et al., 2002). Therefore, viable tactics to retain special education teachers must be developed.

Researchers and practitioners have developed strategies, programs, and incentives to recruit and retain teachers; but if teachers are leaving the field in such numbers, these efforts may be in vain. Using the image of a revolving door, Ingersoll (2002) argued that teacher shortages are not a function of increasing student enrollment but of teacher attrition. Numerous factors, both singly and collectively, have contributed to teacher attrition, including burnout, classroom conditions, lack of administrative support, excessive paperwork, professional isolation, physical exhaustion, challenging student behaviors, role ambiguity, and the diverse instructional needs of the students (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, 1997; Coleman, 2001; Council for Exceptional Children, 2001; Embich, 2001; Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999).

Although lack of administrative support has been identified as a cause of teacher attrition, according to Weiss (2001), researchers have failed to identify clearly those administrative supports valued by special education educators. Educators need to receive the supports they desire. Balfour (2001) found that special education teachers were not receiving the support they expected from their administrators. Like Weiss, Balfour was unsuccessful in identifying specific support actions valued by special education teachers. Both researchers recommended further examination of support actions that are provided.

In addition, the literature concerning administrative support of special education teachers specific to the perceptions of support that is valued by their administrators is limited (Lund-Glassman, 1999). Likewise, few researchers have investigated differences in the amount of support provided to special education teachers versus the support that building administrators view as important. Additionally, researchers have not identified support actions perceived as valuable by special education teachers. Studies conducted by Tobias (2000), Geter (1997), and Lund-Glassman (1999) recommended additional research to investigate further the differences between teachers and building administrators. Therefore, this study addressed the different administrative support actions that special education teachers value and compared the administrative supports that special education teachers value with the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to special education teachers.

Purpose of the Study

Although researchers have identified administrative support as one factor that contributes to job satisfaction, little evidence exists on specific administrative support actions valued by special education educators as compared to the perceptions of valuable support actions from the building administrators' view. The purpose of this study was to fill a gap in the research that relates to special education teacher attrition by identifying areas of administrative support

perceived as valuable to special education teachers as compared to the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to special education teachers. Recent studies have failed to identify specific sources of administrative support (Balfour, 2001; Weiss, 2001). Additionally, researchers have not ascertained the specific needs of special education teachers (Balfour, 2001; Sirk, 1999). Because of limited research available in this area, this study was designed to determine any differences between what special education teachers value and what building administrators perceive as valuable regarding the amount of support received and to identify the supports valued by special education educators. Resulting data may illuminate the need to increase or decrease the type of administrative support to special education educators.

Research Questions

Two questions related to the perceived value of administrative support from special education educators were addressed:

1. What types of administrative supports do special education teachers value?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to special education teachers?

These research questions led to the null hypothesis in this study: There is no statistically significant difference between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to the special education teachers. The alternate hypothesis was the following: There is a statistically significant difference between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to the special education teachers.

Statement of Significance

The existing literature indicated researchers have been unable to provide reliable and consistent information on the perceived value of specific administrative supports or comparisons between special education educators and building administrators regarding the value of administrative support. Lund-Glassman (1999) and Tobias (2000) recommended additional research to investigate these differences further. Additionally, Balfour (2001) and Weiss (2001) recommended further research to identify specific support actions that are perceived as valuable by special education educators. Therefore, a critical examination of supports should provide valuable information to the field of special education (Balfour, 2001; Weiss, 2001). Theoretically, providing the desired support actions should reduce special education teacher attrition (Kreger,

1999; Weiss, 2001), thus alleviating somewhat the teacher shortage by preserving current personnel.

Results from this study could be utilized to create policies and programs to increase those administrative supports identified as valuable. The retention of qualified teachers should represent a partial solution to the teacher shortage and facilitate school compliance with federal mandates (Ingersoll, 2002).

Additionally, teacher turnover has cost school systems an average of 25% of their annual salary expenses (Gately, n.d.). Increasing valued support actions by administrators could reduce special education educator attrition, assist in compliance with federal regulations, and reduce expenses (Fore et al., 2002).

Results could also be used to help design and prepare future building administrators concerning which types of support special educators perceive as valuable. Building administrators could then focus their efforts on the specific supports of value to the special education educators.

This study was grounded in a theoretical foundation, including current special education law, theories on teacher attrition, and research regarding special education. The following section provides a brief description of this foundation, which is discussed in more detail in the literature review in chapter 2.

Theoretical Foundation

Providing a quality education to every child is a priority in America. Evident by numerous school reform initiatives, Americans desire school reform and educational accountability. The landmark enactment of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (1975) afforded children with handicapping conditions an equal right to education and held local and state agencies accountable for serving students with disabilities. More recently, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, the 1997 amendments (IDEA 97), and the reauthorization in 2004 provided schools specific guidelines related to serving students with disabilities. Each piece of educational legislation defined chronologically and incrementally the provisions afforded to students with disabilities and tied federal funds to compliance.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandated accountability through annual testing, research-based instruction, and placement of a qualified teacher in every classroom. Each mandate exemplified challenges in differing magnitude across the United States that had to be addressed to receive federal funding. In addition, the success of each mandate could be achieved only if school divisions have qualified teachers, defined as teachers who have been certified by the state to teach in a particular subject area.

NCLB required school administrators to ensure that a qualified teacher instructs each student. Thus, as the special education population grew, the

responsibilities of the administrator as educational leader grew as well. However, administrators might not be adequately prepared. Despite spending a large amount of their time on special education-related issues, administrators in a study by Bravenec (1998) perceived themselves as inadequately prepared and expressed the need for further training. In a study by Stanley and Wilcox (1999), a majority of principals expressed the need for formal training in special education, but only 60% indicated they had some type of special education training. Without the appropriate knowledge and ability, administrators were unable to support special education teachers effectively.

The supports that special education teachers value might be significantly different than those that building administrators perceive to be valuable. Various researchers (Balfour, 2001; Bare-Oldham, 1999; Geter, 1997; Lund-Glassman, 1999; Sirk, 1999; Tobias, 2000) have examined the differences between elementary and secondary special education teachers and their perceptions of leadership, school climate, and job satisfaction. Each study revealed differences between elementary and secondary teacher perceptions. Drawing on their own research, Lund-Glassman and Tobias recommended further exploration of differences between special education teachers and building administrators. Identifying the support actions valued by special education teachers may assist administrators in implementing strategies that teachers actually value to increase satisfaction among teachers and, theoretically, to decrease attrition.

Compounding this problem for administrators is an apparent shortage of qualified teachers, particularly special education teachers (Ingersoll, 1999, 2001). According to Ingersoll (2001), the most important problem facing American schools is the shortage of qualified teachers. Unfortunately, school division administrators have reported a lack of qualified teacher applicants, so often positions have been filled by unqualified personnel or left vacant (Center for Personnel Studies in Special Education, 2002). An additional related problem involves teachers qualified to teach one subject but hired to teach out of their fields. In 2003-2004, nearly 47,500 special education positions were filled by uncertified personnel (Center for Personnel Studies in Special Education, 2005).

Additional variables have compounded the shortage of qualified teachers in special education. IDEA 97 clearly defined the procedures for identifying students with disabilities, preventing schools from arbitrarily denying students special education services. This legislative component increased the number of students being identified that, in turn, necessitated more teachers being needed in special education (Ingersoll, 1999). This was only one facet of the multidimensional problem. Colleges have not been producing enough special education teachers to fill the vacancies (Hirsch, 2001). Students enrolled in teacher preparatory programs have compounded the shortage by choosing not to accept positions in education (Hirsch, 2001). Thus, a commonality among localities has been the shortage of special education teachers.

An additional factor has affected the availability of qualified special education teachers: teacher attrition and turnover (Office of Special Education Programs, 1998). The data on levels of attrition and migration have revealed that special education teachers leave their assignments in far greater numbers than general education teachers (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, & Barkanci, 1998; Boe, Cook, et al., 1996; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997; Zabel & Zabel, 2002). Nationally, 20% of special education educators have left the field, compared to 13% of general education teachers (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, et al., 1997). This phenomenon has been attributed to burnout, poor classroom conditions, lack of administrative support, excessive paperwork, professional isolation, exhaustion from work load, various student behaviors, role ambiguities, and the diverse instructional needs of the students (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, et al., 1997; Coleman, 2001; Council for Exceptional Children, 2001).

Job satisfaction has been one contributing factor to attrition (Ingersoll, 1999). Researchers have linked effective administrative support directly to increased job satisfaction levels and positive perceptions of working conditions (Coleman, 2001; Council for Exceptional Children, 2001; Embich, 2001; Gersten et al., 2001; Morgan, 2000; Sirk, 1999). According to Morgan (2000), job satisfaction was the most significant predictor of special education teachers' intent to stay. In turn, most significant to teachers' job satisfaction was principal support

(Sirk, 1999). Thus, increasing effective administrative support could be theorized as a contributing factor to reducing special education teacher attrition.

There has been ample evidence that administrators play pivotal roles in the teachers' levels of job satisfaction (Bruton, 2001; Levine, B., 2001). Those administrators who provided effective support to special education educators have increased the odds of retaining qualified teachers (Sirk, 1999).

Increased support from administrators could diminish teacher attrition and, therefore, teacher shortages (Ingersoll, 2002). Boyer and Gillespie (2000) identified providing instructional feedback, maintaining communication, allowing for collaboration with peers, playing a role in decision making, and empathizing with teachers as strategies administrators can implement to support teachers. However, the relationship between these variables and the decisions made regarding their profession has been largely unknown.

A gap in the literature exists regarding research identifying specific support actions administrators can implement that are valued by special education teachers. According to the Council for Exceptional Children (2000), most administrators have not been prepared adequately or do not realize what supports are needed to increase special education educator job satisfaction and thus increase retention. This lack of knowledge has decreased the probability that administrators can provide effective support or effectively provide the supports that the special education teachers need. After conducting studies on

administrative support, Balfour (2001) and Weiss (2001) recommended additional investigation of effective administration supports.

Summary of the Methodology

This was a comparative study to identify administrative support actions valued by special education teachers. The study sought to compare those administrative supports that special education teachers value with the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be valuable. The survey was distributed online through Kansas State University to special education educators and to building administrators in the state of Kansas. The population pool was a sample of convenience to ensure adequate response numbers. The survey contained questions pertaining to support actions identified as having or lacking value.

The data were collected and analyzed with a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA), using the Statistical Package for the Social Services software to determine significant differences between the total mean score and within the four subscales in the surveys.

Delimitations

This study included a random and proportionate sampling of special education educators and building administrators employed in the state of Kansas

during the 2006-2007 school year. Educators and building administrators employed in private schools were not included in this study. Data were collected during the 2006-2007 school year.

Limitations

This survey was limited to special education educators and building administrators employed full-time in the state of Kansas during the 2006-2007 school year. Results could be generalized only to populations similar to the state of Kansas. In addition, the survey instruments collected the participants' perceptions at the time the responses were provided (Dawson, 1997); teacher perceptions might change over time. The survey was sent out online through Kansas State University; teachers or building administrators unfamiliar or unable to use the survey system might be unwilling to respond or to complete the survey.

However, the use of an Internet survey increased the credibility of responses (Dillman, 2000), and it was assumed that the participants provided honest answers. Responses were confidential and had no impact on the individual, thus reducing the potential for response bias. It should be noted also that, according to Doyle (1985), only a relationship between variables can be determined, not a direction of causation for the relationship of the responses. Random assignment did not occur; therefore, any conclusions of cause and effect were less definite but still plausible as there were limited threats to internal

reliability. The survey did not ask for certain specific demographic information, such as: gender, length of service, licensure status, or size of school population. The respondents can not be categorized or evaluated using those demographic factors.

Definitions

The following terms have been defined according to the purpose of this study:

Administrator. This term encompasses the assistant principal or principal within the school building who is responsible for implementing, supervising, and evaluating special education programs (Balfour, 2001).

Attrition. Attrition refers to educators leaving their teaching positions to seek employment elsewhere, including other school divisions, or to retire (Levine, B., 2001).

Elementary special education educator. This term refers to educators responsible for servicing students receiving special education services from kindergarten through Grade 5.

Emotional subscale. The emotional subscale were administrative support behaviors that were based upon feelings and emotions.

Environmental subscale. The environmental subscale were administrative support behaviors that were based upon the school's physical characteristics.

In-service. Professional development training provided for practicing principals and faculty usually is noted as staff development or in-service.

Instructional subscale. The instructional subscale were administrative support behaviors that were based upon the action, or practice of teaching.

Job satisfaction. The perceived value of various factors attained through completion of roles and tasks within a position (Morgan, 2000).

Qualified teacher. A qualified teacher is one who has been fully licensed or certified by the state and who has not had any certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis (Kansas Department of Education, 2005).

Secondary special education educator. A secondary special education educator is responsible for servicing students in special education within Grades 6-12.

Technical Subscale. The technical subscale were administrative support behaviors that were based upon the mechanics and specifics of the school.

Summary

Building-level administrative support is essential to retention of quality teachers (Weiss, 2001). Researchers have revealed that teachers who are not satisfied with administrative support are less satisfied with their roles as special education teachers (Ingersoll, 1999; Sirk, 1999). Teachers who perceived themselves as receiving insufficient administrative support cited this as a

mitigating factor in their decision to leave education (Gersten et al., 2001).

Teachers who perceived receiving higher levels of administrative support reported planning to remain in education (Sirk 1999). In addition to these findings, some researchers have reported that special education teachers and building administrators may hold differing perceptions on what administrative support is valued (Sirk, 1999).

The literature suggested that administrative support influences the decision of special education teachers to remain in education (Sirk, 1999). This study was designed to identify the administrative supports valued by special education educators and how those compared to what building administrators felt were valuable supports to give to special education teachers. The results could be useful to administrative educators on the college level as well as professional development personnel within the schools to improve the climate and culture of the school and in turn increase the opportunities for teaching and learning.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation presents the literature related to the historical significance of special education, administrative responsibilities, comparisons of perceptions, attrition of special education teachers, and the role of administrative support. Chapter 3 contains an explanation of the survey design and development, methodology, and data collection procedures. Chapters 4 and 5 contain analysis of the data, interpretations of the study results, and implications for practice and future research.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Recent legislation, the NCLB (2002), mandates that a qualified teacher teach every child. Securing highly qualified teachers poses a daunting task in an era of teacher shortages. Nationally, researchers have estimated that schools need to hire over 2 million teachers within the next decade (Bradley, 1999). According to Boe and Gilford (1992), there is a great shortage of quality teachers and an even greater shortage of highly qualified teachers. A minimum of 6 out of every 10 students had teachers without the appropriate credentials in science and mathematics during the 2001-2002 school year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). “While the shortage of teachers for most subjects is being felt in pockets across the country, the scarcity of special education teachers is nearly universal” (Bradley, 1999, p. 36). During the 1996-1997 school year, 4,000 special education teaching positions were left vacant; and 33,000 teaching positions were filled by unqualified teachers (Coleman, 2001). Not surprisingly, special education educators have been identified as the most prevalent and pervasive component of the shortage (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2006).

As a result of legal decisions and legislation specifically defining special education, special education populations have soared as has the need for special education teachers. To exacerbate this situation, educators have been leaving the field rapidly, and enrollment in teaching preparation programs has been low (Office of Special Education Programs, 1998). Thus, positions often have been filled by unqualified teachers or left vacant (U. S. Department of Labor, 2005). The shortages have been due partly to the growth of the field over the past 25 years, resulting from increased identification of students following the federal and state mandates for students with disabilities (Zabel & Zabel, 2001). The long-term shortage of qualified special education teachers has continued to mount (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005).

Despite the shortage of teachers, administrators are responsible for ensuring that students receive a quality education by qualified teachers (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). It has been widely accepted that qualified teachers are necessary ingredients to a quality education. Additionally, IDEA 97 supports the notion that high quality teachers are imperative to ensure a quality education for students with disabilities. However, qualified special education teachers are in short supply. Not only have universities failed to produce the quantity of special education teachers needed, but student enrollment in public school has steadily increased as well. Adding attrition to those factors has only served to intensify the special education teacher shortage (Ingersoll, 2002). Upon review of the research,

Boyer and Gillespie (2000) found an average 9% of special educators leave the field and another 7% resort to teaching regular education.

Attrition or turnover (teachers leaving education or changing positions within education) accounted for an estimated 66%-75% of recently hired teachers in the 2003-2004 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2005), barriers associated with retention of quality teachers were lack of opportunities to advance, poor working conditions, lack of respect for the profession, and weak school leadership. The Center for Personnel Studies in Special Education (2005) reported that 14,000 special education educators left the profession all together and over 20,000 special education teachers transferred out of special education during the 2003-2004 school year. Attrition of special education teachers accounted for 10% of all educators (Fore et al., 2002). The factors associated with special education teacher attrition must be examined and understood to increase retention.

Research included in the review of the literature was found using an exhaustive search of the Wilson Omni Database, the ERIC database, research journals, and *Digital Dissertations Abstract International*. The reference sections of the literature reviewed were scrutinized for additional sources and research.

The following section presents information pertaining to the history of special education and legislative decisions that have affected special education, administrators' responsibilities within special education, elementary and

secondary teachers and administrators, special education teachers, and administrative support.

Origins of Special Education

Public schools developed in response to social needs, values, and the inequalities of American society. According to Katz, (1987), “Nineteenth-century education promoters...helped to engineer...public education as both the cornerstone and key agency for the solution of virtually every major social problem” (p. 23). Public education became viewed as a fundamental birthright in America, fomenting a democratic society (Levine, B. 2001). Unfortunately, this birthright was not afforded immediately to children with special needs, who were neglected by public schools (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). Students with special needs were denied education despite compulsory attendance laws. As recently as 1969, court rulings upheld states’ rights to deny education to the “feeble minded,” making it illegal for parents to attempt to enroll in school a child who had been excluded previously (Weber, 1992, pg. 32).

Throughout the early 1900s, children with disabilities were educated in separate private or state facilities, while public schools catered to the average child. Advocates for children with disabilities argued that separate institutions did not provide the best environment for their education (Wright & Wright, 2002). The Fourteenth Amendment, providing citizens equal protection under the law, in

combination with the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling, which struck down the premise that separate schooling is equal schooling, provided a platform for special education students and their advocates. This began a litigious journey to provide all students equal educational opportunity, including students with disabilities. Advocacy groups formed; and parents began to challenge the schools' decisions to deny, limit, or exclude special education students from school and their general education peers (Yell et al., 1998).

This pattern of advocacy for rights of children with special needs persisted until federal legislators passed sweeping reforms in 1975 regarding the education of handicapped children. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) stated that children with a handicapping condition “have a right to education, and we have a duty to establish a process by which State and local agencies may be held accountable for providing education services for all handicapped children” (Wright & Wright, 2002, p. 1427). Special education was defined as a free, appropriate education with “specifically designed instruction provided by the school district or other local education agency that meets the unique needs of students identified as disabled” (Bursuck & Friend, 2002, p. 2). Finally, special education students were guaranteed legally certain fundamental rights in the most least restrictive environment. Specifically, least restrictive environment required “that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions and other care facilities, are educated

with children who are not disabled” (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1990, §1412 [a] [5]). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was reauthorized in 1990 as the IDEA, which was reauthorized in 1997 and again in 2004 to encompass more explicit guidelines.

As opposed to other areas in education where the bulk of policy has been determined at the state and local levels, most, but not all, special education policy has been derived from federal statutes, particularly IDEA (Rotherham, 2002). Each piece of legislation chronologically and incrementally defined the provisions afforded to students with special needs, specifically increasing services to be provided. Finn, Rotherham, and Hokanson (2001) found the following:

Although the federal program was initially intended to address the educational needs of the severely disabled, today approximately 90 percent of special education students have lesser disabilities, such as a specific learning disability, speech and language delays, mild mental retardation, or an emotional disorder. (p. 3)

Initially, broad terms were used to identify students eligible for special education and placement options. IDEA 97 specifically defined terms such as "eligibility" and "Individual Education Plans" (IEP) and identified members of the IEP team, timelines, and even disciplinary procedures. IDEA 97 also addressed the supervision of instruction expressly by a person who “is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities” (Crabtree, Gartin, & Murdick, 2002, p. 78). Dorn, Fuchs, and Fuchs (1996) noted that special education is not a place but a

service, and increasingly this service is being implemented in the general education setting. The demand for inclusion, a term used to describe a variety of methods for including special needs students in the regular education setting, has been fueled by the federal mandate to provide special services in the least restrictive environment (Cronis & Ellis, 2000). Integrating these students within the general education curriculum and setting presented unique challenges for schools.

The most current legislation proposed and signed into law by President George W. Bush paralleled the public's concern for increased accountability of schools (NCLB, 2002). Provisions of this act mandated that 95% of special needs students must take state standardized tests by the 2013-2014 school year, special needs students must be assessed annually, and qualified teacher must teach all students. "Qualified" was defined as a teacher who has passed "rigorous" state assessments, holds at least a bachelor's degree, and does not have a license obtained through waivers or provisional certification (Kansas Department of Education, 2005). Special education students and teachers were to be held accountable to the same standards as those in general education. This act indeed added to the already tumultuous history of special education.

Over the years, special education requirements developed to include that students with special needs were to be served through appropriate education plans (IDEA, 1997). In addition, qualified teachers must teach these students. The next

section of the review presents the responsibilities of administration to ensure that each child receives a quality education provided by a qualified teacher.

Administrative Responsibilities

Changing student demographic curricular priorities, along with a mounting shortage of qualified teachers and administrators, have had serious implications for American schools (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook et al., 1997; Tirozzi, 2001). As the educational system evolved, so did the role of building level administrators. School leaders were no longer viewed as managers; instead, they were instructional leaders (Cotton, 2003). Principals who serve as instructional leaders, according to Brigham and Lowe (2000), were the most significant determining factors of effective schools.

“Principals for the 21st century will need the skills necessary to cope with change processes and challenges associated with educating diverse student populations” (Brigham & Lowe, 2000, p. 5). Special education was a part of this change and led the way with a growing population. In 1990, special education services were provided to 4,361,751 students nationally. Ten years later, the 2000 school year, the population grew to 5,683,707 students, a 30% increase (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Building-level administrators were responsible for not only serving these students but also supervising special education teachers. As discussed earlier, federal mandates outlined rigorous standards and

expectations of special education programming. “The principal’s role is critical to success as public schools strive to meet the challenge of implementing the new IDEA requirements” (Warger, Eavy & Assoc., 2001, p. 1).

In addition, NCLB policy explicitly outlined expectations and accountability for special education students. Bowling, Marshall, and Patterson (2000) asked, “What should principals know about special education?” (p. 9). They conducted 25 in-depth interviews with 4 principals, 6 central office administrators, 11 current and former special education and classroom teachers, and 4 parents. The respondents indicated that principals should have a basic understanding of special education services, laws, regulations, court cases, funding, local policies, implications, and district policies pertaining to responsibilities; they should also partake in educational advancement in the complex field of special education. Prior studies of administrative programs suggested that minimal preparation exists addressing the special needs population (Bravenec, 1998; Brigham & Lowe, 2001; Kreger, 1999). In addition, the perceptions of current administrators concerning their level of competence in administrating students with special needs were weak, particularly amid the medley of IDEA regulations (Brigham & Lowe, 2001). Administrators lacking knowledge of special education issues left school systems not only without effective leaders but also without teachers. Without the appropriate knowledge

and ability, how would administrators effectively support special education teachers?

The Council for Exceptional Children (1997) identified 35 key skills as being significant for administrators interacting with students with special needs (Stanlye & Wilcox, 1999). Stanley and Wilcox developed a survey based on these key skills. Respondents indicated their competencies as *skilled*, *adequate*, or *inadequate*. The survey was distributed to a sample of 240 general education administrators, 240 special education directors, and 240 special education teachers and received a return rate of 22%. After employing chi-square tests to determine differences in frequencies, Stanley and Wilcox reported a trend of inadequacy in the perceptions of administrators as they rated themselves against the competencies outlined by the Council for Exceptional Children. In isolation, the results of their survey should be interpreted cautiously because of the low return rate and the reliance on self-reporting of the participants' competencies (Stanley & Wilcox, 1999). However, the study did support other educational literature that suggested many administrators lack necessary skills needed to serve the special needs population effectively. Without these skills, administrators' abilities were limited to relate and provide needed support, potentially affecting the support provided to special education teachers. Lack of administrative support could decrease levels of job satisfaction among teachers (Sirk, 1999).

According to Patterson, Marshall, and Bowling (2000), administrators, “must manage intricacies ranging from allocating classroom space, responding to parent concerns, and hiring and assigning special education assistants, to ensuring that grab bars are installed in the bathrooms” (p. 42). Administrators were confronted with new diverse issues: accountability, conflicts among constituents, the need for collaboration between regular education and special education teachers, and the commingling of other responsibilities (Patterson et al.).

Looking at the critical needs of Texas school principals in relation to special education, Bravenec (1998) focused on the preparation content of building-level principals. Using a stratified random sampling strategy, Bravenec distributed surveys to 100 elementary and 100 secondary principals and received a total response rate of 70.5%. Data collected through ordinal responses were analyzed using cross-tabulations. Bravenec found that 71.9% of the principals indicated dedicating one fourth of their time to special education-related issues, such as IEP meetings, discipline, supervision, and implementing legal regulations. In addition, 73% of the principals specified being 51% to 100% responsible for evaluation of special education programming, but only 60% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that they were adequately prepared for their position. Based on the responses, the need for more preparatory programs in special education was apparent, with 80% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the necessity of more training. Bravenec’s study outlined, in broad areas, the need for

administrative preparatory programs and current training in special education issues.

Administrators needed broad training in special education as well as in specific special education programs. Early childhood special education programs appeared to be in limbo of administrative leadership. According to Kreger (1999), not only did a gap exist in administrative training to facilitate programming effectively, but principals were also unclear as to who was responsible for overseeing these programs. Through her study, Kreger challenged two assumptions: (a) Principals are adequately prepared for special education administration, and (b) there is no difference in preparation needs between school-age and early-childhood special education teachers.

Kreger (1999) surveyed 319 current elementary school principals in Ohio public schools that served early childhood special educational programs. The survey, with a 56.1% return rate, asked principals to respond to questions concerning their own competencies in regard to early childhood special education, preparation, and demographic information and added comments on their role as an administrator. The respondents were asked to rank 5 out of 20 areas for additional training from *most important* to *least important*. Using frequency data, principals indicated the need and desire for more training, particularly in legal issues and best practices for effective instruction. In addition, in the comment section of the survey, a predominant number of participants (>50%) indicated

their need for further training: “I believe that preparation programs should include courses in special education and early childhood” (p. 75). Because the focus of her study was on early childhood special education administrators, the results could not be generalized to elementary and secondary special education administrators.

Administrative leadership was essential for effectively implementing quality special education practices. Morton (2000) conducted a study of a Baltimore, Maryland, school system, analyzing the characteristics of effective school leaders for inclusive practices in special education. A survey was distributed within Baltimore Public Schools to all special education teachers ($N=683$). With 37% ($n=118$) of elementary teachers, 32% ($n=68$) of middle school teachers, and 27% ($n=43$) of high school teachers responding, a total return rate of 33.5% ($N=229$) was produced. Special education teachers rated administrative characteristics they perceived as imperative to being a valuable leader from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). Morton found that educational leaders (a) are effective when they have knowledge of the special education field (64% *strongly agree*, 27% *agree*, 91% total), (b) are supportive of practices (80% *strongly agree*, 15% *agree*, 95% total), and (c) are caring (72% *strongly agree*, 22% *agree*, 94% total). When comparing frequency distributions, Morton observed subtle differences between the frequencies of *strongly agree* and *agree* totals between elementary, middle, and high school teachers (see Table 1).

Morton identified no differences among desired leadership characteristics and grade level taught. However, this statement could be unfounded as he failed to investigate statistically significant relationships between the grade levels; he simply compared frequency data totals. Identifying relationships within the data could determine if statistically significant differences between grade levels exist regarding desired leadership characteristics. There was no indication of statistical analysis for significant relationships in Morton’s research.

Table 1

Important Leadership Characteristics as Indicated by Percent of Responses of Strongly Agree and Agree

Agreement	<i>P</i>		
	Elementary	Middle	High school
Support	95	97	93
Knowledge	91	87	83
Care	94	94	93

Note. From *Characteristics of Principal as a Leader as Perceived by Teachers of Special Education* pg. 76, by C. S. Morton, 2000, University of Toledo.

The study (Morton, 2000) identified the amount of agreement toward characteristics perceived as important qualities of leader principals but fell short in identifying the current status of administrators' skills in Baltimore. However,

Morton's results should be interpreted cautiously, given the limited population size, limited sample area, and low return rate.

In another study, Nardone (1999) hypothesized that administrators in the El Paso Independent School District, El Paso, Texas, did not have an adequate knowledge base of special education. He collected data from 157 elementary and secondary principals and assistant principals, with an overall return rate of 83.5%. Using frequency distribution, he found that 98.1% of the sampled population had received some type of training in special education, but only 7.6% had a degree in special education. Nardone's findings also indicated no statistically significant increase in knowledge regardless of experience, education, or training. In the knowledge section of the questionnaire, 68% scored below the mastery level of 70%. Nardone interpreted these results as "frightening" for students in special education, leaving the school system vulnerable to litigation for failing to accurately facilitate legally mandated special education practices, pg 3. Administrators who are prepared inadequately would be equally unprepared to meet the support needs of special education teachers (Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994). The data were not analyzed for differences between elementary and secondary administrators' knowledge; however, Nardone did recommend further research to determine if differences exist between grade levels.

An administrator's lack of knowledge in the field of special education left both the school system and the teachers vulnerable. Researchers indicated that

knowledgeable, supportive principals increased the likelihood that special educators would remain in the field (Littrell et al., 1994; Miller et al., 1999). A supportive principal, in fact, was an incentive for these teachers to remain in the field. Insufficient principal support was a significant reason for special education teachers' exiting the field (Gersten et al., 2001).

Without an adequate knowledge base, principals might lack the skills necessary to provide support to teachers. Principals must have knowledge about special education and a basic understanding of special education services, among other areas (Bowling et al., 2000). Researchers demonstrated that administrators not only lack this critical basic knowledge (Nardone, 1999; Stanley & Wilson, 1999) but also desire more training to gain necessary skills (Kreger, 1999).

Based upon the review of available studies, it seemed reasonable to ascertain that administrators need direction to meet effectively the needs of special education teachers. With a growing population of students in special education and rising teacher attrition rates, knowledgeable administrators capable of providing effective supports were needed more than ever (Ingersoll, 2001). Compounding a documented deficit in administrator knowledge regarding special education, little research existed to guide administrators in the different needs of elementary and secondary teachers.

Bare-Oldham (1999) investigated the relationship between administrative leadership styles and teacher job satisfaction. She randomly surveyed 250

elementary and 250 secondary teachers in Kentucky. She obtained a 56% return rate overall (elementary, 53%, $n=142$; secondary, 47%, $n=128$). Bare-Oldham used two survey instruments to measure leadership styles and job satisfaction. Answers were elicited through a Likert-type scale. Comparing the norm means on teacher job satisfaction, with scores of 1-3 being low and scores of 4-6 being high, Bare-Oldham found that the sample appeared to have moderately high job satisfaction ($M=4.35$). These results would indicate the need to investigate elementary and secondary teachers as separate groups with separate needs from their leaders. Although these descriptive statistics indicated a difference for these two samples, no statistical tests were utilized to test for this to be true in the population. Bare-Oldham used descriptive statistics, comparing means, to decipher the differences. The results of her findings in respect to differences between elementary and secondary teachers should be viewed very cautiously as no statistical significance was found.

Researching school climate, Tobias (2000) sought to investigate if there were differences among teachers' perceptions of their principals and their perceptions of school climate. He self-selected 18 elementary, 5 middle, and 5 high schools in which to survey teachers. He sent 400 surveys to teachers within these schools and achieved a total return rate of 49% ($N=195$). The return rate of each group was not reported. This would make any results about grade-level comparisons suspect as the data reflected an insufficient sample size. The teachers

rated both their satisfaction with leadership and their perceptions of the building climate. The responses were elicited through a Likert-type scale; 1 indicated *strong agreement* and 5 indicated *strong disagreement*.

Tobias's (2000) results indicated statistically significant differences between elementary, middle, and high school teachers in both their perceptions of leadership and climate (Table 2). Although Tobias's study provided interesting and needed comparisons of elementary and secondary teacher perceptions, his conclusions must be accepted with caution. Not only was his return rate less than 50%, but he also failed to report the return rate of the subgroups separately. Differences within the numbers of these groups were not indicated. Additionally, information needed to evaluate the statistical tests he implemented were absent from his document. He recommended further research to investigate the differences between elementary, middle, and high school leadership as well as climate variables.

In 1997, Geter sought to examine critically principal attitudes toward inclusion. Using random sampling, he surveyed 550 principals in the state of Georgia, yielding 351 responses (elementary, 60%, $n=205$; and high school, 40%, $n=134$). A secondary question of his research pertained to the differences in attitudes toward inclusion between elementary and high school principals. The survey instrument consisted of four subgroupings of questions on inclusive education. Each subgroup had a different number of questions: learning capability

had 8 questions (Cronbach alpha, .9119), inclusion had 4 questions (Cronbach alpha, .8537), traditional limiting disabilities had 5 questions (Cronbach alpha, .6821), and classroom factors had 7 questions (Cronbach alpha, .7116).

Table 2

Leadership Style and Climate

Region	Leadership total	Climate total
Elementary	28.9	25.7
Middle	36.2	29.8
High school	35.1	32.9
Statistical significance ^a $F=8.46, p<.0004$ $F=15.14, p<.0001$		

Note. ^a*df* and post hoc tests were not reported by the author. From *Leadership and School Climate: Teachers' Perceptions* pg. 91, by G. Tobias, 2000, St. Louis, MO: Saint Louis University.

In Geter's (1997) study, the only significant difference among the subgroups between elementary and high school principals was the inclusion category itself ($p=.003$). This category measured the principal's perceptions of which students should participate in inclusive programs. Findings revealed that, overall, elementary principals were more positive toward inclusion than were high school principals. Although the survey was deemed valid and reliable through statistical tests, Geter provided no supporting documentation for the development of the questions. The limited and varied number of questions in each subgroup

might have distorted the results (Huck, 2000). The area that produced findings of significant differences only had four questions. Increasing the questions in each subgroup would render more reliable results, yet .85 is considered respectable.

In examining communication styles, Lund-Glassman (1999) sought to identify communication styles of principals and their relationship to school climate. She surveyed teachers in eight school districts, a total of 68 schools (46 elementary and 22 secondary) in the states of Washington and Oregon. Of the 2,320 surveys sent, 86% were returned; but of those returned, only 65% (1,521 teachers and 68 principals) were completed adequately enough to utilize. The secondary teachers completed a survey designed for assessing the climate of a secondary setting. (Junior high schools were included in this group.) The elementary teachers completed a different survey designed for assessing the climate of the elementary setting. (Middle schools were included in this group.) The teachers' responses from each school were calculated, and a total score was established on a scale of 1 (*low climate*) to 4 (*high climate*) for each school. These numbers were then correlated with different variables. A predominate variable, communication style, was correlated by utilizing an additional survey, with all subgroups completing the same instrument. The sample rated their leaders' communication style as *a careful transmitter* (1), *frank* (2), *informal* (3), *a careful listener* (4), and *an open/two-way communicator* (5).

A chi-square indicated significant differences between the communication style ($X^2=5.2750, p=.02$) of elementary and secondary principals. Additionally, Lund-Glassman (1999) made comparisons using descriptive means and reported that secondary principals were rated more often as careful listeners and careful transmitters, whereas elementary principals were rated more often as frank and open/two-way communicators. No statistical significance was apparent concerning the climates of the elementary and secondary schools; it would be inappropriate to make comparisons in this study based on descriptive statistics.

Lund-Glassman (1999) indicated that differences exist in the communication styles of elementary and secondary principals. Regrettably, the study contained a number of methodological flaws. The utilization of two different instruments to measure the communication styles of elementary and secondary principals rendered the correlation results vulnerable to skepticism. In addition, Lund-Glassman failed to report the response rate of secondary teachers and elementary teachers separately. Finally, the sample was based on convenience, limiting the ability to generalize the results. Lund-Glassman recommended further research to determine differences in the communication styles of elementary, middle, and high school principals.

The studies reviewed presented evidence of differences between teachers and administrators (Bare-Oldham, 1999; Geter, 1997; Lund-Glassman, 1999; Tobias, 2000). The research findings varied in the amount and significance of the

differences between the elementary and secondary levels. Lund-Glassman found significant differences in the communication styles of elementary and secondary principals. If these results were accepted, it could be theorized that administrators interact differently based on the level they are serving. Lund-Glassman and Tobias recommended further research in the differences between elementary and secondary levels.

Special education teachers have been subjected to the same concerns of differing needs. Deciphering the different needs of special education teachers could assist in providing more effective administrative support, thereby reducing attrition rates. The next section of the literature review examines more specifically the needs of special education teachers.

Special Education Teachers

The growing shortage of qualified special educators poses a tremendous problem to school divisions in the delivery of special education services (Wisnieski & Gargiulo, 1997). Teachers play a pivotal role in student success. According to Finn et al. (2001) and Kanstoroom and Finn (1999), students are more successful when taught by competent, certified teachers who are teaching in their certified content areas. This section presents research on the needs of qualified special education teachers. Additionally, information is presented on teacher attrition and its effects on school systems.

The NCLB (2002) addressed the need for qualified teachers and set specific deadlines for schools to provide a competent teacher in every classroom. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2001), during the 1998-1999 school year, 387,284 special education teachers were employed nationally, but 39,466 of those teachers were not certified for their positions. During the 1999-2000 school year, there were 69,249 special education teacher openings throughout the nation; nearly 97% of school districts reported at least one opening for a special education position. Figures compiled by the U.S. Department of Education (2001), indicated that the special education teacher shortage was critical. This shortage does impact special education students' entitlement to competent and prepared teachers.

Special education teachers not only must be qualified to serve specific areas of disabilities but also must have widespread knowledge of numerous academic areas. Nationally, 80% of special education teachers are teaching students with more than one disability (Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education, 2000). By implication, students with numerous disabilities are served by teachers with inadequate endorsements or certifications. The Kansas Department of Education (2005) has defined qualified teachers as persons who are professionally licensed by the Kansas State Board of Education and are teaching in the area in which they are endorsed. Nationally, 9% of special education teachers were not certified during the 200-2001 school year (U.S.

Department of Education, 2005). Researchers have indicated that the shortage of special education teachers is a persistent, pervasive issue that will likely intensify across time unless the problem is addressed (Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997).

The statistics clearly have defined a need for qualified special education teachers. The staggering national shortage has coincided with the critical needs in the state of Kansas. As discussed previously, reducing teacher attrition would alleviate the strains of the teacher shortage (Ingersoll, 2002).

Attrition of Special Education Teachers

With higher levels of attrition and migration, special education teachers have left the field in substantially greater numbers when compared to their general education counterparts (Boe, Cook, et al., 1996; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). This phenomenon has been explained by burnout, classroom conditions, lack of administrative support, excessive paperwork, isolation, student behaviors, role ambiguity, and the diverse instructional needs of students (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, et al., 1997; Coleman, 2001; Council for Exceptional Children, 2001; Embich, 2001). Conditions for teachers of students with special needs have been “influenced by several major themes: a sense of collegiality and professionalism; an environment of open frequent communication/collaboration; a climate of support; [and] the availability and

clarity of roles, responsibilities and expectations for ‘doing the job successfully’” (Council for Exceptional Children, 2001, p. 52).

A fiscal burden, teacher turnover has cost school systems an average of 25% of their annual salary expenses (Gately, n.d.). With the average special education teacher earning \$38,774 a year (Office of Special Education Programs, 1998), each teacher’s departure costs over \$9,693. According to Ingersoll (2002), who has researched and written numerous reports on special education teacher turnover, teacher turnover has been a prevailing factor in the demand for qualified teachers, and special education teacher have been the most likely to leave the teaching field.

Addressing the need to examine the dynamics associated with attrition, B. Levine (2001) conducted a study to identify factors related to special education teacher attrition and retention. She surveyed current and former special education teachers in Cobb County, Georgia, and compared their responses (436 surveys sent and 279 returned). Using a frequency distribution of categorized comments, she found that 21% of special education teachers identified lack of administrative support and guidance as reasons for leaving the field. Respondents indicated that other reasons included excess paperwork (16%), legal issues (12%), diversity of student needs (10%), stress (6%), and parental demands (6%). Teachers were satisfied, however, with the level of training and perceptions of personal preparedness. About 8% of teachers made comments that they loved their

positions and their administrators were very supportive; therefore, they had no intention of leaving the Cobb County School System. Factors contributing to the comments on supportive administrators were not identified. The frequency of comments was not disaggregated according to grade level, providing no further information concerning possible discrepancies in reasons for leaving and the teacher's grade level assignment. B. Levine recommended further research to identify quality administrative support.

According to research conducted by Darling-Hammond (1999), nearly 30% of teachers leave the field within the first 5 years of entry, clearly supporting the findings of B. Levine's (2001) study and demonstrating the need to develop viable tactics teachers to retain teachers. Numerous strategies, programs, and incentives have been developed to recruit teachers; but if teachers are leaving the field so rapidly, these efforts have been in vain. Ingersoll (2002) argued that the teacher shortage is not because of increasing student enrollment but because of teacher turnover. According to the Bureau of National Affairs (1998), in 2000-2001 approximately 17% of teachers left the field nationally.

The intentions of special educators to remain in the field must be examined to address the critical shortages of qualified special education teachers. With aspirations of replicating on a larger scale a study by Cross and Billingsley (1994), Bruton (2001) sought to examine special education teachers' intent to stay in the education field. His research questions were designed to find if stress,

role problems, principal support, special education administrative support, and years of experience affect commitment. He surveyed current special education teacher in Houston, Texas, ($N=340$) with a total response rate of 45.9% ($N=156$). Principal support, stress, and years of experience were not significant factors in teachers' intent to stay in special education. Rather, commitment of special education teachers and job satisfaction were significant in retention of special education teachers. In addition, administrative support had significant effects on levels of stress among special educators. Role problems were attributed to lack of administrative support as well. Job satisfaction was the most significant predictor of intent to stay. In turn, most significant to teacher job satisfaction was principal support. The differences in responses according to grade level taught were not variables in Bruton's study and were not reported within the demographics, contributing to the pool of insufficient research concerning grade-level needs.

The review of the research revealed that special education teachers need effective administrative support to reduce levels of attrition. Administrators must support teachers with environmental factors, instructional concerns, technical requirements, and emotional issues (Balfour, 2001). Lack of this administrative support has been cited most often as the reason for teacher job dissatisfaction (Bruton, 2001; Levine, B., 2001). Researchers have demonstrated that teachers are not only happier when supported but also more likely to remain in the field

(Ingersoll, 2002). In this section, the supports provided by administrators to special education teacher are examined.

A trend of administrators being “out of touch” and disconnected pervades research regarding administrator lack of understanding and support, the reasons most cited by special education teachers for leaving education (Council for Exceptional Children, 2001). After a review of the literature, Boyer and Gillespie (2000) identified and recommended seven strategies for administrators to implement for supporting special education teachers: (a) adopt policies to reduce paperwork, (b) align past teaching experiences with present assignments, (c) implement a mentoring program, (d) allow collaboration time, (e) provide feedback and encouragement, (f) utilize technology to streamline communication, and (g) maintain structured communication systems between general and special education teachers. Factors that must be addressed include the following issues: identifying role problems (specifically, caseload overload), incorporating teachers in the decision-making process, assessing the culture of the school, and communicating job performance (Wald, 1998).

Sirk (1999) conducted a study in West Virginia on the influence of administrative support relative to job satisfaction levels of special education teachers. Using random sampling (total population 2,743), 280 subjects received surveys, with a return rate of 56% (42% elementary, 23% middle, 28% high school teachers and 7% all grades). Participants rated administrative support to

West Virginia special education teachers on a scale of *not supportive* (1), *somewhat supportive* (2), and *very supportive* (3). The overall appraisal produced a mean rating of somewhat supportive ($M=2.2034$). Unfortunately, the 3-point scale limited the range of responses. Nevertheless, the data were analyzed via frequency distributions, variance, and correlations.

Sirk (1999) ascertained that increased support from administrators correlates with increased levels of job satisfaction. The data did not specifically support this statement; however, Sirk hypothesized and interpreted the data to arrive at this correlation. She correlated the job satisfaction levels with teachers' intent to stay in their current teaching assignments. Sirk's study indicated an overall statistically significant correlation between both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction ratings and support levels. Further revelations of a positive relationship toward special education teachers' planning to remain in the field and higher levels of perceived administrative support were identified as significant ($F=.02$). Sirk cautioned that teachers with low levels of administrative support have decreased productivity, according to her literature review, and were less likely to maintain fervent lessons within the classroom. In addition, job satisfaction was associated with special education teachers' leaving the field ($F=.03$). Specifically examining elementary special education teachers ($N=67$), Sirk found a statistically significant relationship ($F=6.924, p>.05$) between levels of principal support and extrinsic job satisfaction levels. When analyzing the middle

school teachers' responses, she found no statistically significant relationship between the perceived rating of principal support levels and the perceived rating of job satisfaction levels ($F=3.460, p>.05$). Sirk also found no statistically significant relation between principal support and job satisfaction on the high school level. Unfortunately, she did not include the statistical information that corresponded with these findings.

Although Sirk (1999) found significance within the levels of administrative support and teachers' leaving, she did surmise from the data that as administrative support levels increase, so does the level of job satisfaction, thereby contributing to retention efforts. Those respondents that indicated higher levels of job satisfaction maintained higher desires to remain in the field. Sirk also concluded that elementary teachers' job satisfaction levels are affected by their principals' support, whereas middle and high school teachers' job satisfaction did not vary according to levels of support. The conclusions reached from the disaggregation of the data by grade levels taught must be interpreted loosely because vital pieces of data were missing from the study and conclusions cannot be drawn from correlations. Further research should be conducted to determine administrative supports that are more likely to increase job satisfaction.

According to Weiss (2001), a positive work environment, specifically communication and collaboration with building level administration, can reduce special education teacher attrition. In his study, special education teachers

($N=316$; 45% elementary, 24% middle, 27% high school, and 4% unidentified) identified perceived support from administrators and the teachers' intent to remain in the field of special education. Teachers labeled all 20 areas of support as first, second, and third in value. Using frequency distributions, teacher appreciation and recognition received the highest responses (14.7%, $n=47$). Teachers rated principal support the lowest in direct interpersonal skills, with nearly a third reporting infrequent interactions and feedback concerning performance. The respondents, however, did indicate respect and trust of their principals regardless of support levels. Perceived strengths and weaknesses of building level administrators were not identified quantitatively in the study. Weiss used responses from comment sections to identify concurrent themes. Split equally, negative comments related to principals' experience and knowledge, whereas positive comments focused on the support and understanding of the principal.

Acknowledging this as a weakness in his study, Weiss (2001) was unable to identify specific attributes of positive support by building-level administrators. In addition, Weiss did not analyze the data on support needs and grade levels taught. His findings, therefore, cannot be interpreted as to which supportive acts best meet the needs of elementary and secondary teachers. Weiss also indicated that respondents may have been unclear that the intended administrative support was from the principal and not administrators as a whole (e.g., special education

directors). The results of Weiss's study must be interpreted with caution, as his excessive use of statistical tests increased the likelihood of a type one error.

In a related examination of rates of job satisfaction, Galvez (1997) conducted a study of elementary regular education teachers serving special needs students in Chesapeake, Virginia. Galvez found that the most significant factor contributing to higher job satisfaction was administrative supervision. Speculating that the increased interaction with administration for the special needs students created a shared goal and attitude, Galvez reported this as primary research that analyzed the relationship of higher job satisfaction relative to supervision. However, Galvez failed to identify contributing factors to a positive relationship with a supervisory role, opting instead to surmise a connection. Also, specific actions that created a positive relationship were not identified.

After partially replicating Galvez's (1997) study, Morgan (2000) also recommended further research in administrative support issues. Morgan conducted a study with a relatively large sample of both K-12 special education teachers and regular education teachers in the state of Idaho. A total of 672 teachers in K-12 schools were surveyed, with a final response rate of 75.9% (279 regular education teachers and 231 special education teachers). Morgan failed to find a difference in job satisfaction levels. Similar to Galvez's study, the data showed statistically significant relationship levels between teachers' job satisfaction levels and their perceived levels of administration support. Like

Galvez, Morgan did not identify how administrators succeeded or failed to provide support to teachers and did not analyze the data for differences among teaching levels.

According to the accumulated research, providing the desired support to special educators could result in reduction of attrition and migration. The studies reviewed failed to identify, however, which types of support special educators value. In addition, the research yielded conflicting results that were gained from weak sample sizes to determine the support needs of elementary special education teachers versus those of secondary special education teachers. The main unifying conclusion of the studies reviewed was that support techniques valued by special education teachers must be scrutinized to retain quality teachers.

This point was emphasized by Balfour's study (2001) of novice special education teachers' need of administrative support. Balfour found that teachers were not receiving the support they expected from their administrators. A national random sample of 900 novice special education teachers (total sample frame identified: 2,600) received surveys generating a total response rate of 49%. Of those returned, 126 surveys identified the respondent as not fitting the demographic parameters of the study, bringing the utilized survey return rate to 39% (43% elementary, 25% middle, 24% high school, and 8% other). The survey was developed after conducting research on prior survey tools and based on the responses of three focus groups containing eight special education teachers. Four

subscales of administrative support were identified: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical. The survey utilized closed-response questions with auxiliary information gained from demographic responses. Special education teachers rated the amount of expected support from administration as well as the amount of support they actually received using a 4-point scale (1=*Not true at all* to 4=*Very true*). Testing for reliability, Balfour administered the survey to 32 special education teachers. Thirteen complete, usable surveys were returned to generate a total internal reliability consistency of .90, and each subgroup generated a respectable internal consistence (emotional, Cronbach alpha=.93; environmental, Cronbach alpha=.73; instructional, Cronbach alpha=.87; and technical, Cronbach alpha=.70).

Utilizing a paired samples *t* test ($\alpha=.05$), Balfour analyzed the data, which indicated that teachers had much higher expectations of support ($M=204.54$, $SD=28.37$, $t=17.20$, $df=287$, $N=287$, $p=.00$) than they perceived receiving from these administrators ($M=164.39$, $SD=40.69$). Balfour, however, could not clearly identify administrative support as a significant factor in retention of special education teachers. Analysis of variance revealed significant differences in those teachers who were planning to remain in their current positions ($F=18.64$, $df=285$, $N=287$, $p=.00$). Post hoc tests were run (Bonferroni's), revealing those who planned to remain in their current positions perceived receiving more administrative support ($M=173.44$, $SD=36.60$). A comparison of the effect sizes

showed a low-to-high (.10-.82) relationship between those teachers planning to return to their positions the next year and administrative support. Unable to directly link administrative support to teacher retention, Balfour concluded that teachers who planned to remain in education rated expected support of administrators in close correlation with the amount of support they received. In other words, the respondents rated the amount of support received according to the amount of support they expected. Balfour drew these conclusions based on examining the frequencies of the data rather than conducting tests to show significance.

Two themes emerged from the teachers' responses: a lack of emotional support from administrators and the inability of administrators to manage the workplace. Even so, Balfour failed to identify differences in the support needs in regard to certification status of the novice special education teachers.

Balfour's (2001) data analysis did not support the need to differentiate administrative support practices by demographic variables. Analysis of the grade level taught, special education field, and other variables did not reveal statistically significant relationships toward teachers' intent to remain in the field of education.

These results differed from those reported by Sirk (1999) regarding differences in variables among grade level taught. Sirk found a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and principal support and no

statistical differences in administrative support and job satisfaction between middle and high school educators. Sirk's results contradicted Balfour's findings of no significant differences between the grade level taught and administrative support practices.

In addition, Balfour expressed frustration that her research did not identify the information that would lead to implementation of recommended support options. The teachers were unable to indicate on the survey the administrative acts they value as supportive, only those acts they expected. Balfour recommended further research in this area.

Limitations within Balfour's (2001) study were evident. First, her return rate was low, thus decreasing generalizability of her results. In addition, she criticized the inability of the study to determine why 30% of the respondents did not plan to return to the field of education. This might suggest the survey instrument was not adequately constructed to reflect the relevant data accurately. Finally, reports of the statistical analysis did not indicate methods to account for the incongruent responses of elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers. Balfour used only descriptive data to substantiate her findings, with no statistical significance indicated. Therefore, when interpreting workplace demographic data, such as grade-level assignment in comparison with support needs, the results must be viewed within the confines of the sophistication of the methodology.

Summary

This review of the related literature focused on the impact of the administrative support on special education teacher attrition. Many variables have affected the special education teacher shortage and qualified teacher retention problems. Researchers have indicated an overlapping, complex problem of teacher attrition, including commonalities of role problems, excessive paperwork, and lack of job satisfaction (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, & Barkanci, 1998; Boe, Cook, et al., 1996; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). Specifically, researchers linked administrative support to levels of job satisfaction and identified teacher dissatisfaction to levels of support. Researchers identified providing instructional feedback, maintaining communication, allowing for collaboration with peers, playing a role in decision making, and empathizing with teachers as strategies administrators can implement to support teachers (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000).

Challenging the overall negative perception of administrative support within the research, Weiss's study (2001) indicated that comments were split equally between positive and negative perceptions of support. Revealing that administrators were perceived as supportive, Weiss failed to determine which aspects produced positive comments. Researchers have not identified specific actions administrators can implement to increase the perceived level of teacher support; this is a gap in the literature.

The literature addressing the support levels provided, needed, and valued by special education teacher according to grade level was limited. Previous research produced varying results. For example, Balfour (2001) failed to find a difference among the desired needs of administrative support between elementary and secondary level special education teachers, whereas Sirk (199) found differences in their needs. Researchers have focused primarily on administrative supports expected and received by the special education group as a whole. In contrast, there has been scant research on valued administrative support actions specific to the differences or similarities of the special education teachers and the building administrators.

Further research is required to investigate the ways administrators currently provide support and those supports teachers perceive as valuable. Administrative support actions that are considered valuable by special education teachers need to be identified. These administrative support actions need to be compared with the perceptions of building administrators regarding what support actions they perceive to be valuable. This study was designed to attempt to answer some of these questions and contribute to closing the gap in the research literature. Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology implemented to investigate what administrative support actions are valued by special education teachers and what building administrators perceive to be of value.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

Overview of the Methodology

This comparative study was designed to elicit information on the specific administrative supports that special education teachers deem valuable. The study was also designed to compare the supports special education teachers value to those administrative supports that building administrators deem to be of value to special education teachers. A preexisting survey instrument developed by Balfour (2001), was utilized to collect data to answer the research questions.

The survey was distributed online to a group of 200 special education teachers and 200 building administrators in the state of Kansas from a sample of convenience. The survey contained questions addressing administrative support actions. These questions solicited responses designed to identify support actions that have or lack value.

Frequency data were used to determine the mean scores for the individual items. The data collected was also analyzed with a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software to determine significant differences in the total mean scores and in the four subscales in the surveys between the two groups of special education teachers and building administrators.

Statement of Research Questions

Two questions related to the perceived value of administrative support from special education educators were addressed. These research questions guided the investigation:

1. What are the types of administrative supports that special education teachers in Kansas value?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be of value to the teachers?

These research questions led to the null hypothesis in this study: There are no statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to the special education teachers. The alternate hypothesis was the following: There are statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teacher value and the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to the special education teachers.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of full-time special education teachers and full-time building administrators serving Grades K-12 during the 2006-2007 school year. A national sample might be ideal for maximum generalizability within the United States, but because of budgetary concerns and time restraints, a smaller sampling frame was more desirable for the purposes of this study. The sampling frame was limited to the state of Kansas. Results of this study could be generalized to populations similar to that of Kansas. All data pertaining to student numbers, school information, and contact persons were obtained from the Kansas Department of Education Web site (www.ksde.org).

To have the maximum number of survey participants actually participate, the study utilized all full time special education teachers and building administrators in the state of Kansas. According to the Kansas Department of Education (2005), Kansas has 105 counties and 300 school districts of varying population sizes. The study used a stratified sample by dividing the enrollment in to large (more than 1,000 students) and small counties (0-1000 students) and the state of Kansas into four quadrants (see Appendix B). A purposeful sample was used to arrive at one large and one small county per quadrant based upon representative or demographic items. The following counties were chosen: from the northwest quadrant, Ellis County and Rawlins County; from the southwest quadrant, Finney County and Hodgeman County; from the northeast, Shawnee

County and Republic County; and from the southeast, Sedgwick County and Chautauqua County. Once the list of counties was generated, the Kansas Department of Education website staff directory was used to obtain the names of special education teachers and building administrators in the identified school districts (2006). The directors of special education and superintendents were contacted via email on November 15, 2006, to inform the directors and superintendents and to gain permission to survey the special education teachers and administrators chosen. Additionally, the list of randomly selected teachers, building administrators, and school assignments was reviewed for accuracy.

Prior to making contact with any member of the identified sample, the Institutional Review Board of Kansas State University was contacted to review the proposed research and approve a human subjects study. Approval was provided prior to the first contact (Appendix A). The email with the survey link (Appendix C) and Informed Consent Letter (Appendix D) were emailed to the contact persons on December 1, 2006. The surveys were administered electronically by the Kansas State University Survey System (www.surveys.ksu.edu).

Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that the data collected would be used for research purposes only. Through the survey cover letter (Appendix C), participants were also informed that the names of individuals, schools, and school divisions would not be revealed.

Instrumentation

The survey chosen for this study was originally developed by Balfour (2001) to measure administrative supports expected and received by novice special education teachers. Balfour identified categories of support through an interview with the director of the National Clearinghouse for Professionals in Special Education. Four categories were determined: emotional support, instructional support, technical support, and environmental support. Three focus group meetings, consisting of eight special education teachers, were held to determine measures of the identified categories. The following opening questions were posed to each focus group:

1. What kind of emotional support do you look for from your building administrator?
2. What kind of technical support do you look for from your building administrator?
3. What kind of instructional support do you look for from your building administrator?
4. How do you look for your building administrator to manage your environment? (Balfour, 2001, p. 82)

Questions were developed from the focus group and a final draft was distributed to 32 special education teachers to test reliability. Balfour made

significant changes to the final draft based on the responses of the pretest group (return rate of 47%).

The final draft of Balfour's tool consisted of two parts: demographic questions and support judgments. Part I elicited information about career status, teaching environment, and future teaching plans. Part II involved two judgments in perception of expected and received support of four administrative behavior subscales. The question items were not grouped by subscale but in random order (see Appendix E for items grouped by subscale). Each subscale had between 11 and 16 items for a total of 52 items (see Table 3). Reliability coefficients of .60 or greater for the four subscales of received actions and .90 for the total were achieved prior to the changes Balfour (2001) made to her instrument (see Table 4). Responses were assessed on a Likert scale from *not valuable at all* (1) to *extremely valuable* (4) supports from administrators.

The instrument developed by Balfour (2001) was selected because it represents current research reviewed, matches the criteria it is intended to study, is grounded in the research, and has been tested as sufficiently reliable and valid for the purposes of this study. Balfour was contacted via telephone to discuss the intentions of this study. She granted permission to use and modify the Administrative Support Survey instrument (see Appendix F).

Table 3

Number of Items in Each Subcategory

Subscale	Number of question items
Emotional	16
Environmental	12
Instructional	13
Technical	11
Total	52

Note. From *Impact of Certification Status on the Administrative Support Needs of Novice Special Education Teachers* (p. 84), by C. Y. Balfour, 2001, George Mason University,.

Each section of the survey sought to reveal information vital to the research questions in the study. In Part I, the information requested ensured the respondents were full-time special education teachers or building administrators and, therefore, fit the parameters of the study. In addition, the grade level taught and the school level at which the teacher worked were ascertained to classify the teachers for possible additional research. Questions concerning administrative staffing patterns and future teaching plans also were included to provide further descriptive data.

Table 4

Reliability Coefficients for Subscales and Total (N=13)

Administrative support action subscales	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
1. Emotional support	16	52.38	11.69	.93
2. Environmental support	12	40.92	5.71	.73
3. Instructional support	13	29.39	8.62	.87
4. Technical support	11	35.23	6.25	.70
5. Total	52	157.15	21.73	.90

Note. From *Impact of Certification Status on the Administrative Support Needs of Novice Special Education Teachers* (p. 84), by C. Y. Balfour, 2001, George Mason University,.

Part II of the survey measured judgments regarding the perceived value of support. The 52 items, with a 4-point rating scale, represented the four identified subscales of support: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical. Each subgroup had between 11 and 16 question items in random order (see Table 3).

The support actions were ordered randomly throughout Part II of the instrument (see Table 5). The internal reliability coefficients of the subscales ranged from .70 to .93 (Balfour, 2001), demonstrating a strong internal reliability (see Table 6).

Respondents were asked to rate the value of administrative support behaviors on a

4-point rating scale (1=*not valuable*, 2=*somewhat valuable*, 3=*very valuable*, and 4=*extremely valuable*).

Table 5

Support Action Subscale

Administrative support action subscales	Survey item numbers
1. Emotional support	1,2,3,8,9,10,12,13,15,22,24,30,31,41,51,52
2. Environmental support	7,21,25,32,34,35,36,37,38,42,44,49
3. Instructional support	4,5,11,14,16,17,18,19,40,43,45, 47,48
4. Technical support	6,20,23,26,27,28,29,33,39,46,50

Note. From *Impact of Certification Status on the Administrative Support Needs of Novice Special Education Teachers*, by C. Y. Balfour, 2001, George Mason University

The modified final draft of the Administrative Support Survey was field tested in October 2006 (see Appendix G). The field test group consisted of 11 current special education teachers in Manhattan/Ogden USD #383 and 11 building administrators in Manhattan/Ogden USD #383. Suggestions and input from the field test group were considered in altering or modifying the format, content, and clarity of the instrument (Alreck & Settle, 1995). The field test group offered few comments on the instrument and made no suggestions for modifications or clarifications of the instrument.

Table 6

Reliability Coefficients for Subscales and Total

Administrative support action subscales	No. of items	Value		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
1. Emotional support	16	57.79	14.31	.94
2. Environmental support	12	38.33	9.85	.87
3. Instructional support	13	30.76	12.38	.94
4. Technical support	11	31.79	11.23	.92
Total	52	157.25	43.86	.98

The final draft of the instrument was distributed in December 2006 (see Appendix G). The appropriate contact persons (special education directors and district superintendents) from the identified sample divisions were contacted by email to gain permission to survey the teachers and to confirm information of the teachers randomly selected. The email included an explanation of the survey (Appendix H). After permission was granted, an email was sent to each contact person. The email contained a letter of introduction with informed consent (Appendices C and D) and an Internet link to the survey (Appendix I). Making only one contact would likely result in a return rate as low as 20% (Doyle, 1985); therefore, three contacts were made, following the steps recommended by

Dillman (as cited in Huck, 2000). These steps included emailing the survey link to the teachers and administrators again and including another follow-up email to thank them for their participation.

On December 10, 2006, 10 days after the initial mailing, a second email was sent thanking the contact persons for their time and response and an additional link to the survey. Finally, the third contact was a follow-up email (Appendix I) and link to the survey that was sent out on January 10, 2007. This email explained the importance of the study, reiterated the need for further responses, and again thanked them for their time. A response rate of 69% was generated from a total of 276 returned surveys.

Data Analysis

The subgroups for the primary data analysis were determined through the demographic section of the survey. Item 6 of Part I asked the type of school employee the respondent was. The survey was conditionally branched based on that question. The building administrator and the special education teacher answered the same questions, just voiced differently, so confusion would be minimal. The means, standard deviations, and frequencies have been reported in chapter 4 of this study.

The first research question sought to identify the types of administrative supports special education teachers value. The second research question sought to

compare the administrative supports that special education teachers value with the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to special education teachers. These research questions led to the null hypothesis in this study: There are no statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teacher value and the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to the special education teachers. The alternate hypothesis was the following: There are statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teacher value and the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to the special education teachers.

These two research questions were measured through data collected from Item 6 of the survey to determine the grouping (teacher or administrator) and from the 52 items of Part II of the survey. An ANOVA was utilized to determine if there were statistically significant differences between each group (teachers and administrators) and within the four subscales. The results of the data analysis have been presented in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Human Subjects and Ethics Precautions

Approval for this study was obtained through the Graduate School of Kansas State University by a review of the proposed research, which was approved as a human subjects study. There were no potential risks to the subjects participating in this study. The survey email, as stated earlier, contained an

informed consent form. This form explained the purpose and procedures of the study. In addition, the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any point and the confidential nature of their responses were stated. Data were utilized only when the participant consented to the survey.

Summary

This study was designed to identify administrative support actions valued by special education teachers to assist in reducing teacher attrition and identifying possible needs in administrator preparation programs. Furthermore, the study sought to reveal administrative supports valued by special education teachers as compared to the perceived value of those supports by administrators. The methodology of the study was designed to gather information on perceptions of special education teachers and building administrators. The questions sought to identify administrative actions that special education teachers consider valuable and to compare those to the administrative behaviors that building administrators perceive to be of value to the special education teachers. The survey utilized was originally developed by Balfour (2001). The instrument was field tested for clarity and validity. Special education teachers and building administrators across Kansas were randomly selected from a sample of convenience. Chapter 4 contains the analysis and results of the data.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to fill a gap in the research related to special education teacher attrition and to determine possible needs in administrator preparation programs. By identifying valued areas of administrative support to special education teachers, this research could determine support actions by administrators that may reduce attrition (Weiss, 2001). This study was developed to investigate the nature of administrative support:

1. What are the types of administrative supports that special education teachers in Kansas value?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be of value to the teachers?

An Internet survey was utilized to collect data. After a review of the literature and focus group input, the survey instrument included 52 administrative support actions as identified by Balfour (2001). The support actions were clustered into four subscales: (a) emotional support, (b) environmental support, (c) instructional support, and (d) technical support.

The most valuable administrative support actions were identified and explored. Demographic information that pertained to the respondents' teaching or administrative assignments was obtained as well.

The population of this study consisted of full-time public school special education teachers and building administrators within the state of Kansas. A survey created by Balfour (2001) was utilized to address the specific questions of this study. The survey was mailed to a sample size of 200 special education teachers and 200 building administrators in the state of Kansas. An overall return rate of 69% was obtained ($N=276$). A return rate of 69% ($N=276$) was utilized for data analysis to respond to the research questions. Participants provided demographic information as well as their perceptions of administrative support actions of value.

This chapter reveals the data collected by the survey and the responses to the research questions presented in this study. The first section summarizes the demographic information collected. The second section shows the data that was used to respond to the two research questions, with a brief summary. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of implications, interpretations, and conclusions of this study.

Survey Results: Sample Characteristics

The first section of the survey, Part I, elicited demographic information from the participants. Demographic information collected pertained to teaching or administrative assignment, grade level, school level, employment plans for the next school year, and administrative staffing. This information assisted in ensuring that the respondents matched the criteria of the survey sample.

Teaching model. Survey Item 1 asked the respondents to identify the delivery model they were assigned for the majority of the school day (see Table 8). Building administrators accounted for 36% ($n=104$). Special education teachers accounted for 62% ($n=172$). Of the special education teachers, teachers in the resource model accounted for 19% ($n=52$) of the sample, the co-teaching or inclusion model accounted for 22% ($n=60$), the self-contained model accounted for 17% ($n=48$), and the consultative model accounted for 4% ($n=12$). See Table 7 for the specific data related to teaching and administrative assignments.

Grade-level analysis. Survey Item 2 asked the respondents to identify all the grades they taught or served as administrator. This information was then grouped into two categories: Grades K-5 and Grades 6-12 (see Table 8). The data revealed that 37% ($n=101$) of respondents taught Grades K-5 and 63% ($n=175$) taught Grades 6-12. The respondents who identified Grades K-5 as their primary assignment were grouped as elementary, and those that identified Grades 6-12 as their primary assignment were grouped as secondary.

Table 7

Teaching Model

Model	Total	
	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Resource	52	19
Self-contained	48	17
Consultative	12	4
Co-teaching/inclusion	60	22
Administrative	104	38
Total	276	100

Table 8

Grade Level Taught Analysis

Grade level	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
K-5	101	37
6-12	175	63
Total	276	100

Plans for the next school year. Survey Item 4 asked the respondents to identify if they planned on remaining in their current positions for the next school year. Of the responses, 91% ($n=250$) stated they planned to return to the same position, 3% ($n=8$) stated they did not plan to return, and 7% ($n=18$) were unsure of their plans (see Table 9).

Table 9

Plans for the Next School Year

Plans	Total	
	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Plan to return	250	91
Do not plan to return	8	3
Not sure if they plan to return	18	7
Total	276	100

Number of principals. Survey Item 5 asked the respondents to identify how many principals were assigned to their buildings on a full-time basis. Having one principal accounted for 100% ($n=276$) of the responses.

Number of assistant principals. Survey Item 6 asked the respondents to identify how many assistant principals were assigned to their buildings. The following data were collected: 36% ($n=100$) had no assistant principal, 29% ($n=79$) had one assistant principal, 26% ($n=72$) had two assistant principals, 8% ($n=23$) had three assistant principals, and 1% ($n=2$) had four assistant principals (see Table 10).

Table 10

Number of Assistant Principals

Number of assistant principals	Total	
	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
0	100	36
1	79	29
2	72	26
3	23	8
4	2	1
Total	276	100

Demographic summary. In summary, the data demonstrated the demographic characteristics of the building assignments and administrative

staffing. Teachers made up over 60% of the respondents and administrators made up almost 40%. Over 20% of the teachers taught in the co-teaching or inclusion model, closely followed by teachers in the resource setting (19%). Sixty-three percent of the respondents worked in a secondary setting, while 37% worked in an elementary setting. Over 90% of the teachers planned to return to their current teaching positions the next year, and nearly 7% were not planning to return or were unsure of their return to their current teaching positions. One principal on a full-time basis served the vast majority of buildings. Over 35% of teachers reported having no assistant principals and well over half reported one or two assistant principals. The next section reports the data utilized to respond to the research questions.

Presentation of the Data: Research Questions

The research questions proposed for this study were answered using descriptive statistics and comparing means using inferential statistics. Statistical analysis was utilized to determine the administrative support behavior that teachers find most valuable. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and that building administrators perceive to be of value to special education teachers.

Research Question 1. What are the types of administrative supports that special education teachers value? Part II of the survey instrument contained 52 administrative support actions identified by Balfour (2001). Special education teachers were asked to rate their perceptions of the value of each administrative support action. The responses were based on a 4-point scale: 1=*not valuable*, 2=*somewhat valuable*, 3=*very valuable*, and 4=*extremely valuable*. Four subscale scores and a total score were calculated.

When seeking to find what administrative support behavior special education teachers value the most, the means for each of the 52 questions that the special education teachers answered were examined. The minimum mean score that an item could receive was 1 and the maximum mean score that an item could receive was 4. The administrative behavior that scored the highest was “supports my decision in front of parents,” with a mean score of 3.95. This behavior was closely followed by “communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school,” with a mean score of 3.88. Of the 17 highest mean scores, 16 were in the emotional subscale. Special education teachers valued the items listed in the emotional subscale over any of the other subscales, with the exception of the second highest item, “communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school,” which was in the environmental subscale. Table 11 lists all of the support behaviors listed in the survey ranked from the highest mean score to

the lowest mean score; the table also includes the minimum and maximum scores, standard deviation, and the subscale for each item number.

Table 11

Average Score for Each Survey Item on the Teacher Survey, Arranged From Highest Mean to Lowest Mean

Questionnumber	Administrative behavior survey item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Subscale
1	Supports my decisions in front of parents.	172	1	4	3.95	.346	Emo
49	Communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school.	172	1	4	3.88	.444	Env
2	Makes me feel that I am making a difference.	172	1	4	3.88	.417	Emo
52	Supports my decisions in front of other teachers.	172	1	4	3.85	.472	Emo
3	Is interested in what I do in my classroom.	172	1	4	3.84	.492	Emo
12	Shows confidence in my actions and decisions.	172	1	4	3.80	.569	Emo
9	Gives me genuine and specific feedback about my work.	172	1	4	3.76	.568	Emo
8	Takes an interest in my professional development and gives me opportunities to grow.	172	1	4	3.74	.615	Emo
51	Permits me to use my own judgment to solve problems.	172	1	4	3.74	.534	Emo
22	Listens and gives me undivided attention while I am talking.	172	1	4	3.71	.609	Emo
24	Seeks my input on important issues in the school.	172	1	4	3.70	.632	Emo
10	Tells me when I am on the right track with my work.	172	1	4	3.69	.596	Emo
31	Recognizes special projects or programs in my classroom.	172	1	4	3.67	.693	Emo

Table 11. *Average Score for Each Survey Item, Arranged From Highest Mean to Lowest Mean, Continued*

Question number	Administrative behavior survey item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Subscale
30	Gives me recognition for a job well done.	172	1	4	3.67	.666	Emo
15	Is available to discuss my personal problems or concerns	172	1	4	3.60	.739	Emo
13	Observes frequently in my classroom.	172	1	4	3.58	.787	Emo
41	Is available to discuss my professional problems or concerns	172	1	4	3.52	.820	Emo
11	Helps me interpret state curriculum standards and apply them to teaching my special education students.	172	1	4	3.37	.950	Inst
14	Helps me select or create curriculum for students with disabilities	172	1	4	3.31	.951	Inst
23	Helps me follow the federal and state special education regulations.	172	1	4	3.23	.593	Tech
25	Makes sure that I do not have to switch between too many grade levels and subjects.	172	1	4	2.65	.761	Env
47	Provides me with strategies for working with paraprofessionals.	172	1	4	2.63	.773	Inst
4	Gives me information about modifying instruction.	172	1	4	2.50	.784	Inst
32	Arranges my schedule in a way to reduce the time I spend on paperwork and in meetings.	172	1	4	2.48	.783	Env
36	Makes sure that I have the space I need to teach and plan.	172	1	4	2.47	.833	Env
28	Helps me get information from the central office special education department in my school system.	172	1	4	2.46	.812	Tech

Table 11. *Average Score for Each Survey Item, Arranged From Highest Mean to Lowest Mean, Continued*

Question number	Administrative behavior survey item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Subscale
37	Makes sure that I have the equipment I need for my classroom (i.e. computers, TVs, etc.).	172	1	4	2.45	.847	Env
34	Provides me with the funds I need to get supplies.	172	1	4	2.42	.816	Env
42	Provides me with clerical assistance to schedule meetings and complete paperwork	172	1	4	2.42	.802	Env
35	Assigns me to work with students for whom I am trained and certified to teach.	172	1	4	2.41	.857	Env
5	Gives me information about instructional techniques that will help improve teaching.	172	1	4	2.40	.739	Inst
7	Ensures that I have enough planning time.	172	1	4	2.35	.770	Env
40	Helps me implement co-teaching strategies.	172	1	4	2.35	.770	Inst
16	Helps me decide when and how to teach certain subjects.	172	1	4	2.33	.859	Inst
38	Does not assign me the most challenging students in the school all at one time.	172	1	4	2.33	.780	Env
50	Helps me get assistive technology devices for my students.	172	1	4	2.32	.707	Tech
43	Helps me write lesson plans.	172	1	4	2.30	.866	Inst
6	Provides me with reliable feedback about my IEPs.	172	1	4	2.27	.830	Tech
26	Provides me with reliable feedback about the assessments I conduct with my students.	172	1	4	2.27	.758	Tech
48	Helps me pick the right instructional programs for my students (i.e., reading, math, etc.).	172	1	4	2.27	.683	Inst
27	Helps me ensure that I meet confidentiality requirements.	172	1	4	2.25	.810	Tech

Table 11. *Average Score for Each Survey Item, Arranged From Highest Mean to Lowest Mean, Continued*

Question number	Administrative behavior survey item	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Subscale
46	Helps me develop schedules to ensure that my students are receiving the required hours of service per their IEPs.	172	1	4	2.24	.784	Tech
21	Keeps me informed of school and district events.	172	1	4	2.24	.762	Env
44	Keeps the student diversity in my classroom to a minimum (grade levels and exceptionalities).	172	1	4	2.24	.740	Env
45	Gives me information on ways to make my instruction meaningful.	172	1	4	2.23	.720	Inst
39	Helps me coordinate related services for my students (i.e., speech/language, physical therapy, etc.).	172	1	4	2.22	.708	Tech
33	Helps me find information in special education files.	172	1	4	2.19	.742	Tech
18	Suggests alternative instructional methods for students who are struggling.	172	1	4	2.15	.723	Inst
19	Helps me select or create appropriate instructional materials.	172	1	4	2.15	.684	Inst
29	Gives me reliable information about due dates for my special education paperwork (i.e., IEPs, evaluations, annual reviews, etc.)	172	1	4	2.14	.797	Tech
17	Helps me use my planning time effectively.	172	1	4	2.13	.709	Inst
20	Provides me with reliable input about the progress reports I write on my students.	172	1	4	2.12	.804	Tech

Research Question 2. Is there any significant difference between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be of value for teachers? Out of the 400 surveys sent out to teachers and administrators in Kansas, 275 (69%) were returned and used for the purpose of this study. The number of special education teachers that responded was 172. The teachers' mean score was 143.90, with the minimum mean score being a 52 (if a respondent answered 1 on every question) and the maximum mean score of 208 (if a respondent answered 4 on every question). The number of building administrators that responded was 103. The administrators' mean score was 148.89, with the minimum mean score being a 52 (if a respondent answered 1 on every question) and the maximum mean score of 208 (if a respondent answered 4 on every question). Table 12 incorporates the data and includes the median scores, standard deviations, and variance values as well. Figure 1 illustrates the total mean scores in a graph format.

The mean scores of the teachers and administrators were then compared to find out if there was a significant difference. The survey data were examined using a one-way ANOVA. The data were run using the Statistical Package for the Social Services software. The Levene's test showed the variance between groups at a significance level of .082. Even though the large F statistic on the Levene test ($F=3.053$) was inflated due to the large sample size, it was determined using

Keppel's guidelines (largest sample variance divided by smallest sample variance equals less than three) that the assumption of homogeneity of variance had not been violated (Keppel, 1991). See Table 13.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for the Total Score by Position

		Total score: Possible range 52-208	
	Number of surveys	103	
	Mean score	143.90	
Administrators	Median score	137	
	Std. deviation	16.35	
	Variance	267.32	
	<hr/>		
Position	Number of surveys	172	
	Mean score	148.89	
	Teachers	Median score	149
		Std. deviation	13.84
		Variance	191.61
<hr/>			
Group total	Number of surveys	275	
	Mean score	147.02	
	Median score	145	
	Std. deviation	15	
	Variance	224.94	

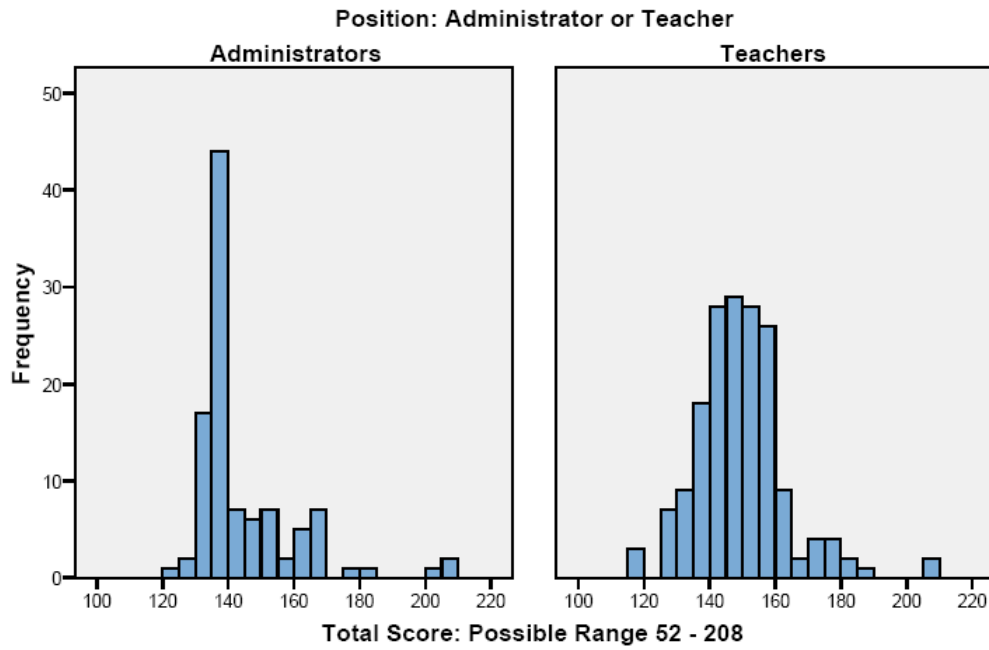


Figure 1. Total mean survey scores of administrators and teachers.

Table 13

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	Significance
3.053	1	273	.082

An ANOVA was conducted using the total mean score on the survey as the dependent variable and position held by the respondent as the independent variable. Type III sum of squares ANOVA was used to accommodate for unequal sample sizes. The F statistic indicated a statistically significant difference between the administrative supports that special education teachers in Kansas value and what building administrators in Kansas perceive to be of value to special education teachers. This difference was significant at the .007 level, using a .05 alpha level. The adjusted R -squared value for this test was .022 (2.2%), which indicated that only 2.2% of the results could be attributed to the position of the individual. R -squared values indicated that the strength of this association was moderate according to Cohen (as cited in Huck, 2000). The power for this study was .767, which was respectable according to Cohen (as cited in Huck, 2000). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based upon this initial testing, there appears to be a statistically significant difference in what administrative support behaviors special education teachers value and what building administrators perceive that special education teachers value. Table 14 displays the ANOVA results.

Because the null hypothesis was rejected, further investigation was needed to determine more information regarding the significant differences. The mean scores were broken into subgroups to determine the mean scores of each subgroup. The subgroups from the survey consisted of: emotional, environmental,

instructional, and technical. The individual items were broken down by subgroups (Appendix E). There were 16 survey items in the emotional subscale, 12 survey items in the environmental subscale, 13 survey items in the instructional subscale, and 11 items in the technical subscale. Table 15 illustrates this and includes the minimum scores possible and the maximum scores possible.

Table 14

ANOVA Table for Subgroup Mean Scores

	Type III Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Significance	Observed power ^a
	^b					
Position	1601.939	1	1601.939	7.285	.007	.767
Error	60031.930	273	219.897			
Total	6005873.000	275				
Corrected total	61633.869	274				

Note. ^aComputed using alpha=.05. ^b*R*-squared=.026 (Adjusted *R*-squared=.022).

There were 276 total respondents in the survey. They were made up of special education teachers and building administrators currently working in the state of Kansas. The total number of respondents ranked the survey items in the

emotional scale the highest (mean score of 58.12), followed by the environmental subscale (mean score of 32.47), the instructional subscale (mean score of 30.85), and the technical subscale (mean score of 25.58). The overall mean for the entire group of survey respondents was 147.02. Table 16 illustrates this information.

Table 15

Subscale Items With Minimum and Maximum Scores

Subscale	Number of items	Minimum score	Maximum score
Emotional	16	16	64
Environmental	12	12	48
Instructional	13	13	52
Technical	11	11	44
Total	52	52	208

There were 172 teachers who responded to the survey. For the teachers who responded, the emotional scale had the highest mean score with 60, followed by instructional with a mean score of 32, environmental with a mean score of 32, and technical with a mean score of 26. Table 17 shows the mean, median, minimum, maximum, range, standard deviation, and variance for each of the subscales for the total number of teachers who responded to the survey.

Table 16

Total Group Scores for Each Subscale

	Valid <i>N</i>	Mean	Median	Std. deviation	Variance
Emotional: 16	276	58.12	60	6.19	38.30
Environmental: 12	276	32.47	32	5.09	25.88
Instructional: 13	276	30.85	31	6.76	45.64
Technical: 11	276	25.58	25	5.43	29.54
Total: 52	276	147.02	145	15.00	224.94

Table 17

Teachers' Scores by Subscale

	Valid	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Min.	Max.	Range	<i>SD</i>	Variance
Emotional: 16	172	60	62	20	64	44	6	40
Environmental: 12	172	31	31	17	48	31	5	26
Instructional: 13	172	32	32	17	52	35	6	34
Technical: 11	172	26	25	14	44	30	5	24
Total: 52	172	149	149	117	208	91	14	192

There were 103 building administrators who responded to the survey. For the administrators who responded, the emotional scale had the highest mean score with 55, followed by environmental with a mean score of 34, the instructional subscale with a mean score of 29, and technical with a mean score of 25. Table 18 shows the mean, median, minimum, maximum, range, standard deviation, and variance for each of the subscales for the total number of administrators that responded to the survey.

Table 18

Administrators' Scores by Subscale

	Valid N	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Min.	Max.	Range	<i>SD</i>	Variance
Emotional: 16	103	55	56	41	64	23	5	24
Environmental: 12	103	34	33	23	48	25	4	20
Instructional: 13	103	29	25	23	52	29	8	58
Technical: 11	103	25	23	18	44	26	6	40
Total: 52	103	144	137	121	208	87	16	267

Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 visually illustrate this information and compare the mean scores of building administrators and teachers for each of the subscales.

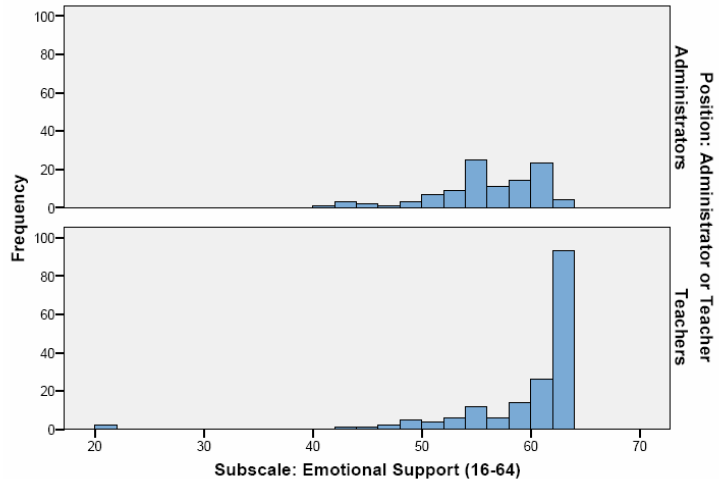


Figure 2. Comparison of emotional support by position.

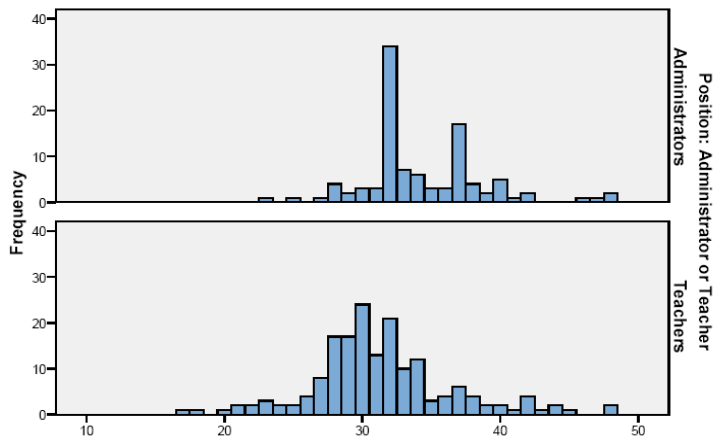


Figure 3. Comparison of environmental support by position.

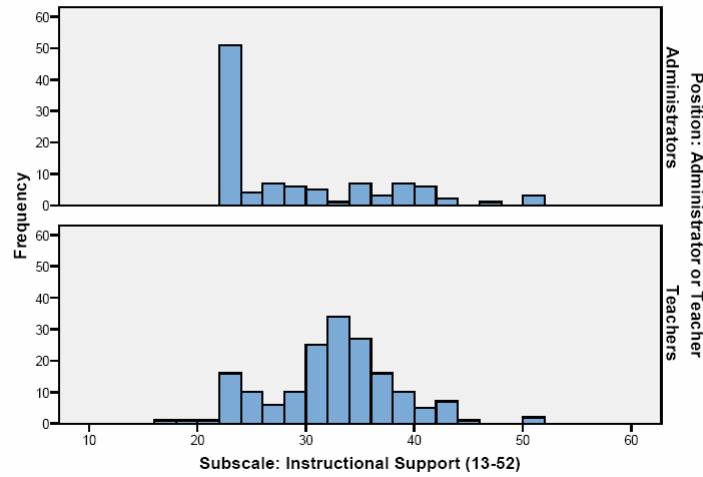


Figure 4. Comparison of instructional support by position.

To find out more about the significant differences and where they lay, the data were further dissected. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if there were any significant differences between the subscale mean scores of building administrators and special education teachers. The previous hypothesis testing and the ANOVA test indicated that there was a significant difference on the total score, but tests on each individual subscale were needed to find out more specific information about where the differences lay.

The first subscale that was examined was the emotional subscale. This subscale consisted of 16 questions that dealt with the emotional administrative behaviors. The Levene’s test of equality of error variances showed that the

variance between the groups on the emotional subscale was equal at a significance level of .434.

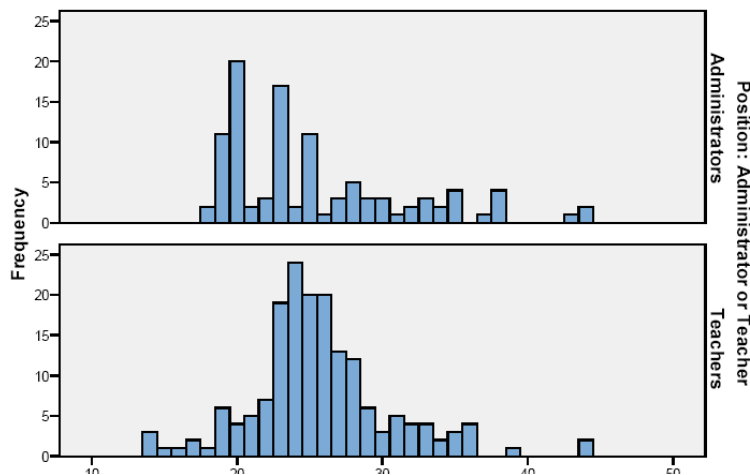


Figure 5. Comparison of technical support by position.

The one-way ANOVA test was conducted using the responses on the emotional subscale as the dependent variable and the position that the respondent held as the independent variable. Type III sum of squares ANOVA was used to accommodate for unequal sample sizes. The F statistic indicated a statistically significant difference between building administrators and special education

teachers at the .000 level. Table 19 displays the ANOVA results for the emotional subscale.

Table 19

Comparison of Building Administrators and Special Education Teachers Using the Emotional Subscale

	Type III sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Observed power ^a
Position	^b 1159.944	1	1159.944	33.922	.000	1.00
Error	9335.096	273	34.194			
Corrected total	10495.040	274				

Note. a. Computed using alpha=.05. b. Adjusted *R*-squared=.107.

The next subscale examined was the environmental subscale. This subscale consisted of 12 questions that dealt with environmental administrative behaviors. The Levene's test of equality of error variances showed that the variance between the groups on the environmental subscale was equal at a significance level of .501. The one-way ANOVA test was conducted using the responses on the environmental subscale as the dependent variable and the position that the respondent held as the independent variable. Type III sum of squares ANOVA was used to accommodate for unequal sample sizes. The *F* statistic indicated a statistically significant difference between building

administrators and special education teachers at the .000 level. Table 20 displays the ANOVA results for the environmental subscale.

Table 20

Comparison of Building Administrators and Special Education Teachers Using the Environmental Subscale

	Type III sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Observed power ^a
Position	^b 576.311	1	576.311	24.145	.000	.998
Error	6516.177	273	23.869			
Corrected total	7092.487	274				

Note. a. Computed using alpha=.05. b. Adjusted *R*-squared=.078.

The next subscale examined was the instructional subscale. This subscale consisted of 13 questions that dealt with instructional administrative behaviors. The Levene's test of equality of error variances showed that the variance between the groups on the instructional subscale was not equal at a significance level of .000; the error variance on the survey items in this subscale was not equal with both groups. The one-way ANOVA test was conducted using the responses on the instructional subscale as the dependent variable and the position that the respondent held as the independent variable. Type III sum of squares ANOVA was used to accommodate for unequal sample sizes. The *F* statistic indicated a

statistically significant difference between building administrators and special education teachers at the .000 level. Table 21 displays the ANOVA results for the instructional subscale.

Table 21

Comparison of Building Administrators and Special Education Teachers Using the Instructional Subscale

	Type III sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Observed power ^a
Position	^b 744.607	1	744.607	17.283	.000	.985
Error	11761.574	273	43.083			
Corrected total	12506.182	274				

Note. a. Computed using alpha=.05. b. Adjusted *R*-squared=.056.

The final subscale examined was the technical subscale. This subscale consisted of 11 questions that dealt with technical administrative behaviors. The Levene's test of equality of error variances showed that the variance between the groups on the technical subscale was not equal at a significance level of .001; the error variance on the survey items in this subscale was not equal with both groups. The one-way ANOVA test was conducted using the responses on the technical subscale as the dependent variable and the position that the respondent held as the independent variable. Type III sum of squares ANOVA was used to

accommodate for unequal sample sizes. The F statistic indicated that in the technical subscale there was not a statistically significant difference between building administrators and special education teachers at the .622 level. However, even though there were no significant differences between the two groups on this subscale, the power of this ANOVA was only .078 and the R -squared value was .003. Table 22 displays the ANOVA results for the environmental subscale.

Table 22

Comparison of Building Administrators and Special Education Teachers Using the Technical Subscale

	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Observed power ^a
Position	^b 7.211	1	7.211	.243	.622	.078
Error	8085.858	273	29.619			
Corrected total	8093.069	274				

Note. a. Computed using $\alpha=.05$. b. Adjusted R -squared= -.003.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to fill a gap in the research related to special education teacher attrition and building administrator preparation. The study was developed to investigate the following questions: What are the most important administrative supports that special education teachers in Kansas value? Are there

any statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be of value to the special education teachers? A survey developed by Balfour (2001) was used to gather data. The support actions were clustered into four subscales: emotional support, environmental support, instructional support, and technical support. An Internet survey was sent to 200 special education teachers and 200 building administrators in the state of Kansas. An overall return rate of 69% ($N=276$) was utilized for data analysis to respond to the two research questions. Of the total population who responded to the survey, 104 (36%) were building administrators and 172 (62%) were special education teachers.

The survey was designed to find out which administrative support behaviors special education teachers found most valuable. When the mean scores were compared, the administrative support behavior that scored the highest was “supports my decisions in front of parents.” Of the 17 highest mean scores, 16 were in the emotional subscale. Special education teachers valued the items listed in the emotional subscale over any of the other subscales, with the exception of the second highest item, “communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school,” which was in the environmental subscale.

Findings indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the overall perceived value of administrative support actions that special education teachers value and the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be of value to special education teachers. When delving further into the data, it was found that on every subscale except for the technical support subscale, there were statistically significant differences between the supports that special education teachers valued and what building administrators perceived to be of value to special education teachers. The last chapter of this dissertation presents the interpretations of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 5

Interpretations, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Nationwide, there is a growing shortage of qualified teachers. Though the need varies by region and discipline, it is especially acute in science, math, and special education (Merrow, 1999). The shortage of quality teachers is epitomized by the critical need for special education teachers. Many variables affect the special education shortage and retention of qualified teachers. Attrition is a major contributing factor to the dwindling supply of educators (Ingersoll, 2002). A contributing factor to dissatisfaction within their positions is lack of effective administrative support (Kreger, 1999). Lack of this administrative support is the reason cited most often for dissatisfaction with teacher job positions (Bruton, 2001; B. Levine, 2001). A positive work environment, specifically communication and collaboration with building level administration, reduces special education teacher attrition (Weiss, 2001).

This study was a comparative analysis designed to elicit information on the perceived value of specific administrative support of special education teachers. The purpose of this study was to identify support actions that are valued by special education teachers and to determine if there were differences with the perceptions of administrators as to what they feel special education teachers value.

A survey instrument was utilized for data collection purposes. The survey was designed to probe the perceptions of special education teachers toward the value of specific administrative supports and to probe the building administrators to determine what supports they perceived to be of value to the special education teachers. The data were analyzed to detect any differences between responses of building administrators and special education teachers.

Balfour (2001) developed a survey instrument that included 52 administrative support actions. Through a review of the literature and focus group input, Balfour ascertained the support components important to special education teachers. The support actions were then clustered into four subscales: (a) emotional support, (b) environmental support, (c) instructional support, and (d) technical support. These subscales represented areas of administrative support actions. The special education teachers made judgments on their perceptions of value of the 52 administrative support actions. The building administrators made judgments on the perceived value of supports to the special education teachers.

Participants provided demographic information as well as their perceptions of the value of administrative support. Full-time public school special education teachers and building administrators within the state of Kansas were the target population of this study. The survey was emailed to a sample size of 200 randomly selected special education teachers and 200 randomly selected building administrators, with a return rate of 69% ($N=276$). Descriptive and inferential

statistics were utilized to respond to the research questions of this study and to develop the following summary of results.

Research Questions

Two questions related to the perceived value of administrative support from special education educators are addressed. These research questions guided the investigation are:

1. What are the types of administrative supports that special education teachers in Kansas value?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be of value to the special education teachers?

Summary of Results

Research Question 1. What are the types of administrative supports that special education teachers in Kansas value? Special education teachers were asked to rate their perceptions of the value of each administrative support action. The responses were based on a 4-point scale: 1=*not valuable*, 2=*somewhat valuable*, 3=*very valuable*, 4=*extremely valuable*. The means of each item were compared to determine what the most valued item was. The administrative

support behavior that scored the highest was “supports my decisions in front of parents,” with an average mean score of 3.95 out of a possible 4. Of the 17 highest means scores, 16 were in the emotional subscale. Special education teachers valued the items listed in the emotional subscale over any of the other subscales, with the exception of the second highest item, “communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school,” from the environmental subscale.

Research Question 2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the administrative supports that special education teachers value and the administrative supports that building administrators perceive to be of value to the special education teachers? ANOVA tests were used to analyze the data for each subscale mean and the total mean score. Statistically significant differences were found in the total mean scores and in the subscales of environmental, emotional, and instructional support. Technical support did not have a statistically significant difference.

Summary

According to Balfour’s (2001) study two themes emerged from the teachers’ responses: a lack of emotional support from administrators and the inability of administrators to manage the workplace. The respondents in Balfour’s study valued emotional behaviors from administrators. The top four rated

administrative behaviors were: supporting decisions in front of parents and other teachers, making the teacher feel like he/she makes a difference, and communicates the importance of special education students and teachers to the staff. Balfour's (2001) data analysis did not support the need to differentiate administrative support practices by demographic variables. Analysis of the grade level taught, special education field, and other variables did not reveal statistically significant relationships toward teachers' intent to remain in the field of education. Previous research produced varying results. For example, Balfour (2001) failed to find a difference among the desired needs of administrative support between elementary and secondary level special education teachers, whereas Sirk (1999) found differences in their needs. Researchers have focused primarily on administrative supports expected and received by the special education group as a whole. In contrast, there has been scant research on valued administrative support actions specific to the differences or similarities of the special education teachers and the building administrators.

Findings indicate that special education teachers in Kansas value emotional administrative behavior support items over items in other categories. This follows closely the results of Balfour's (2001) survey. Respondents reported that the most valued support actions include providing praise and acknowledging that the teacher makes a difference, supporting the teacher in front of parents, and trusting the teacher's judgment.

Findings also indicate that there are statistically significant differences between what administrative supports special education teachers value and what building administrators perceive to be of value to special education teachers, with the exception of the technical administrative support actions.

Interpretation of Findings

Special education teachers found a number of similar areas of support valuable. Of the top 17 items with the highest mean score, 16 were from the emotional subscale. This finding correlates with the research conducted by Weiss (2001), who found that teachers give the most favorable ratings to administrators who provide teacher appreciation and recognition. Weiss, however, along with other researchers (Balfour, 2001; Bruton, 2001), did not identify specific administrative support actions as valuable. This study provided those specific administrative support actions teachers perceive to be valuable, which include supporting teachers in front of parents, making the teachers feel as if they make a difference, and being interested in what the teachers do in the classroom.

Based on the present findings, special education teachers and building administrators showed statistically significantly different perceptions of the value of administrative support. The strength of association, the variability of the independent variable (environmental support) explained by the dependent variable (school level taught) indicated a range of 2% to 10% within the responses. The

only subscale in which no statistically significant differences between special education teachers' and building administrators' perceptions occurred was the perceived value of administrative support within technical support. Possible explanations for these results may be the sample size was too small, the survey instrument did not adequately assess the perceptions of the teachers surveyed, or there simply were no differences in their perceptions. The literature supports the premise that teachers and administrators vary to some degree (Balfour, 2001; Bare-Oldham, 1999; Geter, 1997; Lund-Glassman, 1999; Sirk, 1999). This study demonstrated four statistically significant differences in a total of four subscales and one overall total.

Studies have linked together teacher attrition to lack of administrative support (Balfour, 2001; Bruton, 2001; Cross & Billingsley, 1994; Levine, B., 2001; Sirk, 1999; Zabel & Zabel, 2001). Findings related to attrition indicate that a majority of special education teachers are likely to abandon the field of education as a result of ineffective administrative support. Interestingly, research indicates administrative support as a reason to remain in the field of education. (Bruton, 1999; Levine, B., 2001; Morgan, 2000; Sirk, 1999; Weiss, 2001; Zabel & Zabel, 2001). It may be theorized that special education teachers who deem administrative support as a factor to remain in education are less likely to leave the field when provided valuable administrative support actions.

These findings suggest that it behooves school districts to implement strategies to evaluate the emotional support provided and desired by their special education teachers. In all likelihood, all teachers would benefit from emotional support. Administrators must be cognizant of the critical need to provide emotional support. One way of ensuring administrators provide these supports is to hold them accountable, perhaps through a policy change in the evaluation process.

Another way to enlighten administrators of the significance of providing emotional support to teachers is through staff development for administrators. Implementing training (such as attending presentations, in-service, or conferences) on the provision of emotional support may assist administrators in meeting the needs of their teachers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the mean responses of the sample in this study, special education teachers and building administrators do not attach similar value to administrative support actions. This suggests that administrators and teachers differ significantly on the support behaviors they desire and perceive to be of value. Assuming this is a representative finding, the support actions that teachers in this study identified as valuable can be provided to special education teachers to assist in reducing teacher attrition (Bruton, 1999; Levine, B., 2001; Morgan, 2000; Sirk, 1999;

Weiss, 2001). The retention of qualified teachers represents a partial solution to the teacher shortage and facilitates school compliance with federal mandates (Ingersoll, 2002). Additionally, teacher turnover costs school systems an average of 25% of their annual salary expenses (Gately, n.d.). Specific support actions administrators should implement, according to this sample, include supporting teacher decisions in front of parents, making teachers feel as if they make a difference, and being interested in what happens in the classrooms. Increasing valued support actions by administrators may reduce special education teacher attrition, assist in compliance with federal regulations, and reduce expenses (Fore et al., 2002).

Recommendations for Further Research

Data generated from this study revealed additional areas of interest for further study. The following are recommendations for further study:

1. This study was limited to the state of Kansas because of time and budget constraints. A study should be conducted in another region or state or across the nation to support or negate the findings in this study and to contribute to the current body of research on this topic.
2. A study should be conducted to identify administrative actions that contribute to decisions of special education teachers to leave or remain in the field of education. This study should focus on identifying the

specific administrative actions pertinent to special education teachers wanting to remain in education.

3. Future research could determine if there are differences in the value placed on administrative support actions according to years of experience. This study should focus on intervening variables such as years of teaching experience and licensure status.
4. Researchers could attempt to identify contributing factors to special education teachers' desire to remain in education. The focus of this study should be specific administrative support actions.
5. A study should be conducted on characteristics that lead an administrator to provide supportive actions to special education teachers. This study should focus on identifying administrators who are considered supportive by special education teachers and identifying specific actions considered valuable to special education teachers.

Summary

The foundation of this study was to determine what administrative support behaviors special education teachers value and if there was a difference between

special education teachers' perceptions of the value of administrative support actions and building administrators' perceptions of what is of value.

The literature review revealed that teacher attrition is a mounting concern, especially in the area of special education teachers (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, & Barkanci, 1998; Boe, Cook, et al., 1996; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997; Zabel & Zabel, 2001). Identified as a key component to teacher attrition, job satisfaction has been studied extensively. Researchers have found that administrative support functions as a prominent factor in teacher job satisfaction (Galvez, 1997; Morgan, 2000).

This study identified administrative support behaviors considered the most valuable by special education teachers. Sixteen out of the 17 actions considered valuable by special education teachers were emotional in nature and grouped in the emotional subscale. Additionally, providing emotional support, particularly in front of others, was of particularly high value to special education teachers. Teachers appreciated having their decisions supported in front of parents and other staff, feeling as if they make a difference, and having administrators who were interested in what was happening in their classrooms.

Results from this study may be utilized to create policies and programs to increase those administrative supports identified as valuable. The retention of qualified teachers represents a partial solution to the teacher shortage and facilitating school compliance with federal mandates (Ingersoll, 2002). Increasing

valued support actions by administrators may reduce special education teacher attrition (Fore et al., 2002).

Supporting teachers' decisions in front of parents, making the teachers feel as if they are making a difference, and being interested in the classrooms were supports identified as highly valued by this sample. Offering teachers these types of support may influence them to remain in the field, reducing attrition.

This study also demonstrated that special education teachers and building administrators do not view administrative supports the same. The survey data showed that there were statistically significant differences in the total scores of teachers and building administrators. This different thinking could perhaps lead to unappreciated teachers, resulting in special education teacher attrition. The findings of the present study indicate the possible importance of administrative support to special education teachers. Supportive administrative actions must be identified and implemented within schools to assist in reducing special education teacher attrition. Additionally, higher education, parents, and communities must understand the paramount importance of supporting this highly needed and scarce teaching resource. With recent legislation, such as NCLB, mandating all students receive a quality education from qualified teachers despite the current shortage of special education teachers, administrators must implement strategies to keep their teachers satisfied.

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Appendix A
IRB Approval Letter



University Research
Compliance Office
203 Fairchild Hall
Lower Mezzanine
Manhattan, KS 66506-1103
785-532-3224
Fax: 785-532-3278
<http://www.ksu.edu/research/comply>

TO: Jim Teagarden
Special Education
311 Bluemont Hall

Proposal Number: 4072

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair 
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: October 20, 2006

RE: Proposal Entitled, "Value of Administrative Support"

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is exempt from further review.

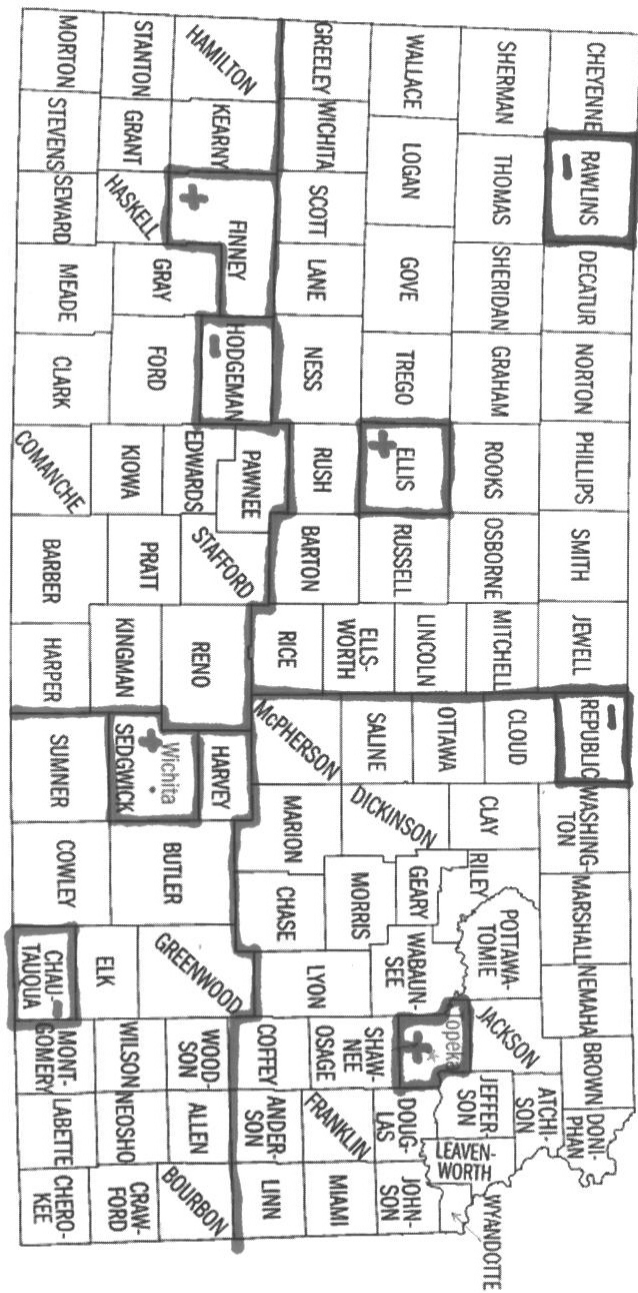
This exemption applies only to the proposal currently on file with the IRB. Any change affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Exemption from review does not release the investigator from statutory responsibility for obtaining the informed consent of subjects or their authorized representatives, as appropriate, either orally or in writing, prior to involving the subjects in research. The general requirements for informed consent and for its documentation are set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 CFR 46.116-117, copies of which are available in the University Research Compliance Office and online at <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm#46.116>. In cases of remote oral data collection, as in telephone interviews, oral consent is sufficient and the researcher is required to provide the respondent with a copy of the consent statement only if the respondent requests one. The researcher must, however, ask the respondent whether he or she wishes to have a copy. The initiative in requesting a copy must not be left to the respondent. Regardless of whether the informed consent is written or oral, the investigator must keep a written record of the informed consent statement, not merely of the fact that it was presented, and must save this documentation for 3 years after completing the research.

The identification of a human subject in any publication constitutes an invasion of privacy and requires a separate informed consent.

Injuries or any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

Appendix B
State of Kansas Map



Appendix C
Survey Email

December 1, 2006

Dear Valued Education Professional,

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University and a special education teacher in the Manhattan/Ogden School District. Through my experiences, I understand the tremendous challenges that educators must tackle each and every day. Administration plays a prominent role in supporting teachers through these challenges and I want to discover what **supports special education teachers find to be of value** and what **administrative supports building administrators perceive to be of value** to special education teachers.

I am surveying full time special education teachers and building administrators in grades K-12 currently teaching in the state of Kansas, to determine, a) what administrative supports are valuable to special education teachers, b) if there are any significant differences between what special education teachers value and what building administrators perceive to be of value.

Through identifying what supports special education teachers desire, administration may be better able to provide supports. **All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential, NO names will be elicited and NO connection to specific schools or districts will be identified.** Your participation in this survey is in no way required, although I would greatly appreciate your participation. The survey is to be taken online and will take approximately 8-10 minutes to complete. The link to the survey is: <https://surveys.ksu.edu/TS?offeringId=59300>

I sincerely appreciated your time and efforts to complete this survey. You will play a pivotal role in helping administration serve special education teachers more effectively! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my faculty advisor or me. I can be reached at caseye@manhattan.k12.ks.us or 785-587-2890. My advisor, Dr. Jim Teagarden, can be reached at Kansas State University. His phone number is 785-532-5923 and his email is mrt@ksu.edu. Thanks again for your time, I know that you are all busy professionals. You have been a great help to educators and administrators all across the country.

Thank you,
Casey Ewy

Appendix D

Notice of Informed Consent

Administrative Support Actions

Investigator: Casey Ewy

Telephone: 785-587-2890

I. INTRODUCTION

You are being requested to take part in a research study. This consent form provides information about the research study. I will be available to answer your questions and to provide further explanations. If you agree to take part in the research study, you will be asked to sign the consent form. This process is known as informed consent. Your decision to participate is voluntary. You are free to choose whether or not you take part in this study.

II. PURPOSE

As a student in the Department of Education of Kansas State University, I am facilitating a research study to identify valuable support actions provided by administrators to elementary and secondary special education teachers.

III. PROCEDURES

The research will be conducted in the State of Kansas. You are being asked to complete a survey regarding your perceptions of administrative support actions. Each teacher has been randomly selected. Survey completion will take about 15-20 minutes. You will be asked to sign the informed consent prior to participating in the study. You may refuse to participate. Refusing to participate will not affect you in anyway. **At no time will you be requested or required to provide identifying information such as name, phone number, student number, social security number, etc.**

IV. POSSIBLE RISKS

Survey completion will have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

V. POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There will be no personal benefit from taking part in this study.

VI. COSTS

There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

VII. COMPENSATION

You will not receive compensation for participating in this study.

VIII. RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may decide not to begin or to stop this study at any time.

IX. PRIVACY OF RESEARCH RECORDS

All survey records will be kept private. Surveys will be used for research purposes only.

X. QUESTIONS

If you have questions about this study, please feel free to ask. I will provide any information necessary. If you have complaints about participating, please call 785-587-2890.

XI. SIGNATURES

By participating in this online survey, you agree that you have read this informed consent form, you understand what is involved, and you agree to participate in this study. You do not give up any of your legal rights by signing this informed consent form.

Appendix E

Survey Items Grouped by Subscale

Survey Items Grouped by Subscale (Balfour, 2001)

Emotional subscale

- 1 Support my decisions in front of parents.
- 2 Make me feel that I am making a difference.
- 3 Be interested in what I do in my classroom.
- 8 Take an interest in my professional development and give me opportunities to grow.
- 9 Give me genuine and specific feedback about my work.
- 10 Tell me when I am on the right track with my work.
- 12 Show confidence in my actions and decisions.
- 13 Observe frequently in my classroom.
- 15 Be available to discuss my personal problems or concerns.
- 22 Listen and give me undivided attention while I am talking.
- 24 Seek my input on important issues in the school.
- 30 Give me recognition for a job well done.
- 31 Recognize special projects or programs in my class.
- 41 Be available to help me solve professional problems.
- 51 Permit me to use my own judgment.
- 52 Support my decision in front of other teachers.

Environmental subscale

- 7 Ensure that I have enough planning time.

- 21 Keep me informed of school and district events.
- 25 Make sure that I do not have to switch between too many grade levels and subjects.
- 32 Arrange my schedule in a way to reduce the time I spend on paperwork and meetings.
- 34 Provide me with the funds I need to get the supplies.
- 35 Assign me to work with students for whom I am certified to teach.
- 36 Make sure that I have the space I need to teach and plan.
- 37 Make sure that I have the equipment I need for my classroom (i.e., computers, TVs).
- 38 Not assign me the most challenging students in the school all at one time.
- 42 Provide me with clerical assistance to schedule meetings and complete paperwork.
- 44 Keep the student diversity in my classroom to a minimum (grade levels and exceptionalities).
- 49 Communicate to staff that special education students and teachers are important.

Instructional subscale

- 4 Give me information about modifying instruction.
- 5 Give me information about instructional techniques that will improve my teaching.
- 11 Help me interpret state curriculum standards and apply them to teaching my special education students.
- 14 Help me select or create curriculum for students with disabilities.

- 16 Help me decide when and how to teach certain subjects.
- 17 Help me use my plan book effectively.
- 18 Suggest alternative materials for students who are struggling.
- 19 Help me select appropriate instructional materials.
- 40 Help me implement co-teaching strategies.
- 43 Help me write lesson plans.
- 45 Give me information on ways to make my instruction meaningful.
- 47 Provide me with strategies for working with paraprofessionals.
- 48 Help me pick the right instructional programs for my students (i.e., for reading, math).

Technical subscale

- 6 Provide me with reliable feedback about my IEPs.
- 20 Provide me with reliable input about the progress reports I write on my students.
- 23 Help me follow the federal and state special education regulations.
- 26 Provide me with reliable feedback about the assessments I conduct on my students.
- 27 Help me ensure that I meet confidentiality requirements.
- 28 Help me get information from the central office special education department in my school district.
- 29 Give me reliable information about due dates for my special education paperwork.
- 33 Help me find information in special education files.

- 39 Help me coordinate related services for my students (i.e., speech/language and others).
- 46 Help me develop schedules to ensure that students are receiving the required hours of service.
- 50 Help me get assistive technology devices for my students.

Appendix F

Permission to Use and Modify Balfour's Survey

Casey Ewy

2501 Browning Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66502
785-587-2890
caseyewy@yahoo.com

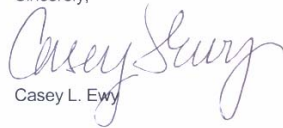
August 1, 2006

Dear Dr. Balfour

I am very interested in pursuing similar research addressed in your dissertation. Currently a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University, my dissertation will seek to reveal what administrative supports are valued by special education teachers. I am impressed with your research. I anticipate that by modifying your survey tool, I can extract the needed information to conduct my research.

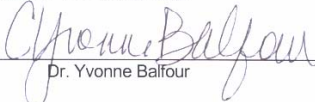
It was a pleasure discussing your research/dissertation with you. Per our phone conversation, this letter indicates your permission to modify your survey instrument for purposes of my dissertation research. I greatly appreciate your permission and assistance in this process.

Sincerely,



Casey L. Ewy

I, Yvonne Balfour, give Casey Ewy permission to modify the survey instrument utilized in my dissertation: *The Impact of Certification Status on the Administrative Support Needs of Novice Special Education Teachers (2001)*.

Signature: 
Dr. Yvonne Balfour

Date: 8/1/06

Appendix G
Survey Instrument

Survey Description

This study seeks to identify the types of administrative supports special education teachers value. Please remember that your answers are completely anonymous and will only be used for research purposes. The study will compare the administrative supports that special education teachers value with the supports that building administrators perceive as valuable to special education teachers.

Opening Instructions

I appreciate your completion of this survey regarding administrative support. Please respond to each item. There are three pages to the survey and should take you about 8 to 10 minutes to complete. Thank you so much for your time.

Please answer the questions based on your current position in the 2006-2007 school year.

Question 1 ** required **

What grades do you teach or cover as an administrator? Check all that apply

- Pre K
- K
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

Question 2 ** required **

What category best describes the school in which you teach 50% or more of your time.

- Elementary School (grades K-5)
- Secondary School (grades 6-12)
- Other:

Question 3 ** required **

Do you plan on being in your current assignment next school year (2007-2008)?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure Yet

Question 4 ** required **

How many principals serve in your building full-time (50% or more of the time)?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

Question 5 ** required **

How many assistant principals serve in your building full-time (50% or more of the time)?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

Question 6 ** required **

What category best describes the delivery model for your primary assignment (where you spend 50% or more of your time)?

- Resource
- Self-contained
- Consultant/related service
- Co-teaching/inclusion in a general ed. class
- Building administrator

Please make judgments about each Administrative Behavior in regards to your personal opinion. Rate the value of each administrative support using the scale. Please only rate the value of the support, not what you actually receive. Base your responses on your overall feelings. Please mark the value that best corresponds with your response. There are 52 administrative behaviors covered in this survey.

Question 7

1 - *Not Valuable At All* | 2 - *Somewhat Valuable* | 3 - *Very Valuable*
4 - *Extremely Valuable*

	1	2	3	4
7.1 Supports my decisions in front of parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2 Makes me feel that I am making a difference.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3 Is interested in what I do in my classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4 Gives me information about modifying instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.5 Gives me information about instrumental techniques that will help improve my teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.6 Provides me with reliable feedback about my IEPs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.7 Ensures that I have enough planning time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.8 Takes an interest in my professional development and gives me opportunities to grow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.9 Gives me genuine and specific feedback about my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.10 Tells me when I am on the right track with my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.11 Helps me interpret state curriculum standards and apply them to teaching my special education students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.12 Shows confidence in my actions and decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.13 Observes frequently in my classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.14 Helps me select or create curriculum for students with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.15 Is available to discuss my personal problems or concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.16 Helps me decide when and how to teach certain subjects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.17 Helps me use my planning time effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.18 Suggests alternative instructional methods for students who are struggling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.19 Helps me select or create appropriate instructional materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.20 Provides me with reliable input about the progress reports I write on my students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.21 Keeps me informed of school and district events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.22 Listens and gives me undivided attention when I am talking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.23 Helps me follow the federal and state special education regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.24 Seeks my input on important issues in the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.25 Makes sure that I do not have to switch between too many grade levels and subjects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.26 Provides me with reliable feedback about the assessments I conduct with my students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.27 Helps me ensure that I meet confidentiality requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.28 Helps me get information from the central office special education department in my school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.29 Gives me reliable information about due dates for my special education paperwork (i.e. IEPs, triennial, evaluations, annual reviews, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.30 Gives me recognition for a job well done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.31 Recognizes special projects or programs in my classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.32 Arranges my schedule in a way to reduce the time I spend on paperwork and in meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.33 Helps me find information in special education files.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.34 Provides me with the funds I need to get supplies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.35 Assigns me to work with students for whom I am trained and certified to teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.36 Makes sure that I have the space I need to teach and plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.37 Makes sure that I have the equipment I need for my classroom (i.e. computers, TVs, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.38 Does not assign me the most challenging students in the school all at one time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.39 Helps me coordinate related services for my students (i.e., speech/language, physical therapy, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.40 Helps me implement co-teaching strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.41 Is available to discuss my professional problems or concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.42 Provides me with clerical assistance to schedule meetings and complete paperwork.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.43 Helps me write lesson plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.44 Keeps the student diversity in my classroom to a minimum (grade levels and exceptionalities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.45 Gives me information on ways to make my instruction meaningful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.46 Helps me develop schedules to ensure that my students are receiving the required hours of service per their IEPs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.47 Provides me with strategies for working with professionals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.48 Helps me pick the right instructional programs for my students (i.e., reading, math, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.49 Communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.50 Helps me get assistive technology devices for my students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.51 Permits me to use my own judgment to solve problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.52 Supports my decisions in front of other teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Closing Message

Thanks again for your valuable contribution to this project. By completing this survey, we are closer to improving the education of all of our students; in addition to identifying the supports deemed most valuable by our special education teachers.

Appendix H

Email to Superintendents and Special Education Directors

November 15, 2006

Dear Superintendent or Special Education Director,

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University. As required for graduation, I must complete a research project. I respectfully ask for your staff's help in this study.

Teacher attrition is a significant area of concern, especially in special education. I plan to survey special education teachers and building administrators in grades K-12 currently teaching in the state of Kansas, to determine: a) what administrative are valuable to them, and b) if there are any significant differences between what special education teachers value and what building administrators perceive to be of value.

Hopefully, through identifying what supports are desirable, administration can help decrease special education attrition. All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and NO connection to specific schools or districts will be identified. The surveys will be emailed to the building administrators and special education teachers chosen at random to participate.

I sincerely appreciated your staff's time and efforts to complete this research project. Without everyone's help this research project would not be possible. Once my research is complete, I will forward you a brief summary of my findings. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 785-587-2890 or caseye@manhattan.k12.ks.us. You can also contact my advisor, Dr. Jim Teagarden, at 785-532-5923 or mrt@ksu.edu.

Sincerely,
Casey Ewy

Appendix I
Follow-Up Email

January 10, 2007

Dear Valued Special Education Teacher,

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University and a special education teacher in the Manhattan/Ogden School District. Through my experiences, I understand the tremendous challenges that special educators must tackle each and every day. Administration plays a prominent role in supporting teachers through these challenges and I want to discover administrative **supports building administrators perceive to be of value** and what administrative supports building administrators perceive to be of value to special education teachers.

I am surveying full time special education teachers and building administrators in grades K-12 currently teaching in the state of Kansas, to determine, a) what administrative supports are valuable to special education teachers, and b) if there are any significant differences between what special education teachers value and what building administrators perceive to be of value.

Through identifying what supports special education teachers desire, administrators may be better able to serve the needs of special education teachers' needs. **All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential, NO names will be elicited and NO connection to specific schools or districts will be identified.** The survey is to be taken online and will take approximately 8-10 minutes to complete. The link to the survey is: <https://surveys.ksu.edu/TS?offeringId=59300>.

I sincerely appreciated your time and efforts to complete this survey. You will play a pivotal role in helping administration serve special education teachers more effectively! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 785-587-2890 or caseye@manhattan.k12.ks.us. My advisor, Dr. Jim Teagarden, can be reached at Kansas State University at 785-532-5923 or mrt@ksu.edu. Thanks again for your time, I know that you are all busy professionals. You have been a great help to educators and administrators all across the country.

Thank you,
Casey Ewy