

Special Education Directors' Perceptions of the Adequacy of and Additional Coursework Needed in Their Graduate School Programs

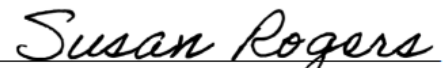
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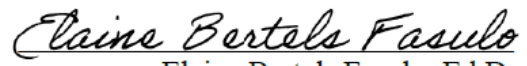
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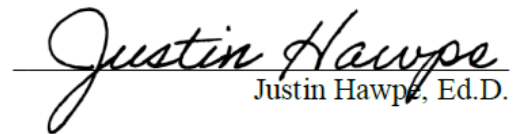


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Abstract

This study was developed to explore Kansas special education directors' perceptions of their graduate program coursework. Special education directors in Kansas provided information about whether they perceived they were taught skills from the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Advanced Specialty Set: Special Education Administration Specialist during their graduate coursework. Additionally, special education directors' in Kansas perceptions were gained to understand what additional CEC skills should be taught during the graduate coursework. The study was also developed to understand differences in the special education directors' perceptions based on the type of license endorsement (special education director, special education coordinator/supervisor, or district level license endorsement) held by the special education director. The population for this study included all special education directors, including executive directors and assistant directors, in Kansas during the 2020-2021 school year. The online survey was sent to 130 special education directors in Kansas, and 46 special education directors responded to the online survey. The findings from the study indicate that of the 26 CEC (2015) skills, special education directors in Kansas agree that 12 of the CEC skills were taught in graduate school coursework, two of the CEC skills were not taught in graduate school coursework, and did not agree or disagree that 12 of the CEC skills were taught in graduate school coursework. Additionally, special education directors in Kansas perceive that additional coursework is needed in graduate programs to prepare directors for all 26 CEC skills. Finally, the study's findings provide clear evidence that special education directors perceptions about whether their graduate program taught the necessary skills or whether additional coursework is needed

in graduate school coursework are not dependent on the type of licensure endorsement (director of special education, district-level endorsement, or another licensure endorsement) held by the special education director. The results of the current study could be used to help state licensure departments determine what courses should be required for directors of special education. Additional research studies could be conducted to provide information about whether the licensure endorsement held by the special education impacts the special education directors' perceptions of their graduate coursework. Recommendations for additional research studies include a qualitative study or a study comparing special education directors' perceptions of skills needed depending on the size and type of their employing local education agency (LEA).

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who supported me on this journey.

I would also like to dedicate this to my children Carter and Alexis Persinger.

Whatever life holds for you, know you are supported and loved.

Acknowledgements

I want to give my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all of my family who supported my journey of completing the doctoral program and in writing this dissertation.

Additionally, to Dr. Karen Kuhn and Dr. Christy Skelton, thank you for encouraging me to continue to grow professionally. I consider both of you mentors, providing me the necessary guidance and knowledge as I started my leadership career in special education. If it were not for both of you, I would not have started down this road.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

While the role of a special education director has been said to be ambiguous (Whitworth, 1979), the multitude of responsibilities and challenges being addressed on a day-to-day basis by special education administrators hinges on effective leadership and the ability to extract information from a set of competencies (Marrett, 2008). Special education directors need to prepare for this multi-faceted, complex position to carry out the roles and responsibilities on behalf of children. Mason (1999) said it best when describing the necessity for a skilled special education director, as the field of special education is expected to continue evolving during the millennium and become increasingly challenging: “It will be imperative that administrators of special education programs be well versed and knowledgeable” (p. 4). Special education directors must be resilient to manage their assigned roles and responsibilities as they “must demonstrate educational leadership skills, such as working collaboratively and creatively, and sustain personal motivation as they strive to discover effective methods to improve outcomes for students and uphold local, state, and federal mandates” (Diggs, 2016, p. 8). Due to each school district’s uniqueness, size, and individual need, there may be a difference in perceptions regarding preparation for the position based on the specific responsibilities of the particular position and the special education director’s experience. “While some states have been quite rigorous, clearly defining competencies and expectations for special education administrators, many states remain vague, with no such definitions or guidelines” (Boscardin, Weir, & Kusek, 2010, p. 61).

In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), also known as Public Law 94-142, was passed and guaranteed each student with a disability receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) (U.S. Department of Education & Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2010). With the enactment of this law and the mandates made for local education agencies (LEAs), it became crucial for LEAs across the United States to provide supervision for special education programming. During this critical time, researchers began to impart information on the necessary competencies required to guide pre-training programs on the required competencies for special education directors (Mason, 1999). In 1979, Whitworth and Hatley studied state certification of special education administrators and found an increase from 12 to 30 states who implemented standards for special education administration from 1970 to 1979. Whitworth and Hatley (1979) stated, “Present certification standards bear witness to the conviction that specially trained and qualified personnel must assume the leadership reins if the promise of special education is to be realized” (p. 304).

Each amendment to EAHCA added rights and increased services for students with disabilities, changing special education directors’ roles. Over time, the roles and responsibilities for special education directors began to include “terms such as instructional leadership, equitable access, and success for all students” (Crockett, Becker, & Quinn, 2009, p. 55). Although Whitworth and Hatley (1979) discussed how university programs are primarily affected by the state standards developed for special education administrators and impact the quality of special education programs for students with disabilities, “over the last two decades there has been a marked evolution in the development of professional standards and their implementation in response to the

various iterations of education reform” (Boscardin & Lashley, 2019, p. 39). Furthermore, reforms in education by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) increased the accountability for those who lead special education programs and outcomes for students with disabilities (Boscardin & Lashley, 2019). With increased accountability and the evolution in leadership standards for special education directors, “There is a body of knowledge that supports the disciplinary work of administrators of special education” (Boscardin & Lashley, 2019, p. 53).

Background

According to Eisenbach (1960),

The education of exceptional children in the state of Kansas became a reality with the enactment of legislation which defined the exceptional child, created a state division of special education, and prescribed the duties and powers of that division and its director. (p. 2)

Beginning in 1951, school districts in Kansas began providing special classes and ancillary services for exceptional children. The number of teachers needed for these classes rose from 19 to 126 in just five years (Eisenbach, 1960). While Kansas laws made it the state’s responsibility to educate all students, including exceptional children, it was not until 1975 that the EAHCA of 1975 was signed. The EAHCA required all states to provide FAPE to students with disabilities, prepare plans for identification, evaluation, and placement that comply with state laws, write individualized education programs (IEPs) with the appropriate participants, consider the least restrictive environment (LRE) for each student, and implement processes for parents to disagree with identification, evaluation, or placement (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2010).

From 1975 to 2020, the number of students served in special education grew exponentially in Kansas. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE, 2019a), *Kansas Report Card 2017-2018*, indicated that of 486,649 students enrolled in Kansas schools, 71,732 were students with disabilities. With nearly 15% of students with disabilities in Kansas schools, special education directors are an integral part of the educational system (KSDE, 2019a). Special education directors are responsible for leading the efforts to assure identified students' rights are protected under the IDEA. While the special education director position is critical to the education of students with disabilities, not all special education director positions across Kansas assume the same responsibilities (director of special education, personal communication, September 9, 2020).

The special education director's roles and responsibilities may differ depending on the educational organization's type and size. The provision of special education in Kansas is delivered in one of two ways (Legislative Division of Post Audit State of Kansas, 2018). A school district can either provide the services through its school district under the jurisdiction of its board of education (BOE) or join other school districts to provide special education through a cooperative or interlocal (Legislative Division of Post Audit State of Kansas, 2018). According to the Legislative Division of Post Audit State of Kansas (2018), "a cooperative is administered by a member district, while an interlocal is managed by a separate, independent entity consisting of one or more board members from each participating district" (p. 4). Each LEA and BOE determines what special education administration positions are hired and assigns the associated duties and

responsibilities accordingly. Position title and assignment duties and responsibilities determine what license is required for the position.

From 1988 to 2020, the endorsement required to be employed as a special education director by KSDE changed. According to Certificate Regulations (1988), Each applicant for endorsement as a director of special education shall have completed: (1) a state-approved director of special education program; (2) a state-approved program in a special education subject area; (3) a state-approved district school administrator program; and (4) (A) a state-approved building administrator program, including two years teaching experience; or (B) a state-approved special education supervisor/coordinator program, including two years teaching experience in a recognized special education area. In addition, each applicant for endorsement as a director of special education shall be recommended by a teacher education institution. (p. 518)

Additionally, the approved college or university program of study allows the opportunity for the candidate for licensure to learn how to “develop a written comprehensive plan for the provision of special education and related services; and perform special education and related services program administrative operations in a supervised practicum placement” (Certificate Regulations, 1988).

In 2003, the new regulations for special education director licensure endorsement went into effect. According to those regulations, special education director’s licensure endorsement is approved by KSDE once verification of the completion of an approved graduate-level building leadership program with a 3.25 cumulative grade-point average; completion of a school leadership assessment with a passing score; and verification of

five years of certified experience while holding an approved certificate (Educator Licensure Regulation, 2000). The *Licensed Personnel Guide* provides information about licensure endorsement requirements for special education directors and assistant directors (KSDE, 2020b). While special education directors must hold a district leadership or director of special education licensure endorsement, assistant directors of special education are not required to hold a district-leadership licensure endorsement. According to the *Licensed Personnel Guide*, assistant directors of special education could be assigned a district-level position with any of the following: district leadership, supervisor of special education, director of special education, program leadership in special education, or a combination of building leadership with a special education endorsement (KSDE, 2020b). Although new regulations went into effect in 2003 and changed the requirements for a special education district-level administrator, there is a particular skill set needed for a special education director to be effective as a district-level leader (Marrett, 2008). According to Milligan, Neal, and Singleton (2012), “effective leadership does not happen by accident” (p. 179).

Researchers have indicated several specific job-related tasks directly linked to the required knowledge and skills associated with IDEA and providing FAPE to students with disabilities (Fan, Gallup, Bocanegra, Wu, & Zhang, 2019; Marrett, 2008; Mason, 1999; Thompson & O’Brian, 2007). “Special education administrators are frequently viewed by colleagues and parents as experts in implementing policies and effective practices” (Crockett et al., 2009, p. 66). A standard was set in 2002 by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that teachers must be deemed highly qualified (Klein, 2015). According to the USDOE (2004), “To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have: a

bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensures, and prove they know each subject they teach" (para. 14). If teachers are required to know the specific content they teach, highly qualified status should also apply to administrators supervising general and special education. Regardless of the licensure requirements, the knowledge and skills special education directors must have to carry out the district-level responsibilities are specific to their field of administration. According to Mason (1999), "persons who assume leadership positions in this field should have appropriate academic and field experiences to prepare them for the rigors of the position" (p. 4). Crockett et al. (2009) reviewed the knowledge base of special education administration from 1970-2009. In this review, the outcome was clear that the preponderance of data did not provide the guidance needed to understand the entire skillset and knowledge necessary for today's special education directors nor the impact of the licensure requirements (Crockett et al., 2009).

While the conclusion of the aforementioned study provides inconclusive data regarding the requisite knowledge and skills for a special education director, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) provides an advanced specialty set of standards for special education administration. Currently known as "THE source for information, resources, and professional development for special educators" and the largest international advocacy organization for students with exceptionalities, this professional association strives to advance students with exceptionalities, finding them success (CEC, 2020a, para. 1a). CEC works to meet its mission through advocacy, standard development, and professional development (CEC, 2020a). CEC's specialty set for special education administration can support universities in training special education directors in the preparation of their assigned roles (CEC, 2020b). The Advanced

Specialty Set: Special Education Administration Specialist standards can be found in Appendix A.

Statement of the Problem

As of 2003, the special education director licensure requirements changed from KSDE requiring a special education supervisor, coordinator, or director of special education endorsement to KSDE requiring a district-level leadership licensure endorsement (Educator Licensure Regulation, 2000). Several accredited universities in Kansas offering district-level licensure programs provide one course in administration and supervision of special programs (Emporia State University, 2019; Newman University, n.d.; Wichita State University, 2018). While this course provides some information needed to lead special education programs, federal and state laws add a layer to the multi-faceted work of a special education director. The responsibility rests with universities to ensure special education directors are prepared to administer programs to support students with disabilities and require organized and systematic programs (Milligan et al., 2012). According to Thompson and O'Brian (2007), pertinent functions of special education directors include applying laws, regulations, and policies related to IDEA; understanding fiscal policies that apply to special education services; and providing professional development for improved student outcomes. One course might not be sufficient to address all these skill areas. Little evidence has shown whether the required district-level licensure endorsement and graduate program coursework in Kansas ensure district-level leaders, who supervise special education, perceive they have acquired the skills necessary to complete the assigned duties as a special education director and whether they perceive extra coursework is needed. Limited research exists

about the perceptions of special education directors in Kansas; this study can contribute and strengthen the literature as a similar study was conducted in Missouri. According to Colhour (2016),

Replication of the study in other states would further the research by providing additional data about perceptions of special education directors regarding what is necessary knowledge to be successful, and if what they learned was from completion of graduate work, or from work experience on the job. (p. 94)

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration to complete the duties and responsibilities related to district level positions. The second purpose of this study was to determine the extent the perceptions of the special education directors regarding the degree their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration differ by licensure. The third purpose of this study was to determine the extent special education directors in Kansas perceive that additional coursework is needed in graduate programs to prepare for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes. The final purpose of this study was to determine the extent the perceptions of the special

education directors regarding the need for additional coursework for the areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes differ by licensure.

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study may contribute to the field of special education in several areas. First, the results of the data analysis may inform KSDE as to whether the current licensure requirements meet the perceived needs of Kansas' special education directors. Second, the analysis of the data gathered from the participants in the study may provide universities the necessary information needed to develop educational preparation programs aligned with the skills and knowledge required to carry out the duties of a special education director. Third, special education directors may find the data useful in determining the skills and knowledge they lack to carry out the duties of their positions. Finally, employing agencies can utilize the data to understand how to support current and future special education directors through professional development.

Delimitations

“Delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 134). The delimitations for this study included the following:

1. The participants were employed in a public education agency in Kansas.
2. The participants were either directors or assistant directors of special education. Participants did not include coordinators who supervise special education programs.

3. The participants were contacted via email and provided a link to an online survey to complete voluntarily.
4. The data was collected during the fall semester of the 2020-2021 school year.

Assumptions

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “Delineation of assumptions provides a basis for formulating research questions or stating hypotheses and for interpreting data resulting from the study; and assumptions provide meaning to the conclusions and lend support to the recommendations” (p. 135). Assumptions made for this study were primarily focused on the participants.

1. The participants held either the position of director or assistant director of special education in a public education agency in Kansas.
2. The participants understood the items and the purpose of the survey.
3. The participants were honest while responding to the items posed in the survey.

Research Questions

“In quantitative studies, investigators use quantitative research questions and hypotheses, and sometimes objectives, to shape and specifically focus the purpose of the study” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 136). This study was focused on four research questions to understand perceptions of special education directors about whether their graduate programs provided the necessary skills or whether additional coursework is needed to carry out the duties of their district-level position.

RQ1. To what extent do special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content

knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for the special education directors to complete the duties and responsibilities related to district level positions?

RQ2. To what extent do the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration differ by licensure?

RQ3. To what extent do special education directors in Kansas perceive that additional coursework is needed in graduate programs to prepare for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes?

RQ4. To what extent do the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the need for additional coursework for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes differ by licensure?

Definition of Terms

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the definition of terms aids the reader in understanding the term in the context of the study. Definitions in this section provide an understanding of how the key terms are used within the context of this study.

Assistive technology. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2017a), assistive technology is defined as “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability” (para. 1).

Continuum of services. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2017b), the continuum of services consists of “instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions; and make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction) to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement” (para. 2).

Graduate program. According to the Certificate Regulations (1988), a graduate program is a course of study beyond a bachelor’s degree and usually leads to a master’s, specialist, or doctoral degree that will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to serve as a special education director.

Individuals with exceptionalities. According to the Kansas Special Education for Exceptional Children Act (2019),

Exceptional children means persons who are children with disabilities or gifted children and are school age, to be determined in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the state board, which age may differ from the ages of children required to attend school under the provisions of K.S.A. 72-1111, and amendments thereto. (defn. g)

Licensure. According to the Definition of terms (2009), “licensure means the granting of access to practice teaching, administration, or school services in Kansas public schools” (defn. o).

Special education director. Throughout this study, the term special education director refers to either the director, assistant director, or executive director of special education hired through a district, a cooperative, or an interlocal. However, in the literature, researchers often refer to special education administrators and special education coordinators. Therefore, those titles are also used within those contexts.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 was the introduction to the study, which included the background, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, delimitations, the assumptions, the research questions, and the definitions of terms. Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature, including the history of special education, advocacy organizations, and the perceptions about special education directors. Chapter 3 includes an explanation of the methodology of the study, including the research design, selection of participants, the measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis, and hypothesis testing, and limitations of the study. In Chapter 4, the descriptive statistics and the results of the hypothesis testing are provided. In Chapter 5, the study summary, findings related to the literature, and the conclusions are presented.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The knowledge and skills needed to perform the assigned duties of a special education director are as unique as each of the districts in which a special education director works. The roles and responsibilities of the special education director may differ depending on the characteristics of the district, such as size, socioeconomic status, and diversity. Isaac, Starrett, and Marshall (2016) stated, “Special education administrators have a diverse and complex role in overseeing the individualized educational programs for students with disabilities” (p. 53). Although, Boscardin, Mainzer, and Kealy (2011) said, “The preparation, licensure, and availability of special education administrators have been dominated by the assumptions, practices, and knowledge traditions of the discipline of special education, resulting in narrowly focused but insufficient preparation for today's needs” (p. 72) there continue to be vital functions directly related to the discipline of special education administration. Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of special education, including IDEA reauthorizations and amendments, which presents information pertinent for special education directors to understand their district-level position. Additionally, the chapter provides a foundational understanding of the importance of advocacy agencies and outlines several organizations that benefit students with disabilities and provide resources for teachers and leaders of special education. Finally, a review and analysis of the literature about the role expectations of special education directors will be presented and include perceptions about licensing, competencies, training, and superintendent perceptions about the role of special education director.

History of Special Education

From 1870 to 2020, the terms used to identify students with disabilities and the locations where the students are served have significantly changed. Terms used in a school environment help service providers understand the individual needs of each student. Osgood (2006) explained how terms such as “cretinism,” “idiocy,” “feeble-mindedness,” “moral imbeciles,” and “incorrigibles,” just to name a few, were used in the 1800s depicting students who, at that time, were “treated” by medical professionals in “asylums.” As the turn of the 20th century arrived, and efforts to cure the mental defects were unsuccessful, experts decided that the residential setting should then be called “institutions” or “schools” and moved from an emphasis on treatment to an emphasis on education. Nevertheless, students were still “defined and stigmatized by their medical conditions, children in certain categories of disability were thus in many ways set apart from families, schools, and communities and turned over to presumed specialists who through privileged knowledge knew what was best” (Osgood, 2006, p. 139).

Prior to the mid-1970s, U.S. school districts did not have to serve all students. School districts excluded students with disabilities if they were considered “uneducable” (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). While school districts did not have to serve these students at that time, during the past 50 years, school districts across the country have made significant strides in how students with disabilities are served, given “inclusive settings and practices, validation of school membership for all students, and purposeful shifts to more neutral, even asset-driven terminology for the students, programs, and rationales of special education” (Osgood, 2006, p. 143). The enactment of Public Law

94-142, also called EAHCA, in 1975, earmarked the beginning of federal mandates to improve how students with disabilities were educated; however, both legislative and landmark case decisions, prior to this date, laid the foundation for this federal law (USDOE, 2007).

Landmark cases. More than 20 years preceding PL 94-142, the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education* paved the way in the civil rights movement, significantly changing school policies and how staff approached teaching students with disabilities (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). *Brown v. Board of Education* created opportunities for advocates and parents to draw a parallel line from students who were African-American to those with disabilities, seeking the same equal protection rights (Yell et al., 1998). One of the noteworthy outcomes from *Brown v. Board of Education* was equal protection under the 14th Amendment.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. (National Constitution Center, 2020, sect. 1)

The history of the previously mentioned amendment did not lead to a firm conclusion on providing an education to all students when ratified in 1868; however, the impact of the amendment proved to be an important one for the educational system leading to the other three findings in *Brown v. Board of Education*. First, if a state is providing an education

to its citizens, then this equal opportunity should be made to all; second, segregating students due to their race does not provide an equal opportunity; and finally, “the separate but equal doctrine adopted in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, has no place in the field of public education” (FindLaw, 2020, para 6).

While *Brown v. Board of Education* helped lead the civil rights movement, nearly 20 years later, in the early 1970s, two class-action court cases cite the rulings from *Brown v. Board of Education* to provide the basis of their cases for students with disabilities. *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* and *Mill v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* set the precedence for 46 additional court cases supporting students with disabilities (Yell et al., 1998). Both cases ruled in favor of students with disabilities three years before PL 94-142 (Yell et al., 1998). Rulings from *PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* found it unconstitutional to deny access to a free public education for children with mental retardation between the ages of 6 and 21. Therefore, it was ordered that all children between those ages must have access to a free public education and be provided training in line with the student’s learning capabilities (Martin et al., 1996; Yell et al., 1998). *Mill v. Board of Education* was farther reaching as it provided “the framework for the due process component of EAHCA” (Yell et al., 1998, p. 223). These procedural safeguards outlined in the framework must be provided when schools suspend, expel, reassign, or transfer students out of the general education classrooms (Martin et al., 1996) and include: “the right to a hearing with representation, a record, and an impartial hearing officer; the right to appeal; the right to have access to records; and the requirement of written notice at all stages of the process” (Yell et al., 1998, p. 223).

Rulings from the court cases proved to be effective in bringing about change on behalf of students with disabilities. Additional court cases emerged in the early 1970s addressing the inadequate education of students with disabilities. The conglomeration of these cases pointed out some of the inequities of serving students with special needs and formed the basis of future legislation for the field of special education (Friend, 2011).

Landmark legislation. Limited legislation mandated before 1975 addressed only the rights of students with disabilities. One of the first acts that supported people with disabilities was the Captioned Films Acts of 1958 (P. L. 85-905), which aided the production and distribution of accessible films for individuals who were deaf or hard of hearing (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). An additional act signed in the 1950s by Dwight Eisenhower and the expansion of this law in 1963 led to improvement for students with disabilities by providing federal funding to universities to train teachers and leadership personnel (Martin et al., 1996). Additionally, as Lyndon B. Johnson recognized that equality in education needed continual support, he signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to ensure a commitment that all students were provided an education (Brenchley, 2015). The purpose of ESEA included resources for less fortunate and vulnerable students to increase achievement, including students who receive special education (Brenchley, 2015). While the previously mentioned legislative decisions supported programs in providing better education to students with disabilities, the first standalone statute enacted to combine previous laws for the sole purpose of students with disabilities was the EAHCA (USDOE, 1995). EAHCA was not the only statute enacted in the 1970s that provided rights solely to people with

disabilities. Section 504 for the Rehabilitation Act was the first federal law signed to protect people with disabilities (Cone, 2020).

Following several years of controversy and discussion around the implementation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, sit-ins and demonstrations were organized by people with disabilities pressuring the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare offices in hopes of getting the 504 regulations signed (Cone, 2020). Finally signed into law in 1977, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 “established the basic operation principles that became the basis for legal compliance with the ADA” (Cone, 2020, para. 8). According to Section 504, the “three pronged legal definition” of having a disability includes “people with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activity, those who have a record of such an impairment, and those who are regarded as having such an impairment” (Cone, 2020, para. 9). If a person who meets this definition is discriminated against, the person has the right to take legal action or find a remedy by filing a claim with the appropriate federal agency.

Becoming law in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) “prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public” (ADA National Network, 2020, para. 1). The ADA Section 504 defines an individual with a disability the same way (Leuchovius, 2019). Working in unison with the other federal laws that support individuals with disabilities, ADA does not guarantee a student receives a free and appropriate public education but does cover students with disabilities to ascertain access to the same education as a student without a disability (Leuchovius, 2019).

IDEA. Changing the face of special education forever, the EAHCA passed in 1975, now called IDEA, made a positive impact on millions of students with disabilities across the nation (U.S. Department of Education and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2010). According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, 20 U. S. C. §1400, “IDEA is the main federal statute governing special education for children from birth through age 21” (as cited in Dragoo, 2017, p. 1). In 2004, IDEA was last reauthorized with additional amendments being made through ESSA in 2015 (USDOE, n.d.). Each amendment to IDEA increased the rights given to students with disabilities and their families.

According to Dragoo (2017), IDEA has three functions: ensure students with disabilities receive FAPE, ensure students with disabilities and their parents have their rights protected, and support the education of all students with disabilities. There are four parts to IDEA and Part B services that are provided to students from 3 to 21 years of age who are found eligible under IDEA for one of the 13 categories of disabilities (Dragoo, 2017). To be eligible for special education, the student must meet two prongs: the student must meet the criteria of one of the disability categories, and based upon the disability, the student must require special education or related services. Six tenets provide the foundation of IDEA. The six tenets include appropriate identification and evaluation, FAPE, IEP, LRE, parent and student participation, and procedural safeguards (Dragoo, 2017).

According to Dragoo (2017), “all children with disabilities receiving special education or related services under IDEA between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, residing in a state are entitled to FAPE” (p. 4). FAPE includes special education and

related services that are “provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; meet the standards of the state board; include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education; and are provided in conformity with an individualized education program” (KSDE, 2020a, p. 2). Only twice in history has the U.S. Supreme Court heard and determined whether a school district provided FAPE for a student: the first time in 1982, *Board of Education of the Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley* and most recently in 2017, *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1*.

Board of Education of the Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley was monumental as this was the first case in history that the U.S. Supreme Court was called upon to interpret any part of IDEA, and specifically whether a student was provided an appropriate education (Boyle & Weishaar, 2001). This case arose because the district offered an IEP for Amy Rowley, to which parents agreed but wanted additional services. Amy was a student who was deaf and had minimal residual hearing but could lip read (Boyle & Weishaar, 2001). The district offered an IEP to include an FM system, related services of speech, a tutor for hard of hearing, and placement in the general education classroom. While the parents agreed with the IEP, they also requested a sign language interpreter for all academic classes because Amy should have the same education benefit as her non-disabled peers, which the school denied (Boyle & Weishaar, 2001).

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit found that the district did deny the student FAPE; however, the U.S. Supreme Court was granted certiorari reviewing the case to interpret

the term “appropriate education.” The two questions asked by the U.S. Supreme Court were whether the district had followed IDEA procedures and whether an IEP was “*reasonably calculated* to allow students to benefit from their education” (Boyle & Weishaar, 2001, p. 27). The court found in favor of the district, concluding that “Amy was benefiting from her education, as documented by her passing grades and advancement to the next grade level” (Boyle & Weishaar, 2001, p. 27). The standard set forth from this was reinterpreted over the years regarding how much benefit a student with a disability should gain from their education. Many courts used the standard of “merely more than *de minimis*,” meaning “more than trivial or minor educational benefit” (USDOE, 2017d, p. 4). However, the U.S. Supreme Court recently interpreted FAPE in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1*, which set a new standard.

Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1 was argued at the U.S. Supreme Court with Endrew F., a student with autism, as the plaintiff. Endrew F. attended public school for the first six years of his education. His parents unilaterally withdrew him from public school, enrolled him in private school, and requested reimbursement arguing that the IEP being offered was essentially the same from year to year and his educational progress had stalled (U.S. Department of Education, 2017d). The Court rejected the idea of a student benefiting “merely more than *de minimis*” and found that “each child’s educational program must be appropriately ambitious considering his or her circumstances, and every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017d, p. 5). With this interpretation of FAPE, school districts and IEP teams should consider the application of

this interpretation when determining what special education and related services a student requires and in the development of the IEP.

FAPE is implemented through the development of an IEP and includes the provision of special education and related services for a child with a disability (Dragoo, 2017). Special education is defined by the USDOE (2017c) as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including 1) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and other settings, and 2) instruction in physical education” (para. 1). According to Dragoo (2017), related services are “services required to help a child with a disability to benefit from special education” (p. 11), and include services such as transportation, speech-language, social work, and nursing services. Once a student is determined eligible for special education and related services, the IEP team has 30 days to develop an IEP. In general, the IEP team consists of

the parents of a child with a disability; one or more regular education teachers, if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment; one or more special education teachers; a representative of the Local Education Agency (LEA) who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the LEA; an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results; at the discretion of the parent or the agency, others who may have knowledge or expertise regarding the child, including related service personnel, as appropriate; and whenever appropriate, the child with a disability. (Dragoo, 2017, p. 10)

Just as there are specified IEP team members, there is also specified content that must be included in the IEP. Dragoo (2017) indicated that the IEP must contain present levels of academic achievement and functional performance; annual goals that can be measured, including periodic reporting dates; special education and related services and supplementary aids and services; the extent a student will not participate with nondisabled students; how the student will participate in district and state assessments including whether accommodations or alternate assessments are required; and transition services for students 16 years of age and older. In consideration of all the components of the IEP, the team must determine the placement where the special education and related services will be provided.

IDEA asserts that students with disabilities must participate with students who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate (Dragoo, 2017). There must be a continuum of placements offered by the LEA, and only when the lesser restrictive environment does not provide the student FAPE can the IEP team determine a more restrictive setting. The determination of LRE must be determined annually, and if the parents disagree with the placement decision, they may use one of three dispute resolutions that IDEA requires each district to have in place, including mediation, due process, or writing a formal complaint (Dragoo, 2017).

While mediation, due process, and formal complaints are included as procedural safeguards, there are additional procedural safeguards to protect the rights of students with disabilities and their parents. Some of the procedural safeguards include access to educational records, parent participation, and, when appropriate, student participation, prior written notice, parents' rights provided at specified times, and dispute resolutions

when parents disagree with the LEA (Dragoo, 2017). This brief explanation of the six tenets of IDEA provides just enough information to understand the intricacies and complexities of special education, combining both the Courts' interpretation of IDEA with the policies and procedures written for implementation of IDEA in any given school district.

Advocacy Organizations

According to Levi (2007), “ableism describes prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors toward persons with a disability” (p. 1). While prejudice and discrimination have existed throughout history, worldwide, and still exists today, this term originated from the United States and Britain during the civil rights movement (Levi, 2007). At the same time, parents began to combine their efforts in advocating for their children, not just as a student, but as a human. As early as the 1920s and 1930s and before students with disabilities had laws protecting their education rights, parents and advocates began to band together to make positive changes on behalf of students with disabilities (Hyder, 2018). Advocacy groups were critical to the movement on behalf of individuals with disabilities and provided pertinent information to Congress (Yell et al., 1998). Educational advocacy is defined by the Center for Education Reform (2020) as “what it takes to influence policy changes, at any level” (para. 1). According to the American Association of People with Disabilities (n.d.), “despite centuries of isolation, segregation, violence, incarceration, and institutionalization, people with disabilities have always existed and have always resisted” (part 1). Without parents, advocates, and advocacy groups, inclusionary practices and equality in education for all may not exist as it does today.

Throughout the twentieth century, numerous advocacy organizations began to take form and continue to support students and people with disabilities today. Through advocacy, there is a level of support provided on behalf of students, families, educators, and special education administration. Due to the massive number of advocacy organizations established, a comprehensive list cannot be established; however, several notable organizations are worth reviewing.

CEC was founded in the early 1920s as one of the earliest advocacy organizations throughout the country, supporting students with disabilities by protecting student rights and advocating for inclusion with nondisabled peers. CEC (2020c) understood the importance of how standards played a role in “defining special education as a profession” (para. 1). Creating standards for safe and effective practices, CEC informs teachers on programming needs for students with disabilities, universities in developing preparation programs, and state agencies on licensure requirements (CEC, 2020c). The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) is affiliated with CEC. “The mission of CASE is to provide leadership and support to members by shaping policies and practices that impact the quality of education” (CASE, 2020, para. 3). Each year there are legislative recommendations made by CASE to members of congress. CASE (2020) also offers resources and professional development to its members.

Providing support for state directors of special education, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDE, 2020) began in 1938 when 15 special education workers from 13 states met in Washington, D.C. NASDE has four goals, with the first goal of driving public policy at the state and national level to make sure students with disabilities can live, learn, work, and participate in their communities.

Aside from advocating for students with disabilities, other services offered by NASDE include extensive opportunities for professional development through training and technical assistance, annual conferences, and support to new directors, as well as providing collaboration with national organizations and publications and resources (NASDE, 2020).

While the previous two organizations focus on the professional development of administrators, teachers, and other school personnel in providing professional standards and resources to assure appropriate services to students with disabilities, other advocacy organizations promote inclusive practices in all areas of the lives of people with disabilities. The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) was established in 1975 when a small group of people gathered to discuss the formation of a new organization to ensure students with severe and profound disabilities and their families had their interests represented (Sailor, 2020). TASH also wanted to make sure people with disabilities were not excluded from society. TASH works to bring advocates, families, professionals, policy-makers, and people with disabilities together, assuring all work in tandem to educate and advocate for the equal rights of people with disabilities. TASH supports people with disabilities by disseminating information on best practices, publishing research reports, and contributing through involvement in court cases to ensure the humane treatment of persons with severe and multiple disabilities (TASH, 2020).

The Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC, 2018), formerly known as Western Law Center for the Handicapped, is another advocacy organization created in 1975. The “mission is to champion the rights of people with disabilities through education,

advocacy, and litigation” (DRCL, 2018, para. 3). Providing free legal assistance to those who are being discriminated against violating their civil rights, DRCL is one of the oldest advocacy organizations of its kind. DRCL breaks down barriers for people with cancer and disabilities to help them avoid discrimination and has set a precedent through individual and class action lawsuits and providing information to organizations.

While the importance of education about people with disabilities and advocacy plays a critical role in bringing about change in the legislature, parents and families of a person with a disability cannot be forgotten. A parent is a child’s best advocate. The Arc and Families Together are both organizations that provide education to parents and guardians of people with disabilities. Established in the 1950s, The Arc, originally known as the National Association of Parents and Friends of Retarded Children, was created by parents and advocates who wanted to know more about students who are intellectually disabled and wanted more than institutionalization for their loved ones (The Arc, 2020b). The Arc (2020a) is currently known as “the largest national community-based organization” (para. 1) for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Families Together (2020) is another advocacy organization that educates families so they can support their loved ones. Families Together (2020) works to encourage families to learn about their child’s disability and educate them and empower both students and parents to learn so parents and guardians can help their child reach their personal goals.

The USDOE is a federal organization whose mission is to “promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (USDOE, n.d., para. 1). USDOE was established

in 1980 by combining several other federal organizations into one. Dedicating its staff and budget to its mission, USDOE supports policies on financial aid and helps to distribute the funds; uses data collected across the United States' schools and conducts research for dissemination; brings attention to key issues in education; and prohibits discrimination ensuring there is equal access to education for all (USDOE, n.d.).

Advocacy organizations have profoundly affected legislation and moving systems of inclusiveness forward for people with disabilities. Following many difficult years of being excluded and treated in such inhumane ways, we now have a system in place that provides the necessary rights for students to ensure they are provided FAPE in the LRE. As the educational system continues to transform, it is essential to understand the history of special education, federal and state law, and court decisions and their significant impact on supporting families and others who advocate for people with disabilities.

Perceptions About Special Education Directors

“The landscape of leadership for special education has changed over the past 40 years in response to legislative and social priorities regarding the inclusion of and outcomes for people with disabilities” (Crockett et al., 2009, p. 55). While the functions of a special education director largely depend on the special education model and the size of the local education agency, “all in all, special education administrators require knowledge of both fundamental and current issues to be able to address the complexities of the legal and contemporary components associated with special education leadership” (Marrett, 2008, p. 31). As the landscape changed and the special education directors' roles and responsibilities transformed to support students with disabilities, so has the training and technologies provided by universities to prepare special education leaders.

This section provides a review of the literature about licensure requirements of the position of special education directors, competencies needed to fulfill the role of special education director, training needed to be prepared to carry out the assigned roles and responsibilities, as well as perceptions of superintendents about the role of special education director.

Licensure. Licensure requirements drive the importance of how special education leaders become qualified for the position held and the requirements of graduate programs to train special education directors. The required credentials needed for an educational position are directly related to the LEA's title for the position and job description. Shortly after P.L. 92-142 came into effect, Whitworth and Hatley (1979) stated that "a realization has come about that special education can and will have an important impact on education at the local level and that this impact demand competent leadership with special training" (p. 304). To understand what state education agencies (SEAs) required for certification of special education administration, Whitworth and Hatley (1979) sent letters to all 50 states seeking information about certification requirements for professionals in special education leadership positions. During the review, it was quickly discovered that titles and terminology were vastly different from state to state, making it harder to understand what credentialing requirements each state had in place (Whitworth & Hatley, 1979). However, once Whitworth and Hatley (1979) determined that for the purpose of the study, role clarification such as "special education leadership position, be it as a supervisor, administrator, director, or coordinator" would be used (p. 299), evidence from the findings showed that there was an increase in the number of states who

were implementing some provisions for certification from 12 states in 1970 to 30 states in 1979.

Additional studies were conducted from 1979 to 2010 to determine what credentialing was required for special education directors. As expectations and accountability increased after No Child Left Behind, Boscardin et al. (2010) completed a study to determine how many states offered licenses, certificates, or endorsements for special education directors. A survey and follow-up questions were used to gather the necessary data for analysis to understand the required licensing. In addition to required competencies, other areas considered were experience, practicum or internship, degree and coursework, and continuing education requirements. Boscardin et al. (2010) found that of the states that responded, 54% of the states required special education licensing, 58% of the states required internships or practicum, 78% of states required prior teaching experience to get an administrator of special education credential, and 83% of states required administrators to complete continuing education units to maintain credentials. Overall, Boscardin et al. (2010) found a decrease in the credentialing requirements across the states, as it was found that 27 states across the nation required some type of licensure, certification, or endorsement for a special education administrator.

Based on research results, Boscardin et al. (2010) reported there are no national expectations about the best credentialing for special education directors. With multiple titles and licensing requirements across the United States, continued research is imperative in supporting the leaders who support one of our most vulnerable populations in public schools. The perceptions of special education directors about knowledge and

skills required to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of this district-level position can help inform SEAs on needed policies for certification.

Competencies. With special education administration being a relatively new position in the educational system in 1975, Hodson (1975) was one of the first to ask practicing special education administrators their perceptions regarding essential competencies and pre-service training programs for special education directors utilizing a research study, stating

while national accreditation standards and standards for program content have been specified by various groups, no attempt has been made, to date, to elicit from practicing administrators of special education their views as to the appropriate means for initially attaining the needed competencies and as to the crucial competencies for inclusion in a pre-service training program. (p. 2)

Developing an original survey and using the eleven major areas identified by directors and supervisors of special education, Hodson (1975) surveyed all the special education directors in Michigan to elicit information about the competency areas and needed pre-service training directors perceived to be necessary for special education directors to be qualified for their position. The researcher recommended the following 11 competencies for Michigan's colleges and universities to include as part of their training to qualify directors of special education:

program development and evaluation; personnel staffing, supervision, and evaluation; interpersonal relationships, communications, persuasion and morale; evaluation of in-service organization and management; budgeting, financing and reporting; parent relationships; school plant planning; consultation; research and

grant writing; office management; and school-related legal activities and due process hearings. (Hodson, 1975, p. 78)

As stated previously, the special education director's role is dependent on both the size of the district and the educational model. To better understand the competencies needed for newly appointed special education directors in urban districts, Marrett (2008) surveyed 30 directors across the nation who were members of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. Marrett (2008) defined urban as a place pertaining "to a central geographic location within a metropolitan area (sometimes surrounded by suburbs) that is characterized by a dense population" (p. 17). In this quantitative study, Marrett sought to determine the perceptions about the knowledge and skills of newly appointed special education directors and whether there is a correlation between years of experience and the essential competencies special education directors know. Marrett found that urban special education directors perceived newly appointed special education administrators should have knowledge in the following areas: management, instruction and change, supervision of faculty, and team-building skills. Marrett (2008) found that due to the low number of participants, the results of the study were not representative of the larger group but still found that the study "provides a basis for recommendations for the training and support of urban special education administrators" (Marrett, 2008, p. 88). The recommendations for professional development included creating collaborative relationships between universities and school district personnel that provide practical and relevant professional development providing authentic situations, mentoring, and coaching by experienced special education directors, and coaching to support the newly

appointed special education directors so they can provide leadership for special education and related services (Marrett, 2008).

Tate (2009) also sought to understand what knowledge was needed to be successful in a special education administration position. Tate utilized a mixed-method research design to understand who was leading the special education field in North Carolina. Special education directors were surveyed about their educational backgrounds, teaching experiences, and leadership. The results of the study indicated that special education administrators in North Carolina were experienced administrators, with the majority having between three and ten years of experience as a special education administrator, and a little more than 70% had experience as a special education teacher. When asked about the characteristics and knowledge needed to be successful in their position, more than half of the respondents indicated that it was necessary to have basic knowledge of special education to be a successful special education director. The two specific areas of special education mentioned in the study include knowledge about “special education law and special education content” (Tate, 2009, p. 92).

A study was also conducted in Maryland to examine the levels of knowledge and skills of special education coordinators. In this study, Gurley (2011) defined a district special education coordinator as

an instructional systems specialist, special education, who is assigned to the school system area office or district office within the school system’s educational program serving as the principal technical advisor and expert on the design and administration of special education. This term is often used interchangeably with

Special Education Director, special education administrator/supervisor, or special education coordinator. (p. 17)

As previously indicated, while titles may not be the same from state-to-state, titles are important in understanding a professional identity and “are symbolic, representing the ethos and culture that define the essence of the embodiment of a discipline or profession” (Boscardin et al., 2010, p. 71). Given the definition of the position, the title of coordinator in Maryland in Gurley’s (2011) study is equivalent to a director or assistant director in other states. One of Gurley’s goals for this study was to understand how special education coordinators’ knowledge and skills compare with the 2009 CEC professional standards for special education administrators. Gurley (2011) asked the respondents to rate themselves on the knowledge and skills from the six CEC standards. With each of the items of knowledge and skills being ranked within each standard, the highest-rated and lowest-rated skill was identified in each of the six standards. The findings from Gurley’s (2011) study indicated that in the leadership and policy standard, the respondents rated themselves most skilled in applying current school system instructions, regulations, and policies to individuals with exceptional learning needs and least skilled in developing a budget per the school system policies for serving individuals with exceptional learning needs. The findings in the standard program development and organization revealed the respondents rated the skill of developing and implementing a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptional learning needs the highest and their perceptions of knowledge about administrative plans that support the use of instructional and assistive technologies the lowest (Gurley, 2011). The skill of engaging in data-based decision-making to

administer educational programs and services that supports exceptional students was ranked the highest, while coordinators ranked themselves the lowest in the knowledge area about research-based administrative practices that support individuals with exceptional learning needs in the research and inquiry standard (Gurley, 2011). The results related to the evaluation standard in the study revealed that coordinators perceived they were most skilled in the areas of advocating and implementing procedures for the participation of individuals with learning needs in accountability systems and least skilled in developing and implementing ongoing evaluations of education programs and personnel and designing and implementing evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices. The findings from Gurley's (2011) study indicate that special education coordinators found themselves to be more skilled in communicating and demonstrating a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with learning needs and in implementing professional development activities that improve instructional practices and least skilled in participating in local, state, and national professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with learning needs in the professional development and ethical practice standard. In the collaboration standard, providing ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with learning needs was ranked the highest by the respondents. In contrast, the skill of developing and implementing intra- and inter-agency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with learning needs were ranked the lowest. Gurley (2011) also inquired about what skills and knowledge coordinators perceived to be essential in the day-to-day functions of the position and how those perceptions

compared to teachers and administrators. While findings showed that the coordinators perceived all six of the standards being essential in day-to-day activities, three common themes emerged as critical. These themes included the guarantee of FAPE being provided to students with disabilities through compliance and monitoring of programs, ensuring the provision of services for students with disabilities through an understanding of required roles and responsibilities, and making sure students increase achievement through the determination of effective practices and interventions (Gurley, 2011).

Clifford (2016) studied special education administrator's perceptions of their self-reported proficiency in their understanding and performance on the "2012 Council for Exceptional Children Preparation Standards Advanced Administrator of Special Education Specialist Set" (p. 3). Clifford also sought to understand differences in self-ratings between special education administrators in Wyoming and North Dakota, among the degree and endorsement area, as well as the effect of years of experience. One standard reported by special education administrators as being rated as the highest level of understanding was ethical practices, and one area that was the highest-rated in performance was collaboration between special education and general education administrators. However, the application of special education laws, regulations, and policies were rated as the highest by special education administrators in both knowledge and performance (Clifford, 2016). The lowest reported rating from special education administrators was the evaluation of special education programs. Clifford (2016) found that special education administrators rated their performance the lowest on assisting staff with the technology needs of students in special education and supporting special education staff in developing transition services for students from birth to adulthood.

Special education administrators in Wyoming and North Dakota did not have any specific differences in the self-ratings; however, overall self-ratings were higher in knowledge and performance for staff who had previous special education experience and more overall years of experience as a special education director. Clifford (2016) also sought to understand whether there was an effect on the self-ratings of special education administrators based on the degree area and endorsement. Clifford found no significant difference in understanding the standards or practicing the standards based on the endorsement status but having a special education degree had some impact. Clifford (2016) recommended using a special education endorsement tailored to special education administrators' specific needs and includes skills and knowledge in diversity, program evaluation, transition services, technology, and information on reducing referral rates, which were all rated low.

Fan et al. (2019) used the updated 2015 CEC standards to examine special education administrators' perceptions of critical skills and knowledge. Directors, principals, special education teachers, school psychologists, general education teachers, and other special education-related staff in a mid-mountain state in the United States were surveyed in this mixed-method study. The results of the study informed training and preparation programs in determining what special education leaders need to learn to be effective leaders in special education. Findings from the analysis of the survey results indicated the highest-rated items that survey respondents found as critical skills for a special education director were high standards of ethical administrative practices; interpreting and applying current laws, regulations, and policies; and developing and implementing a continuum of services based on effective practices. The lowest rated

items included joining and participating in professional organizations, strengthening the role of parent advocacy groups, and developing and implementing agreements for shared responsibilities. Fan et al. (2019) organized the qualitative data from open-ended questions into themes under each of the seven standards to determine what additional knowledge and skills respondents perceived needed to be included in preparation programs for special education directors. Themes from the first standard included the assessment of students who qualify for and need to be exited from special education services and program evaluation using data-based decision making. Two themes were also found for the second standard included support of staff through professional development to address instruction and completing duties as an IEP manager as well as adequate knowledge of assistive technology. Themes from the third standard encompassed services to students, general education interventions, application of accommodations, and supporting special education in developing and completing appropriate IEPs. There were not any themes that emerged from the fourth standard. The four themes from standard five, leadership and policy, include effective leadership practices, knowledge about budget and billing, law compliance, and recruitment and retention of special education teachers. The sixth standard only had one theme and addressed the need for appropriate professional development for special education teachers and resources for families. The last standard's themes addressed communication between special and general educators and stakeholder involvement (Fan et al., 2019).

While some researchers studied the skills that are necessary to be successful as a special education director in urban areas, other researchers found it more pertinent to study the skills and competencies leaders need to succeed in rural school districts.

McDonald (2020) conducted a qualitative study to gain understanding and insight into special education administrators' perceptions of what knowledge and skills they perceive are necessary to lead special education programs in rural Arizona. McDonald (2020) interviewed 15 special education leaders, and three major themes emerged during this process. Each theme then had sub-themes that provided more insight into the special education leaders' perceptions (McDonald, 2020). The three themes that emerged from the interviews were the importance of developing "skills to build strong relationships with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members;" possessing "knowledge of special education law, procedures, practices, and programming;" and developing "skills and knowledge to overcome challenges associated with being a rural location." (McDonald, 2020, p. 63). This information is useful to practicing leaders in rural Arizona and for the superintendents who hire them to assure leaders hired have the necessary skills to be successful in their positions (McDonald, 2020).

Special education directors need to be prepared for a variety of duties and responsibilities when they step into this multidimensional, district-level position. It is not enough to understand special education and IDEA; the importance lies in applying the critical components of special education across all educational systems. From Hodson's (1975) research to more current research, similar skills continued to surface as being important for special education administrators to know. Knowledge about special education was found to be one of the most critical skills related to the position of special education director (Chaffin, 2013; Cope, 2002; Fan et al., 2019; Hodson, 1975; Ivey, 2008; Tate, 2009; Thompson & O'Brian, 2007). Other elements necessary for special education directors to know are related to the development and administration of federal

programs (Cope, 2002; Fan et al., 2019; Hodson, 1975; Thompson & O'Brian, 2007); knowledge of special education budgets and finances (Chaffin, 2013; Hodson, 1975; Thompson & O'Brian, 2007); communication and collaboration with principals and other stakeholders (Chaffin, 2013; Cope, 2002; Hodson, 1975); and implementation of professional development (Chaffin, 2013; Hodson, 1975; Marrett, 2008). For districts and students with disabilities to experience effective and efficient leadership, graduate programs must provide a solid foundation for leaders to build upon so they can conquer the obstacles they will encounter as they begin their journey.

Training. Special education directors have a unique position in leading special programs driven by IDEA and staying in compliance with federal law. "It is difficult to train and supply personnel that contribute to the leadership of special education at the national, state, and local levels without the availability of state-of-the-art training programs" (Boscardin et al., 2010, p. 74). Adequate training is critical to the effectiveness of the position of special education director.

Super (2005) surveyed special education directors in West Virginia to understand what they perceived as the necessary knowledge base required for their current positions. The researcher utilized a mixed-method design using both qualitative and quantitative data. The survey data was collected about three domains: demographic data, skills directors learned on the job, and special education administrators' perceptions of important skills needed in preparation programs. Super found that while more than half of the respondents reported their programs inadequately prepared them for their current positions, the respondents did not believe there should be a certification program specifically designed for special education administration. Numerous respondents found

that on-the-job experiences gave them the necessary skills to complete their job responsibilities. Super found that 94.6% of the respondents thought internships should be part of an administrative endorsement program. Super (2005) also sought to understand additional information about the same three domains from the survey through staff interviews. Background information about each of the six participants was presented, and then open-ended questions were provided for participants to respond. Questions were developed to help understand what special education directors perceived they needed for their district roles as a special education director through their graduate programs. One respondent shared that while the general education administration program taught some items related to interpersonal relationships and skills, several additional skills should have been taught in their graduate programs (Super, 2005). The skills mentioned throughout the interviews that participants stated should be included in their classes through their graduate programs included: special education laws and regulations, both federal and state; budgeting and finances; and curriculum and instructional materials available to special education teachers (Super, 2005).

Thompson and O'Brian (2007) stated, "ultimately, as a leader of the special education administrative team, the director of special education influences the quality of education for every student with special needs within a school district" (p. 33). To ensure special education directors are adequately trained, it is imperative to understand what is needed from a graduate program and what additional professional development is necessary once in the special education director position. In 2007, Thompson and O'Brian created a needs survey to gather information from special education directors to inform Illinois State University of what was needed for graduate coursework to prepare

future special education directors in Illinois. Through this study, Thompson and O'Brian also sought to understand the perceptions of what current special education directors believed was vital to their professional development as a director. Thompson and O'Brian (2007) found that both legal and financial information was of importance as well as programming for students with disabilities. Thompson and O'Brian also emphasized the importance of gaining information directly from special education directors in the field to understand the issues special education directors are facing, so these can be addressed through pre-service training or professional development while on the job.

The knowledge of special education law and the ability to implement federal regulations as a required competency for special education directors have continually emerged as a common theme from several studies. Special education directors must stay current on federal and state law pertaining to IDEA and the litigation that provides knowledge about the application of special education law. Ivey (2008) completed a quantitative study using descriptive data to understand the comparison of special education directors' experiences and their knowledge of special education law. Ivey administered an assessment of skills related to special education law via an online survey to 129 directors. With a 67% return rate, Ivey (2008) found several areas of strength, including LRE, IEP, and due process procedures, where weaknesses were found in the knowledge of FAPE, related services, student discipline, and liability for reimbursement of parents.

Leadership programs in special education administration should emphasize similar skills to those for general education administration (Milligan et al., 2012). According to Milligan et al. (2012), "IDEA and the basic need for competent

administrators in the fields of gifted and special education has increased the need for better preparation programs” (p. 177). Considering this information, recommendations were made for preparation programs that prepare future leaders. Recommendations provided were based upon Milligan et al.’s (2012) review of the literature and included the following: real-life opportunities for collaborative problem solving and use of critical thinking with others in the field of special education, strong mentorship programs where the mentee can receive constructive feedback, internship experiences allowing interaction with other administrators in the field, cohort models providing an informal support group as another layer of support, and a specific set of skills needed for the position taught.

Studying the perceptions of special education administrators in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, Klemisch (2014) sought to understand if special education administrators had the training necessary to learn how to carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities. Besides determining whether there were differences across states, Klemisch also looked at potential differences among respondents based on age, race, gender, special education teaching experience, and special education administrator years of experience. With a 31.7% response rate, Klemisch received 129 responses from the 407 surveys sent to special education administrators across the three states. While different skills were selected among each of the states as most important, one theme that emerged as necessary for special education administrators was professional and ethical practices. Klemisch (2014) found that female and male administrators have different perceptions about which critical skills are needed. Overall, the length of time and experience as a special education teacher and a special education administrator did not

influence perceptions. Each state was more likely to offer special education administrators the necessary training.

With on-the-job experience being found as one of the most critical elements in learning the skills necessary to carry out the responsibilities of a special education director, it is also important to understand where directors learn most of the skills. Colhour (2016) sought to understand this phenomenon, and the results of her study determined “whether special education directors learned about compliance with special education law and regulations, special education finance, completion of state reports, best instructional practices, relationship building and collaboration with all stakeholders during coursework in graduate school or on the job” (p. 41). During the 2015-2016 school year, Colhour conducted a descriptive quantitative study and surveyed special education directors across Missouri. Colhour (2016) found that survey respondents perceived all five specified areas were necessary to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Survey participants indicated that they learned about best instructional practices and relationship building and collaboration on the job and in their graduate courses. Colhour (2016) also found that special education directors’ perceptions of learning about compliance with special education law and regulations happened during graduate coursework while knowledge of special education finance and completing state reports were learned on the job.

While it is crucial to understand special education directors’ perceptions about the necessary skills required for effective leadership as a special education director, Isaac et al. (2016) identified both reasons and barriers to special education administrators operating effectively. A quantitative study was conducted in which Texas special

education administrators were surveyed. Isaac et al. found that the top three reasons “special education administration were able to operate to optimum effectiveness were: (a) sufficient knowledge concerning special education, state and federal laws, budget, etc.; (b) support from central administration; and (c) professional background and education prepared them for the job” (p. 57). The top three barriers identified by Isaac et al. (2016) were inadequate staffing, time, and financial resources. The study’s findings provided evidence to address the training needs of special education administrators to be prepared for special education leadership positions.

To provide information to educational institutions, Taylor (2020) studied the perceptions of special education administrators on their training and the ability to apply the skills they learned in their graduate programs. Taylor also sought to understand if there was a relationship between years of experience as a special education administrator and when the administrators took a leadership training course. Taylor (2020) surveyed 600 special education administrators in a northwestern state. There were 145 respondents whose data were included in the analysis. Taylor (2020) found “that there was a statistically significant relationship between special education administrator's years of service and the completion of a leadership skills course” (p. 74); however, of the 4% of the special education administrators who reported that they took a leadership course during their training programs, 83% of them did not find the leadership class beneficial. Five themes emerged from research question one, providing pertinent information about perceptions of leadership course experiences by special education administrators. Taylor (2020) found that the themes included building strong relationships with other special education administrators and how communication and collaborations affect their roles, as

well as the importance of learning special education law and leadership skills through formal training. Specific responses through the open-ended questions also helped Taylor (2020) find themes about what special education administrators perceived as applicable from the training courses. Further, Taylor (2020) sought to understand how the special education directors perceived they could apply the skills learned through the leadership classes to their positions. The four themes that were derived through the open-ended questions about what special education directors perceived impacted their position and training included having the ability to collaborate with other administrators, the ability to receive a mentor for their position, more years of experience in the position of special education director, and being able to attend professional development.

Superintendent perceptions about the role of special education director. In the early 2000s, research emerged that included the perception of directors about their roles and perceptions from those who hire and supervise the special education directors in the district. Very little research had been completed on what superintendents perceived as necessary skills for entry-level special education directors in their school districts. Cope (2002) examined both the special education directors' and superintendents' perceptions of the skills required for an entry-level director position in Texas utilizing a mixed-method research design. For the quantitative portion of the study, Cope utilized a survey that was developed for each respondent group and then compared the results to find similarities and differences between the superintendents' and the directors' perceptions. Cope found that of the 51 competencies rated, 10 of the competencies were ranked high by both directors and superintendents. While each of the respondents rated these areas high, superintendents were asked about the importance of the competencies,

and the directors were asked whether they were skilled in the competency; therefore, a direct comparison could not be made between the two. However, similarities were found from the highest-ranked competencies by both the superintendent and directors, including the need for directors to maintain their knowledge about special education law and litigation as well as the ability to monitor compliance for new federal laws and regulations; the ability to administer federal programs; coordinate with principals on the implementation of the laws and regulations to provide students with appropriate services; and act as a consultant on the laws and regulations to district stakeholders (Cope, 2002). Information provided by this study was useful to policymakers, preparation programs, and employing entities to help assure skill development for aspiring directors or individuals who already held these positions.

Chaffin (2013) also found value in seeking additional information about what superintendents are looking for when hiring a special education director. Chaffin sought to understand what skills and competencies superintendents perceived as pertinent for a successful special education director. In this qualitative study, Chaffin interviewed eight superintendents and assistant superintendents who had recently hired special education directors in their Washington school districts. Chaffin (2013) found seven themes that emerged from his interviews. One of the most mentioned skills in every interview was the special education director's ability to understand and apply special education law. The other competencies identified from this study were effective leadership, interpersonal communication, experience working in special education, knowledge of budgets and finances, problem-solving skills, and implementation of professional development. While Chaffin found certain competencies superintendents looked for in a special

education director candidate, the roles in which the director would serve in each of Washington's districts varied. What Chaffin (2013) did find as a common understanding of the position is that all superintendents understood the importance of hiring an effective special education administrator because if the position was filled with someone who was not effective, this could negatively impact the district's climate and culture, budget, and most importantly appropriate services to students.

Summary

This literature review provided the history of special education, information about advocacy organizations, and perceptions about special education directors. With such a complex political system that continues to support people with disabilities and the importance of educating all students, it is imperative that those who lead the charge have the necessary knowledge and skills to be effective leaders. First, understanding how federal law and legal proceedings impact the applications of rules and regulations supporting students eligible for special education is the groundwork for special education directors. Second, advocacy organizations originated on behalf of those with disabilities and support those who teach and lead students with disabilities. CEC has been an integral part of providing professional standards to assure that those leading the field have the appropriate knowledge and skills to carry out their district-level positions. Finally, a review of special education directors' perceptions provided relevant information pertaining to licensure, competencies, and training considerations across the United States. In Chapter 3, the methodology used to conduct the study is described.

Chapter 3

Methods

This study was developed to explore special education directors' perceptions about whether their graduate programs prepared them for the assigned duties as a special education director and whether additional coursework is needed. The study was also developed to understand differences in special education directors' perceptions based on the type of license (special education director, special education coordinator/supervisor, or district level license) held by the special education director. This chapter includes the research design, measurement, and selection of participants. Furthermore, provided in the chapter are information about the data collection process, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and the limitations.

Research Design

This study was designed as a quantitative research methodology using a survey to analyze special education directors' perceptions of their graduate program and the extent that those perceptions differ depending on their licensure. Survey research is considered one of the two quantitative research designs, describing numeric descriptions through trends, opinions, and perceptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The first group of dependent variables for this study was the special education directors' perceptions of the skills areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration provided during their graduate coursework. The second group of dependent variables was special education directors' perceptions of the need for additional graduate level coursework related to the skill areas of assessment; curricular

content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration. Licensure held by the special education directors is the independent variable in this study.

Selection of Participants

The population for this study included all special education directors, including executive directors and assistant directors, in Kansas during the 2020-2021 school year. The KSDE directory was used to gain a list of directors and assistant directors of special education in Kansas. Special education directors who received and completed the survey were included in the sample for the study.

Measurement

The researcher developed an original survey for the purposes of this research study (see Appendix B). The skills items in part I and part II of the survey were derived from the CEC (2015) (see Appendix A) advanced preparation standards for special education administration specialist. Each survey item corresponded with the skill items, except for one preparation standard skill under assessment where the skill was reworded to separate the skills into two separate areas based on feedback from one of the expert panelists.

Survey items 1 through 26 were derived from the CEC (2015) advanced preparation standards to measure the dependent variable, the extent the special education director perceive they were provided the necessary skills in the areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration. Survey items 27 through 52 were also based on the CEC (2015) preparation standards. These items

were used to measure the dependent variable, the extent directors of special education perceived additional information was necessary during their graduate coursework. Part III of this survey, survey item 53, asked the participants to indicate which license was held to be employed as a special education director in Kansas.

Using a Likert-type scale for part I and part II of the survey, each special education director chose from the following options: *Strongly Disagree (SD)* = 1; *Disagree (D)* = 2; *No Opinion (NO)* = 3; *Agree (A)* = 4; *Strongly Agree (SA)* = 5. The responses indicated a level of agreement about whether the CEC skills were provided during their graduate coursework and the extent to which they perceived additional coursework was necessary. Participants who did not agree or disagree about whether a specific skill was taught during coursework could choose *No Opinion*.

Content validity, one of the three forms used in quantitative research, answers this question “Do the items measure the content they were intended to measure?” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 153). To check the validity of the survey, three expert panelists were chosen to review the survey and provide feedback (see Appendix C). The feedback could include additional questions or information needed in the survey or additional items to be considered. The individuals chosen to review the survey are considered experts in the field of special education. The experts included:

- Expert #1: A previous director of special education in Kansas and currently the state director of special education.
- Expert #2: A previous director of special education in Kansas and currently employed by Baker University.

- Expert #3: A graduate of Baker University's doctoral program and currently a special education director in a large Kansas district.

The expert panelists provided some recommendations for the modification of the survey. While not all recommendations were completed, all feedback was considered, and the survey was modified. The information that was changed in the survey based on the expert panelists feedback included changing the gerunds back to action verbs as initially written in each of the CEC skill areas; including examples of processes or programs that prevent unnecessary referrals in items 8 and 34; and separating the skill areas of evaluation and personnel into two separate survey items.

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) referred to "the degree to which an instrument consistently measures whatever it is measuring" as "reliability" (p. 182). A scale was not used in this survey where item responses were added together or averaged. Instead, special education directors' perceptions were gathered using single-item measures where each item response was used individually.

Most commonly used single-item measures can be divided into two categories: (a) those measuring psychological constructs, e.g., aspects of personality...measuring the former with a single item is common practice. However, using a single-item measure for the latter is a "fatal error" in research. If the construct being measured is sufficiently narrow or is unambiguous to the respondent, a single item may suffice. (Sackett & Larson, 1990, p. 631)

The individual items analyzed in this research were self-reported facts that were sufficiently narrow and unambiguous. Therefore, reliability was not an issue for the measurement using this survey instrument.

Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting data for the current study, the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the request to conduct the study on September 16, 2020 (see Appendix D). After the IRB approval and before the survey was uploaded to Google Forms, the survey items were randomized. The survey was distributed via email on October 6, 2020 requesting the selected sample to participate in the study (see Appendix E). The email included information about the purpose of the study, the researcher's contact information, and notification that participation would be voluntary. Participants were encouraged to complete the survey. Additionally, participants were told in the email that by completing the survey, the participants were giving their consent for their responses to be used in this study. Two additional email reminders were sent on October 26, 2020 (see Appendix F), and November 11, 2020 (see Appendix G).

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The survey data were collected in an Excel spreadsheet and downloaded to IBM SPSS Statistics Faculty Pack 25 for PC for data analysis. Each of the research questions is listed below, followed by the 26 hypotheses tested to address the question. After the list of hypotheses, a paragraph describing the analyses used to test the 26 hypotheses is included.

RQ1. To what extent do special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for the special education directors to complete the duties and responsibilities related to district level positions?

H1. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems.

H2. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs.

H3. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel.

H4. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices.

H5. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies.

H6. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H7. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H8. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals.

H9. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H10. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H11. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H12. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H13. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H14. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H15. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H16. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H17. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H18. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H19. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation.

H20. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H21. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement intra- and interagency

agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H22. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood.

H23. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders.

H24. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making.

H25. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities.

H26. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels.

Twenty-six one-sample t tests were conducted to test H1-H26. The one-sample t test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a test value of 3.0, and the group mean is a numerical value. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's d , is reported.

RQ2. To what extent do the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration differ by license held by the special education directors?

H27. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems differ by license held by the special education directors.

H28. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs differ by license held by the special education directors.

H29. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel differ by license held by the special education directors.

H30. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices differ by license held by the special education directors.

H31. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement an

administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies differ by license held by the special education directors.

H32. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H33. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H34. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals differ by license held by the special education directors.

H35. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H36. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with

exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H37. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H38. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H39. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H40. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H41. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in recruitment, hiring, and

retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H42. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H43. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H44. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H45. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation differ by license held by the special education directors.

H46. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to strengthen the role of parent and

advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H47. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H48. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood differ by license held by the special education directors.

H49. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders differ by license held by the special education directors.

H50. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making differ by license held by the special education directors.

H51. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities differ by license held by the special education directors.

H52. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels differ by license held by the special education directors.

Twenty-six one-factor analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to test H27-H52. The categorical variable used to group the dependent variable was license type (a special education director's license, a coordinator of special education license, a district level license, and other). The results of the one-factor ANOVA can be used to test for differences in the means for a numerical variable among three or more groups. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size, as indexed by *eta-squared*, is reported.

RQ3. To what extent do special education directors in Kansas perceive that additional coursework is needed in graduate programs to prepare for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes?

H53. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems.

H54. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs.

H55. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education personnel.

H56. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices.

H57. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies.

H58. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H59. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H60. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals.

H61. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H62. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H63. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H64. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H65. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H66. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H67. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H68. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H69. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical

administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H70. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H71. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation.

H72. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H73. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H74. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood.

H75. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders.

H76. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making.

H77. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities.

H78. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels.

Twenty-six one-sample *t* tests were conducted to test H53-H78. The one-sample *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a test value of 3.0, and the group mean is a numerical value. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

RQ4. To what extent do the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the need for additional coursework for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes differ by license held by the special education directors?

H79. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems differ by license held by the special education directors.

H80. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs differ by license held by the special education directors.

H81. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education personnel differ by license held by the special education directors.

H82. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices differ by license held by the special education directors.

H83. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies differ by license held by the special education directors.

H84. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H85. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H86. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals differ by license held by the special education directors.

H87. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H88. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H89. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H90. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H91. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the

provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H92. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H93. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H94. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H95. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H96. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement professional development activities and

programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H97. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation differ by license held by the special education directors.

H98. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H99. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

H100. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood differ by license held by the special education directors.

H101. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders differ by license held by the special education directors.

H102. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making differ by license held by the special education directors.

H103. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities differ by license held by the special education directors.

H104. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels differ by license held by the special education directors.

Twenty-six one-factor ANOVAs were conducted to test H79-H104. The categorical variable used to group the dependent variable was license type (a special education director's license, a coordinator of special education license, and a district level license). The results of the one-factor ANOVA can be used to test for differences in the means for a numerical variable among three or more groups. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size, as indexed by *eta-squared*, is reported.

Limitations

Limitations could potentially have an impact on the findings of research results. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated, "Limitations of a study are not under the control of the researcher". The limitations for this study include the following:

1. The researcher was not able to control whether the participants responded to every item on the survey.

2. The researcher was not able to control who chose to complete the survey.
3. Due to the duration of time since graduate school for some participants, there may have been a lapse in memory regarding the participant's graduate program.
4. The directory data found on KSDE's website is only as up-to-date as the LEA provides or when KSDE updates the directory information.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided the methodology used to conduct the research study. The chapter included the selection of participants, survey design, the data collection method, and a description of how the data was analyzed. The research questions were restated, and the hypotheses associated with each question were included. Each hypothesis was tested using either a one-sample t test or a one-factor ANOVA. The descriptive statistics and results of the data analysis are reported in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Results

Special education directors in Kansas were surveyed to determine the extent they perceived their graduate programs provided the necessary skills for them to complete the duties and responsibilities related to district level positions and to the extent the perceptions of the special education directors regarding the degree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills differ by licensure. Also examined in this study was the extent special education directors in Kansas perceived that additional coursework is needed in graduate programs to prepare for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes and how those perceptions differ by licensure. The descriptive statistics and the results of the hypothesis testing are presented in this chapter.

Descriptive Statistics

According to Lindemann (2019), the average rate of response for online surveys is 33%. Of the 130 special education directors in Kansas, 46 participants completed the survey giving this survey a response rate of 35%. Respondents provided information about the license endorsement special education directors and assistant directors held to be employed in their district-level position, and all but one respondent answered this question. Of the 46 participants who completed the survey, 23 participants indicated that they held a district-level license endorsement to be employed in their position. Two additional responses were recoded to the licensure category of district-level license due to the responses, including language that indicated the respondent held a district-level

license. Ten participants reported holding a coordinator/supervisor of special education endorsement or director of special education, and the other 10 participants' responses fell into the other category. Table 1 includes participants' responses about licenses held by the participants.

Table 1

License Held by Participants

License	N
Original	
Coordinator/Supervisor of special education	2
Director of special education	8
District level licensure	23
Assistant Director of Special Education-Bldg Level Licensure	1
Building level admin	1
Building level licensure	1
Can be Asst. Director with building level license. Director of Sped requires a District Level License (or older license Director of Sped/Supervisor)	1
District leadership	1
District Level Licensure with Emphasis in Sped Programming	1
I don't believe my Building and District Level Leadership programs properly trained me to be a SPED Director. Should be a special track within the Building/District programs.	1
Maybe	1
No	1
This is confusing, are you asking me what I have or what is needed in Kansas to be eligible? You cannot mark more than one item on the list. I have a bldg. admin and District leadership licenses.	1
Yes	3
Recoded	
Coordinator or director of special education	10
District-level licensure	26
Other	10

Hypothesis Testing

One-sample t tests were conducted to test H1-H26 and H53-H78. Following the restatement of each research question is a paragraph describing the data analysis, the hypothesis statements, and the results related to each hypothesis test. One-factor ANOVAs were conducted to test H27-H52 and H79-H104. Following the restatement of each research question is a paragraph describing the data analysis, a paragraph describing the results of the data analysis, a table with the hypothesis testing statistics, each hypothesis statement, and the descriptive statistics related to each hypothesis.

RQ1. To what extent do special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for the special education directors to complete the duties and responsibilities related to district level positions?

Twenty-six one-sample t tests were conducted to test H1-H26. The one-sample t test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a test value of 3.0, and the group mean is a numerical value. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's d , is reported. Each of the hypotheses is listed below followed by the results of the hypothesis test.

H1. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = -0.961, p = .342$. The sample mean ($M = 2.85, SD = 1.07$) was not different from the test value. H1 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems.

H2. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 3.531, p = .001, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.520$. The sample mean ($M = 3.50, SD = 0.96$) was significantly higher than the test value. H2 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H3. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 4.470, p = .000, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.660$. The sample mean ($M = 3.72, SD = 1.09$) was significantly higher than the test value. H3 was supported. Special

education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H4. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 4.130, p = .000, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.610$. The sample mean ($M = 3.61, SD = 1.00$) was significantly higher than the test value. H4 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H5. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 0.401, p = .690$. The sample mean ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.10$) was not different from the test value. H5 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies.

H6. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 1.258, p = .215$. The sample mean ($M = 3.22, SD = 1.17$) was not different from the test value. H6 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H7. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 0.401, p = .690$. The sample mean ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.10$) was not different from the test value. H7 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H8. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = -1.669, p = .102$. The sample mean ($M = 2.72, SD = 1.15$) was not different from the test value. H8 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals.

H9. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 0.387, p = .701$. The sample mean ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.14$) was not different from the test value. H9 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H10. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 2.939$, $p = .005$, Cohen's $d = 0.430$. The sample mean ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.00$) was significantly higher than the test value. H10 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a small effect.

H11. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = -0.683$, $p = .498$. The sample mean ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.09$) was not different from the test value. H11 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H12. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = 4.037, p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.610$. The sample mean ($M = 3.69, SD = 1.14$) was significantly higher than the test value. H10 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H13. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = -0.139, p = .890$. The sample mean ($M = 2.98, SD = 1.06$) was not different from the test value. H13 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H14. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = -1.040, p = .304$. The sample mean ($M = 2.80, SD = 1.28$) was not different from the test value. H14 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H15. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 0.000, p = 1.000$. The sample mean ($M = 3.00, SD = 1.05$) was not different from the test value. H15 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H16. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 2.526$, $p = .015$, Cohen's $d = 0.370$. The sample mean ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.17$) was significantly higher than the test value. H16 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a small effect.

H17. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = 6.906$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.030$. The sample mean ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.93$) was significantly higher than the test value. H17 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H18. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement professional development

activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$. The sample mean ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.01$) was not different from the test value. H18 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

H19. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 8.307$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.220$. The sample mean ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.82$) was significantly higher than the test value. H19 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H20. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = -2.185$, $p = .034$, Cohen's $d = 0.320$. The sample mean ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.08$) was significantly lower than the test value. H20 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a small effect.

H21. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = -4.043$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.590$. The sample mean ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.91$) was significantly lower than the test value. H21 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H22. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop seamless transitions of individuals with

exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated no difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = -1.451, p = .154$. The sample mean ($M = 2.74, SD = 1.22$) was not different from the test value. H22 was not supported. Special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood.

H23. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 9.752, p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.430$. The sample mean ($M = 3.96, SD = 0.67$) was significantly higher than the test value. H23 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H24. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 14.043$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 2.050$. The sample mean ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.56$) was significantly higher than the test value. H24 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H25. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 3.383$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.500$. The sample mean ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.09$) was significantly higher than the test value. H25 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H26. Special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and

the test value, $t(44) = 8.082$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.210$. The sample mean ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.81$) was significantly higher than the test value. H26 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels. The effect size indicated a large effect.

RQ2. To what extent do the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration differ by license held by the special education directors?

Twenty-six one-factor ANOVAs were conducted to test H27-H52. The categorical variable used to group the dependent variable was license type (special education director's license, a coordinator of special education license, a district level license, and other). The results of the one-factor ANOVA can be used to test for differences in the means for a numerical variable among three or more groups. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size, as indexed by *eta-squared*, is reported.

The results of the 26 ANOVAs indicated no significant differences in the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration based on the license held by the special education directors. Table 2, which presents the hypothesis testing statistics

for the tests, is included below. Each of the 26 hypotheses is listed after Table 2, along with a table that includes a summary of the descriptive statistics for that hypothesis.

H27-H52 were not supported.

Table 2

Hypothesis testing statistics for H27 – H52

Hypothesis	<i>F</i>	<i>df1, df2</i>	<i>p</i>
H27	0.110	2, 42	.896
H28	0.686	2, 42	.509
H29	0.892	2, 42	.417
H30	1.012	2, 42	.372
H31	1.558	2, 42	.223
H32	0.969	2, 42	.388
H33	0.494	2, 42	.614
H34	0.365	2, 42	.696
H35	0.135	2, 42	.874
H36	0.036	2, 42	.964
H37	1.008	2, 41	.374
H38	0.443	2, 41	.645
H39	1.038	2, 42	.363
H40	0.308	2, 42	.737
H41	0.884	2, 42	.421
H42	1.247	2, 42	.298
H43	1.768	2, 41	.184
H44	0.249	2, 42	.780
H45	1.373	2, 42	.265
H46	1.380	2, 42	.263
H47	0.624	2, 42	.541
H48	0.019	2, 42	.981
H49	0.118	2, 42	.889
H50	0.108	2, 42	.898
H51	0.028	2, 42	.972
H52	0.080	2, 42	.923

H27. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for H27

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.70	0.95	10
District	2.88	1.09	25
Other	2.90	1.29	10

H28. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for H28

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.20	1.14	10
District	3.52	0.92	25
Other	3.70	0.95	10

H29. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for H29

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.50	1.08	10
District	3.88	1.08	25
Other	3.40	1.07	10

H30. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for H30

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.20	1.32	10
District	3.72	0.84	25
Other	3.70	1.06	10

H31. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement an

administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for H31

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.10	0.99	10
District	2.88	1.17	25
Other	3.60	0.97	10

H32. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for H32

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.60	0.97	10
District	3.00	1.26	25
Other	3.30	1.16	10

H33. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for H33

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.30	1.16	10
District	2.92	1.19	25
Other	3.20	0.92	10

H34. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for H34

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.80	1.14	10
District	2.56	1.08	25
Other	2.90	1.37	10

H35. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for H35

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.90	1.10	10
District	3.12	1.20	25
Other	3.00	1.15	10

H36. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for H36

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.40	0.97	10
District	3.40	1.12	25
Other	3.50	0.85	10

H37. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for H37

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.44	1.01	9
District	3.04	1.17	25
Other	2.80	0.92	10

H38. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for H38

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.89	1.27	9
District	3.72	1.10	25
Other	3.40	1.26	10

H39. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics for H39

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.30	1.16	10
District	2.76	1.01	25
Other	3.10	1.10	10

H40. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics for H40

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.80	1.55	10
District	2.88	1.17	25
Other	2.50	1.35	10

H41. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics for H41

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.10	1.20	10
District	2.80	1.04	25
Other	3.30	0.95	10

H42. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 18

Descriptive Statistics for H42

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	1.10	10
District	3.36	1.15	25
Other	3.10	1.29	10

H43. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 19

Descriptive Statistics for H43

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.40	0.52	10
District	3.75	1.03	24
Other	4.00	0.94	10

H44. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 20

Descriptive Statistics for H44

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.10	0.99	10
District	3.04	1.02	25
Other	2.80	1.14	10

H45. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 21

Descriptive Statistics for H45

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.20	0.42	10
District	3.80	1.00	25
Other	4.20	0.42	10

H46. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 22

Descriptive Statistics for H46

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.60	0.97	10
District	2.44	1.08	25
Other	3.10	1.10	10

H47. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 23

Descriptive Statistics for H47

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.70	0.95	10
District	2.32	0.85	25
Other	2.50	1.08	10

H48. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 24

Descriptive Statistics for H48

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	2.80	1.32	10
District	2.72	1.24	25
Other	2.70	1.25	10

H49. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 25

Descriptive Statistics for H49

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	0.74	10
District	4.00	0.58	25
Other	3.90	0.88	10

H50. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 26

Descriptive Statistics for H50

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.20	0.42	10
District	4.12	0.60	25
Other	4.20	0.63	10

H51. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 27

Descriptive Statistics for H51

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.60	1.26	10
District	3.52	1.12	25
Other	3.60	0.97	10

H52. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 28

Descriptive Statistics for H52

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	0.74	10
District	4.00	0.72	24
Other	3.90	1.10	10

RQ3. To what extent do special education directors in Kansas perceive that additional coursework is needed in graduate programs to prepare for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes?

Twenty-six one-sample t tests were conducted to test H53-H78. The one-sample t test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a test value of 3.0, and the group mean is a numerical value. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's d , is reported.

H53. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 5.318$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.784$. The sample mean ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.97$) was significantly higher than the test value. H53 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H54. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 6.716$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.989$. The sample mean ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.90$) was significantly higher than the test value. H54 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop

and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H55. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education personnel.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 4.841$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.713$. The sample mean ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.94$) was significantly higher than the test value. H55 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education personnel. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H56. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = 9.130$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.351$. The sample mean ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.77$) was significantly higher than the test value. H56 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H57. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 8.202$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.197$. The sample mean ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.76$) was significantly higher than the test value. H57 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H58. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 4.470$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.661$. The sample mean ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.09$) was significantly higher than the test value. H58 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H59. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 6.162$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.906$. The sample mean ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.96$) was significantly higher than the test value. H59 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H60. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 5.967$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.877$. The sample mean ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.06$) was significantly higher than the test value. H60 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H61. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 5.149$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.757$. The sample mean ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.03$) was significantly higher than the test value. H61 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H62. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 5.197$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.768$. The sample mean ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.99$) was significantly higher than the test value. H62 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H63. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to

guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 3.110$, $p = .003$, Cohen's $d = 0.459$. The sample mean ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.09$) was significantly higher than the test value. H63 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a small effect.

H64. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = 7.103$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.057$. The sample mean ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.05$) was significantly higher than the test value. H64 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H65. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(42) = 4.691$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.713$. The sample mean ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.01$) was significantly higher than the test value. H65 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H66. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = 6.961$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.037$. The sample mean ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.07$) was significantly higher than the test value. H66 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H67. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = 4.214$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.621$. The sample mean ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.03$) was significantly higher than the test value. H67 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H68. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 3.520$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.515$. The sample mean ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.01$) was significantly higher than the test value. H68 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H69. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 5.215$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.762$. The sample mean ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.05$) was significantly higher than the test value. H69 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H70. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 6.082$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.899$. The sample mean ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.99$) was significantly higher than the test value. H70 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve

instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H71. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 4.841$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.604$. The sample mean ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.94$) was significantly higher than the test value. H71 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H72. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 4.289$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.630$. The sample mean ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.00$) was significantly higher than the test value. H72 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H73. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 5.205$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.774$. The sample mean ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.93$) was significantly higher than the test value. H73 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H74. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 5.780$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.850$. The sample mean ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.07$) was significantly higher than the test value. H74 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H75. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 4.168$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.604$. The sample mean ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.10$) was significantly higher than the test value. H75 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H76. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(44) = 4.308$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.640$. The sample mean ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.00$) was significantly higher than the test value. H76 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H77. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 6.162$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.906$. The sample mean ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.96$) was significantly higher than the test value. H77 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H78. Special education directors in Kansas perceive additional coursework is needed to be able to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels.

The results of the one-sample t test used to compare the mean perception with the test value (3.0) indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean and the test value, $t(45) = 6.770$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.000$. The sample mean ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.91$) was significantly higher than the test value. H78 was supported. Special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels. The effect size indicated a large effect.

RQ4. To what extent do the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the need for additional coursework for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes differ by license held by the special education directors?

Twenty-six one-factor ANOVAs were conducted to test H79-H104. The categorical variable used to group the dependent variable is license type (a special education director's license, a coordinator of special education license, a district level license, and other). The results of the one-factor ANOVA can be used to test for differences in the means for a numerical variable among three or more groups. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size, as indexed by *eta-squared*, is reported.

The results of the 26 ANOVAs indicated no significant differences in the perceptions of the special education directors in Kansas regarding the need for additional coursework for the necessary skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration based on the license held by the special education directors. Table 29, which presents the hypothesis testing statistics for the tests, is included below. Each of the 26 hypotheses is listed after Table 29 along with a table that presents a summary of the descriptive statistics for that hypothesis. H79-H104 were not supported.

Table 29

Hypothesis testing statistics for H79 – H 104

Hypothesis	<i>F</i>	<i>df1, df2</i>	<i>p</i>
H79	0.636	2, 42	.534
H80	1.914	2, 42	.160
H81	0.538	2, 42	.588
H82	2.336	2, 41	.109
H83	1.198	2, 42	.312
H84	0.561	2, 42	.575
H85	1.434	2, 42	.250
H86	1.206	2, 42	.309
H87	0.185	2, 42	.832
H88	1.498	2, 42	.235
H89	0.073	2, 42	.930
H90	3.246	2, 41	.049
H91	0.933	2, 39	.402
H92	0.663	2, 41	.521
H93	0.066	2, 41	.936
H94	0.545	2, 42	.584
H95	1.480	2, 42	.239
H96	0.147	2, 42	.864
H97	1.987	2, 42	.150
H98	0.392	2, 42	.678
H99	0.351	2, 42	.706
H100	0.044	2, 42	.957
H101	1.211	2, 42	.308
H102	1.977	2, 41	.151
H103	0.761	2, 42	.474
H104	2.665	2, 42	.081

H79. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 30

Descriptive Statistics for H79

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.00	0.00	10
District	3.60	1.08	25
Other	3.60	1.14	10

H80. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 31

Descriptive Statistics for H80

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	0.74	10
District	4.04	0.68	25
Other	3.40	1.35	10

H81. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education personnel differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 32

Descriptive Statistics for H81

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.50	0.85	10
District	3.80	0.96	25
Other	3.50	1.08	10

H82. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 33

Descriptive Statistics for H82

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.10	0.32	10
District	4.21	0.66	24
Other	3.60	1.17	10

H83. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 34

Descriptive Statistics for H83

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	0.32	10
District	4.04	0.89	25
Other	3.60	0.70	10

H84. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 35

Descriptive Statistics for H84

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.70	0.95	10
District	3.84	1.18	25
Other	3.40	1.07	10

H85. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 36

Descriptive Statistics for H85

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.20	0.42	10
District	3.64	1.11	25
Other	4.00	0.82	10

H86. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 37

Descriptive Statistics for H86

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	0.88	10
District	4.12	1.01	25
Other	3.50	1.35	10

H87. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 38

Descriptive Statistics for H87

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.80	0.92	10
District	3.84	1.03	25
Other	3.60	1.26	10

H88. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 39

Descriptive Statistics for H88

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.20	0.42	10
District	3.56	1.12	25
Other	3.80	1.03	10

H89. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 40

Descriptive Statistics for H89

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.50	0.97	10
District	3.44	1.19	25
Other	3.60	1.07	10

H90. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 41

Descriptive Statistics for H90

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.80	0.42	10
District	3.88	1.23	24
Other	3.90	0.74	10

H91. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 42

Descriptive Statistics for H91

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.00	0.95	10
District	3.52	1.16	23
Other	3.89	1.17	9

H92. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 43

Descriptive Statistics for H92

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.44	0.53	9
District	4.04	1.10	25
Other	3.90	1.37	10

H93. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 44

Descriptive Statistics for H93

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.70	0.82	10
District	3.58	1.14	24
Other	3.70	1.06	10

H94. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 45

Descriptive Statistics for H94

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.80	1.03	10
District	3.40	1.08	25
Other	3.50	0.85	10

H95. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 46

Descriptive Statistics for H95

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.10	0.57	10
District	3.56	1.29	25
Other	4.10	0.57	10

H96. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 47

Descriptive Statistics for H96

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.00	0.82	10
District	3.80	1.04	25
Other	3.90	1.10	10

H97. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 48

Descriptive Statistics for H97

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.10	0.88	10
District	3.60	0.82	25
Other	3.30	1.16	10

H98. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 49

Descriptive Statistics for H98

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	1.07	10
District	3.64	0.99	25
Other	3.80	1.03	10

H99. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 50

Descriptive Statistics for H99

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.50	0.85	10
District	3.80	0.87	25
Other	3.70	1.25	10

H100. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 51

Descriptive Statistics for H100

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	3.90	0.88	10
District	3.92	1.15	25
Other	3.80	1.14	10

H101. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 52

Descriptive Statistics for H101

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.10	1.10	10
District	3.56	1.00	25
Other	3.40	1.26	10

H102. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 53

Descriptive Statistics for H102

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.22	0.67	9
District	3.48	1.05	25
Other	3.50	1.08	10

H103. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 54

Descriptive Statistics for H103

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.20	0.42	10
District	3.76	1.05	25
Other	3.80	1.14	10

H104. Special education directors' in Kansas perceptions of additional coursework needed to be able to consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels differ by license held by the special education directors.

Table 55

Descriptive Statistics for H104

License	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Coordinator or Director	4.30	0.48	10
District	3.92	0.81	25
Other	3.40	1.26	10

Summary

Chapter 4 included the descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing results for special education directors' perceptions of the adequacy of and additional coursework needed in their graduate school programs. Presented in Chapter 5 are the interpretations and recommendations of the study. A summary of the study is provided, including the overview of the problem, purpose statement and research questions, methodology, and

major findings. Chapter 5 ends with the findings related to the literature and the conclusions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

The findings of this study provided an understanding of special education directors' perceptions about their graduate programs and the skills the special education directors learned through their graduate programs to carry out their assigned duties and responsibilities in their district-level positions. Further, special education directors provided their perceptions about whether they needed additional graduate coursework. The study was also developed to understand differences in the special education directors' perceptions based on the type of license (special education director, special education coordinator/supervisor, or district level license) held by the special education director. Presented in Chapter 5 is a summary of the study, including an overview of the problem, purpose statement and research questions, a review of the methodology, and the major findings. Also addressed in Chapter 5 are the findings related to the literature and conclusions.

Study Summary

This section provides a summary of the study. First, an overview of the problem associated with licensure requirements and graduate courses for special education directors is provided. The second and third sections restate the purpose of the study and review the study's methodology. Finally, the major findings of the study are presented. The information from the research study can benefit the field of special education, providing pertinent information about the graduate program's course work and licensing for special education directors.

Overview of the problem. At the time the current study was conducted, little research has been completed about whether special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to carry out their leadership responsibilities at the district level to provide special education services or whether they perceived additional coursework was necessary. Nearly 20 years ago, the licensure endorsement requirements changed for special education directors to hold the district-level position (Educator Licensure Regulation, 2000). Before 2003, the licensure requirements were more specific to the position of special education director. Currently, Kansas requires district-level licensure endorsement to hold the position of director of special education (Educator Licensure Regulation, 2000). The need to understand the effect of licensing requirements on the knowledge and skills provided in graduate school coursework for special education directors is pertinent to ensure there are qualified individuals in this unique district position.

Purpose statement and research questions. The first purpose of this study was to determine the extent special education directors in Kansas perceive their graduate programs provided the necessary skills (assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration) for them to complete the duties and responsibilities related to district level positions. The second purpose of this study was to determine the extent the perceptions of the special education directors regarding the extent their graduate programs provided the necessary skills (assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration) differ by licensure. The

third purpose of this study was to determine the extent special education directors in Kansas perceive that additional coursework is needed in graduate programs to prepare for the skill areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes. The final purpose of this study was to determine the extent the perceptions of the special education directors regarding the need for additional coursework for the areas of assessment; curricular content knowledge; programs, services, and outcomes; research and inquiry; leadership and policy; professional and ethical practice; and collaboration for improved student outcomes differ by licensure. To address these purposes, four research questions were posed, and 104 hypotheses were tested.

Review of the methodology. This quantitative study utilized survey research methods to analyze special education directors' perceptions of their graduate program and the extent that those perceptions differ depending on their licensure. Special education directors across Kansas were surveyed using an original survey developed by the researcher using a list of 26 skills derived from the CEC (2015) standards. Survey data were collected in an Excel spreadsheet and downloaded to IBM SPSS Statistics Faculty pack 25 for PC for data analysis. One-sample *t* tests and one-factor ANOVAs were used to analyze the data.

Major findings. The results of the hypothesis testing addressing the four research questions and testing 104 hypotheses were presented in Chapter 4. The analysis of the results is provided about the special education directors' perceptions of the adequacy of

and additional coursework needed in their graduate school programs. Additionally, the results are presented about how the directors' perceptions differ by license type.

Of the 26 CEC skill areas, special education directors agree that their graduate programs prepared them for almost half of the skills. Special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to be able to

- develop and implement ongoing evaluation of education programs;
- develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel;
- design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices;
- engage in data-based decision making for the administration of education programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in education planning, implementation, and evaluation;
- implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders;

- engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making;
- demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities; and
- consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels.

Special education directors disagree that two skills are provided in their graduate program, which include

- strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families and
- develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

For all other skills, special education directors had no opinion about whether their graduate programs provided the necessary skills during their coursework in graduate school. These skills included the ability to:

- advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems;
- develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies;
- provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families;

- develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals;
- develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families;
- develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families; and
- develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood.

To understand what additional course work special education directors perceive to be necessary in their graduate programs, data were analyzed, and the researcher found that

special education directors perceive additional coursework is needed in all 26 CEC skills (see Appendix A).

Data were analyzed for the hypotheses that tested whether special education directors' perceptions differed according to their license. The results indicated no significant differences, regardless of the license held by the special education director, about the adequacy of their graduate coursework. Furthermore, the results indicated no significant differences in perceptions of special education directors about additional coursework needed regardless of the license held for their position of special education director.

Findings Related to the Literature

Presented in Chapter 2 is the relevant research related to this study. This section makes connections between the results found in this study and those found in previous studies identified. In comparison to what special education directors perceive as necessary skills, limited research has been conducted about special education directors' perceptions of skills learned through their graduate coursework and special education directors' perceptions of additional skills needed to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a special education director. When this study was completed, one study was found that included the effect of licensure held; therefore, that is the only study to compare the current study's findings. The majority of research available for comparison is about special education director's perceptions of what essential skills are necessary for the special education director position. Furthermore, there were no studies in the literature review that specifically related to the following CEC skills: developing data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of

diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families; joining and participating in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families; to applying leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families; to communicating a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families; and to strengthening the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The areas of literature compared include perceptions of graduate preparation, additional skills perceived to be needed in a position of special education director, as well as the necessary skills identified in the research, and the effect of certification on the special education directors pre-service training.

Graduate preparation. Colhour (2016) and Super (2005) conducted studies to understand the knowledge and skills special education directors perceive they learned through their preparation programs. While the skills found in Colhour (2016) and Super (2005) studies do not include all the 26 skills, some of the knowledge and skills are relevant for comparing this study's results. The findings from the current study indicate that special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems. These findings do not support Colhour's (2016) findings that "on average, Missouri special education directors disagreed that they learned about completing state reports during coursework in graduate school" (p. 64).

Additionally, findings from the current study indicate that special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices. These findings support Colhour's (2016) findings. However, they do not support the work of Super (2005) as one special education director named several areas that were missing from the director's preparation program and expressly included "curricular programs and materials specifically available to special education teachers" (p. 103).

The current study's findings indicated that special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The current study's findings are inconsistent with the findings of Super (2005), who found that special education directors reported they did not have a special education law class during their preparation programs. However, the findings of the current study support Colhour's (2016) findings that "on average, Missouri special education directors agreed that they learned about compliance with special education law and regulations during coursework in graduate school" (p. 63).

The findings from the current study indicate that special education directors in Kansas do not agree or disagree that their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop a budget per local, state, or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. These findings are inconsistent with Super (2005) and Colhour (2016). Super found that the special education directors reported that they did not learn about "financing (including how to do budget supplements, budget transfers,

how to allocate funds to salaries, fixed charges, and all the other line items involved)” (p. 103) during their preparation programs. Colhour (2016) also found that special education directors in Missouri reported that their graduate programs did not prepare them for the budgeting and finance aspect of the position.

Additional skills. An additional focus of the current study was to understand special education directors’ perceptions of additional skills needed to carry out the roles and responsibilities as a special education director. Research studies conducted by Thompson and O’Brian (2007), Super (2005), and Fan et al. (2019) have provided results to compare this topic. To understand the full continuum of skills needed for current special education directors, Fan et al. (2019) included a question about “what additional knowledge and/or skills should be included in special education director preparation/training programs and continuous professional development” (p. 41). While Thompson and O’Brian (2007) did not specifically study what additional knowledge and skills were needed from graduate coursework, they did state what implications their research has on the professional development needs of current and future special education directors. The results from the current study’s findings in which special education directors agree that additional coursework is need for particular skills can substantiate the results of Thompson and O’Brian’s (2007) findings.

The current study’s findings are congruent with Super (2005) and Fan et al. (2019) because results from the current study indicated that special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to be able to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices, as do their results. Through an interview process, Fan et al. (2019) compiled themes that participants

identified as needed more information, including instructional design. Through the interviews, one respondent reported, “There needs to be more focus on how to provide training to special education staff for effective IEP, instruction, and skills for dealing with mental health issues” (Fan et al., 2019, p. 48).

The findings from the current study indicate that special education directors in Kansas agree that additional coursework is needed to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies. The findings of the current study align with Fan et al. (2019) and Super (2005) because the results of each of these studies found that directors report additional skills were needed to develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies. Through interviews in Fan et al.’s (2019) study, one respondent provided specific information stating, “I would benefit from more information about universal design, mastery-based learning, and assistive technology” (p. 48).

The current study's findings are compatible with Fan et al. (2019) as directors from both studies reported that additional coursework is needed to implement programs and services, such as the multi-tiered system of supports and general education interventions, that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals. Furthermore, the findings from the current study are comparable to the findings from Fan et al. (2019), Thompson and O'Brian (2007), and Super (2005) as the results from these studies indicate that directors agree that additional skills on the use of data-based decision making that support exceptional individuals with disabilities should be included in graduate program coursework. One of the themes that arose in Thompson and O'Brian's (2007) study about professional development was that “today's administrators must be

prepared to explain the effect of special education services on student achievement and to assist their staff in using data to improve programs” (p. 42).

Two of the most notable skills referenced in the literature that special education directors need additional knowledge about were applying special education law and budgeting and finance to provide special education services. The current study’s findings indicate that special education directors in Kansas agree additional coursework is needed to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families and develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. These findings support both Fan et al. (2019) and Thompson and O’Brian (2007). “The respondents ranked finance and law as being very important areas of professional development” (Thompson & O’Brian, 2007, p. 42).

Necessary skills. Most studies available for review focused on what special education directors perceive as the skills necessary for the special education director to carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities. While the current study does not focus on the special education directors’ perceptions of essential skills required of this district-level special education administrative position, the current study’s results correlate to the findings from the literature in this section. When special education directors in Kansas agree that particular skills were taught in graduate coursework this solidifies the necessity of the skills for special education directors, therefore, substantiating the findings in the comparison studies.

The current study's findings provide evidence that special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs. These findings are in alignment with Hodson (1975) and Colhour (2016), as special education directors in both studies report that program development and evaluation is a skill that should be included in university training. Additionally, the current study's findings indicate that special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel. These findings correlate with Hodson's (1975) finding; the results from Hodson's study provided data that indicates special education directors should be able to evaluate the performance and potential dismissal of professional staff.

The data from the current study are supportive of Colhour (2016) and Gurley (2011). The current study's findings provide data that special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices. Both Colhour's (2016) and Gurley's (2011) findings indicate that this is an essential skill for special education directors. Respondents in Gurley's (2011) study specifically responded that it was important to identify "best practices in instruction" and determine "which practices and interventions are most effective and efficient for ensuring optimal student achievement" (p. 94).

The current study's findings indicate that special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with

exceptionalities and their families. These findings correlate with the findings from Hodson (1975), Tate (2009), Colhour (2016), and McDonald (2020). Additionally, Tate (2009) found that for special education directors to be successful, their programs needed to include knowledge about special education law and special education content.

Klemisch (2014) found that professional and ethical practice was the most highly identified skill needed to fulfill the position. The findings from the current study correlate with the finding in Klemisch's (2014) study. The results from the current study indicate special education directors in Kansas agree their graduate programs provided the necessary skills to communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families. The findings from the current study indicate that special education directors in Kansas agree that their graduate programs provided all the skills under the seventh standard from the CEC specialty set on collaboration and shared decision-making with a variety of stakeholders. The results from the current study are compatible with findings from Hodson (1975), Colhour (2016), and McDonald (2020).

Effect of certification. Clifford (2016) studied the effect of certification on the perceptions of special education directors' knowledge and skills. The results of the current study indicate that there were not any significant differences in special education directors' perceptions regardless of the license endorsement held (special education director, district-level licensure, or other), which supports Clifford (2016), who sought to understand if "state certification influence the effectiveness of special education administrators" (p. 6) on the CEC (2012) standards. Findings from Clifford (2016)

indicate that "participants endorsed as a special education director reported a similar level of performance as participants not endorsed as a special education director" (p. 27).

Conclusions

The current study has several implications for the state of Kansas. Further, there are recommendations for future research that can contribute to the literature on special education directors' perceptions. The last section of this chapter explains in greater detail the implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Implications for action. The implications of this researcher's findings from this study can support special education directors at the state and local levels. A review of the current regulations with input from special education directors provides valuable information about whether the 26 CEC skill was included in their graduate coursework and if special education directors perceived additional coursework was necessary. This information can support current and future recommendations for regulations in Kansas. Further, universities in Kansas can use these findings to determine if additional coursework is needed in their current graduate programs. With special education directors reporting that only about half of the skills being identified as skills included in university training, universities may need to review this information and include instruction of the missing skills in their graduate programs. Additionally, special education directors need to grow professionally. Additional graduate school coursework about the following skills is necessary. The study's findings can provide a foundation for school districts to understand what their staff needs to be successful in their positions. Additionally, local school districts can use the findings to develop professional

development to support the professional growth of directors employed by their school districts. Whitworth and Hatley (1979) summed this up well, stating, “Clearly, certification standard practices by states have a large effect on university training programs, professionals who enter the field, and ultimately the quality of special education programs in the local district” (p. 297).

Recommendations for future research. In the current study, special education directors in Kansas provided their perceptions of skills taught during their graduate coursework based on the required license held (special education director, special education coordinator/supervisor, or district level license), which can contribute to the special education literature. Additional research may be needed to discern special education directors’ perceptions and what effect licensure has on the knowledge and skills taught during their graduate coursework. The following suggestions provide a starting point for future research in the area of special education administration.

First, this study could be replicated in other states. Depending on the previous, current, and potential future licensing requirements of other states, there may be a need to understand how licensing impacts the roles and responsibilities of directors in states where there have been multiple licensing requirements for the position of special education. State departments of education across the nation may find information of this type valuable to understand the current ramifications of policies in their states.

This study could also be expanded in Kansas to include additional stakeholders in the education system to understand their perceptions of additional skills special education directors need to carry out roles and responsibilities. While not all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the position of special education director, each administrative

sector of education, and staff, parents, and community members should have a voice in how this position affects their role in supporting students with disabilities.

Using the same 26 skills, perceptions of special education directors could be sought through a qualitative study. The researcher could gain additional information about specific skill sets. Providing respondents with sentence stems or open-ended questions may allow them to further explain any of the skills, thus allowing additional information to be gathered and used for graduate schools to develop their course outcomes.

Additionally, this study could be extended by collecting and analyzing demographic information about the education and previous employment of the special education directors to provide a better understanding of how their previous experiences might affect their perceptions. The study's findings could provide pertinent information about how previous educational and on-the-job experiences support a special education director's current role. The information gained from a study of this nature could help support employing agencies with additional information about candidates who hold the district-level licensure and lead special education in their school districts.

In Kansas, special education directors' responsibilities may vary depending on the size, location, and model provided by the LEA. An additional study could be developed to compare the special education directors' perceptions in Kansas of the skills needed to carry out the roles and responsibilities assigned depending on the make-up of the LEA. The findings from the study can provide the information necessary to develop professional development plans for current and future directors who hold these district-level positions.

Concluding remarks. It is imperative to have qualified staff leading the charge of special education to assure federal and state mandates are followed, and students are provided FAPE. Fan et al. (2019) stated, “the importance of special education leadership competencies cannot be overstated” (p. 55). As the needs of students with disabilities continue to change through the 21st century, so will the role of special education director. Graduate programs should be developed to provide the best foundation for this district-level position for a special population that continues to evolve. According to Super (2005), “the historical preparation and certification of special education administrators falls under a broad umbrella” (p. 28). While this may have been true for previous leaders, a closer examination of research points to specific skills required for special education directors. Isaac (2014) stated, “the role of the special education administrator requires an extensive knowledge base to understand the needs of students with disabilities to ensure appropriate educational programming” (p. 13). On-going investigation of how licensure requirements affect current and future graduate coursework for those who lead this special population is key to assuring students with disabilities are provided the best possible education.

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Appendices

**Appendix A: The Advanced Specialty Set: Special Education Administration
Specialist**

Advanced Specialty Set: Special Education Administration Specialist

Advanced Preparation Standard 1: Assessment	
<i>Knowledge</i>	
SEA.1.K1	Models, theories, and practices used to evaluate educational programs and personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families
<i>Skills</i>	
SEA.1.S1	Advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems
SEA.1.S2	Develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs and personnel
SEA.1.S3	Design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices

Advanced Preparation Standard 2: Curricular Content Knowledge	
<i>Knowledge</i>	
SEA.2.K1	Instruction and services needed to support access to the general education curriculum for individuals with exceptionalities
<i>Skills</i>	
SEA.2.S1	Develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies
SEA.2.S2	Provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families

Advanced Preparation Standard 3: Programs, Services, and Outcomes	
<i>Knowledge</i>	
SEA.3.K1	Programs and services within the general education curriculum to achieve positive school outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities
SEA.3.K2	Programs and strategies that promote positive school engagement for individuals with exceptionalities
<i>Skills</i>	
SEA.3.S1	Develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.3.S2	Develop and implement programs and services that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals
SEA.3.S3	Develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families

Advanced Preparation Standard 4: Research and Inquiry	
<i>Knowledge</i>	
SEA.4.K1	Research in administrative practices that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families
<i>Skills</i>	
SEA.4.S1	Engage in data-based decision making for the administration of educational programs and services that support exceptional individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.4.S2	Join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families

Advanced Preparation Standard 5: Leadership and Policy	
<i>Knowledge</i>	
SEA.5.K1	Models, theories, and philosophies that provide the foundation for the administration of programs and services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.5.K2	Historical and social significance of the laws, regulations, and policies as they apply to the administration of programs and the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.5.K3	Local, state or provincial, and national fiscal policies and funding mechanisms in education, social, and health agencies as they apply to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
<i>Skills</i>	
SEA.5.S1	Interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.5.S2	Apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.5.S3	Develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.5.S4	Engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.5.S5	Communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families

Advanced Preparation Standard 6: Professional and Ethical Practice	
<i>Knowledge</i>	
SEA.6.K1	Ethical theories and practices as they apply to the administration of programs and services with individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.6.K2	Adult learning theories and models as they apply to professional development programs
SEA.6.K3	Professional development theories and practices that improve instruction and instructional content for individuals with exceptionalities

SEA.6.K4	Effect of diversity on educational programming expectations for individuals with exceptionalities
SEA.6.K5	Principles of representative governance that support the system of special education administration
Skills	
SEA.6.S1	Communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.6.S2	Develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities

Advanced Preparation Standard 7: Collaboration	
Knowledge	
SEA.7.K1	Collaborative theories and practices that support the administration of programs and services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.7.K2	Administrative theories and models that facilitate communication among all stakeholders
SEA.7.K3	Importance and relevance of advocacy at the local, state or provincial, and national level for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
Skills	
SEA.7.S1	Utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in educational planning, implementation, and evaluation
SEA.7.S2	Strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.7.S3	Develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
SEA.7.S4	Develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood
SEA.7.S5	Implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders
SEA.7.S6	Engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making
SEA.7.S7	Demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities
SEA.7.S8	Consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels

Appendix B: Survey

Part I. Please rate your agreement with each of the following statements related to the extent you perceive you were taught the following skills during your coursework in graduate school.

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, NO = No Opinion, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

1. Advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems

SD D NO A SA

2. Develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs

SD D NO A SA

3. Develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel

SD D NO A SA

4. Design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices

SD D NO A SA

5. Develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies

SD D NO A SA

6. Provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

7. Develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

8. Develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals

SD D NO A SA

9. Develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

10. Engage in data-based decision making for the administration of educational programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

11. Join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

12. Interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

13. Apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

14. Develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

15. Engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

16. Communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

17. Communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

18. Develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

19. Utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in educational planning, implementation, and evaluation

SD D NO A SA

20. Strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

21. Develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

22. Develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood

SD D NO A SA

23. Implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders

SD D NO A SA

24. Engage in leadership practices that support shared decision-making

SD D NO A SA

25. Demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities

SD D NO A SA

26. Consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels

SD D NO A SA

Part II. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements related to what extent you perceive additional graduate school coursework about the following skills is necessary.

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, NO = No Opinion, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

27. Advocate for and implement procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptionalities in accountability systems

SD D NO A SA

28. Develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education programs

SD D NO A SA

29. Develop and implement ongoing evaluations of personnel

SD D NO A SA

30. Design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices

SD D NO A SA

31. Develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies

SD D NO A SA

32. Provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families
- SD D NO A SA
33. Develop and implement a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
- SD D NO A SA
34. Develop and implement programs and services (MTSS, GEI, etc.) that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals
- SD D NO A SA
35. Develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptionalities and their families
- SD D NO A SA
36. Engage in data-based decision making for the administration of educational programs and services that support individuals with exceptionalities and their families
- SD D NO A SA
37. Join and participate in professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptionalities and their families
- SD D NO A SA
38. Interpret and apply current laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of services to individuals with exceptionalities and their families
- SD D NO A SA
39. Apply leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families
- SD D NO A SA

40. Develop a budget in accordance with local, state or provincial, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

41. Engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state or provincial, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

42. Communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

43. Communicate and demonstrate a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

44. Develop and implement professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

45. Utilize collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in educational planning, implementation, and evaluation

SD D NO A SA

46. Strengthen the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

47. Develop and implement intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

SD D NO A SA

48. Develop seamless transitions of individuals with exceptionalities across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood

SD D NO A SA

49. Implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders

SD D NO A SA

50. Engage in leadership practices the support shared decision making

SD D NO A SA

51. Demonstrate the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptionalities

SD D NO A SA

52. Consult and collaborate in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels

SD D NO A SA

Part III. Please mark the appropriate response. (check all that apply)

53. License held to be eligible for the position of director or assistant director of special education in the state of Kansas:

_____ Coordinator/Supervisor of special education

_____ Director of special education

_____ District level licensure

_____ Other: Please specify _____

Appendix C: Feedback Request From Expert Panelists

June 22, 2020

Dear Special Education Administrator,

My name is Stacie Morris. I am an Executive Coordinator of Special Education in Kansas and a doctoral student at Baker University. I am studying the perceptions of directors and assistant directors of special education about whether their graduate programs prepared them for their assigned duties as a director of special education. Further, I will gain information about whether directors and assistant directors of special education believe there is additional coursework needed in preparation programs. Additionally, gathering license type from the survey participants will provide me data about whether the perceptions of directors and assistant directors of special education differ based on the type of license held by the director.

To research this topic, I have created an original survey using wording from the skills portion of the Council for Exceptional Child (CEC) Advanced Specialty Set: Special Education Administration Specialist (see attached). The only change I made in the wording, was to replace the active verb with a gerund. I am seeking peer reviewers to assist in evaluating the survey and chose you due to your experience in the supervision of special education. I ask that you evaluate the survey for the following areas:

- Are the items readable, too wordy, or complicated?
- Do the items address the correct areas for directors of special education?
- Does changing the verb(s) at the beginning of each item from an active verb to a gerund, change the meaning of the items?
- Are there any items I should add or modify?

Please find attached the survey for your review. Your input is greatly appreciated and I am requesting a response time of two weeks. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. If you have an interest, I would be happy to send you an electronic copy of the survey results.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Stacie L. Morris

Appendix D: IRB Letter of Approval



Baker University Institutional Review Board

September 16th, 2020

Dear Stacie Morris and Susan Rogers,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nathan D. Poell".

Nathan Poell, MLS
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Sara Crump, PhD
Nick Harris
Christa Manson, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix E: Email to Survey Participants

October 1, 2020

Dear Special Education Administrator,

I would like to invite you to provide your perspective and expertise. My name is Stacie Morris. I am an Executive Coordinator of Special Education in Kansas and a doctoral student at Baker University. I am studying the perceptions of directors and assistant directors of special education about whether their graduate programs prepared them for their assigned duties as a director of special education. Your participation in completing this survey is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop your participation at any time without repercussions.

The completion of the survey indicates your consent and permission to use the information you provide. Your privacy is important so your answers to this survey are completely confidential. Combined with other participants' responses, all information from respondents will be shared in summary form. There are no risks associated with your participation.

This three-part, survey consists of 53 questions in total with all of them being multiple-choice and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Please click the link below to complete the survey by November 1, 2020.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdypx9X64xaeJxNrJkMBW4ivWtGjRJGGGC8Dx2tKiufWXYGQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Thank you in advance for your time and participation in this study. If you have questions about the survey, your rights as a participant, or the study, please contact me at StacieLMorris@stu.bakeru.edu or (316) 650-7055, or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers at srogers@bakeru.edu.

Sincerely,

Stacie L Morris
Baker University Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F: Follow-Up Email to Survey Participants

October 26, 2020

Just a reminder, if you have not completed the brief survey below, it is available until November 8, 2020 to complete.

Dear Special Education Administrator,

I would like to invite you to provide your perspective and expertise. My name is Stacie Morris. I am an Executive Coordinator of Special Education in Kansas and a doctoral student at Baker University. I am studying the perceptions of directors and assistant directors of special education about whether their graduate programs prepared them for their assigned duties as a director of special education. Your participation in completing this survey is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop your participation at any time without repercussions.

The completion of the survey indicates your consent and permission to use the information you provide. Your privacy is important so your answers to this survey are completely confidential. Combined with other participants' responses, all information from respondents will be shared in summary form. There are no risks associated with your participation.

This three-part, survey consists of 53 questions in total with all of them being multiple-choice and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Please click the link below to complete the survey by November 8, 2020.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdypx9X64xaeJxNrJkMBW4ivWtGjRJGGGC8Dx2tKiufWXYGQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Thank you in advance for your time and participation in this study. If you have questions about the survey, your rights as a participant, or the study, please contact me at StacieLMorris@stu.bakeru.edu or (316) 650-7055, or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers at srogers@bakeru.edu.

Sincerely,

Stacie L Morris
Baker University Doctoral Candidate

Appendix G: Additional Follow-Up Email to Survey Participants

November 11, 2020

Just a reminder, if you have not completed the brief survey below, I need more responses in order to have a viable study. Please consider participating in the study by completing the survey by November 18, 2020.

Dear Special Education Administrator,

I would like to invite you to provide your perspective and expertise. My name is Stacie Morris. I am an Executive Coordinator of Special Education in Kansas and a doctoral student at Baker University. I am studying the perceptions of directors and assistant directors of special education about whether their graduate programs prepared them for their assigned duties as a director of special education. Your participation in completing this survey is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop your participation at any time without repercussions.

The completion of the survey indicates your consent and permission to use the information you provide. Your privacy is important so your answers to this survey are completely confidential. Combined with other participants' responses, all information from respondents will be shared in summary form. There are no risks associated with your participation.

This three-part survey consists of 53 questions in total with all of them being multiple-choice and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Please click the link below to complete the survey by November 18, 2020.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdypx9X64xaeJxNrJkMBW4ivWtGjRJGGGC8Dx2tKiufWXYGQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Thank you in advance for your time and participation in this study. If you have questions about the survey, your rights as a participant, or the study, please contact me at StacieLMorris@stu.bakeru.edu or (316) 650-7055, or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers at srogers@bakeru.edu.

Sincerely,

Stacie L Morris
Baker University Doctoral Candidate