AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SECONDARY EDUCATOR KNOWLEDGE OF
DISABILITY LEGISLATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO PLANNING FOR
THE TRANSITION FROM SECONDARY TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
SETTINGS

A Dissertation in
Educational Administration
by
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of the Requirements
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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Due to the changes in disability legislation that protect persons with disabilities from discrimination, and allow for free, appropriate public education along with equal access to education, more and more students with disabilities are choosing to attend postsecondary educational settings. The transition planning process as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (IDEA ’04) mandates that supports and services be put in place while a student is in high school to help that student be successful in meeting his/her post-high school outcomes. For secondary educators this means they must understand how supports and services for students with disabilities are implemented in postsecondary education settings. This knowledge will help secondary educators develop transition plans that truly address a given student’s needs, strengths and postsecondary outcomes.

The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which secondary educators perceive themselves to be knowledgeable of federal legislation requirements regarding the education of students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings. In addition, this study explores the perceived competencies related to secondary educators’ knowledge of federal legislation for students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings. The participants in this study include secondary educators (e.g., general and special education teachers, guidance counselors and administrators) from the state of Pennsylvania. The results of this study have implications for policy, practice, and future research.
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The process of completing this dissertation has expanded my world immensely. I have truly learned the old adage that the more I learn, the more I realize how much I do not know, and how much I have yet to learn! This *Magnum Opus* would not be complete without the love, support and help of many family, friends and colleagues; so many that I would need to write another hundred pages or more to include them all. But a few of those people need to be formally acknowledged here.

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Now, I begin the next chapter in my life journey. Life is rich, and laughter and joy are some of life’s sweetest creations. I am going to go experience some of those sweet creations right now (along with enjoying some good chocolate!). It is time to celebrate!
Chapter 1
Introduction

A school-age student who is identified as having a disability will continue to experience a variety of educational needs throughout his/her life. Although there are some situations in which a student’s disability might disappear (e.g., the student with an articulation problem who is receiving speech and language services through provision of an Individualized Education Program (IEP)), typically the identified disability does not disappear when that person graduates from high school. Currently, much of the disability literature related to secondary and postsecondary outcomes focuses on the increased numbers of students with disabilities attending postsecondary institutions, and the low retention rates of these students (NCES, 2002; NCES, 1999; Stodden & Conway, 2003); however, there is limited research on the planning required for the transition from secondary to postsecondary education settings.

For students with disabilities to be adequately prepared for the differences in the types and levels of support they might receive in postsecondary education settings, they need to be actively engaged in their own transition planning while in high school. Their involvement will help them gain self-advocacy skills, along with learning the differences in the laws that protect them (Kochhar-Bryant, Shaw, & Izzo, 2007). Secondary special educators, general educators, guidance counselors, and administrators need to be aware of how disability legislation changes from an entitlement system to an eligibility system when a student graduates from high school. Such knowledge is essential in developing appropriate transition plans from secondary education to postsecondary education.
settings. Additionally, educators need to be aware of what the laws are and what postsecondary institutions are required to do, under the laws, to accommodate students with disabilities. This type of knowledge will allow secondary educators the skills needed to assist students with disabilities and to insure effective transition planning.

Students receiving special education services and supports during high school have a variety of needs ranging from academic, to social/emotional, to behavioral, and transition; these needs are met via an entitlement system mandated by federal law. More specifically, a student’s transition needs include those identified by the IEP team to assist the student in successful movement from high school to postsecondary settings. Postsecondary settings range from work environments to community activities to educational settings, or some combination of the three. If secondary educators are to develop appropriate, individualized transition plans as part of the IEP, they must have a clear understanding of disability legislation, how that legislation changes once a student graduates from high school, and how accommodations are actually implemented in a postsecondary education setting. There is a lack of research and literature regarding secondary transition planning as it relates to postsecondary education outcomes, particularly when examining teacher, counselor, and administrator knowledge.

Transition planning incorporates a variety of components addressing desired post high school outcomes. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities designed in an outcome-oriented process that address postsecondary education and/or training, employment, and independent living which includes residential, community

\[\text{Independent living addresses where a student thinks he/she will live, how he/she wishes to participate in the community, and in what types of recreational activities he/she wishes to participate.}\]
participation, and recreational aspects of such (§300.29 Part 300, Federal Regulations).

Transition services as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (IDEA\textsuperscript{2}) must be based on a student’s needs and must take into account the student’s preferences and interests. The reauthorization of IDEA (2004) resulted in changes to the secondary transition portion of the IEP. Details of these changes will be discussed in Chapter Two. For transition planning to be truly effective and in the spirit of the law, special education and general education teachers, guidance counselors and administrators must have knowledge of how disability legislation changes for a student with a disability upon high school graduation, and the difference in the implementation of accommodations in the two educational settings. For example, in high school, a student with an IEP may receive an alternative curriculum for a given course modifying the course objective(s). While in a postsecondary educational setting, the curriculum cannot and will not be modified; only accommodations will be offered that allow the student with a disability to have equal access. In other words, the accommodations will level the playing field.

\textbf{Statement of the Problem}

Disability legislation mandates that students with disabilities have a right to education in both the K-12 and higher education systems; however, there is a significant difference in the laws that protect students with disabilities in these two educational settings. IDEA is an education law that is entitlement focused, and requires the local

\footnote{2 Although the reauthorization of the law included the word “improvement,” the standard acronym for the law remained the same, IDEA.}
education agency (LEA), or school district to complete an evaluation to determine whether a given student meets specific eligibility criteria as a student with a disability (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000). Once a student is identified as having a disability, it must be determined whether or not the student needs special education because of that disability. Conversely, the laws governing postsecondary life (i.e. the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) (ADA)) and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Section 504, are civil rights laws that mandate equal access for students with disabilities based on whether a person is eligible by meeting the definition of disability under the law, and is otherwise qualified for the service, program, or employment (McLaughlin & Nolet, 2004). An effective transition process carefully guides students’ transition to postsecondary settings. One aspect of that transition process addresses how a disability impacts one’s learning. A second aspect addresses how disability legislation changes from an entitlement system to an eligibility system. A comprehensive transition planning process that includes these components will likely increase the chances of success for students with a disability.

Secondary schools provide little planning and preparation for the transition of supports, services or accommodations to postsecondary school settings for students with disabilities and their parents. According to the National Council on Disability (2000):

…the lack of awareness among educators and parents regarding the policy contract between IDEA at the secondary level…and Section 504 at the postsecondary level. The result is that students are often harshly surprised rather than prepared for the disparity between the two levels of education…students
themselves and parents are often “caught unaware” when the level of service provision drops off or is not automatically extended following high school. (p. 8)

Seemingly, secondary educators often lack the knowledge and awareness of how disability legislation differs between secondary and postsecondary settings, and therefore are unable to communicate those changes to students and their parents (Stodden, Jones & Chang, 2002). According to Stodden et al., “…youth with disabilities transition to post-school environments without the skills that are necessary to identify their support needs and to link their needs with desired outcomes” (p. 4). To complicate this picture, secondary educators, while able to identify the disability legislation that impacts students with disabilities in postsecondary settings, may not realize that they do not have the knowledge needed to adequately assist students with disabilities who have a goal of postsecondary education. The ability to identify the disability legislation is not synonymous with having a working knowledge and understanding of the types of accommodations offered at the postsecondary education level. The problem may be that secondary educators have inflated perceived competence regarding disability legislation, particularly as it relates to postsecondary education settings (Valentine, DoBois & Cooper, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which secondary educators are knowledgeable of the ways in which disability legislation is to be
implemented in postsecondary education settings. Specifically, this study explored the relationship between perceived competency and actual knowledge of how accommodations should be provided at the postsecondary education level for students with disabilities. This information is useful in guiding school districts to support secondary educators as they develop transition plans, along with providing information to teacher and administrator preparation programs related to the content of the legal mandates impacting students with disabilities. In addition, qualitative data was collected related to how secondary educators prefer to receive training. This type of information yields recommendations for future in-services offered to educators in secondary educational settings.

**Significance of the Study**

The results of this study provided baseline data outlining the extent to which secondary educators, all of whom are members of the IEP team, are knowledgeable of implementation of the legislation for students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings. Additionally, secondary educators’ perceived competency regarding the implementation of postsecondary disability legislation was examined. If secondary educators do not have this knowledge, and they “don’t know what they don’t know”, it begs the question of “How can they [secondary educators] develop appropriate transition plans for students with disabilities with the outcome of postsecondary education?”

A researcher-designed survey was used to obtain the baseline data on secondary educators’ knowledge, information about secondary educators’ perceived competency,
and perceived future training needs. Survey research provides a rich pool of descriptive data from which to synthesize issues and guide future practice (Creswell, 2003; Dillman, 2007). In this study, a 31-item survey was administered to participants, all of whom were secondary educators from the state of Pennsylvania. This questionnaire obtained qualitative data regarding respondents’ knowledge of implementation of the legislation that protects students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings. The survey included a qualitative pre and post question requiring participants to rate themselves with regards to their perceived competency of this knowledge, and finally, additional qualitative data was collected related to topics for future training of the participants.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were explored in this study:

1. To what extent are secondary educators knowledgeable of the requirements of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?

2. To what extent do secondary educators’ self-perceived competency related to knowledge of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education change as a result of completing the survey?

3. What are the areas in which secondary educators indicate a need for additional training related to disability legislation for students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?
Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in this study. These definitions are based on the language used in the following laws, IDEA ’04, ADA 1990, and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Section 504:

*Secondary educator.* This includes certified special education teachers and transition specialists; certified general education teachers; certified guidance counselors; and, certified high school principals and vice principals employed at the secondary level who are involved in the IEP and transition planning process. Pennsylvania requires the transition planning process begin at age 14; therefore, the definition of transition used in this study includes services provided to 14 year-old students with disabilities.

*Entitlement.* As it relates to legislation for students with disabilities, entitlement is a student’s right to a free, appropriate public education regardless of that student’s ability or disability. Those rights or entitlements include access to a variety of educational supports and services to assist a student in being successful while in public school.

*Eligibility.* A person with a disability must satisfy appropriate conditions to be considered for accommodations at the postsecondary level; the disability must be a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Eligibility at the postsecondary level is determined first by being *otherwise qualified* to attend the postsecondary setting, and second by the student providing documentation of their disability. The documentation must meet the definition of disability under the ADA and Section 504. Eligibility for school-aged students is determined by meeting a set of criteria and a decision made by a multidisciplinary team of professionals and the parents
of a student. The criteria for school-aged students is specified in IDEA ’04, and includes 13 categories of exceptionalities under which a student may qualify for school-age special education supports and services (See Appendix A).

Special Education. As it relates to IDEA ’04, special education is the supports and services offered to students with disabilities in public school, K-12 settings. More specifically, as stated in IDEA, special education is defined as:

1. ....specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including
   (i) Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and
   (ii) Instruction in physical education.

2. Special education includes each of the following, if the services otherwise meet the requirements of paragraph (a) (1) of this section –
   (i) Speech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service under State standards;
   (ii) Travel training; and
   (iii)Vocational education (20 U.S. C. 1401(19).

Postsecondary Education. This term refers to any formal training and education in which a person participates after graduation from high school (e.g., two or four-year college or university, vocational training school, certificate program).
Intermediate Unit (IU). The state of Pennsylvania has 29 IUs that provide a variety of programs and services to public, private and non-public schools. Each IU covers a region in the state ranging from multiple schools from six counties to a single district in one large city. IUs also provide some of the smaller school districts with special education supports and services. Intermediate units provide technical assistance to school districts in the areas of professional development, curriculum and instruction support, assistive technology support to the districts in a given region. In addition, the IUs operate special education and alternative education programs on a regional basis. Funding for the 29 Intermediate Units is provided by member school districts, state and federal grants, and state funds.

Transition. Transition refers to the movement of a student from high school to post high school activities. Although it is a required component of the IEP at age 16 under federal law, in Pennsylvania transition services must begin at age 14. Transition services are defined as:

A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability, designed within an outcome oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. (20 U.S. C. 1401(19).
Summary

Chapter One sets the stage for the problem addressed in this study. The purpose of this study was to assess secondary educators’ knowledge of the differences in requirements of disability legislation for students at the secondary education level compared to students at the postsecondary education level. An introduction to the laws mandating supports and services to students with disabilities in secondary and postsecondary educational settings was offered, along with a statement of purpose and the significance of the study. Finally, selected research questions and definition of terms were presented. Chapter Two contains a review of relevant literature.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter begins with a review of the history of disability legislation as it relates to the education of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, this chapter will review the literature on transition planning for students with disabilities as they transition from secondary to postsecondary settings. Emphasis was also placed on the role of secondary educators in the transition planning process, transition competency research, and perceived competency.

Overview of the History of Transition Planning

The laws that focus on persons with disabilities and accessing services for educational, vocational, and transition support come from the fields of workforce development, vocational-technical education, special education and rehabilitation (Stillington & Clark, 2006). The various laws that have been implemented over the last four decades, have impacted transition planning for students with disabilities, come from various arms of the federal government (Pierangelo & Gioliana, 2004). Secondary educators’ understanding of these laws is an important component of assisting students with disabilities during their secondary school career to enhance the transition planning process. The legislation that impacts students with disabilities mandates collaboration among the various systems that serve persons with disabilities\(^3\). For purposes of this

\(^3\) See Appendix B for a detailed list of the various pieces of Federal legislation.
study, three (3) key pieces of Federal legislation, which impact transition planning for individuals with disabilities will be addressed. These include: The Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, ‘04); the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Section 504 (P.L. 102-569); and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990, P.L. 101-336).

IDEA was originally authorized as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA), or P.L. 94-142. This was the first piece of federal legislation that established special education services for children with disabilities in public school settings, and did not require public schools to address a student’s transition from high school to post high school life. P.L. 94-142 has been reauthorized four times since its inception, in 1983, 1990, 1997, and 2004. The 1990 reauthorization changed the name of the law to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act or IDEA. This law, which protects students with disabilities between the ages of 0 (birth) and 21, was reauthorized most recently in 2004. The reauthorization of IDEA ‘04 resulted in changes to the secondary transition portion of the IEP. These changes include the addition of the term “further education” of children with disabilities as it relates to ensuring an education that prepares them for additional education [601(d)(1)(A)]. Changes were also made in the definition of “transition services.” The law now defines the coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability to include postsecondary education, vocational education, continuing and adult education, integrated employment (including supported employment), adult services, and independent living or community participation [602(34)]. The transition plan requirements for the IEP now must be initiated no later than the first IEP that is in effect when the child is or will turn 16, and must be updated
annually thereafter. [614(d)(I)(A)(viii)]. The age of 16 is a change from IDEA ’97 where
the law required this to occur by age 14. One final difference between IDEA ’97 and
IDEA ’04 is the addition of the Summary of Performance (SOP) to be completed by the
IEP team upon a student’s graduation from high school thus providing the student with
specific information regarding his/her transition to the next phase of life as an adult.
According to Gerber (1994) knowledge of the laws and the increasing demand for
support services has created an adult population of persons with disabilities who are more
aware of their educational rights.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, often referred to as Section 504, and the
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) offered the first legislation that protected
persons with disabilities against discrimination in a variety of settings, and provided
access to educational and other services. Section 504 and the ADA protect persons with
disabilities in all environments from birth to death. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was
reauthorized and updated in 1998. The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Section
504 provided a new definition of transition services that basically mirrors the definition
in IDEA ’04. Additionally, new language was added that addresses coordination with
high schools for students who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services upon high
school graduation.

The legislation that has been enacted over the last 30 years has been part of the
reason for the increased number of students with disabilities attending postsecondary
education because transition planning became a requirement for IEP teams after the
reauthorization of IDEA in 1990. This requirement brought about the trend to transition
more youth with disabilities in secondary programs into postsecondary programs (Levine
& Nourse, 1998). Additionally, according to Gottesman (1994) many institutions of higher education excluded persons with disabilities prior to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The percentage of full-time freshmen attending colleges and universities who reported having a disability increased from 7% to 9.2% between 1988 and 1994 (Henderson, 1995). This increase in college and university students with disabilities encouraged the development of student support programs to facilitate the success of students with disabilities (Raskind & Higgins, 1995), yet these programs provided significantly different levels of service and support to students with disabilities. As these support programs developed, and the number of students with disabilities attending postsecondary programs increased, few formal evaluations and empirical studies were instituted about the outcomes of these students.

Federal policies pertaining to public secondary and postsecondary education are vastly different. The IDEA requires school districts to provide educational assistance to students with disabilities, and is an entitlement law that directs the supports and services provided to a student. Under IDEA, the IEP team can significantly modify the general education curriculum even to the point of providing a replacement curriculum for those students who need that level of intervention. In addition, supplementary services and aids are provided to any student with a disability in a public school setting, and those modifications are put in place to ensure success (IDEA, 2004). These entitlements can create an atmosphere and belief on the part of students, parents and educators that educators must guarantee success in school for a student with a disability. The IEP team must address this entitlement thinking in the transition planning process. The ADA and Section 504 are not entitlement oriented. These laws only require postsecondary
institutions to provide assistance and accommodations to a student resulting in equal access to their programs, and to receive those accommodations a student must first meet the eligibility requirements as disability is defined under these laws. The difference between IDEA, the ADA and Section 504 results in accommodations that are typically less comprehensive and less individualized at the postsecondary level. Individualized Education Programs are not part of the education equation for a student with a disability at the postsecondary level. More specifically, unlike at the secondary level where it is the responsibility of the school district to determine eligibility and provide a student with an IEP that includes such items as needs, strengths, accommodations, modifications, goals, supplemental services and aids, and transition plans, at the postsecondary level all that responsibility falls to the student. Once in a postsecondary setting, students with a disability are responsible for (a) identifying themselves as having a disability; (b) providing documentation that verifies they actually have this disability, where the IEP from high school is typically not enough; and (c) actively advocating for the identified accommodations. No “special educator” is available to do these tasks for them, nor is it the purview of their parents to continue to fill this advocate role. These significant discrepancies between secondary and postsecondary supports and services for students with disabilities have a major impact on those students with disabilities who attend postsecondary institutions. The following tables provide a side-by-side comparison of federal policy that impacts students with disabilities in educational settings. Table 2.1 reflects rights and responsibilities under the laws. Table 2.2 provides details regarding these rights and responsibilities, the purposes of the laws, how the laws are implemented in different educational settings, financial considerations, and information about who
enforces the laws.
Table 2.1

*Comparison of Rights and Responsibilities Under the Law*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEA ‘04 (Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act)</th>
<th>Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and The Rehabilitation Act, Section 504 (1998)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Laws:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Civil Rights Laws:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entitlements</td>
<td>Equal opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth – age 21 (or until high school graduation)</td>
<td>Birth to death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic settings for public school-age students</td>
<td>All settings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parental Involvement:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parental Involvement:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents have rights</td>
<td>Parents’ rights change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents can access information</td>
<td>Cannot access information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERPA- Family Equal Rights &amp; Privacy Act</td>
<td>FERPA- Family Equal Rights &amp; Privacy Act</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interventions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Academic Adjustments, Auxiliary Aids and Services:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP built for success</td>
<td>No IEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can change curriculum</td>
<td>Based on functional limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual goals and objectives</td>
<td>No change in curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Equal Opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School District Responsibilities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Responsibilities:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interventions</td>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
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<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>Evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifications</td>
<td>Identification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any costs</td>
<td>Any costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy for student(s)</td>
<td>Self-advocacy</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Confidentiality:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Confidentiality:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All professionals and family have access to records</td>
<td>Support services staff have access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others only have access with signed release/permission from student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: IDEA ’04, ADA 1990, & Section 504*
Table 2.2

*Differences between Secondary Education and Postsecondary Education Regarding Individuals with Disabilities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Secondary Education</th>
<th>Postsecondary Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laws that apply:</strong></td>
<td><em>IDEA 2004</em> and <em>Section 504</em>: Applies to public and private schools (preschool - high school).</td>
<td><em>Section 504</em>: Applies to any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance (including postsecondary education).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADA (Sections II and III): Title II applies to public institutions and Title III applies to private institutions.</td>
<td>ADA (Sections II and III): Title II applies to public institutions and Title III applies to private institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose of laws:</strong></td>
<td><em>IDEA 2004</em>: An education law that requires public and private schools to provide free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment and that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.</td>
<td><em>Section 504</em>: A civil rights law that was written to eliminate discrimination on the basis of handicap (disability) in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Section 504</em>: Prohibits the denial of public education participation, or enjoyment of the benefits offered by public school programs because of a child’s disability. Also includes a requirement of a FAPE. Nondiscrimination protection extends to IDEA students as well under Section 504.</td>
<td><em>ADA</em>: A civil rights guarantee law that provides persons with disabilities in the United States protection from discrimination for individuals on the basis of disability. To ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, benefits of, or is subject to discrimination solely on the basis of disability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2.2

#### Differences between Secondary Education and Postsecondary Education Regarding Individuals with Disabilities (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The laws cover:</th>
<th>IDEA 2004: Only those who are educationally disabled (an impairment that meets criteria for 1 or more of the 13 categories defined), in that they require special education services (Individualized Education Program), ages 3-21 years.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Section 504:</strong> A person with a disability is defined as anyone who has a physical or emotional impairment that substantially limits one or more major life functions. “504-only students” are those who are entitled to the protections of 504, but are not also eligible under the IDEA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has responsibility to identify and evaluate?</td>
<td><strong>IDEA 2004:</strong> A referral for special education services may be made by the parent(s), a local education agency (LEA), a state education agency (SEA) or other state agencies. Once in special education, evaluations done periodically, but at least every three years (unless waived by IEP team).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Section 504:</strong> Each school district establishes and implements the identification, evaluation or educational placement of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Section 504 and ADA:</strong> The individual with the disability must self-identify and provide appropriate documentation. There are no IEPs, 504 plans, or placement committees; a student must be a self-advocate and ask for academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postsecondary institutions have specific guidelines for documentation of a disability. Students are required to provide documentation that meets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.2

*Differences between Secondary Education and Postsecondary Education Regarding Individuals with Disabilities* (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who has to pay for the evaluation?</th>
<th>IDEA 2004: The LEA or school district has the responsibility to evaluate the child at no expense to the parent. The LEA has 60 calendar days after permission is received from the parent to evaluate.</th>
<th>Section 504 and ADA: The individual must pay for the cost of the evaluation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who determines eligibility under the law?</td>
<td>IDEA 2004: After an assessment is performed, a team of qualified professionals and the parent determine eligibility. It is determined whether the child meets one of the 13 categories and if the child is in need of specialized instruction. Section 504: A team of professionals, the parents, and medical practitioner.</td>
<td>Section 504 and ADA: A postsecondary institution makes the determination based upon a reasonable process set forth by the institution. Each institution may have somewhat different requirements. The documentation must support that the individual meets the definition of disability above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are services provided to individuals with disabilities under this law?</td>
<td>IDEA 2004: Necessary special education and related services are defined by the student’s multi-disciplinary team and written in a document called the Individualized</td>
<td>Section 504 and ADA: Services, auxiliary aids, and academic adjustments may be provided in the regular education setting. Individuals must provide an evaluation that documents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.2

*Differences between Secondary Education and Postsecondary Education Regarding Individuals with Disabilities (continued)*

| How are services funded under this law? | IDEA 2004: Some federal funds are available to cover the costs of compliance with IDEA regulations. School districts typically combine local, state, and federal funds to cover the full cost of implementing IDEA regulations.  
Section 504: the LEA or school district is responsible for funding accommodations. Federal funding is not available to schools for Section 504. | Section 504 and ADA: No Federal funding is available to the school or postsecondary institution to implement Civil Rights statute. The school or institution is responsible for funding services, auxiliary aids, or academic adjustments. |

| Who enforces this law? | The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services promulgates regulations governing the enforcement of the IDEA. | The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice in conjunction with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). |

*Education Program (IEP).*

*Section 504:* An accommodation plan is created for the student needing a 504 plan. The accommodation plan provides accommodations so that the student has equal access to the educational benefits of the school’s program and activities.

*The disability and the functional limitations of that disability.*
Table 2.2

Differences between Secondary Education and Postsecondary Education Regarding Individuals with Disabilities (continued)

| If an institution with responsibility for providing a service is found to have failed in that responsibility, what options are available? | If a public school fails to provide a free appropriate educational program (as determined by an impartial judge), reimbursement by district of school-related expenses may be available to parents of children with disabilities to ensure a FAPE. | A postsecondary institution must have grievance procedures. These procedures are different from high school. However, the postsecondary school's grievance procedures must include steps to ensure prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. If an individual is dissatisfied with the outcome from using the school's grievance procedures wishes to pursue an alternative to using the grievance procedures, an individual may file a complaint against the school with the Office for Civil Rights or in a court. |

*Note.* Adapted from The Pennsylvania State University, Office for Disabilities (2007).
The laws that protect students with disabilities (ADA, 1990; IDEA, 2004; Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998) vary in their scope, sequence and intent. Although secondary educators are exposed to these laws in their academic preparation (e.g., Gajar, Goodman & McAfee, 1993; Hughes & Carter, 2000; Miller, Lombard, & Corbey, 2007; Osborne & Russo, 2006; Rothstein, 2000; Sitlington & Clark, 2006; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000; Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, Smith & Leal, 2002), education texts typically do not address the implementation of these laws in different educational settings. Therein lies the problem faced by secondary educators trying to assist students with disabilities, who have the intention of attending college. The rules are different in a college environment and students need to be educated about those differences. Secondary educators cannot teach effectively if they do not understand the differences in the implementation of these laws.

The majority of the research (Backorby & Wagner, 1996; Johnson & Sharpe, 2000; Levine & Nourse 1998; NCD, 2000; Rusch & Phelps, 1987; White, 1992) on postsecondary students focuses on employment outcomes for students with disabilities who have graduated from, or dropped out of, high school. Much of this research provides contradictory evidence regarding employment outcomes (Levine & Nourse). Blackorby and Wagner (1996) conducted a national, longitudinal study of the post school outcomes of youth ages 13-21 with disabilities. They found that students with disabilities lagged behind their peers in employment, wages, education, and residential independence. According to White, adults with disabilities were only somewhat successful in obtaining jobs and among those employed most were underemployed. Again, most of the research focused on employment, not postsecondary education.
Factors Impacting Students’ with Disabilities Decision to Pursue Postsecondary Education

There are several interrelated issues that impact the preparation of students with disabilities to enter postsecondary institutions. First, the transition planning process as mandated in IDEA is implemented differently in each state and each individual school district. This leads to students not being actively involved in the planning process (Gajar, Goodman, & McAfee, 1993; Kochhar-Bryant et al., 2007; Sitlington & Clark, 2006; Stodden et al., 2002). Second, students and their parents need to understand the differences between the two systems (K-12 public education versus postsecondary education) and the approach to these services (entitlement versus equal access). Third, students’ understanding of their disability, self-advocacy skills, and knowledge of how to negotiate the higher education system to obtain accommodations are lacking.

Unfortunately, there is a paucity of research focusing on secondary educator and administrator knowledge as it relates to transition planning for students with disabilities matriculating to higher education. The next section of the literature review will examine what the research and experts say regarding student involvement in the transition planning process and self-advocacy, entitlement versus equal access issues and the role of secondary educators. A discussion regarding perceived competence will also be provided.
Student Involvement in Transition Planning and Self-Advocacy

The transition from high school to college can be daunting for any student, but it is especially challenging for students with disabilities. They are transitioning from a system that is replete with built-in safety nets, in the guise of their parents, special education teachers, guidance counselors, and principals, along with the mandates in IDEA (Gajar et al., 1993). These mandates require each of these individuals to support and guide the student to ensure success while in public school; yet these students are moving to a system that harbors none of those safety nets where the student with a disability must advocate for him/herself and carry the burden of proof on his/her shoulders. Even with the mandates in IDEA (2004) regarding transition planning for youth with disabilities, often times these same youth are not active participants in their own transition planning, nor are they aware of the disparities between provision of services, their rights and responsibilities, and the need to be their own advocate once they enter a postsecondary education setting (Gajar, et al., 1993; Stodden, et al., 2002; Hurtubis Sahlen & Lehmann, 2006). According to Stodden, et al., the lack of attention to teaching self-advocacy skills in the secondary education setting sets up students with disabilities for failure in postsecondary settings. Hurtubis Sahlen and Lehmann (2006), feel so strongly about self-advocacy, that they believe that students being proactive self-advocates as tantamount to their postsecondary survival. Starting the teaching of self-advocacy skills while still in high school is needed so that students with disabilities can transition into postsecondary education settings successfully (Graf, Whelley, & Jones, 2004).
High school students with disabilities rarely take an active involvement in the IEP process where discussions and decisions are made regarding their transition from secondary education to post high school experiences (Izzo & Lamb, 2002; National Council on Disability, 2003; Storms, O’Leary, & Williams, 2000). This lack of involvement in their own transition planning results in students being disengaged in the transition process. As a result, they are unprepared for the expectations placed on them regarding their disability in postsecondary settings.

To complicate the situation, there are significant differences between how a student with disabilities accesses supports from a secondary education setting to a postsecondary education setting. The IDEA, ADA and the Rehabilitation Act, while similar with regards to protections against discrimination, are significantly different with regards to their intent and application (Stodden, et al., 2002). The impact of these discrepancies results in students with disabilities being unaware of the “how to” of self-advocacy. Stodden, et al, go on to explain that students with disabilities lack an understanding of how specialized and prescriptive the services and supports are in secondary education settings. This results in confusion and misunderstanding of a postsecondary education system that focuses on reasonable accommodations. These students need to be actively involved in their IEP, specifically in their own transition planning process.

**Entitlement versus Equal Access**

Another challenging area related to the process of transition planning for youth with disabilities, particularly those going on to postsecondary education settings, is
understanding the difference between an entitlement system versus an eligibility system. Students with disabilities and their parents must understand the paradigm shift that occurs once a student graduates from high school. These students will move from an entitlement system of specially designed instruction for students with disabilities under IDEA, to an eligibility system that focuses on equal access in the form of accommodations under ADA and Section 504 (Kochhar-Bryant et al., 2004; Stodden, Whelley, Chuan & Harding, 2001). While in high school, students with disabilities are “provided for”, whereas in postsecondary education settings, students with disabilities are expected to advocate for themselves.

Under IDEA, students with disabilities are provided services and supports based on individual strengths and needs. These students are entitled to these services and supports based on the mandates outlined in IDEA (Stodden et al., 2002). Conversely, at the postsecondary level, supports and services are more closely aligned with the disability categories in which students fall. For example, note-taker services being available for students who have a learning disability in writing, or sign language interpreters for students who are deaf. Stodden et al. expand on this difference by pointing out that on the surface these services appear to be available to everyone, thus imitating entitlement, they can only be accessed if the student advocates for him/herself and meets the criteria to have a documented disability.

Expanding on the difference between determining eligibility via the entitlement oriented guidelines under IDEA, IDEA has very stringent regulations regarding the content of the evaluation completed to determine a disability. In contrast to this, the equal access focus of the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act provide no mandated processes for
determining eligibility at the postsecondary education level, resulting in discrepancies from one college or university to another (Stodden & Conway, 2003; Stodden & Dowrick, 2000). These inconsistencies across environments regarding the purpose and intent of the laws make the transition process from secondary education to postsecondary education convoluted at best.

**The Role of Secondary Educators in Transition Planning**

The Local Education Agency (LEA), or school district, is ultimately responsible for implementing all components of IDEA. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to assisting students and families with identifying and linking to community based services; assisting students in determining their preferences, strengths and needs related to postsecondary goals; preparing students and their families for leadership roles in the IEP process; preparing all students for transition to adult life; coordinating professionals, agencies, services and/or programs to facilitate the transition process; suggest appropriate courses for students based on their post-school goals; provide staff development, time for collaboration, and resources to teachers so they can create appropriate instruction, modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities; and, advocate for individual student and system needs for transition planning. A variety of school district professionals work together to ensure that these supports and services are in place for students with disabilities. These professionals include the high school principals/assistant principals, guidance counselors, and special education teachers. The

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4 Adapted from Grossi, Schaff, Steigerwald, & Thomas (2000).
following section will address what the literature says about the various roles of these secondary educators in transition planning.

Required members of the IEP team for students of transition age include: parent(s), student, special education teacher(s), general education teacher(s), representative of the LEA and community agency representatives. Additional members may include other family members, an employer, school psychologist, the student’s guidance counselor, and others. The secondary educators involved in transition planning must be certified teachers and administrators. Each state has its own criteria for teacher and administrator certifications; however, there are many similarities among the states based on the current system of evaluating competencies.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) (2003) developed and adopted knowledge and skill standards for special educators and special education administrators. These competencies are found in the CEC (2003) list of competencies for special educators and administrators (see Appendix C). In addition, a majority of states require standardized testing of all applicants for teacher certification in a given teaching area. Currently, 44 states and U.S jurisdictions use the Educational Testing Service (ETS), PRAXIS Series exams as their method of standardized testing. In addition, many postsecondary institutions use the PRAXIS Series as part of their teacher licensing process (PRAXIS, 2007). Although both CEC and the PRAXIS Series exams indicate a need for knowledge of legislation, neither of these offer specific information and details about what is incorporated into that knowledge. For example, the competencies listed in CEC and in the PRAXIS exams identify a need for knowledge of legislation that impacts students with disabilities. The CEC competencies offer a bit more detail; however,
neither provide much detail about the laws and the implementation of the laws as they pertain to students with disabilities as they transition into postsecondary settings (see Appendix C).

During an IEP meeting, the principal or assistant principal represents the school district in the role of LEA. He/she is to provide leadership and guidance to the overall development of the IEP. Unfortunately, even though knowledge would ensure provision of appropriate services in public schools, principals are typically not trained to understand the relevant differences between the laws that impact and protect persons with disabilities (e.g., Bateman & Bateman, 2006). In their text, Bateman and Bateman provide a definition of each law, but no comparison related to the differences in implementation. Similarly, according to McLaughlin and Nolet (2004), principals and assistant principals need to know five things about special education: (a) the core legal foundations of IDEA and the entitlements offered a student and his/her parents, (b) that special education is an individualized process that matched the student’s needs with instruction, (c) that special education is not a program or place, but a set of supports and services provided to individual students, (d) understanding how to include students in general education in a manner that is meaningful to a given student, yet still allows for the accountability for progress monitoring, and (e) how to infuse a school-wide attitude of ownership that supports conditions conducive to effective education for all students. While this list of five “must knows” is helpful, it lacks a sixth important component of understanding how the laws change for a student with a disability upon high school graduation.
Principals and assistant principals represent the LEA during IEP conferences. As the LEA’s representative, they support and approve the contents of each student’s IEP. Johnson and Sharpe (2000) surveyed administrators regarding what their individual districts were doing to ensure implementation of practices related to transition plan development. Specifically, the four main mandates were (a) parent notification, (b) participation in meetings, (c) content of the IEP, and (d) agency responsibility. While the results indicated that efforts were being made to improve implementation of these federal requirements, special education administrators acknowledged a need to do more to ensure compliance, and additional work was needed at the local level to meet the full intent and purpose of the law, there was no discussion regarding a level of knowledge needed by the educators to ensure that the transition planning process was truly meaningful for a given student.

Regular education teachers and special education teachers attend and participate in the IEP process to ensure that a student’s individual strengths and needs are addressed. Ysseldyke and Algozzine (2006) discuss the importance of teachers understanding the scope of the laws that protect students with disabilities, but fail to address the significant differences in how students access those services along with how those services are implemented. Fiedler (2000) discusses the importance of special education professionals knowing how to advocate for their students, even to being able to identify the various laws that protect those students with disabilities. Again, while his focus on the role of special educators is clear and concise, it falls short with regards to understanding the differences in the laws that protect these students from one educational setting to the next.
Transition Competencies

Competencies related to working with students with disabilities have been identified by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) (2003) and the PRAXIS exams (2007) for all secondary educators who might potentially be an IEP team member. Development of the IEP includes transition planning and secondary educators need a certain amount of knowledge to assist student with transition activities and services. Although a very limited body of research has been conducted involving the knowledge needed by secondary educators to assist with development of effective transition plans for students with disabilities with the goal of attending postsecondary education, there has been a small number of studies that examined transition related competencies of special educators, including transition coordinators, vocational educators, and vocational rehabilitation specialists.

Six-hundred (600) competencies needed for transition coordinators were identified by Baker and Geiger (1988), and deFur and Taymans’ research study (1995) validated these competencies by having experts in transition rate these competencies. The competencies found to be most needed for transition planning were those related to interagency collaboration, ongoing consultation, and communication with families. None of the most significant competencies identified knowledge, nor did these needed competencies address what other IEP team members needed to possess. Additional research (Prater, Sileao, & Black, 2000; Wolfe, Boone, & Blanchett, 1998) identified secondary special education teachers as feeling unprepared to address transition planning for their students. These results were not specific to transition planning for those students
with a goal of attending postsecondary education, but for all types of transition planning. Again, these studies were specific to special educators.

Knott and Asselin (1999) reported that special educators, who perceived themselves as having a strong knowledge base related to the transition process required by IDEA, were able to effectively implement transition activities. This was the only study found to clearly address knowledge as an important component to effective transition planning, and while knowledge was identified, the type or content of that knowledge was not identified. Again, the research only focused on special educators, and did not separate out transition planning for students with disabilities planning to attend postsecondary education from those with a goal of work or independent living.

All secondary educators are involved in IEP development, transition planning and implementation, and according to Benitez, Morningstar, and Frey (2009), they should all possess skills and knowledge to plan for effective transition services. Benitez, et. al., (2009) surveyed 557 special educators from 31 states who worked at the middle school or high school level. The survey focused on the participants’ proficiency in developing and implementing transition plans, and satisfaction with their training related to transition, along with the frequency they delivered specific competencies.

**Perceived Competence**

A person’s understanding of his/her individual knowledge and the control he/she has of that knowledge is important when learning something new (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Effective learners have a realistic view of what they know and what they don’t know; in essence they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. To compliment
this view, effective learners can use their self-knowledge of their own personal achievements to guide their learning and development (Boud & Falchikov, 1989). This self-knowledge is an aspect of metacognition. Self-regulation and metacognitive knowledge are two aspects of metacognition (Sundstrom, 2006).

Metacognitive knowledge involves one’s knowledge about his/her own cognition. This construct was first explored by Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl in 1956 (cited in Clark, 2004). Referred to as “Bloom’s taxonomy”, Bloom et al. identified three domains for learning. These three domains include: knowledge, skills, and attitude. Knowledge is described as cognitive mental skills, skills are described as affective growth in emotional areas or feelings, and attitude is described as psychomotor or physical and manual skills (Clark, 2004). As reported in Sundstrom (2006), Andersson et al. (2001), expanded on Bloom’s taxonomy and explored metacognitive knowledge and identified three dimensions to this type of knowledge: (a) strategic knowledge or what a person knows and understands regarding the processes of learning and thinking, (b) knowledge of cognitive tasks or the knowledge a person has that helps determine why and when to use different strategies, and (c) self-knowledge or one’s ability to understand his/herself in relation to their performance. Self-knowledge is described as one’s knowledge base and self-awareness of that knowledge base.

Self-regulation involves a person’s ability to monitor, control and regulate cognitive processes (Pintrich, 2000). The four phases of this process are (a) planning and setting of goals, (b) monitoring, (c) regulation and control, and (d) reactions and reflections, and all four work in concert with each other in the areas of motivation, cognition, environmental context and behavior. Pintrich described these four phases as
self-regulated learning (SRL). SRL and other metacognitive approaches to learning examine one’s ability to reflect on his/her knowledge and skills, resulting in self-assessment or making judgments about one’s learning, knowledge, achievements and outcomes (Bransford et al., 1999; Longhurst & Norton, 1997). The two main approaches used for self-assessment are (a) use of the person as the instrument and judging his/her skills in a specific area, and (b) the person’s perceived competence, knowledge and abilities are measured by a separate instrument and those results are interpreted by relating them to some type of external measure of knowledge. Perceived competence is positively related to different knowledge measures in various meta-analyses (e.g., Boud & Falchikov, 1989; Dochy & McDowell, 1997; Valentine, DoBois, & Cooper, 2004). Each of these analyses supported the belief that there was a relationship between ability, performance and perceived knowledge, and uniformly believed that people either underestimate or overestimate their competency based on their self-assessment of knowledge and ability.

Perceived competence is important in this study because it addresses the issue of secondary educators who “don’t know what they don’t know”. Measuring knowledge can only offer information about what a person knows. Beyond that, it is important to explore whether secondary educators overestimate their competency related to transition planning and disability legislation. By assessing a respondent’s perceived competence data will be offered to support the need for additional training for secondary educators. If the participants learn that they have inflated perceived competency, it stands to reason they will be more likely to recognize a need for more training.
Summary

Chapter two provides an overview of the research and literature that pertains to transition planning for high school students with disabilities. More specifically, this chapter highlights student involvement in transition planning and the importance of teaching self advocacy skills, the entitlement versus equal access differences in the laws, and the role of secondary educators in the transition planning process and perceived competency. Chapter three will provide the details regarding the methodology used in this study, including information regarding the sample, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The focus of this study was on the transition planning process as it relates to students with disabilities who have a goal of pursuing postsecondary education. More specifically, this study assessed secondary educators’ knowledge of the differences in requirements of disability legislation for students at the secondary education level compared to students at the postsecondary education level. Secondary educators’ perceived competency related to their knowledge of disability legislation was also examined. This chapter includes a description of the sample, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis used in this study. As outlined in Chapters One and Two, the research questions were:

1. To what extent are secondary educators knowledgeable of the requirements of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?

2. To what extent do secondary educators’ self-perceived competency related to knowledge of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education change as a result of completing the survey?

3. What are the areas in which secondary educators indicate a need for additional training related to transition planning for students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?
Sample

The sample for this study was drawn from the population of secondary educators in the state of Pennsylvania. The targeted participants were educators who potentially have a role in the transition planning process of the IEP: special educators, general educators, guidance counselors and principals/assistant principals. A list of secondary special educators, guidance counselors, and administrators was obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (http://www.pde.psu.edu). Pennsylvania has 501 local public school districts and 29 intermediate units. The number of secondary educators in the state of Pennsylvania is approximately 68,000. A secondary educator was defined as a regular education teacher, special education teacher, guidance counselor, principal or vice/assistant principal working in 8th through 12th grade. Of that 68,000, approximately 2,100 were guidance counselors, 2,000 were principals or assistant principals, 37,100 were regular education teachers, and 3,800 were special educators.

Using a modest confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5%, the approximate sample size needed was 380 respondents. Emails were sent to 3,676 potential respondents.

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5 The 29 intermediate units provide a variety of programs and services to public, private and non-public schools such as special education supports and services, technical assistance to school districts in the areas of professional development, curriculum and instruction support, assistive technology support, and operate special education and alternative education programs on a regional basis.

6 This information was gathered from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Data Services (Deb Rodriguez, Personal Communications, October 4, 2007).

Instrumentation

Participants were asked to complete an online survey (see Appendix E) that collected three types of information consisting of perceived competency, assessment of knowledge, and demographic information. The data collected offered descriptive data regarding secondary educators’ knowledge of disability legislation at the postsecondary education level.

*Perceived competency.* Part of the rationale for this study was that participants “don’t know what they don’t know”. Therefore, the survey provided two opportunities for participants to rate their perceived competence, before and after completing the knowledge portion of the survey. Pre-test/post-test assessments have been found to be a reliable technique to assess the impact of some type of intervention or treatment (Dallal, 2005; Howard, et. al., 1979). To measure perceived competence, a 7-point semantic differential approach was used. A semantic differential measures a person’s reaction to or perception of a word or concept, by using polar opposites (“no knowledge” to “complete knowledge” in this study) and asking the person to make a relative judgment (Heise, 1970). Semantic differentials have been shown to produce both valid and reliable scores in studies of perceptions (Emmerson & Neely, 1998) and the 7-point scale seems optimal for survey research (DeVellis, 1991; Fink, 2006).

*Assessment of knowledge.* The bulk of the online survey contained questions related to participants’ knowledge of disability legislation and its relationship to transition planning for students with disabilities who plan to attend a postsecondary educational setting. The content of the survey was based on the special education knowledge areas for administrators and teachers developed by the Council for
Exceptional Children (2003), and Praxis examination competencies for special education teachers, secondary general education teachers, guidance counselors and principals (see Appendix C). Knowledge areas included: (a) legislation governing the education of persons with disabilities (e.g., knowledge of IDEA, the ADA, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998), and (b) principles of learning and teaching for students in grades 7 through 12. More specifically, questions in the survey addressed knowledge of the legal issues in postsecondary education settings for students with disabilities, the university resources, relationships between faculty, staff and students with disabilities, accommodations versus modifications, entitlement versus eligibility, and finally, self-advocacy and empowerment of students with disabilities.

The content of the knowledge portion of the survey was validated in two ways. First, qualitative item analysis was provided by a panel of experts, including recognized scholars and directors of disability services from three universities in Pennsylvania. The expert panel members provided feedback regarding the content of the survey that resulted in deletion of four questions, rewording of five questions, and reorganization of the order in which questions were presented. A second group of individuals representing a cross section of practicing special educators, general educators, and guidance counselors who are currently graduate students at The Pennsylvania State University completed the survey and provided “take-ability” feedback, including clarity of instructions, confusing items, amount of time it took to complete the survey. The 30 completed surveys were viewed as adequate for feedback on clarity, format, and overall analysis (Isaac & Michael, 1997). The results of the survey pilot indicated that it took participants approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete the entire survey, and there were no
suggestions for edits regarding the directions or confusing items. Information from these two groups was only used to refine the instrument prior to its use in the study. No edits were needed related to clarity of instructions or items.

Upon completion of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to receive the answers to the knowledge portion. To receive the answers, respondents had to request them via an email.

**Demographics and Open-Ended Questions.** The final part of the online survey contained two types of items. Demographic questions (e.g., gender, years of experience) were asked to describe the respondents. Because a simple measure of knowledge does not necessarily guide practice, additional open-ended questions were used to gain a better understanding of respondents’ future needs. Specifically, data from the opened-ended questions provided information regarding future staff development activities and preferred training formats, which might be useful to administrators.

**Procedures**

After the content of the online survey was validated, the following steps were followed to recruit secondary educators to complete the survey:

1. A personalized email (see Appendix H) was sent to a random sample of 3,676 secondary educators working in public schools in the state alerting them to a forthcoming invitation to participate in the study.

2. Five days later, participants received an email (see Appendix H) inviting them to participate in the survey. Seven days later a reminder email (see Appendix H) was sent. Two days between reminders was chosen because research
(Crawford, Couper, & Lamias, 2001) has shown that emails sent two days after the first request produced a higher response rate than reminders sent five or more days after the initial email.

3. A second reminder (see Appendix H) was sent 14 days after the first reminder.

4. The final reminder (see Appendix H) was sent 16 days after the first email.

The development of technology to support use of the Internet for survey administration has resulted in a new way of conducting survey research (Dillman, 2007). The survey was accessed via SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), an online survey program that assists in creating and designing the actual survey, inviting participation, collecting survey responses, and downloading the results for the researcher(s) in a variety of formats including databases or spreadsheets.

After the final reminder email was sent, the total number of responses was less than 200. The response rate seemed to be low due to the number of secondary educators on summer vacation and therefore perhaps not accessing their emails. Approximately 50 emails were returned indicating “out of office” status. A Modification Request was made to the Office of Research Protections to disseminate a flyer at the PA Community on Transition Conference, University Park, Pennsylvania inviting secondary educators to participate in the online survey (see Appendix G). The PA Community of Transition Conference is an annual statewide conference. The primary purpose of this conference is to expand the capacity of schools and communities, in partnership with youth, young adults and families, in promoting the successful transition of youth/young adults with disabilities to post-school outcomes of employment, post-secondary education and training, community participation and healthy lifestyles. Participants have the opportunity
to learn about effective practices to assist youth/young adults with disabilities in achieving successful post-school outcomes. In addition to requesting this modification, approval was received to place a website link on the SharedWork.org transition site, on the URL pages specific to Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{8}

The written invitation/flyer disseminated at the transition conference, along with the link added to the SharedWork.org web site resulted in obtaining an additional 67 responses. A second Modification Request was made to the Office of Research Protections for a second round of emails to be sent once the 2008-2009 academic year started. This request was approved. The same sequence of emails was used to solicit participation in the survey and resulted in an additional 55 responses.

**Data Analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study was postsecondary educators in the state of Pennsylvania. As defined and discussed by Monette, Sullivan, and DeJong (1994), groups of individuals can be used as a unit of analysis to collect data about a given behavior (e.g., knowledge) when the members of a given group share certain characteristics and relationships. Although the secondary educators in this study may have different titles and therefore different job responsibilities, they all share the work setting, vision, mission, and overall goal of the school, along with all being IEP team members who assist in developing the transition plan section of the IEP. Descriptive

\textsuperscript{8} Sharedwork.org is a website that supports and facilitates the various work done by individuals, groups, school districts, states, organizations, agencies, and so on at the local, state, and national levels related to four (4) key areas: 1) IDEA and NCLB; 2) interagency transition; 3) school behavioral health services, and 4) teacher quality. Various states, Pennsylvania being one of them, have information specific to information related to one of these four (4) areas and activities related to such in Pennsylvania. You can access the website by going to <Sharedwork.org>. To access any state-specific information, one needs to log-on as a user. There is no fee for this site.
statistics were used to describe the sample population based on the demographics collected.

Multiple statistical techniques were used to analyze participants’ responses. The first research question related to respondents’ aggregate scores on the measure of educator knowledge of disability legislation. Descriptive statistics were used to capture the nature of the response distribution (mean, mode, range and standard deviation). Because the survey is a measurement instrument, simple diagnostic tests were run on the psychometric properties of the scores. Specifically, corrected item/scale correlations were used to identify any item that did not appear to measure the latent construct of disability knowledge. Finally, Cronbach’s alpha (\( \alpha \)) was used to assess measurement precision, prior to answering research questions two and three (Henderson, 2001).

As noted, the survey included two questions that measure respondents’ perceived competency, before and after completing the survey (Appendix E). Both questions used the same 7-point semantic differential approach with 0 representing no knowledge and 6 representing complete knowledge. For this analysis, consistent with the premise behind the use of semantic differentials (Emmerson & Neely, 1998), the assumption was made that people would use the same set of internal criteria to judge their perceived competency on both questions. Hence, any differences between the two scores would be attributable to having taken the survey. To test for a significant change in perceived competency, a paired \( t \)-test was used with the two sets of self-ratings. Consistent with the expected outcome, a significant and negative \( t \) score would reflect a decrease in perceived competency as a result of taking the survey.
Finally, to analyze the third research question, two open-ended questions were asked regarding training topics for assisting with transition planning for students with disabilities who plan to attend postsecondary educational settings, and participants’ preferred training format(s). These responses were compiled, individual themes identified, and responses were organized based on those themes. The frequency of responses in these identified themes was examined. Recommendations for future training for secondary educators were then made. This is one qualitative component of the research design as discussed by Creswell (2003).

**Human Subjects Review**

This study was reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania State University, Office of Research Protections (See Appendix G). Each participant was informed that completion of the survey indicated implied consent. An informed consent document was included on the SurveyMonkey site (See Appendix I). Respondents were asked to read this document before completing the survey. No personally identifying information was collected or reported.
Summary

Chapter 3 provides an overview of this study including information about the sample, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis, and human subjects review. Chapter 4 will report the analysis of the data and the results. Chapter 5 will discuss conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to assess secondary educators’ knowledge of the differences in requirements of disability legislation for students in secondary education settings compared to students in postsecondary education settings. This study also examined secondary educators’ perceived competency related to their knowledge of disability legislation, and their views of future training needs. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study.

Participants

From the 3,676 emails that were sent, 319 individuals logged onto the SurveyMonkey web site. Out of these 319 respondents, 52 were deleted because they contained no usable data (i.e. the participants logged into the survey site, but never went beyond the first question, or answered less than 10 questions on the survey of knowledge). After these cases were deleted, there were 267 respondents remaining in the sample. The 267 participants provided a 3.9% participation rate for secondary educators in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, many of the emails were blocked by school district security programs. Therefore, it was difficult to know how many emails actually reached the targeted educators. The 3.9% participation rate was computed by dividing the number of participants by the number of secondary educators in Pennsylvania. The sample size of 267 is 115 less than needed to meet the confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 5%. A discussion of the implications of this difference can be found in Chapter 5.
Participants in this study were recruited from the state of Pennsylvania and asked to respond to a series of demographic and descriptive questions. Of the 267 respondents, 175 (65.5%) were women, 89 (33.3%) were men, and 3 (1.12%) participants did not identify their gender. By position, there were 15 (5.62%) building-level administrators, 147 (55.1%) regular education teachers, 65 (24.3%) special education teachers, 18 (6.7%) guidance counselors, 20 (7.5%) individuals who were assigned to other positions that included school psychologists, ESL/ELL teachers, special education administrators, supervisors, and consultants, a curriculum supervisor, a paraprofessional, and a former special education administrator, and two (.75%) participants who did not respond. The majority of the participants, 251 (94%), were white (non-Hispanic), with eight (3%) Black/African American, six (2.25%) were from non-majority ethnic backgrounds, and again, two (.75%) participants did not respond.

When examining their location, 152 (57%) participants reported being from suburban areas of Pennsylvania, 65 (24.3%) were from urban areas, 45 (16.9%) were from rural areas, and five (1.8%) participants did not respond. Sixty-nine (25.8%) of the participants held a bachelors degree, 92 (34.5%) held a masters degree, 89 (33.3%) had completed some level of post-masters work, 13 (4.9%) held a doctorate, and four (1.5%) did not respond (see Table 4.1). Finally, 265 participants identified their number of years of experience working as a secondary educator. The years of experience ranged from .5 to 40 resulting in the mean number of years of experience as 13.9 with a standard deviation of 10.06.
Table 4.1

**Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal/Assistant Principal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Education Teacher</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-majority Ethnic Background</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
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Table 4.1

Demographics (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>District Type</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Masters Course Work</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants' Knowledge of Disability Law

To answer the first research question of this study, a survey (see Appendix E) was developed to assess secondary educators’ knowledge of the differences in requirements of disability legislation for students at the secondary level of education compared to students in postsecondary education settings. In addition, the survey included items to examine secondary educators’ perceived competency related to their knowledge of disability legislation and compared their perceived competency prior to completing the survey and again after completing the survey. Finally, the survey contained open-ended items to gather demographic information and, using a pre and post approach, data to answer the third question related to participants’ identified needs for future training.

Item Analysis

Before answering the first research question addressing knowledge, a screening of the corrected item/scale correlations revealed that several items did not appear to support an assumption ($r_{corrected} < .25$) that the survey measured a single latent construct of disability knowledge (See Table 4.2). Further, the scores on the survey showed low reliability ($\alpha = .44$). These weak results are not consistent with the fact that experts in the field reviewed the survey questions prior to any data collection, and validated the content and wording of items, thus indicating that the survey would assess knowledge. Hence, a logical conclusion is that the survey may measure knowledge in multiple domains, and secondary educators have better knowledge of some domains than others. A closer scrutiny of the individual items provided some evidence in this regard.
Table 4.2

*Item scores - Summary of survey item analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number Left Blank</th>
<th>Corrected Item Correlation</th>
<th>Percent Correct (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>77.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>75.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentage correct for each item ranged from the lowest (item 8) with only 14.2% of participants responding correctly, to the highest (item 15) with 96.3% of participants responding correctly. None of the participants answered all the items correctly. Further, the percentage of correct responses seemed to have little relationship to the corrected item/scale correlations (e.g., item 12). The content of the high and low percent-correct items revealed a possible explanation for these inconsistent results.

Six items (1, 4, 9, 12, 14, and 15) were answered correctly by 90% or more of participants. All of these items address specific language/requirements/knowledge of the ADA and Section 504, as opposed to how these two laws are implemented. In contrast, the set of items (5, 8, 19, 20 and 25) with which most people had the most difficulty (below 60% responded correctly) were those related to the actual implementation of the ADA and Section 504, which is vastly different from implementation of IDEA. Discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, the clear distinction between these two groups of items reflects the similarities and differences between the two types of academic settings.

**Participants’ Knowledge Scores**

The first question asked, “To what extent are secondary educators knowledgeable of the requirements of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?”, was addressed by examining the total scores received by participants. A frequency distribution of those total scores for all participants can be seen in Table 4.3. The individual total scores ranged from 13 (41.9%) correct to 28 (90.3%) correct, from a possible score of 31. The mean score on the knowledge section of the survey was 22.76 (73.2%) correct, which would translate into a “C” if the test had
been graded. This grade might not be considered “good enough” to teach the content of
the survey to a secondary education student who needs the knowledge for a successful
transition to postsecondary education settings. The fact that none of the participants knew
all the answers indicates that either the items were not well constructed, or they did not
possess the knowledge required to answer the questions correctly.

Upon completion of the entire survey, participants were given the opportunity to
receive the correct answers to the knowledge portion. Twenty-six respondents requested
the answers via an email. Of those 26 requests, four were from guidance counselors, two
were from principals/assistant principals, five were from regular education teachers, six
were from special education teachers, and the remaining four did not identify their
current position.
Table 4.3

*Frequency Distribution of Total Number Correct for the Knowledge Portion of the Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Correct Out of 31</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ Perceived Competency

The second question, “To what extent do secondary educators’ self perceived competency related to knowledge of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education change as a result of completing the survey?” was addressed using a 7-point semantic differential that measured participants’ perceived competency related to their knowledge of disability legislation. The semantic differential measured participants’ perception of their knowledge, by using polar opposites (“no knowledge” to “complete knowledge” in this study). Participants were asked to make a relative judgment of their own knowledge (Heise, 1970). Participants assessed themselves twice in the study: the first time prior to completing the knowledge section of the survey, and then again after completing the knowledge section of the survey. See Figure 4.1 for the frequency distribution of responses on the semantic differential prior to and after completing the knowledge portion of the survey.
Figure 4.1 Frequency Distribution of Responses to Perceived Competency Prior to and After Completing the Knowledge Portion of the Survey.
Because 18 participants did not respond to this item both times, only 249 complete sets of scores were available to examine the question of how the participants’ perceived competency changed as a result of completing the knowledge survey. Using the pre and post test ratings, the paired t-test results were statistically significant (\(t (248) = 4.35, p < .00002\)). Specifically the pre-test mean (2.65) was higher than the post-test mean (2.32), suggesting a drop in perceived competence as a result of taking the survey. However, neither mean suggests that the group felt competent in their knowledge. Based on these data, the group did not feel competent prior to taking the survey, and experienced even less self-competency after completing the survey.

**Additional Training**

Knowing that educators may lack knowledge and/or have low perceived competence does not necessarily inform potential solutions to this situation. Hence, the third question asked in this study was, “What are the areas in which secondary educators indicate the need for additional training related to transition planning for students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?” Participants were asked to identify areas in which they had a need for additional training prior to completing the survey, and then again after completing the survey. The training items were analyzed by grouping responses according to the positions held by the participants and examining the patterns of their responses to this open-ended question. Responses were grouped by position to assist in identifying similar training content areas for participants regardless of their position.
Responses Prior to Completing the Knowledge Survey

Only 106 (39.7%) of the participants responded to this question, although an individual could give multiple responses. Of the 105 responses, eight responses were from principals/assistant principals who identified four areas for additional training: 1) laws and legal issues between secondary education and postsecondary education, 2) accommodations offered 3) how students with disabilities access services at the postsecondary education level, and 4) the overall high school transition process. Forty-seven regular education teachers identified six areas of additional training in which they were interested; 1) accommodations offered, 2) laws and the difference between secondary education and postsecondary education, 3) teachers’ legal responsibilities in the transition planning process, 4) student’s rights in postsecondary education settings, 5) IEPs, and 6) twenty of the respondents indicated a need to be trained in all aspects of transition. It is interesting to note that one regular education teacher actually wrote, “I don’t know what it is that I don’t know.” Seven regular education teachers did not answer the question presented, but wrote comments or asked questions unrelated to their own training needs. Forty special education teachers responded and identified seven training areas; 1) accommodations offered, 2) laws and the differences between secondary education and postsecondary education settings, 3) how students with disabilities access services, 4) community agency information to assist students once they graduate from high school and move into the postsecondary education arena, 5) the overall transition planning process, 6) self-advocacy, and 7) four of the participants indicated a need for training in all aspects of transition. Again, there were participants who responded by not answering the question presented, but wrote other types of comments unrelated to their
own training needs. Three guidance counselors responded to the question, one response stating that it was not his/her job to know this type of information. The other two (2) areas identified were 1) laws and legal issues, and 2) training about what happens to the IEP when a student goes to college. Eight (8) others responded and identified three (3) training areas that included 1) accommodations offered, 2) laws and the differences between secondary education and postsecondary education, and 3) ongoing updates as the regulations change. There were two (2) responses that were unrelated to the question asked. See Table 4.4.
Table 4.4

**Additional Training Identified Prior to Completing the Knowledge Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Training Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals/Assistant Principals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodations offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How students access services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall transition process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Education Teachers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Accommodations offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ legal responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IEP’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teachers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Accommodations offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How students access services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall transition process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-advocacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4

*Additional Training Identified Prior to Completing the Knowledge Survey (continued)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Training Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What happens to the IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Accommodations offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Updates regarding legislation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses After Completing the Knowledge Survey

Upon completion of the knowledge survey, participants were asked a second time to identify content areas for future training. Of the 267 participants, 109 (41%) responded the second time, when asked about their training needs. Five principals/assistant principals identified 1) laws and legal issues, 2) accommodations in college, 3) self-advocacy, and 4) the admissions process for students with disabilities. Fifty-one regular education teachers identified seven (7) content areas for training that included 1) laws and legal issues, 2) accommodations 3) how to access disability services, 4) self-advocacy, 5) postsecondary instructor’s rights, 6) differences in how various exceptionalities are accommodated/treated, and 7) all areas. There were eight regular education teachers who entered general comments that were unrelated to their training needs, and another eight who stated that it was not their job to know this information, but fell under the purview of the guidance counselors and/or transition coordinators. The 38 special education teachers identified 1) laws and legal issues, 2) accommodations offered, 3) rights and responsibilities of the students and the postsecondary education settings, 4) how to access disability services, 5) agency supports, 6) grievance procedures, 7) professors’ freedom to implement or not implement accommodations, 8) who to contact for guidance, 9) ongoing updates as regulations change, and 10) everything. The eight guidance counselor responses identified 1) laws and legal issues, 2) accommodations offered, and 3) how to access disability services. Eight others responded and identified areas of needed training as 1) self-advocacy, 2) the transition process, and 3) the obligation of the postsecondary institutions to meet the needs of students with disabilities. One respondent indicated that he/she did not know what she needed to know, and two
stated that this was the responsibility of the guidance counselors and they needed whatever training to be offered. See Table 4.5.
Table 4.5

*Additional Training Identified After Completing the Knowledge Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Training Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals/Assistant Principals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodations in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Admissions process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Education Teachers</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodations offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How to access disability services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professors’ legal responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How disabilities are addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teachers</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodations offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ rights and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How students access services</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grievance procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professors’ freedoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who to contact for help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Training Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing legislative updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(cont.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Everything – all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Laws and legal issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodations offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How to access disability services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Self-advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall transition process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obligation of the institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The differences between the reported training needs before and after completing the survey seemed negligible, although there were some new suggested training topics such as professors’ freedoms and legal responsibilities, the obligation of the postsecondary institution, grievance procedures, and who to contact for help. What was quite apparent for all groups was a need to have a better understanding of the laws and legal issues related to education of students with disabilities in both secondary and postsecondary education settings, along with a need for more clarity regarding accommodations offered in the postsecondary education setting. The second time the question was posed regarding training needs, participants were asked to identify the preferred formats in which they would receive the training. For this portion of the survey, participants were given six choices from which to select one or more preferred formats. Of the 267 participants, 151 preferred a face-to-face in-service, 89 preferred web-based training, 47 preferred small group study, 43 preferred a college course, 31 preferred an independent study, and 28 preferred a weekend seminar. The top two preferred formats were the face-to-face in-services and the web-based training. Implications of the training content along with the preferred training format have been addressed more specifically in Chapter 5.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided detailed information about the results of the study including specific information related to the survey items, the perceived competency of participants, and identified training needs. Although the survey may actually be
multidimensional, the analysis of the aggregated scores suggested that the educators in this study were performing at a “C” level. Further, simple exposure to the content of disability law appeared to have the anticipated effect on participants' perceived competency in this domain. Both the quantitative and qualitative data support the premise that educators may not know what they don't know. Finally, the self-identified training needs of these participants were consistent before and after completing the survey. These needs fell mainly in the areas of the law and legal mandates, and how accommodations are implemented in a postsecondary education setting. Chapter 5 will discuss conclusions, limitations, implications and recommendations for future research, policy and practice.
Chapter 5

Conclusions, Limitations, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research, Policy and Practice

This chapter presents the conclusions and limitations of this study. Implications for professional development, teacher/administrator training, and policy makers are discussed. Recommendations for future research are also offered.

Review of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to assess secondary educators’ knowledge of the differences in requirements of disability legislation for students in secondary education settings compared to students in postsecondary education settings. Additionally, the study included an examination of secondary educators’ perceived competency related to their knowledge of disability legislation, and questions to identify areas in which secondary educators indicated a need for additional training. The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are secondary educators knowledgeable of the requirements of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?
2. To what extent do secondary educators’ self-perceived competency related to knowledge of federal legislation concerning students with disabilities in postsecondary education change as a result of completing the survey?

3. What are the areas in which secondary educators indicate a need for additional training related to transition planning for students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings?

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Two hundred and sixty-seven (267) secondary educators from the state of Pennsylvania participated in this study by completing an online survey. The survey collected data related to participants’ knowledge of the differences in disability legislation that protects students with disabilities in secondary education settings and postsecondary education settings. Additionally, the survey provided data related to participants’ perceived competency of disability legislation, and asked that they identify content areas for additional training. Twenty-six (26) of the 267 (9.73%) respondents requested and received the answers to the knowledge portion of the survey via an email.

**Respondents**

Examination of the percent of participation by position indicates that, even though the representation of regular education teachers who participated was similar to the percentage of regular educators in the state of Pennsylvania, the administrator and guidance counselor participant groups were underrepresented. In contrast, the special
education teachers were overrepresented. One might expect that an overrepresentation of special educators would result in a higher mean in the knowledge portion of the survey, and a higher self-perceived competency, yet that was not the case. As discussed below, the mean score (m = 22.76) does not suggest that one group of participants is more knowledgeable than another group. Additionally, the mean for the number of years of experience (13.9) would indicate that, although participants have a solid understanding of the names of the laws and which laws protect students with disabilities in which educational setting, they do not possess the knowledge about how those laws are implemented in postsecondary education.

Knowledge Data

The initial assessment of the knowledge survey itself was mixed. The range of total correct scores varied notably (13 - 28), and the percent of correct responses to individual items appeared to be related to item difficulty (as discussed next). Still, internal consistency for the entire scale was low (α = .44), and many items did not perform well on the corrected item-scale correlations. Given these findings, a conclusion was made that the survey may have measured multiple aspects of disability knowledge, rather than containing some “bad” items. This conclusion was based, in part, on the fact that the survey items had been vetted by experts in the field. Further, as discussed next, a closer examination of the patterns in responses to individual items, as related to the content of items, supported the interpretation of item performance being related to items posing questions that addressed different aspects of knowledge.
Two distinct patterns emerged after a closer scrutiny of the types of items answered mostly correct (“easy”) and the types of items answered mostly incorrect (“difficult”). One basic difference between the two types of items is that the easy items are directly related to the language of the laws (IDEA 2004, ADA 1990, and Section 504), whereas the difficult items relate to actual implementation, or operationalization of these same laws. A second pattern that emerged was that the easy items appear to address situations where there are no differences between the two education settings, while the difficult items reflect scenarios where the two education settings implement the laws differently.

Six items on the survey, (1, 4, 9, 12, 14, and 15) were answered correctly by 90% or more of participants. These items addressed specific language, requirements and knowledge of the ADA and Section 504 that are very similar to the requirements of IDEA, such as the identification process and what makes a person someone with a disability. In particular, items 9 and 12 address evaluation and documentation of a disability, which are required processes in both educational settings. The rights of a student who is a qualified individual with a disability (Item 14), and the rules of behavior in an educational setting (items 15) are also equivalent, regardless of the educational setting or applicable law. In sum, these results indicate that participants seemed to know the basics of disability laws.

Although literature was not reviewed regarding the typical training related to special education provided to perspective general educators and principals, such literature may inform this discussion. Research suggests that school personnel, school leaders in particular, are not adequately prepared to provide the necessary leadership in their role as
local education agency (LEA) in the IEP process (Monteith, 2000; Walther-Thomas, DiPaola, & Butler, 2002). Both the CEC (2003) and the PRAXIS tests (ETS, 2007) have identified legal issues as an area to be assessed. Hence, this type of basic information is likely taught during formal training to become an educator, and does not vary by type of instructional setting. This type of basic information is captured in the easy questions, and positively, most educators in this survey answered them correctly.

In contrast, the set of items (5, 8, 19, 20 and 25) with which most people had the most difficulty (below 60% responded correctly) were related to the actual implementation of the ADA and Section 504, which is vastly different from implementation of IDEA. To demonstrate this difference, item 5 addresses whether the provision of an IEP under IDEA is one avenue for a college student to access disability services at the postsecondary education level. The fact that so few participants answered this item correctly (40.4 %) would indicate that they did not understand that having an IEP in high school is not synonymous with provision of accommodations at the postsecondary education level. Another example, item 25 (46.4%), addresses the issue of access to information about a student’s disability by the faculty/staff working directly with an identified student. Again, the implementation of this aspect of the ADA and Section 504 at the postsecondary education level is the opposite of the implementation of IDEA related to access. Under IDEA, any secondary educator working with a student with a disability has access to any/all educational evaluation documentation that is generated by the school district personnel and history regarding that student. At the postsecondary education level, even those individuals working directly with the student do not have access to confidential information without signed permission from the
student. As a matter of fact, the amount of information available to faculty and staff is quite limited, beyond what a faculty can actually see (e.g., a physical disability) or the student self-discloses.

All other responses, ones that fell between 60% and 90%, were items that either address the implementation of the laws in postsecondary education settings, and/or are significantly different from the implementation of IDEA in the secondary education setting. For example, item 7 addresses whether or not parents of students with disabilities have the right to access information about their child in postsecondary education settings. Only 66.7% of respondents answered this correctly, which is not surprising. This aspect of the ADA and Section 504 in postsecondary educational settings is significantly different from parents’ rights in secondary education settings, where they hold all the rights. Another example related to implementation of the laws is item 27, which addresses whether a student with a disability in math may use a standard four-function calculator on a math test. Only 63.7% of respondents answered this item correctly, thus supporting the notion that secondary educators are not versed in the implementation of these laws in postsecondary education settings and how accommodations are different from those in high school.

Many of the difficult items are consistent with the overall premise of the study: that secondary educators are not fully aware of the intent of the laws along with their implementation in postsecondary education, and do not clearly understand that the implementation of the laws in postsecondary education is different from the implementation in secondary education settings. Still, in some instances, the results were conflicting. For example, item 5, “Under both the ADA and Section 504 colleges and
universities must provide accommodations to students who received special education services under IDEA,” (NO is the correct answer) addresses the differences between the ADA and Section 504. Both the ADA and Section 504 are applicable to postsecondary education settings, while IDEA, is the law applicable only to secondary education settings. As stated earlier, only 40.4% of participants responded correctly to this item.

Continuing in that vein, item 6, “Students with disabilities receive an IEP (Individualized Education Program) in postsecondary settings,” (NO is the correct answer), addressed implementation of the laws, as opposed to a comparison between the laws. Paradoxically, 77.5% of respondents responded correctly on this item.

The fact that none of the participants knew all the correct answers seems to indicate that they either did not know the correct answer, or the items were not well constructed. Again, all items were vetted with experts in the field, thus the contention that the survey may not measure one single construct of knowledge. But, all items had at least one correct response (i.e. no item had zero correct responses), which might suggest that individuals do not have complete knowledge of the various ways that these laws are operationalized in postsecondary settings. The other possible explanation would be that some people simply guessed the correct answer.

If this survey had been an actual test given to a class, the class mean (m = 22.76) would have been a “C” or 73.2%. One might assert that a score of “C” does not provide participants with the knowledge base needed to assist students with disabilities at the secondary education level with developing comprehensive transition plans. A contention of this study is that secondary educators “don’t know what they don’t know”, and the “C” score supports this premise. Of particular note, this exact comment was actually
written by three of the participants when they responded to the question regarding their needs for additional training.

Although not addressed in this study, the difference between the regular educators’ (teachers, guidance counselors and administrators) and the special educators’ level of knowledge might provide some interesting insights. In concert with examining the level of knowledge by position, examining the years of experience and the extent to which there is a relationship between position type and years of experience to an individual knowledge score would also be interesting. These types of comparisons would examine whether special educators do, in fact, know more than regular educators; an interesting question for future research, and whether years of experience has any relationship to knowledge level. This type of data might help guide various components of future training needs of secondary educators. In addition to surveying participants’ knowledge, this study examined participants’ perceived competency related to their knowledge of their own, individual understanding of their skills and knowledge related to transition planning for students with disabilities who have a goal of attending college. This topic was addressed in question 2.

**Perceived Competency Data**

One concern with training educators is that their perceived competence in this domain of transition planning for college-bound students with disabilities may be preventing them from seeking additional training. To examine this premise, perceived competence was assessed prior to participants completing the survey and directly after the survey, using a 7-point semantic differential. As discussed by Heise (1970) in Chapter
the semantic differential technique can be used measure participants’ reaction to or perception of their knowledge, by using polar opposites (“no knowledge” to “complete knowledge” in this study) and asking each participant to make a relative self-judgment of their knowledge. Semantic differentials have been shown to produce both valid and reliable scores in studies of perceptions (Emmerson & Neely, 1998). The results of this study support the contention that exposure to the information in the knowledge portion of the survey had an impact on participants’ perceived competency.

Based on the assumption that secondary educators “don’t know what they don’t know”, it was expected that the pretest perceived competency mean would be higher than the posttest perceived competency mean. A paired $t$-test was used with the pre and post self-ratings of competency for the 267 participants who responded to these two items. The entire range of responses ($0 = \text{no knowledge}$ to $6 = \text{complete knowledge}$) was seen in both sets of rankings. The statistical test result was significant ($t(248) = 4.35, p < .00002$) suggesting a change in competence following the initial administration of the survey. However, although a subtle drop in perceived competence was observed ($-.33$), neither the pre-test ($M = 2.65$) or post-test ($M = 2.32$) means seemed to indicate that the respondents felt competent in their knowledge.

As predicted, these results suggest that the participants felt less competent after completing the knowledge survey. Given that the only known event between time one and time two of the competency ratings, for all participants, was completion of the knowledge portion of the survey, the exposure to the content may help to explain the participants’ decrease in perceived competence. In other words, the survey provided the participants with the “here’s what you don’t know” information related to transition from
secondary education settings to postsecondary education settings, and participants were able to recognize this fact. Importantly, on average, participants did not rate themselves very high on the self-assessment, either pre or post-test. These results seem to indicate that educators do not feel particularly competent in their knowledge of disability legislation and how it is implemented at the postsecondary education level, and even less so when they are exposed to the content with which they should be knowledgeable.

A review of the literature indicated that the use of self-assessment of knowledge could be an important part of the teaching process. Lopez and Kossack (2007) discussed the role of prior knowledge in setting realistic learning objectives in the classroom, which naturally extends to professional development efforts. Earlier, Kossack, Sandiford, and Lopez (2006) explored the role of self-assessment, noting in particular, the need for additional studies of the role of inflated initial assessment. Consistent with the assertions in this study, they observed that college students “verbalized they ‘didn’t know as much as they thought they knew’ at the beginning” of a given course (p. 41). Researchers speculated that recognition of this deficit might have had a positive impact on student learning.

Further examination of various theories related to personal change and the learning process (Chapman, 2009) support the contention that a person must have awareness of their competence level in a given arena to be cognizant of their need to learn something new. For example, Barkley and Bianco (2005) discussed Gordon’s skill development ladder to identify each of the steps through which a person goes in the learning process. These steps include: 1) unconsciously unskilled (“I don’t know that I don’t know”); 2) consciously unskilled (“I know that I don’t know”); 3) consciously
skilled (“I know that I know”); and 4) unconsciously skilled (“I know it automatically”).

If a person is unconsciously unskilled, he/she is not aware of not knowing something, and that person cannot learn something new until their consciousness level is raised to at least being consciously unskilled, when they know that they do not know something. Change and growth occur when a person is conscious of not knowing something. Oftentimes, this consciousness causes discomfort. It is the job of the school leader(s) and teacher leader(s) to bring discomfort to the learner, resulting in increased willingness and ownership of learning something new.

A logical conclusion might be that the culture within successful professional development is one in which participants are comfortable with discomfort. Hand-in-hand with that discomfort is growth. By providing participants the opportunity to examine their self-perceived competence, participants are now more aware of what they do not know, and therefore may be more receptive to future training opportunities related to transition planning and the laws and legal issues related to such planning. In a simple but fundamental way, this survey raised their awareness of their lack of knowledge by teaching them something about themselves they may not have fully recognized.

The pre-test post-test approach is a classic research paradigm for studying change in individuals over time, with an intervening event or experience (Dallal, 2005; Howard, et. al., 1979). Often, this event is educational in nature and designed to have a positive effect on participants, who become their own statistical controls. A search of previous research revealed no study structured in the exact manner of this one, with the ostensive goal of documenting a decrease in self-assessed competence based solely on exposure to the content. Instead, studies usually involved improving various aspects of self-
confidence and/or knowledge, often over a span of weeks. For example, Meichtry and Smith’s (2007) study of the professional development of educators and Chiba and Low’s (2007) study of the transitions of college students with disabilities, both relied on this approach. Another factor that might explain participants’ low levels of self-perceived competence is the fact that the participants are not experts in the law. Additionally, some participants, while having many years of experience as secondary educators, may not have had any comprehensive experience with the transition planning process involved in IEP development at the secondary education level.

**Identified Training Areas and Training Formats**

Clearly, based on the findings from the first two research questions, increased training is indicated as related to the educational practice of transition planning for students with disabilities who have a goal of attending college. The third research question addressed this topic by asking participants to identify their training needs related to their knowledge of the differences in requirements of disability legislation for students in secondary education settings compared to students in postsecondary education settings. They completed this task prior to completing the knowledge survey, and then after completion of the knowledge survey. The content of these open-ended questions was examined both within and across educator groups, to identify any possible patterns or themes in their responses.

The top content areas for future training of current secondary educators in both the pre and post data were 1) the laws and legal issues, and 2) accommodations offered to students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings. No meaningful differences
were seen in the suggested content areas for future training between the pre and post collection of this information, beyond a few items related to professors’ legal responsibilities, obligation of the postsecondary institution, grievance procedures, and who to contact for help. The first three fall under the umbrella of laws and legal responsibilities, and therefore would be included in any future training. Interestingly, 24 participants indicated a need for training in all areas related to transition, and three participants stated that they “don’t know what it is that they don’t know”, thus supporting one of the arguments for this research study.

Some of the comments from guidance counselors and regular education teachers were interesting in that they asserted that knowing this information was not a requirement of their positions. Although there is no literature specific to the expected knowledge competencies of guidance counselors and regular education teachers related to disability legislation and transition planning for students with disabilities, the PRAXIS competencies (ETS, 2007) identified knowledge of legislation as a requirement for obtaining teaching certification in both arenas. Kochhar-Bryant et al. (2007) also supported the contention that all educators, regardless of their certification should be knowledgeable of disability legislation and how it is to be addressed in secondary and postsecondary education settings. Additionally, in IDEA ’04, the regular education teacher is identified as one of the required members of the IEP team, thus the need for regular education teachers to have this knowledge. The IEP team is charged with the job of assisting students with disabilities in planning for their transition to life after high school. Therefore, it can be argued that, without the knowledge of legislation that impacts
persons with disabilities post-high school, regular education teachers and guidance counselors cannot help with this federal mandate.

Based on the responses of the participants in this study, the future training of secondary educators should focus on disability legislation and helping those educators understand the difference between the secondary and postsecondary education settings. In addition, a major finding of this study is that secondary educators need to gain a better understanding of the laws versus implementation of the laws in postsecondary education settings. Attention should be given to clarifying the differences in the types of accommodations students with disabilities can expect at the postsecondary education setting when compared to those in the secondary setting.

The training format data indicate that participants prefer one of two training formats: face-to-face in-service and web-based instruction. Individuals who design professional development activities for secondary educators would benefit from considering this information when planning the format for trainings. An important aspect for future training is insuring interaction between participants during training, regardless of the format. Zirkin and Sumler (1995) discussed this importance in their review of distance education literature. Additionally, Sitzmann, Ely, and Wisher (2008) compared classroom instruction (face-to-face) with web-based instruction for employee groups. They found the web-based instruction to be 9% more effective than the face-to-face method as long as the web-based instruction incorporated a variety of teaching methodologies, specifically synchronous communication, lecture notes, and control of the learning experience in the hands of the participants. This information would be beneficial for those developing future training for educators.
Implications

The results of this research study have numerous implications for future training and professional development programs for current postsecondary educators, colleges and universities that offer teacher, administrator and guidance counselor certification programs, and future research. Additionally, there are potential implications for policy.

Professional Development and Teacher/Administrator Training

The two main training areas identified both before and after completion of the knowledge portion of the survey were disability legislation and accommodations. Future professional development programs for secondary educators should address the three disability laws -IDEA (2004), the ADA (1990), and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments (1998), specifically Section 504 – and their differences. In particular, training content should identify the differences between these pieces of legislation and offer concrete examples of the difference in their implementation in various educational settings. Information related to how a student is determined as eligible and therefore able to access services is also tantamount for secondary educators to understand these differences.

Generally, teacher-training programs expose secondary educators to the various laws that guide practice, including the provision of special education services. However, they are rarely exposed to the implementation of these laws in various educational settings (Gajar, Goodman, & McAfee, 1993; Hughes & Carter, 2000; Miller, Lombard, & Corbey, 2007; Osborne & Russo, 2006; Rothstein, 2000; Sitlington & Clark, 2006;
Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000; Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, Smith, & Leal, 2002). The specific differences in the implementation of these laws are what future professional training must address.

Future training for secondary educators must be offered using formats that are more hands-on and practical in nature, offering participants the opportunity to compare and contrast various types of accommodations found in a secondary education setting compared to a postsecondary education setting. Additionally, building-level administrators need to understand their roles and responsibilities as the representative of the school district and all that this responsibility entails.

The development of transition plans for students with disabilities ultimately results in teaching these students a different set of skills that they will need upon graduation from high school. Secondary educators need knowledge of the differences in implementation of the laws from the secondary setting to the postsecondary settings, if students are to learn this new skill set. By addressing implementation of the laws operationally as a component of future training, attention will be given to understanding accommodations and what they look like in a postsecondary education setting compared to a secondary education setting, thus providing secondary educators with the knowledge needed to develop transition plans that are meaningful for students with disabilities who have the goal of attending a postsecondary education program. Without this knowledge, educators will not be effective in assisting students with disabilities who plan to pursue higher education options.

A knowledge test, such as the one developed in this study, could be used as a training tool to facilitate discussion regarding what participants know and do not know,
thus helping identify training content areas needed for individual growth. Varying the level of difficulty in questions asked could offer an interesting approach to future training for teachers and administrators alike. Additionally, using the knowledge test as a training tool might help participants understand how much they do not know, and how much they need to learn to develop effective transition plans.

**Policy Makers**

The results of this research study also have potential implications for disability-related policy at the local, state and federal levels. In spite of all the mandates from the federal government to the state and local governments that address the needs of students with disabilities, many secondary educators still do not possess the level of knowledge needed to teach students with disabilities what they need to know about going to college. This lack of understanding of the required elements of transition planning for students with disabilities, who have a goal of attending postsecondary education, might result in students being underprepared for their life after graduation from high school. Students’ lack of preparation is in direct opposition to the original intent of the transition planning process; to prepare students with disabilities for their life after high school graduation, in particular one-year out (IDEA, 2004). The process of including transition planning as a requirement of IDEA, while obviously moving educators in the right direction, does not automatically mean that secondary educators have the information needed to assist their students. Policy makers are urged to consider offering clearer language, and even some concrete examples, to facilitate a better understanding of the differences between secondary education and postsecondary education requirements for students with
disabilities. For example, development of a matrix of accommodations that compares how accommodations are implemented in secondary education compared to postsecondary education would be helpful.

The apparent lack of understanding of the transition plan requirements among secondary educators results in school districts in general, and IEPs more specifically, being out of compliance with the requirements of Indicator 13 of IDEA. Indicator 13 is the portion of IDEA (2004) that addresses transition planning in the IEP process, and the mandate from IDEA is that districts are to be in 100% compliance of the requirements of Indicator 13. The results of this study would indicate that more education and training directed at secondary educators is needed so that IEPs can meet the compliance expectations from IDEA (2004).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Although the results of this study have implications for future professional development and training, along with policy formation, future administrations of this study could be strengthened in a number of ways. First, an unanticipated aspect of this study was the conclusion that the survey may not measure one single construct. In fact, *knowledge of disability legislation* may have multiple dimensions. Hence, a revised version of the survey could include subtests on the actual laws and on implementation of laws in different settings. The measurement aspects of the survey could also be strengthened by the use of factor analysis and other psychometric strategies. With a stronger measurement tool, future research could examine multiple dimensions of knowledge and the ways in which they impact a secondary educator’s ability to provide
effective transition planning for students with disabilities with a goal of participating in postsecondary education. An improved survey could also be used to examine participants’ knowledge and its relationship to perceived competency.

As previously discussed, the foci in this study were primarily on developing the knowledge survey, examining participants’ self-perceived competency related to their knowledge, and demonstrating the need for training, rather than an examination of differences among different types of educators. Secondary educators were defined as special education teachers, guidance counselors, regular education teachers and principals/assistant principals. It would be interesting to see if, for example, special educators are more knowledgeable than regular educators regarding transition requirements. Although one could argue that special educators should know more than the regular educators, the data might not support this contention.

Another area that would benefit from additional research is the various domains of needed training. Further studies could be conducted that gather information from disability services directors in postsecondary education settings related to their observation of the challenges faced by these students in the college environment. Such data could guide the future training content for secondary educators. Additionally, school districts could complete various needs assessments of their secondary educators that would identify specific training content for those working in their school district. This goal could be achieved via a variety of techniques such as questionnaires or surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The information collected, in concert with that gathered from disability services directors at postsecondary education settings, could help school districts determine the training content for future inservices.
Limitations

Although the results of this study appear relevant to the transition planning process, the following limitations are noted:

1. The process of accessing individual secondary educator emails online was tedious at best. Although these email addresses are in the public domain, the use of email as a way to solicit participants to complete the survey was, at times, quite daunting. Individual school district email servers had established security filters that blocked emails, if too many were sent at the same time from the same IP address. For example, in the case of fourteen (14) school districts, “failure to deliver” emails were returned if one email was sent to a group of secondary educators from a given district. Undoubtedly, this limited access and ability to use emails in this fashion had a negative impact on the final sample size.

   Additionally, the sample was composed of those individuals who could actually be accessed, and who self-selected to participate based on receipt of an email invitation, but also those who received the flyer invitation.

2. The smaller sample than originally targeted ($N = 267$) limits the ability to generalize the findings of this study to a larger population of secondary educators (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The targeted sample size was 380, using a modest confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5. A response rate of 3.9% limits the use of these results to infer that the participants’ responses did not differ significantly from those who did not respond. This researcher believes that the process of obtaining email addresses and then contacting prospective participants
via email had a negative impact on the response rate. Obtaining permission from
individual school districts to send a large number of emails to educators in the
district, along with changing the timing of the data collection might have
increased the response rate. This type of permission might have allowed more
secondary educators to receive the invitation to participate in the survey.

3. The sample was further limited by the fact that it was composed of participants
who actually received and chose to respond to the email invitations, and those
who received the flyer invitation at the PA Community on Transition Conference.
This resulted in a sample comprised primarily of two very select groups of
educators.

4. A fourth limitation of the study was the impact of the timing of the data
collection. The initial emails inviting participation occurred in June, at the end of
an academic year when educators are typically taking their summer vacation, and
in some cases the researcher received automatic “out of office” responses to the
invitation to participate in the survey. As a result of the timing, additional emails
were sent and other avenues used to solicit responses to the invitation to
participate in the research, and the total data collection period was extended. If the
timing of the data collection had been during the school year, as opposed to the
end and beginning, educators might have been more willing to take the time
required to participate.

5. A fifth limitation is that there was no question asked, in the survey, regarding
previous training related to transition planning for students with disabilities from
secondary to postsecondary education programs. This type of information might
have allowed for a more detailed analysis of the respondents and their individual scores on the knowledge portion of the survey.

6. A final limitation, and possibly the most significant, is that the knowledge portion of the survey appeared to have assessed more than one single construct of knowledge. Corrected item-scale correlations was not a good technique to analyze the data given the varying performance of the items on what appeared to be a test of a single domain of knowledge. This outcome supports the contention that this type of knowledge is truly multidimensional, requiring a different type of analysis. Hence, the single, total score approach may miss important distinctions in educators’ knowledge of this domain.

Conclusions

The results of this research study, even in light of the identified limitations, indicate a need for increased research regarding teacher and administrator preparation in relationship to their knowledge of legislation that impacts students with disabilities who plan to pursue postsecondary education. Of particular interest was the absence of scholarship regarding the knowledge needed by secondary educators related to disability legislation and its relationship to transition planning in general, and specifically for the transition planning from secondary to postsecondary settings. This study appeared to be one of the first of its kind to examine the knowledge of secondary educators, specifically special education teachers, regular education teachers, guidance counselors, and principals and assistant/vice principals. Therefore, the obtained data can be helpful in
understanding the limitations felt by these educators related to their knowledge and understanding of the issues related to transition planning for these young adults.

When examining the perceived competency of secondary educators, two facts seem important to remember. First, although the results indicated a decrease in participants’ competency, educators did not seem to feel particularly competent at the outset. Second, the items presented in the knowledge portion of the survey, which were specific to disability-related laws (ADA, 1990; Section 504, 1998), seemed more straightforward and “easy”. Knowledge regarding the implementation of disability-related laws, which is needed for secondary educators to plan and implement meaningful transition activities, was more likely the source of perceived lack of competence. That is, if educators “don’t know what they don’t know” related to disability legislation and its implementation, they certainly cannot teach the content needed by their students to gain proficiency. However, the educators in this study did seem to recognize their deficits, which may be a source of motivation for them to seek more training (Kossack et al, 2006).

This study suggests that secondary educators are in need of ongoing training and professional development in disability legislation and how accommodations are implemented in the postsecondary education setting. Specifically, secondary educators identified laws and legal issues, and accommodations in postsecondary education as the two top training needs. Future research in the area of knowledge acquisition, along with an examination of the content of teacher and administrator training programs in relationship to disability legislation will assist in moving secondary educators forward to help students with disabilities who plan to attend a postsecondary education program,
more effectively. Given adequate training, secondary educators will “know what they know, and know what they need to teach” in relation to transition planning for those students with disabilities who have the goal of attending college.
References


Code of Federal Regulations, 34 CFR 300 et seq.


Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Section 504, P.L. 102-569, (29 USC § 794 et seq)


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

13 CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES UNDER IDEA 2004
Disability Definitions under IDEA ‘04:

**Autism (Aut)**
A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child’s educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined below.

**Deaf-blindness (DB)**
This means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

**Deafness (D)**
This means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

**Emotional Disturbance (ED)**
The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- (A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- (B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- (C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- (D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- (E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
(ii) The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

**Hearing Impairment (HI)**
This means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness.
Mental Retardation (MR)
This means significantly sub average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

Multiple Disabilities (MD)
This means concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation & blindness, mental retardation & orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

Orthopedic Impairments (OI)
This means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g. clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., bone tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

Other Health Impairments (OHI)
This means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that -

(i) Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and
(ii) Adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
(i) General. The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
(ii) Disorders not included. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Speech or Language Impairment (S/L)
This means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
This means an acquired injury to the brain caused by external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychological impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Visual Impairment including Blindness (VI)
This means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Note: Adapted from IDEA 2004.
APPENDIX B

FEDERAL LEGISLATION THAT HAS IMPACTED THE TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Major Laws Impacting Transition

1965 – Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments – This law was the first to recognize students with disabilities, and the first to provide any state and federal funding for state institutions for children with disabilities.

1966 – Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments – The law was expanded to include local public school districts when those district began educating students with disabilities.

1973 – Rehabilitation Act – The first civil rights act for persons with disabilities, this law included all individuals with disabilities regardless of their age. The Rehabilitation Act mandated accessibility as it related the structural access and well as non-discrimination in employment in all businesses receiving federal funding.

1975 – P.L. 94-142 Education of all Handicapped Children Act (EHA) – the first education law specifically for students with disabilities, EHA emphasized policies and procedures for provision of special education services, and included a statement regarding transition to postsecondary environments for students with disabilities. That statement indicated that it was the responsibility of the LEA to provide transition related to services such as testing, social skills, career exploration, and development of job seeking skills along with assistance in finding employment to assist students to be successful in the world of work.

1977 – Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act – This was the first law that stated it was the responsibility of the public to give youth, including those with disabilities, with job training and employment which would lead to those youth being successful adults.

1982 – Job Training Partnership Training Act (JTPA) – The passage of JTPA expanded on the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act by improving job-training programs and connected those programs to state employment agencies. This began the concept of interagency connections, and acknowledged that other agencies could be involved in transition. JTPA also provided federal grant money to those wanting to develop work programs specifically for youth, including youth with disabilities.

1983 – Amendments to EHA – The amendments to the Education for all Handicapped Children Act acknowledged the challenges for youth with disabilities related to transitioning to life after high school. Students were not being provided with the needed transition services for them to become successful as adults. These amendments defined
incentives for transition services, and the federal government provided funding for states developing transition programs.

1984 – Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act – This act was originally known as the Vocational Education Act of 1984, and authorized federal funding for vocational training programs. The targeted populations for this training were students who were disadvantaged, disabled, or for English Language Learners (ELL). This act offered equal access to vocational education to these students.

1990 – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – With this reauthorization of the EHA, and the name change to IDEA, transition services were formally added to special education law and provided comprehensive guidelines. Specifically, the transition component was added to the IEP process and required that teams specify postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities in the areas of training, employment, community involvement, and independent living.

1990 – American with Disabilities Act (ADA) – Another civil rights law, the ADA was passed to strengthen and expand on the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. There were no longer limits for non-discrimination based on whether an entity received federal funding, and the law mandates that discrimination may not occur in any private-sector public services, employment, public accommodations, and telecommunications.

1994 – School to Work Opportunity Act (SWOA) – The SWOA outlined a plan to support secondary students with disabilities in their transition planning, including academic skill development, vocational skills, social skills, and independent living skills.

1997 – IDEA Amendments – When IDEA was amended in ’97, the transition age changed from 16 to 14 and looked at transition from middle school to high school. By doing this, parents and students were enabled to plan a course of study in high school based on graduation from high school and the postsecondary outcome in mind. In addition, a process for including a statement of needed transition services, and if appropriate a statement of the interagency responsibilities of needed linkages from high school to adult living.

1998 – Workforce Investment Act – This act mandated coordination and administration of training programs through a state workforce investment system. This allowed individuals with disabilities who did not meet the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) guidelines for support to access other services and supports through their state workforce investment programs.

1998 – Rehabilitation Act Amendments – These amendments supported the need for linkages between high school special education and adult service agencies. The amendments offered recommendations regarding how the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) must work with the LEA to assist with the transition of youth with disabilities.
1999 – Ticket to Work Incentive Improvement Act – This act was passed with a focus on the need for interagency agreements to assist in making transition successful for students with disabilities. The purpose of this act was to ease the burden put on Social Security Insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) back into the work force. The key for Ticket to Work is for increased self-sufficiency for persons with disabilities.

2001 – No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – At the heart of NCLB are accountability, standards, and high stakes testing. NCLB is the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and emphasizes accountability of teachers and the LEA for educating at-risk students, including students with disabilities. NCLB mandates that educators work together to educate students with disabilities, blurring the lines between special education and general education practices. Like previous laws discussed, NCLB encourages interagency collaboration.

2004 – IDEA Amendments – When IDEA was reauthorized in 2004, the transition age changed once again, reverting back to 16 from the age of 14 outlined in IDEA ’97. The interagency statement was moved into the transition plan portion of the IEP, strengthening that section. In addition to this change, states were now mandated to develop a 6-year State Performance Plan that revolved around 20 indicators. One of those indicators is Indicator 13 and relates directly to transition. Indicator 13 ensures that youth with disabilities age 16 and older have coordinated, measurable annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable those students to meet their postsecondary goals [20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)]. In addition, the added requirement of the Summary of Performance (SOP) provides students with disabilities who are exiting the secondary special education system a summary of academic performance, accommodations and modifications that have been of benefit, and state what the student will need in his/her postsecondary environment. Specific skills still needed by the students are included.

Note: Adapted from Long, E. (2007)
The PRAXIS SERIES – ETS

Complete document available on-line at:

http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.fab2360b1645a1de9b3a0779f1751509/?vgnextoid=48c05ee3d74f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&WT.ac=Praxis+Brochure+and+Front+Door

Note: The following PRAXIS exams were reviewed. The numbers after the exam titles are the identification numbers used by ETS.

Special Education: Knowledge-Based Core Principles (0351)
Special Education: Application of Core Principles Across Categories of Disability (0352)
Education of Exceptional Students: Core Knowledge Content (0353)
Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision (0410)
School Guidance and Counseling (0420)
Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades 7 – 12 (0524)

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August 21, 2007

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Appendix

Materials Covered by this Permission:

Test at a Glance
Test Codes: 0351, 0352, 0353, 0410, 0420, 0524
APPENDIX D

CEC COMPETENCIES
CEC Knowledge and Skill Base for All Entry-Level Special Education Teachers of Students with Exceptionalities in Individualized General Curriculums

CEC Knowledge and Skill Base for Special Education Administrators

CEC Knowledge and Skill Base for Special Education Transition Specialists
CEC Knowledge and Skill Base for All Entry-Level Special Education Teachers of Students with Exceptionalities in Individualized General Curriculums (most closely aligns with a Mild/Moderate licensure framework)

**Standard #1: Foundations**
CC1K1 Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.
CC1K2 Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation.
CC1K3 Relationship of special education to the organization and function of educational agencies.
CC1K4 Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.
CC1K5 Issues in definition and identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
CC1K6 Issues, assurances, and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services.
CC1K7 Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
CC1K8 Historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups.
CC1K9 Impact of the dominant culture on shaping schools and the individuals who study and work in them.
CC1K10 Potential impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school.
GC1K1 Definitions and issues related to the identification of individuals with disabilities.
GC1K2 Models and theories of deviance and behavior problems.
GC1K3 Historical foundations, classic studies, major contributors, major legislation, and current issues related to knowledge and practice.
GC1K4 The legal, judicial, and educational systems to assist individuals with disabilities.
GC1K5 Continuum of placement and services available for individuals with disabilities.
GC1K6 Laws and policies related to provision of specialized health care in educational settings.
GC1K7 Factors that influence the overrepresentation of culturally/linguistically diverse students in programs for individuals with disabilities.
GC1K8 Principles of normalization and concept of least restrictive environment.
GC1K9 Theory of reinforcement techniques in serving individuals with disabilities.
CC1S1 Articulate personal philosophy of special education.

**Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners**
CC2K1 Typical and atypical human growth and development.
CC2K2 Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.
CC2K3 Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family.
CC2K4 Family systems and the role of families in supporting development.
CC2K5 Similiarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
CC2K6 Similarities and differences among individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC2K7 Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.
GC2K1 Etiology and diagnosis related to various theoretical approaches.

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1Note On Coding: CC in the number code indicates a Common Core item; EC indicates an Early Childhood Special Education item; K indicates a Knowledge item; S indicates a Skill item.
GC2K2 Impact of sensory impairments, physical and health disabilities on individuals, families, and society.
GC2K3 Etiologies and medical aspects of conditions affecting individuals with disabilities.
GC2K4 Psychological and social-emotional characteristics of individuals with disabilities.
GC2K5 Common etiologies and the impact of sensory disabilities on learning and experience.
GC2K6 Types and transmission routes of infectious disease.

**Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences**
CC3K1 Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual’s life.
CC3K2 Impact of learners’ academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
CC3K3 Variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures and their effects on
relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, family, and schooling.

CC3K4 Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related to instruction.

CC3K5 Differing ways of learning of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and strategies for addressing these differences.

GC3K1 Impact of disabilities on auditory and information processing skills.

GC3S1 Relate levels of support to the needs of the individual.

Standard #4: Instructional Strategies

GC4K1 Sources of specialized materials, curricula, and resources for individuals with disabilities.

GC4K2 Strategies to prepare for and take tests.

GC4K3 Advantages and limitations of instructional strategies and practices for teaching individuals with disabilities.

GC4K4 Prevention and intervention strategies for individuals at risk for a disability.

GC4K5 Strategies for integrating student-initiated learning experiences into ongoing instruction.

GC4K6 Methods for increasing accuracy and proficiency in math calculations and applications.

GC4K7 Methods for guiding individuals in identifying and organizing critical content.

CC4S1 Use strategies to facilitate integration into various settings.

CC4S2 Teach individuals to use self-assessment, problem-solving, and other cognitive strategies to meet their needs.

CC4S3 Select, adapt, and use instructional strategies and materials according to characteristics of the individual with exceptional learning needs.

CC4S4 Use strategies to facilitate maintenance and generalization of skills across learning environments.

CC4S5 Use procedures to increase the individual’s self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem.

CC4S6 Use strategies that promote successful transitions for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

GC4S1 Use research-supported methods for academic and nonacademic instruction of individuals with disabilities.

GC4S2 Use strategies from multiple theoretical approaches for individuals with disabilities.

GC4S3 Teach learning strategies and study skills to acquire academic content.

GC4S4 Use reading methods appropriate to individuals with disabilities.

GC4S5 Use methods to teach mathematics appropriate to the individuals with disabilities.

GC4S6 Modify pace of instruction and provide organizational cures.

GC4S7 Use appropriate adaptations and technology for all individuals with disabilities.

GC4S8 Resources and techniques used to transition individuals with disabilities into and out of school and postschool environments.

GC4S9 Use a variety of nonaversive techniques to control targeted behavior and maintain attention of individuals with disabilities.

GC4S10 Identify and teach basic structures and relationships within and across curricula.

WHAT EVERY SPECIAL EDUCATOR MUST KNOW 55

GC4S11 Use instructional methods to strengthen and compensate for deficits in perception, comprehension, memory, and retrieval.

GC4S12 Use responses and errors to guide instructional decisions and provide feedback to learners.

GC4S13 Identify and teach essential concepts, vocabulary, and content across the general curriculum.

GC4S14 Implement systematic instruction in teaching reading comprehension and monitoring strategies.

GC4S15 Teach strategies for organizing and composing written products.

GC4S16 Implement systematic instruction to teach accuracy, fluency, and comprehension in content area reading and written language.

Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions

CC5K1 Demands of learning environments.

CC5K2 Basic classroom management theories and strategies for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

CC5K3 Effective management of teaching and learning.

CC5K4 Teacher attitudes and behaviors that influence behavior of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

CC5K5 Social skills needed for educational and other environments.

CC5K6 Strategies for crisis prevention and intervention.

CC5K7 Strategies for preparing individuals to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world.
CC5K8 Ways to create learning environments that allow individuals to retain and appreciate their own and each others’ respective language and cultural heritage.
CC5K9 Ways specific cultures are negatively stereotyped.
CC5K10 Strategies used by diverse populations to cope with a legacy of former and continuing racism.
GC5K1 Barriers to accessibility and acceptance of individuals with disabilities.
GC5K2 Adaptation of the physical environment to provide optimal learning opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
GC5K3 Methods for ensuring individual academic success in one-to-one, small-group, and large-group settings.
CC5S1 Create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
CC5S2 Identify realistic expectations for personal and social behavior in various settings.
CC5S3 Identify supports needed for integration into various program placements.
CC5S4 Design learning environments that encourage active participation in individual and group activities.
CC5S5 Modify the learning environment to manage behaviors.
CC5S6 Use performance data and information from all stakeholders to make or suggest modifications in learning environments.
CC5S7 Establish and maintain rapport with individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
CC5S8 Teach self-advocacy.
CC5S9 Create an environment that encourages self-advocacy and increased independence.
CC5S10 Use effective and varied behavior management strategies.
CC5S11 Use the least intensive behavior management strategy consistent with the needs of the individual with exceptional learning needs.
CC5S12 Design and manage daily routines.
CC5S13 Organize, develop, and sustain learning environments that support positive intracultural and intercultural experiences.
CC5S14 Mediate controversial intercultural issues among students within the learning environment in ways that enhance any culture, group, or person.
CC5S15 Structure, direct, and support the activities of paraeducators, volunteers, and tutors.
CC5S16 Use universal precautions.
GC5S1 Provide instruction in community-based settings.

**6 WHAT EVERY SPECIAL EDUCATOR MUST KNOW**
GC5S2 Use and maintain assistive technologies.
GC5S3 Plan instruction in a variety of educational settings.
GC5S4 Teach individuals with disabilities to give and receive meaningful feedback from peers and adults.
GC5S5 Use skills in problem-solving and conflict resolution.
GC5S6 Establish a consistent classroom routine for individuals with disabilities.

**Standard #6: Language**
CC6K1 Effects of cultural and linguistic differences on growth and development.
CC6K2 Characteristics of one’s own culture and use of language and the ways in which these can differ from other cultures and uses of languages.
CC6K3 Ways of behaving and communicating among cultures that can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.
CC6K4 Augmentative and assistive communication strategies.
GC6K1 Impact of language development and listening comprehension on academic and nonacademic learning of individuals with disabilities.
GC6K2 Communication and social interaction alternatives for individuals who are nonspeaking.
GC6K3 Typical language development and how that may differ for individuals with learning disabilities.
CC6S1 Use strategies to support and enhance communication skills of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC6S2 Use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for students whose primary language is not the dominant language.
GC6S1 Enhance vocabulary development.
GC6S2 Teach strategies for spelling accuracy and generalization.
GC6S3 Teach individuals with disabilities to monitor for errors in oral and written language.
GC6S4 Teach methods and strategies for producing legible documents.
GC6S5 Plan instruction on the use of alternative and augmentative communication systems.
Standard #7: Instructional Planning
CC7K1 Theories and research that form the basis of curriculum development and instructional practice.
CC7K2 Scope and sequences of general and special curricula.
CC7K3 National, state or provincial, and local curricula standards.
CC7K4 Technology for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment.
CC7K5 Roles and responsibilities of the paraeducator related to instruction, intervention, and direct service.
GC7K1 Integrate academic instruction and behavior management for individuals and groups with disabilities.
GC7K2 Model career, vocational, and transition programs for individuals with disabilities.
GC7K3 Interventions and services for children who may be at risk for learning disabilities.
GC7K4 Relationships among disabilities and reading instruction.
CC7S1 Identify and prioritize areas of the general curriculum and accommodations for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC7S2 Develop and implement comprehensive, longitudinal individualized programs in collaboration with team members.
CC7S3 Involve the individual and family in setting instructional goals and monitoring progress.
CC7S4 Use functional assessments to develop intervention plans.
CC7S5 Use task analysis.
CC7S6 Sequence, implement, and evaluate individualized learning objectives.
CC7S7 Integrate affective, social, and life skills with academic curricula.
CC7S8 Develop and select instructional content, resources, and strategies that respond to cultural, linguistic, and gender differences.
CC7S9 Incorporate and implement instructional and assistive technology into the educational program.

WHAT EVERY SPECIAL EDUCATOR MUST KNOW 57
CC7S10 Prepare lesson plans.
CC7S11 Prepare and organize materials to implement daily lesson plans.
CC7S12 Use instructional time effectively.
CC7S13 Make responsive adjustments to instruction based on continual observations.
CC7S14 Prepare individuals to exhibit self-enhancing behavior in response to societal attitudes and actions.
GC7S1 Plan and implement individualized reinforcement systems and environmental modifications at levels equal to the intensity of the behavior.
GC7S2 Select and use specialized instructional strategies appropriate to the abilities and needs of the individual.
GC7S3 Plan and implement age- and ability-appropriate instruction for individuals with disabilities.
GC7S4 Select, design, and use technology, materials, and resources required to educate individuals whose disabilities interfere with communication.
GC7S5 Interpret sensory, mobility, reflex, and perceptual information to create or adapt appropriate learning plans.
GC7S6 Design and implement instructional programs that address independent living and career education for individuals.
GC7S7 Design and implement curriculum and instructional strategies for medical self-management procedures.
GC7S8 Design, implement, and evaluate instructional programs that enhance social participation across environments.

Standard #8: Assessment
CC8K1 Basic terminology used in assessment.
CC8K2 Legal provisions and ethical principles regarding assessment of individuals.
CC8K3 Screening, prereferral, referral, and classification procedures.
CC8K4 Use and limitations of assessment instruments.
CC8K5 National, state or provincial, and local accommodations and modifications.
GC8K1 Specialized terminology used in the assessment of individuals with disabilities.
GC8K2 Laws and policies regarding referral and placement procedures for individuals with disabilities.
GC8K3 Types and importance of information concerning individuals with disabilities available from families and public agencies.
GC8K4 Procedures for early identification of young children who may be at risk for disabilities.
CC8S1 Gather relevant background information.
CC8S2 Administer nonbiased formal and informal assessments.
CC8S3 Use technology to conduct assessments.
CC8S4 Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies.
CC8S5 Interpret information from formal and informal assessments.
CC8S6 Use assessment information in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions for individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
CC8S7 Report assessment results to all stakeholders using effective communication skills.
CC8S8 Evaluate instruction and monitor progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC8S9 Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies.
CC8S10 Create and maintain records.
GC8S1 Implement procedures for assessing and reporting both appropriate and problematic social behaviors of individuals with disabilities.
GC8S2 Use exceptionality-specific assessment instruments with individuals with disabilities.
GC8S3 Select, adapt and modify assessments to accommodate the unique abilities and needs of individuals with disabilities.

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GC8S4 Assess reliable methods of response of individuals who lack typical communication and performance abilities.
GC8S5 Monitor intragroup behavior changes across subjects and activities.

**Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice**
CC9K1 Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one’s teaching.
CC9K2 Importance of the teacher serving as a model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC9K3 Continuum of lifelong professional development.
CC9K4 Methods to remain current regarding research-validated practice.
GC9K1 Sources of unique services, networks, and organizations for individuals with disabilities.
GC9K2 Organizations and publications relevant to individuals with disabilities.
CC9S1 Practice within the CEC Code of Ethics and other standards of the profession.
CC9S2 Uphold high standards of competence and integrity and exercise sound judgment in the practice of the professional.
CC9S3 Act ethically in advocating for appropriate services.
CC9S4 Conduct professional activities in compliance with applicable laws and policies.
CC9S5 Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC9S6 Demonstrate sensitivity for the culture, language, religion, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation of individuals.
CC9S7 Practice within one’s skill limit and obtain assistance as needed.
CC9S8 Use verbal, nonverbal, and written language effectively.
CC9S9 Conduct self-evaluation of instruction.
CC9S10 Access information on exceptionalities.
CC9S11 Reflect on one’s practice to improve instruction and guide professional growth.
CC9S12 Engage in professional activities that benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, and one’s colleagues.
GC9S1 Participate in the activities of professional organizations relevant to individuals with disabilities.
GC9S2 Ethical responsibility to advocate for appropriate services for individuals with disabilities.

**Standard #10: Collaboration**
CC10K1 Models and strategies of consultation and collaboration.
CC10K2 Roles of individuals with exceptional learning needs, families, and school and community personnel in planning of an individualized program.
CC10K3 Concerns of families of individuals with exceptional learning needs and strategies to help address these concerns.
CC10K4 Culturally responsive factors that promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals with exceptional learning needs, families, school personnel, and community members.
GC10K1 Parent education programs and behavior management guides that address severe behavior problems and facilitation communication for individuals with disabilities.
GC10K2 Collaborative and/or consultative role of the special education teacher in the reintegration of individuals with disabilities.
GC10K3 Roles of professional groups and referral agencies in identifying, assessing, and providing services to individuals with disabilities.
GC10K4 Co-planning and co-teaching methods to strengthen content acquisition of individuals with learning disabilities.

CC10S1 Maintain confidential communication about individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC10S2 Collaborate with families and others in assessment of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
CC10S3 Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and professionals.
CC10S4 Assist individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families in becoming active participants in the educational team.

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CC10S5 Plan and conduct collaborative conferences with individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.

CC10S6 Collaborate with school personnel and community members in integrating individuals with exceptional learning needs into various settings.

CC10S7 Use group problem-solving skills to develop, implement, and evaluate collaborative activities.

CC10S8 Model techniques and coach others in the use of instructional methods and accommodations.

CC10S9 Communicate with school personnel about the characteristics and needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

CC10S10 Communicate effectively with families of individuals with exceptional learning needs from diverse backgrounds.

CC10S11 Observe, evaluate, and provide feedback to paraeducators.

GC10S1 Use local community, and state and provincial resources to assist in programming with individuals with disabilities.

GC10S2 Select, plan, and coordinate activities of related services personnel to maximize direct instruction for individuals with disabilities.

GC10S3 Teach parents to use appropriate behavior management and counseling techniques.

GC10S4 Collaborate with team members to plan transition to adulthood that encourages full community participation.
CEC Knowledge and Skill Base for Special Education Administrators

Standard #1: Foundations
SA1K1 Laws and policies for general and special education.
SA1K2 Evolution of laws and policies that impact the lives of individuals with exceptionalities and their families from birth through adulthood.
SA1K3 Political and economic issues that affect policy development.
SA1K4 Models, theories, and philosophies that provide the basis for educational systems.
SA1K5 Development and implementation of policies and regulations for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA1K6 Laws and policies regarding assessment, program evaluation, and accountability related to individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA1K7 General curriculum theories and implications for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA1K8 Research related to educational change.
SA1K9 Education, social, and health agency fiscal policies.
SA1K10 Human resources management, recruitment, personnel assistance and development, and evaluation.
SA1K11 Sources of funding.
SA1K12 Laws and policies governing the discipline of all students and implications for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA1K13 Legal and ethical issues of behavior management of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA1K14 Family systems and the role of families in supporting development and educational progress of the individual with exceptional learning needs.
SA1S1 Interpret laws and policies pertaining to individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners
SA2K1 Human development, principles of learning, and the relationships to individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA2K2 Characteristics of individuals with exceptional learning needs and implications for the development of programs and services.

Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences
SA3K1 Impact of diversity on educational expectations and programming.

Standard #4: Instructional Strategies
None specified for this set of advanced standards.

Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions
None specified for this set of advanced standards.

Standard #6: Language
None specified for this set of advanced standards.

Standard #7: Instructional Planning
SA7K1 General curriculum, instruction, and how special education services support access to the general curriculum.
SA7S1 Develop and implement a continuum of services that responds to individual educational needs and family characteristics.
SA7S2 Incorporate postschool outcomes for individuals with exceptional learning needs in the general curriculum standards.

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1Note On Coding: CC in the number code indicates a Common Core item; EC indicates an Early Childhood Special Education item; K indicates a Knowledge item; S indicates a Skill item.
2These standards were developed with the assumption that candidates would have had previous training in special education.
SA7S3 Design and implement professional development and constructive evaluation procedures that are designed to improve instructional content and practices.
SA7S4 Develop and implement a plan to provide instructional and assistive technologies.
SA7S5 Develop collaborative programs that ensure that individuals with exceptional learning needs have access to and participate in the general curriculum.
SA7S6 Develop and implement flexible service delivery that addresses the range of needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA7S7 Develop and implement prevention strategies and programs.
SA7S8 Develop budgets to ensure the efficient and effective allocation of resources.
SA7S9 Use a variety of technologies to enhance management of resources and programs.
SA7S10 Develop and implement discipline policy and procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA7S11 Implement a range of strategies that promote positive behavior, crisis intervention, and family involvement and support.

**Standard #8: Assessment**
SA8S1 Advocate for the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs in accountability systems.
SA8S2 Implement procedures within the assessment accountability system to ensure the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA8S3 Develop and implement ongoing evaluations of special education programs and practices.

**Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice**
SA9K1 Organizations and publications relevant to the field of special education administration.
SA9S1 Communicate a personal inclusive vision for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA9S2 Advocate for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA9S3 Respect and support individuals with exceptional learning needs in self-advocacy.
SA9S4 Communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical practice.
SA9S5 Make decisions concerning individuals with exceptional learning needs based on open communication, trust, mutual respect, and dignity.
SA9S6 Participate in the activities of the professional organization relevant to the field of Special Education Administration.

**Standard #10: Collaboration**
SA10K1 Approaches for involving parents, family, and community members in educational planning, implementation, and evaluation.
SA10K2 Role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.
SA10S1 Develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA10S2 Promote seamless transitions of individuals with exceptional learning needs across educational and other programs from birth through adulthood.
SA10S3 Implement administrative procedures to ensure clear communication among administrators, instructional staff, and related service personnel.
SA10S4 Develop family education and other support programs.
SA10S5 Engage in shared decision making to support programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA10S6 Provide ongoing communication with families of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SS10S7 Consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional settings.
CEC Knowledge and Skill Base for Special Education Transition Specialists

Standard #1: Foundations
TS1K1 Theoretical and applied models of transition.
TS1K2 Transition-related laws and policies.
TS1K3 History of national transition initiatives.
TS1K4 Research on relationships between individual outcomes and transition practices.
TS1K5 Procedures and requirements for referring individuals to community service agencies.

Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners
TS2K1 Implications of individual characteristics with respect to postschool outcomes and support needs.

Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences
None specified for this set of advanced standards.

Standard #4: Instructional Strategies
TS4K1 Methods for providing community-based education for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
TS4K2 Methods for linking academic content to transition goals.
TS4K3 Strategies for involving families and individuals with exceptional learning needs in transition planning and evaluation.
TS4S1 Arrange and evaluate instructional activities in relation to postschool goals.

Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions
TS5K1 School and postschool services available to specific populations of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
TS5S1 Identify and facilitate modifications within work and community environments.
TS5S2 Use support systems to facilitate self-advocacy in transition planning.

Standard #6: Language
None specified for this set of advanced standards.

Standard #7: Instructional Planning
TS7K1 Job seeking and job retention skills identified by employers as essential for successful employment.
TS7K2 Vocational education methods, models, and curricula.
TS7K3 Range of postschool options within specific outcome areas.
TS7S1 Identify outcomes and instructional options specific to the community and the individual.
TS7S2 Arrange and evaluate instructional activities in relation to postschool goals.
TS7S3 Ensure the inclusion of transition-related goals in the educational program plan.
TS7S4 Develop postschool goals and objectives, using interests and preferences of the individual.

Standard #8: Assessment
TS8K1 Formal and informal approaches for identifying students’ interests and preferences related to educational experiences and postschool goals.
TS8S1 Match skills and interests of the individuals to skills and demands required by vocational and postschool settings.
TS8S2 Interpret results of career and vocational assessment for individuals, families, and professionals.
TS8S3 Use a variety of formal and informal career, transition, and vocational assessment procedures.
TS8S4 Evaluate and modify transition goals on an ongoing basis.

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Note On Coding: CC in the number code indicates a Common Core item; EC indicates an Early Childhood Special Education item; K indicates a Knowledge item; S indicates a Skill item.
These standards were developed with the assumption that candidates would have had previous training in special education.
TS8S5 Assess and develop natural support systems to facilitate transition to postschool environments.

Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice
TS9K1 Scope and role of transition specialist.
TS9K2 Scope and role of agency personnel related to transition services.
TS9K3 Organizations and publications relevant to the field of transition.
TS9S1 Show positive regard for the capacity and operating constraints of community organizations involved in transition services.
TS9S2 Participate in activities of professional organizations in the field of transition.

Standard #10: Collaboration
TS10K1 Methods to increase transition service delivery through interagency agreements and collaborative funding.
TS10K2 Transition planning strategies that facilitate input from team members.
TS10S1 Design and use procedures to evaluate and improve transition education and services in collaboration with team members.
TS10S2 Provide information to families about transition education, services, support networks, and postschool options.
TS10S3 Involve team members in establishing transition policy.
TS10S4 Provide transition-focused technical assistance and professional development in collaboration with team members.
TS10S5 Collaborate with transition-focused agencies.
TS10S6 Develop interagency strategies to collect, share, and use student assessment data.
TS10S7 Use strategies for resolving differences in collaborative relationships and interagency agreements.
TS10S8 Assist teachers to identify educational program planning team members.
TS10S9 Assure individual, family, and agency participation in transition planning and implementation.
APPENDIX E

SURVEY INSTRUMENT – SECONDARY EDUCATOR SURVEY OF
DISABILITY RELATED KNOWLEDGE
Secondary Educator Survey of Disability-Related Knowledge

**Instructions:** This survey is designed to collect information concerning your knowledge of disability-related laws for students with disabilities pursuing postsecondary education.

Before beginning the survey, please use the scale below to rate your knowledge and understanding of how disability legislation is implemented to support students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings. Circle the number that best represents your current knowledge with 0 representing *no knowledge* and 6 representing *complete knowledge*.

*No Knowledge* 0-------1--------2--------3--------4--------5-------6 *Complete Knowledge*

### Section I: Knowledge

**Directions:** The following statements relate directly to disability legislation impacting postsecondary education (college/university). Please read each statement and indicate whether the statement is correct (YES) or incorrect (NO).

1. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) a person is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she has any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, has a record of impairment, or is regarded as having impairment.

   YES [ ]   NO [ ]

2. A qualified person with a disability does not have to meet the same academic and technical standards required for admission to college/university as a qualified person without a disability.

   YES [ ]   NO [ ]

3. Pre-admission inquiries from the college/university admissions officers as to whether a person has a disability are permissible.

   YES [ ]   NO [ ]

4. Section 504 of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by college/university.

   YES [ ]   NO [ ]
5. Under both the ADA and Section 504 colleges and universities must provide accommodations to students who received special education services in high school under IDEA.

   YES □     NO □

6. Students with disabilities receive an IEP (Individualized Education Program) in postsecondary settings.

   YES □     NO □

7. Parents/guardians have the right to access information regarding their child’s disability accommodations in the postsecondary setting.

   YES □     NO □

8. Students with disabilities are required to assume the responsibility for securing their accommodation(s) in postsecondary settings.

   YES □     NO □

9. A student with a disability must have a diagnostic evaluation that is less than three years old to be eligible for the provision of reasonable accommodations in postsecondary settings.

   YES □     NO □

10. Student requests for accommodation are to be granted when the accommodation will result in a fundamental alteration of the program/course.

    YES □     NO □

11. Postsecondary education personnel are required to offer a student with a disability accommodation even if the student does not request it.

    YES □     NO □

12. The university may refuse to grant a student’s request for an accommodation that is not supported by the student’s documentation.

    YES □     NO □
13. A college/university must operate its programs so individuals with disabilities can have access to the greatest extent possible.

YES □  NO □

14. Qualified individuals in colleges/universities with disabilities must be given the option to participate in regular programs even where accommodations for special programs can be made.

YES □  NO □

15. According to both Section 504 and the ADA, colleges and universities may establish reasonable rules of behavior to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment.

YES □  NO □

16. According to both Section 504 and the ADA colleges and universities must modify course goals, objectives, assignments and exams for students with disabilities.

YES □  NO □

17. The provision of a personal attendant for a student with a disability is the responsibility of the institution.

YES □  NO □

18. A student with a disability is entitled to have more than one housing option presented if options exist for students who are not disabled.

YES □  NO □

19. A student with a disability who needs attendant care can be automatically assigned to a single room.

YES □  NO □

20. Colleges/universities must provide comparable opportunities for intercollegiate activities to students with and without disabilities.

YES □  NO □
21. A program or classroom’s location should be changed to provide accessibility for a student with a mobility disability.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

22. A student with a speech disorder must be offered an alternate assignment to presenting an oral report if identified as a needed accommodation.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

23. If a student with a visual disability is enrolled in a course, the college/university must provide all the written materials for the course in the alternate format requested by the student.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

24. If a student has a documented disability that affects writing, the instructor might be expected to provide the student with an oral test.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

25. Postsecondary faculty and staff who work directly with a student have the right to access diagnostic information regarding that student’s disability.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

26. If a student’s disability documentation specifically recommends a quiet testing area with no distractions, the instructor must allow the student to take an exam in a room different from the classroom with a proctor.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

27. A student with a documented disability in math processing may use a standard four-function calculator on a math test.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

28. A college/university must utilize a grievance procedure that includes a grade change if appropriate disability-related accommodations were not provided.

YES [ ] NO [ ]
29. A reasonable accommodation for a student with a learning disability might be to provide a copy the notes from another student(s) in the class.

   YES [ ]    NO [ ]

30. An individual faculty or staff member who fails to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability may be held personally liable.

   YES [ ]    NO [ ]

31. The instructor’s academic freedom permits the instructor to decide if he/she will provide special aids and services for students with disabilities in the classroom.

   YES [ ]    NO [ ]

**Directions:** Now that you have completed the survey, please use the scale below to rate your knowledge and understanding of how disability legislation is implemented to support students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings. Circle the number that best represents your current knowledge with 0 representing *no knowledge* and 6 representing *complete knowledge.*

*No Knowledge* 0-------1-------2-------3-------4-------5-------6 *Complete Knowledge*

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**Section II: Demographics**

**Directions** - Please answer the following questions.

1. What is your age? ______

2. Gender: (Check one)
   
   ____ Male
   ____ Female

3. Current Occupation (Check one)
   
   ____ Special Education Teacher (please indicate grade level ________)
   ____ Secondary Guidance Counselor
   ____ Transition Coordinator
   ____ High School Principal
   ____ High School Assistant Principal/Vice Principal
   ____ Other (Please specify ________________________ )
4. Current Employer information:

   Approximately how many students are enrolled in your school district?

   ___ 1-2000
   ___ 2001-4000
   ___ 4001-8000
   ___ 8001-12,000
   ___ 12,001-20,000
   ___ 20,001 and up

5. Which term best describes the school district in which you are currently employed?

   ______ Rural
   ______ Urban
   ______ Suburban

6. Highest degree you have completed (check one)

   ___ Bachelors degree
   ___ Masters degree
   ___ Post-masters coursework
   ___ Doctorate
   ___ Other (Please specify____________________)

7. Total number of years of experience you have as an educator (total) = _____

   ___ Number of years as a regular education teacher
   ___ Number of years as a special education teacher
   ___ Number of years as a guidance counselor
   ___ Number of years as an administrator

8. Ethnicity (check all that apply)

   ___ American Indian or Alaskan Native
   ___ Black/African American
   ___ Hispanic
   ___ Asian or Pacific Islander
   ___ White (non-Hispanic)
   ___ Other____________________
9. Use the space below to identify specific training needs for secondary educators related to transition planning for students with disabilities who plan to pursue postsecondary education.

10. In what format would you prefer to have additional training on transition planning presented? (Check all that apply)

___ face-to-face in-service
___ weekend seminar
___ college course
___ independent study
___ small study group
___ other (please specify)

Thank you for your time and assistance!

If you have questions or would like to receive this survey in an alternative format, or are interested in receiving the correct answers to the knowledge portion of the survey please contact Sharon Salter at sharonfsalter@gmail.com.
APPENDIX F

SECONDARY EDUCATOR SURVEY of DISABILITY RELATED KNOWLEDGE: ANSWERS
Secondary Educator Survey of Disability-Related Knowledge
Answers & Justification

Section I: Knowledge

1. **Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) a person is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she has any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, has a record of impairment, or is regarded as having impairment.** **YES**

Under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, an individual with a disability is a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity; (2) has a record or history of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment (Equal Opportunity Commission, 1991).

2. **A qualified person with a disability does not have to meet the same academic and technical standards required for admission to college as a qualified person without a disability.** **NO**

The Federal Register, Title 34 (as cited in Frank & Wade, 1993) defines a qualified person with a disability as one who meets the technical and academic standards for entry into school. Therefore, a student with a disability must meet all of the academic and nonacademic criteria for admission and continued enrollment in a school program. The courts’ interpretation of Section 504 does not require a school to lower its standards. It does require schools to provide reasonable accommodations that afford an equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

3. **Pre-admission inquiries as to whether a person has a disability are permissible.** **NO**

Preadmission inquiries as to whether a person has a disability are prohibited (Jarrow, 1991). In the case of Thomas M. Cooley Law School, the OCR found the institution in violation of Section 504 for asking applicants on its application form if they have mental illness and for asking why they took the LAST under special conditions (Kincaid & Simon, 1994). After a student is admitted, it is appropriate to ask for any information that may be pertinent to enrollment. A letter may be sent inviting a student to identify to the designated compliance officer or disability services office if the student needs some accommodation.

4. **Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by an institution of higher education.** **YES**
The Rehabilitation Act (1973), Section 504, Subpart E - Postsecondary Education, states that qualified persons with disabilities may not be denied, on the basis of their disability, access to any program or activity offered by an institution of higher education that receives federal assistance. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990), Title III extended this mandate to include private institutions. With the accessibility of postsecondary education programs, more than 800,000 students with disabilities were reported to be enrolled in higher education institutions in the 1992-1993 academic year (Facts in Brief, 1995).

5. Under both the ADA and Section 504 postsecondary settings must provide accommodations to students who received special education services under IDEA. NO

6. Students with disabilities receive an IEP (Individualized Education Program) in postsecondary settings. NO

7. Parents/guardians have the right to access information regarding their child’s disability accommodations in the postsecondary setting. NO

8. Students with disabilities are required to assume the responsibility for securing their accommodation(s). NO

The institution is required to provide reasonable accommodations for a student's known disability so that the student has an equal opportunity to participate in the school's courses, programs, or activities (Kincaid & Simon, 1994). The designated compliance officer or disability services office may provide accommodation or the instructor; but, ultimately it is the responsibility of the university. In the case of Mitchell College, CT (Kincaid, 1995, May) the court ruled that a college/university may not charge students for necessary accommodations.

9. A student with a disability must have a diagnostic evaluation that is less than three years old to be eligible for reasonable accommodations. YES

Although OCR has not made a specific ruling on this issue, it is generally accepted procedure to ascertain that appropriate academic accommodations can only be made on the current functioning level of the student. OCR was aware of that ruling at the University of Arizona and did not indicate that it was inappropriate (D. Perreira, personal communication, October 4, 1995). Boston University has indicated that it follows the three-year limit on documentation for learning disabilities and recently announced that currently enrolled students must keep their documentation updated (Lewin, 1996).

10. Student requests for accommodation must be granted when the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the program/course. NO
Academic requirements that the institution can show are essential to the student's course of study do not have to be modified/accommodated. In other words, the institution would not have to change a requirement if it could demonstrate that such a change would fundamentally alter the nature of the course. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission upheld Case Western Reserve University's refusal to accommodate a student because such accommodation would "unduly burden the school and require it to modify the essential nature of its program" (Kincaid, 1995, May). The case relied on federal law (Southeastern Community College v. Davis, 1979) in its decision that the student was not otherwise qualified with or without accommodation.

11. **Postsecondary personnel are required to offer a student with a disability accommodation even if the student does not request it.** NO

The student has the responsibility to self-identify to the designated compliance officer or disability services office, provide documentation of a disability and ask for accommodation before the institution is required to provide that accommodation. In the case of Salvador v. Bell the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) ruled in favor of Roosevelt University because the student had not self-identified and requested the necessary accommodation (Jarrow, 1991).

12. **The university may refuse to grant a student’s request for an accommodation that is not supported by the student’s documentation.** YES

In the case of Cumberland Community College, NJ, the OCR upheld a college's refusal to grant a student's request for an accommodation which was not specifically recommended in the student's documentation (Kincaid, 1995, September).

13. **The university must operate its programs so individuals with disabilities can have access to the greatest extent possible.** YES

Section 504 mandates that programs be accessible to students with disabilities. Wichita State University violated Section 504 by hiding a medallion in an inaccessible location. Students with mobility impairments could not participate in the contest (Kincaid & Simon, 1994). Section 504 also states that activities developed to be "separate but equal" are inappropriate unless they can be shown to be developed to meet the specific, unique needs of students with disabilities (Jarrow, 1991).

14. **Qualified individuals with disabilities must be given the option to participate in regular programs even where accommodations for special programs can be made.** YES

Participation in regular programs even where special accommodations have been made is an option of qualified individuals with disabilities (Jarrow, 1995).
15. According to both Section 504 and the ADA the college/university may establish reasonable rules of behavior to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment. **YES**

The Western Michigan University case reinforced the fact that the institution may establish reasonable rules of behavior to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment. The OCR agreed with the university's decision to suspend a student with paranoid schizophrenia from classes and prohibit her from entering campus. The university provided substantial evidence that the student had engaged in behavior which disrupted university activities and which was reasonably viewed as disturbing and threatening by students, faculty, and staff. The OCR found that the university made its decision to suspend the student on its observations of the student and the opinion of psychiatric professionals that the student could not currently abide by the student code of conduct. The university made it clear to the applicant that she would be permitted to seek enrollment when she provided medical documentation attesting to her emotional stability (Kincaid & Simon, 1994)

16. According to both Section 504 and the ADA colleges and universities are to modify course goals, objectives, assignments and exams for students with disabilities. **NO**

Academic requirements that the institution can show are essential to the student's course of study do not have to be modified/accommodated. In other words, the institution would not have to change a requirement if it could demonstrate that such a change would fundamentally alter the nature of the course. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission upheld Case Western Reserve University's refusal to accommodate a student because such accommodation would "unduly burden the school and require it to modify the essential nature of its program" (Kincaid, 1995, May). The case relied on federal law (Southeastern Community College v. Davis, 1979) in its decision that the student was not otherwise qualified with or without accommodation.

17. The provision of a personal attendant for a student with a disability is the responsibility of the institution. **NO**

The university is not required to provide personal services such as attendant care, or personal aids such as wheelchairs or eyeglasses (Heyward, 1993).

18. A student with a disability is entitled to have more than one housing option presented if options exist for students who are not disabled. **YES**

Section 504 specifies that university housing be available in sufficient quantity and variety so that the options for living accommodations available to students with disabilities, as a whole, are comparable to those available to nondisabled students (Jarrow, 1991).
19. A student with a disability who needs attendant care can be automatically assigned to a single room. **NO**

In the Coleman C. Zatechka case, the OCR found the University of Nebraska in violation of Section 504 and the ADA by refusing to allow a student who needed attendant care to participate in the roommate assignment program. The student was an "otherwise qualified" person with a disability because she met the essential academic and nonacademic criteria: admission to the university and submission of housing application (Kincaid, 1993, November).

20. Colleges and universities must provide comparable opportunities for intercollegiate activities to students with and without disabilities. **YES**

Section 504 specifically states that institutions must provide equal opportunities for students with disabilities in intercollegiate activities (Jarrow, 1991).

21. A program or classroom’s location should be changed to provide accessibility for a student with a mobility disability. **YES**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) mandates that programs be accessible to students with disabilities. The institution does not need to make every classroom accessible but must allow the participation of students with disabilities when "viewed in its entirety." Therefore, the institution may choose to move a class to an accessible location without making every campus building accessible (West et al., 1993).

22. A student with a speech disorder must be offered an alternate assignment to presenting an oral report if identified as a needed accommodation. **YES**

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), the institution must operate its programs in such a way that students with disabilities are not excluded on the basis of their disability. The institution must make modifications to academic requirements to ensure that they do not have the effect of discriminating against a student solely on the basis of disability.

23. If a student with a visual disability is enrolled in a course, the college/university must provide all the written materials for the course in the alternate format requested by the student. **YES**

In the case of Los Rios Community College, CA, the OCR stated that postsecondary institutions should be prepared to make printed materials available in a reasonable and timely manner to students with visual impairments in all three mediums: auditory, tactile (Braille) and enlarged print. The institution may not refuse to provide access through a particular medium such as Braille. In addition, examinations and handouts must be made available to students on the same day they are distributed to nondisabled students (Kincaid, 1974, September).
24. If a student has a documented disability that affects writing, the instructor might be expected to provide the student with an oral test. YES

The Rehabilitation Act (1973), Section 504 lists accommodations to testing to include readers, scribes, separate proctored settings and the use of adaptive equipment. Although the disability services office may provide these accommodations, the instructor and then the university is ultimately responsible to see that the student has necessary accommodation.

25. Postsecondary faculty and staff who work directly with a student have the right to access diagnostic information regarding that student’s disability. NO

Faculty do not have the right to access the student's diagnostic information (Jarrow, 1991). The Department of Education follows the rules of confidentiality that are described in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973). A number of court cases as well as OCR findings have further defined Section 503 as the standard for compliance. According to the rules of confidentiality, faculty and staff members need only know the accommodations that are necessary to guarantee an equal opportunity for the student.

26. If a student’s disability documentation specifically recommends a quiet testing area with no distractions, the instructor must allow the student to take an exam in a room different from the classroom with a proctor. YES

The Rehabilitation Act (1973), Section 504 specifically calls for the accommodation in testing of a separate proctored setting if the student's documentation specifically recommends this. This mandate was tested in the case of Weintraub v. Board of Bar Examiners and separate private room accommodations for resting was upheld (Latham, 1995).

27. A student with a documented disability in math processing may use a standard four-function calculator on a math test. YES

No specific OCR rulings have been made at this time. However, existing policy/practice would indicate that a standard four function calculator is a reasonable accommodation for a student with a disability in the area of math processing (J.E. Jarrow, personal communication, April 2, 1996).

28. A college/university must utilize a grievance procedure that includes a grade change if appropriate disability-related accommodations were not provided. YES

The OCR ruled that Solano Community College violated a student's rights when a grade did not reflect the student's skills because no reasonable accommodations were provided. The school had to establish a grievance procedure that included a grade change if warranted (Kincaid, 1996, January).
29. A reasonable accommodation for a student with a learning disability might be to copy the notes of another student(s) in the class. **YES**

The Rehabilitation Act (1973) and Title II of the ADA (1990) mandate equal access and accommodation such as a note taker at no cost to the student. If such an accommodation can be made by accessing another student's notes and/or tape recording the lecture, this may be an acceptable accommodation and avoid additional cost.

30. An individual faculty or staff member who fails to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability may be held personally liable. **YES**

In the case of Dinsmore v. University of California at Berkeley, a professor refused to allow extended time on math tests to a student with a learning disability whose documentation specified the need for that accommodation. The professor maintained that giving the student extended time provided an unfair advantage. The Office for Disability Services and the university's administrators supported the student's request. However, the professor still refused to allow the accommodation. The OCR found the institution violated Section 504 and ordered the university to establish necessary procedures to ensure that not student would be denied necessary accommodation for equal access. OCR held the institution responsible. The student filed a civil suit against the professor for abridgement of civil rights and the court accepted the case. The case was settled out of court for an unspecified amount. This case signaled that a faculty or staff member could be held liable if his/her behavior denied a student necessary accommodation (Jarrow, 1992).

According to Section 504, students could only file a complaint with federal agencies to investigate a charge of discrimination. Under the ADA (1990) students may sue the institution if they believe they have been denied their right to equal access (Jaschikk, 1993).

31. The instructor’s academic freedom permits the instructor to decide if he/she will provide special aids and services for students with disabilities in the classroom. **NO**

The individual faculty member's academic freedom cannot supersede the rights of a student with a disability for the provisions of documented accommodations (Jarrow, 1991).
APPENDIX G

IRB APPROVALS

RECRUITMENT FLYER
From: "Seisler, Andrea" <ars17@psu.edu>
Date: May 5, 2008 9:53:23 AM EDT
To: "Sharon F. Salter" <sfs14@scasd.org>
Subject: IRB# 27634 - Secondary Educator Knowledge of Disability Legislation and its Relationship to Planning for the Transition from Secondary to Postsecondary Education Settings

Sharon,

Please use the attached recruitment invitation email (page 2 of recruitment document sent with the 5/3/08 email). Since the web or email is being used, the study cannot be considered 'anonymous'. Computer IP addresses can be linked back to the participant. The word 'anonymous' has been changed to 'confidential' in paragraph 4 Sentence 2.

Your approval letter is below.

Thanks,
Andrea

Hi Sharon,

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has reviewed the modification for the above referenced study. This request does not change the exemption status and this study continues to be exempt from IRB review. You may continue with your research.

MODIFICATION REVIEW CATEGORY:
Category 2: Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (ii) any disclosure of the human participants’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants’ financial standing, employability, or reputation. [45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)]

COMMENT: Approval of the April 28, 2008 email has been granted.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

Include your IRB number in any correspondence to the ORP.
The principal investigator is responsible for determining and adhering to additional requirements established by any outside sponsors/funding sources.

Record Keeping
The principal investigator is expected to maintain the original signed informed consent forms, if applicable, along with the research records for at least three (3) years after termination of the study.
This will be the only correspondence you will receive from our office regarding this modification determination.

**MAINTAIN A COPY OF THIS EMAIL FOR YOUR RECORDS.**

**Consent Document(s)**
The exempt consent form(s) will no longer be stamped with the approval/expiration dates. The most recent consent form(s) that you sent in for review is the one that you are expected to use.

**Follow-Up**
The Office for Research Protections will contact you in three (3) years to inquire if this study will be on-going.
If the study is completed within the three year period, the principal investigator may complete and submit a **Project Close-Out Report**. (http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/areas/humans/applications/closeout.rtf)

**Revisions/Modifications**
Any changes or modifications to the study must be submitted to the Office for Research Protections on the **Modification Request Form - Exemption** available on our website: http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/areas/humans/applications/modrequest.rtf

**Modifications will not be accepted unless the Modification Request Form is included with the submission.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
Andrea

Andrea R. Seisler, MBE
Compliance Coordinator
Office for Research Protections
The Pennsylvania State University
201 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802
Telephone: 814-865-1775
Fax: 814-863-8699
http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/
Hi Sharon,

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has reviewed the modification for the above referenced study. This request does not change the exemption status and this study continues to be exempt from IRB review. You may continue with your research.

**MODIFICATION REVIEW CATEGORY:**

**Category 2:** Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (ii) any disclosure of the human participants’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants’ financial standing, employability, or reputation. [45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)]

**COMMENT:** Approval of the July 21, 2008 email has been granted. Approval includes the addition of a recruitment flyer to be distributed at the PA Wide Transition Conference.

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**

Include your IRB number in any correspondence to the ORP. The principal investigator is responsible for determining and adhering to additional requirements established by any outside sponsors/funding sources.

**Record Keeping**

The principal investigator is expected to maintain the original signed informed consent forms, if applicable, along with the research records for at least three (3) years after termination of the study. This will be the only correspondence you will receive from our office regarding this modification determination.

**MAINTAIN A COPY OF THIS EMAIL FOR YOUR RECORDS.**

**Consent Document(s)**

The exempt consent form(s) will no longer be stamped with the approval/expiration dates. The most recent consent form(s) that you sent in for review is the one that you are expected to use.

**Follow-Up**

The Office for Research Protections will contact you in three (3) years to inquire if this study will be on-going. If the study is completed within the three-year period, the principal investigator may complete and submit a Project Close-Out Report.
Revisions/Modifications

Any changes or modifications to the study must be submitted to the Office for Research Protections on the Modification Request Form - Exemption available on our website: http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/areas/humans/applications/modrequest.rtf

Modifications will not be accepted unless the Modification Request Form is included with the submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you,

Laura S. Young
The Pennsylvania State University
Office for Research Protections
201 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802
Phone: (814) 863-1459
Fax: (814) 863-8699
www.research.psu.edu/orp
ARE YOU A SECONDARY EDUCATOR? YOU’RE INVITED!

You’re invited to participate in an important research study regarding secondary educators’ knowledge of federal legislation governing the transition of students with disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education. I am seeking participants who are secondary educators (regular education teachers, special education teachers, guidance counselors, principals/assistant principals, etc.) in the state of Pennsylvania. This study is part of my doctoral research at the Pennsylvania State University. In my current position as the Assistant Director of Special Education for the State College Area School District, I am generally very pleased with the transition planning done for students with more complicated and severe exceptionalities. Unfortunately, I don't see the same level of interventions for students with the transition outcome of attending a postsecondary education setting. I hope to find out “why”.

Participation in this research study involves completion of a brief online survey titled *Secondary Educator Survey of Disability Related Knowledge* that will take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete. The survey can be accessed by entering the following link into your browser -


Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you choose to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty; simply exit the online survey and your survey will be deleted.

Submission of the survey accessed from the above link will be considered your consent to participate. Your responses will remain confidential. Upon completion of the survey, you may request the answers and legal justification for each answer.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your rights as a research subject, please feel free to contact me via email at sharonfsalter@gmail.com. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan Faircloth via email at scf2@psu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request. I appreciate your time and your willingness to help me explore the transition of students with disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education settings.

Sincerely,

Sharon F. Salter
Doctoral Candidate, Penn State University
517 Royal Road
State College, PA 16801
(814) 237-6883
sfs8@psu.edu or sharonfsalter@gmail.com
APPENDIX H

EMAILS TO PARTICIPANTS
Dear Secondary Educator!

Coming soon to your email IN box! An invitation to participate in an online survey that will explore your knowledge of disability legislation and its impact on students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings! Once you get the email invitation, I hope you’ll take 20-30 minutes to complete the survey. This survey is part of my doctoral research at Penn State University.

Thanks in advance! Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

Sharon Salter
Doctoral Candidate
Penn State University
(814) 236-6883
sfs8@psu.edu or
sharonfsalter@gmail.com
Dear Secondary Educator:

I am writing to invite you to participate in an important study regarding secondary educators’ knowledge of federal legislation governing the transition of students with disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a secondary educator in the state of Pennsylvania. This study is part of my doctoral research at the Pennsylvania State University. In my current position as the Assistant Director of Special Education for the State College Area School District, I am generally very pleased with the transition planning done for students with more complicated and severe exceptionalities. Unfortunately, I don't see the same level of interventions for students with the transition outcome of attending a postsecondary education setting. I hope to find out “why”.

Participation in this study involves completion of a brief online survey. The survey can be accessed by clicking the following link, or by copying the url into your browser.


Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you choose to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty; simply exit the online survey and your survey will be deleted. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with your participation in this study.

Submission of the survey accessed from the above link will be considered your consent to participate. Your responses will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your rights as a research subject, please feel free to contact me at (814) 237-6883 or via email at <sharonfsalter@gmail.com>. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan Faircloth at (814) 863-3775 or via email at <scf2@psu.edu>.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request. I appreciate your time and your willingness to help me explore the transition of students with disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education settings.

Sincerely,

Sharon F. Salter
Doctoral Candidate
Penn State University
(814) 237-6883
sfs8@psu.edu or
sharonfsalter@gmail.com
EMAIL SENT 6/16/08 AND 9/6/08

Dear Secondary Educator,

On 6/14/08, you received an email inviting you to participate in an online survey regarding secondary educators’ knowledge of federal legislation governing the transition of students with disabilities from secondary to postsecondary education.

I hope you’ll take approximately 30 minutes to complete this survey. I need your input!

The survey can be accessed by clicking the following link, or by copying the url into your browser.


Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you choose to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty; simply exit the online survey and your survey will be deleted. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with your participation in this study.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your rights as a research subject, please feel free to contact me at (814) 237-6883 or via email at <sharonfsalter@gmail.com>. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan Faircloth at (814) 863-3775 or via email at <scf2@psu.edu>.

I appreciate and value your time. Thanks so much for taking the survey.

Sincerely,

Sharon F. Salter
Doctoral Candidate
Penn State University
(814) 237-6883
sfs8@psu.edu or
sharonfsalter@gmail.com
YOU’RE INVITED!

Please remember to participate in the online survey for secondary educators in Pennsylvania. The title of this survey is *Secondary Educator Survey of Disability-Related Knowledge*. The survey is available online at


Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you choose to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty; simply exit the online survey and your survey will be deleted. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with your participation in this study.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your rights as a research subject, please feel free to contact me at (814) 237-6883 or via email at <sharonfsalter@gmail.com>. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan Faircloth at (814) 863-3775 or via email at <scf2@psu.edu>.

Thanks for all you do for secondary level students in Pennsylvania!

Sincerely,

Sharon F. Salter
Doctoral Candidate
Penn State University
(814) 237-6883
sfs8@psu.edu or
sharonfsalter@gmail.com
EMAIL SENT 7/2/08 AND 9/22/08

Thank you to all of you who have completed the online survey titled Secondary Educator Survey of Disability-Related Knowledge. Your input is vital to the success of this study. If you have not already completed the survey, I would like to encourage you to do so. This is the opportunity to complete the survey as data collection will be ending on [insert date]. The survey is available online at


Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you choose to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty; simply exit the online survey and your survey will be deleted. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with your participation in this study.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your rights as a research subject, please feel free to contact me at (814) 237-6883 or via email at <sharonfsalter@gmail.com>. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Susan Faircloth at (814) 863-3775 or via email at <scf2@psu.edu>.

Thanks for responding to this request! I really appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Sharon F. Salter
Doctoral Candidate
Penn State University
(814) 237-6883
sfs8@psu.edu or sharonfsalter@gmail.com
APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT
Statement of Informed Consent for Social Science Research  
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Secondary Educator Knowledge of Disability Legislation and its Relationship to Planning for the Transition from Secondary to Postsecondary Education Settings

Principal Investigator: Sharon F. Salter, Doctoral Candidate  
Suite 300 Rackley Building, University Park, PA 16801 814-237-6883; E-mail: sfs8@psu.edu

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to examine the knowledge base of secondary educators related to disability legislation and how the implementation of those laws changes from secondary to postsecondary education setting. Additional information will be gathered regarding their perceived competency related to their knowledge.

Procedures: This online survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. If you prefer to complete the survey by pen and paper, let us know (sfs8@psu.edu or scf2@psu.edu) and we will be happy to mail the survey to you.

Potential Benefits of Participating in this Study:  
The results of this study will assist participants in better understanding disability legislation as it is implemented in postsecondary education settings and therefore assisting them in transition planning. In addition, recommendations for future training will be made.

Statement of Confidentiality: Information obtained will remain confidential. No personal identifiers will be obtained. Access to survey data will be limited to project investigators. Data from the completed surveys will be maintained on a secure computer server. In the event that the results of this study are presented or published, all information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, schools, school districts and communities cannot be identified. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used; however, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Duration of Study: Each participant will complete one survey. Completion time is estimated at one 30 minute session.

This section describes your rights and responsibilities as a research participant:

You may ask questions about the research procedures, and these questions will be answered. Questions should be directed to Sharon Salter, Principal Investigator (sfs8@psu.edu; 814-237-6883) or Susan C. Faircloth, Faculty Advisor (scf2@psu.edu; 814-863-3775). You may also contact Penn State’s Office of Human Research Protections at (814) 863-1459.
Your participation is voluntary. You are free to stop participating in this study at any time. You do not have to answer questions you do not wish to answer. You do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so.

This section indicates that you are giving informed consent to participate in this study:

You agree to participate in a study of Secondary Educator Knowledge of Disability Legislation and its Relationship to Planning for the Transition from Secondary to Postsecondary Education Settings. This study is being conducted by Sharon F. Salter, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Administration.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study.

Completion and submission of the survey is considered implied consent to participate in this study. Please print a copy of this form for your records.
APPENDIX J

LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT
November 27, 2007

Dear Ms. Salter,

Thank you for soliciting my opinion on your dissertation topic. I believe that results of the research you propose will be a valuable contribution to the transition of secondary students with disabilities to higher education.

Your topic, “Secondary Educator Knowledge of Disability Legislation and its Relationship to Planning for the Transition from Secondary to Post-Secondary Education Settings” and findings would be of great interest to the Pennsylvania Chapter of Career Development and Transition.

There is very little research related to the knowledge competencies of professionals in transition planning, as well as a lack of clarity regarding the laws and how they differ and ultimately change upon graduation.

I highly encourage and support your proposed research. If I can be of any assistance to you during this time, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Deitmen, Ed.D.
President, Pennsylvania Chapter of Career Development and Transition
VITA

Sharon Finkle Salter

Educational History

2009  Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration  
The Pennsylvania State University

1986  Specialist in Education: Mid-Management Certification  
Texas Tech University

1979  Master of Art in Education – Guidance and Counseling Psychology  
Ball State University

1978  Bachelor of Science in Deaf Education  
Ball State University

Employment Record

Assistant Director of Special Education, State College Area School District, State  
College, PA  
2000 - present

Project Coordinator, Special Education and Rehabilitation Services Programs, The  
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA  
1997 - 2000

Adult Basic Education Instructor, Central Intermediate Unit 10, Adult Development  
Centre, Pleasant Gap, PA  
Fall, 1997

Supervisor for Mental Health Services and Serious Emotional Disturbance Programs,  
Columbus Public Schools, Columbus, OH  
1991 – 1997

Principalship – Education Director, St. Vincent Children’s Center, Columbus, OH  
1986 – 1991

Speech Advisor/ Teacher of the Deaf & Hearing Impaired, Lubbock Independent School  
District, Lubbock, TX  
1983 – 1986

Teacher of the Deaf & Hearing Impaired, Board of Cooperative Educational Services,  
Watertown, NY  
1981 – 1983

Teacher of the Deaf & Hearing Impaired, Rehabilitation Services, Inc., Binghamton, NY  
1979 - 1981