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Special Education Leadership Practices that Support Postsecondary Transition Service Delivery for Students with Severe Disabilities

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Special Education Leadership Practices that Support Postsecondary Transition Service
Delivery for Students with Severe Disabilities

A Dissertation Presented

by

LAUREL A. PELTIER

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

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College of Education

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Delivery for Students with Severe Disabilities

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. I thank my parents for believing in me and encouraging me to do all that I have ever dreamed I could and for providing so many of the resources that have made this dream possible. I thank my sister and her family for their unfailing support and constant reminders of their love for me. I thank my husband for remaining confident in my ability to accomplish this long-term goal and for caring for our family as I studied. I thank my children for being the joy of my heart and my inspiration. So many experiences have brought me to this place and yet, without the ones who have stayed by me, this accomplishment would mean very little. I'm so grateful to each of you and I could never have come this far without you by my side.

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ABSTRACT

SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT POSTSECONDARY AND TRANSITION SERVICE DELIVERY FOR STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES

SEPTEMBER 2015

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In the past decade, researchers have made new forays into understanding educational leadership and the connections between leadership practices and outcomes for students. While evidence-based leadership practices at the building and district level are critical to the success of students in general and special education settings as a whole, the need for effective leadership in special education as a unique discipline within the field has also received significant attention over the past decade. Another area of special education practice that has received significant attention over the past decade is transition service delivery for secondary students with intellectual disabilities. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the intersection of special education leadership priorities and effective transition service delivery for high school students with severe disabilities. Specifically, this study addresses the research question, “What skills and knowledge do

special education leaders prioritize when leading transition programs for secondary students with severe disabilities?” Using a demographic questionnaire, a Q-sort and follow up questions, this dissertation gathered information from 17 special education leaders in Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Advisory Groups and 17 special education leaders who have not participated in Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment to identify differences in each group’s priorities for educational leadership activities. This study of the nexus between specific leadership activities and secondary transition services for students with severe disabilities has the potential to address long-standing barriers to college access and success for this student population and serve as a guide for professional practice and policy decisions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, educational research has made new forays into understanding educational leadership and the connections between leadership practices and outcomes for students. Much attention has been given to theoretical frameworks for understanding leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Leithwood, Anderson, Mascall, & Strauss, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004), the development of evidence-based leadership practices to support school change efforts (Avolio & Bass, 2002, Ross & Berger, 2009; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Zaretsky, 2004a & b), and the connections between leadership activities and improved student outcomes (Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Leithwood, & Kington, 2008; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Many studies regarding school leadership focus on the role of principal or headmaster (Day, Leithwood, & Sammons, 2008; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Young, Fuller, Brewer, Carpenter, & Mansfield, 2007). An exciting outcome of these and similar studies is an abundance of information about effective educational leadership practices that are demonstrated to improve outcomes for all students.

While evidence-based leadership practices at the building and district level are critical to the success of students in schools as a whole, the need for effective leadership in special education as a unique discipline within the field has also received significant attention over the past decade. A key component of the evolution of special education leadership has been the development and revision of standards of practice for

administrators of special education (Council for Exceptional Children, 2009; Voltz & Collins, 2010; Boscardin, Mainzer, & Kealy, 2011). The need for standards that are specific to special education administration emerged as the result of highly discrepant practices across the United States regarding the training and licensure requirements for educational leaders holding these positions. As noted by Boscardin, Kusek, & Weir (2010), only 27 of 50 states in the U.S. currently require separate licensure for administrators of special education. This has resulted in administration by a group of professionals who lack uniform training or experience related to special education regulations, specialized instructional practices, or the team process that drives decision making for students prior to taking on a leadership role (Crockett, Becker, & Quinn, 2009). The articulation of standards for special education leadership has laid the foundation for a new body of research that targets the practices that are unique to special education administration (Boscardin, McCarthy, & Delgado, 2009). Current research seeks to make connections between these practices and improved outcomes for students with disabilities.

Another area of special education practice that has received significant attention over the past decade is transition service delivery for secondary students with intellectual disabilities. Transition services are designed to supplement the traditional academic program offered by secondary schools for students who qualify for special education. Transition services are described in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations, which state:

Beginning not later than the first individualized educational program (IEP) to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include—

1. Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and,
2. The transition services [including courses of study] needed to assist the child in reaching these goals (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

Transition service delivery is complicated because the emphasis is on preparing students not just for the academic work required for postsecondary education, but also for employment and independent living. Under IDEA, special education leaders are required to design and implement programs that will result in measurably improved work and community-living skills for high school students with disabilities (Glasenapp, 1990); yet, the primary outcome that most high schools are designed to achieve is academic success by getting students prepared for college. Accountability measures such as those required by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) also focus solely on academic progress. While secondary principals and superintendents are getting the message that high school success is about academic proficiency, special education leaders are asked to develop a secondary education system that leads to college, paid employment, and self-determined home and community living (Lindstrom, Paskey, Dickinson, Doren, Zane, & Johnson, 2007). In addition, schools are tasked not only with skill-building related to these settings, but also with equipping students to succeed socially and emotionally in this wide variety of environments. Secondary transition service delivery is further complicated

when special education leaders are face with designing effective programs for students with cognitive impairments, whose instructional needs differ significantly from typical high school students (Greathouse & Shaunessy, 2010).

During the past decade, legislative initiatives have sought to address this issue of equity by reforming educational practices in publicly funded schools. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) has tied federal funding for education to requirements for teacher licensure and evaluation and for monitoring student progress through the development of state-wide academic testing systems. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) includes requirements for secondary students with disabilities who are eligible for special education to receive transition services that will meet identified academic and functional needs. The nexus of these requirements creates a problem for students with cognitive disabilities and those involved in the design of their educational programs. Thomas Hehir (2005) writes extensively about the dilemma schools face when attempting to design effective programs for these students in an era of mandates regarding academic progress, the connection of high-stakes testing outcomes with the awarding of high school diplomas, and the need for high quality transition services to provide skill development related to employment and community experiences. In his book, *New Directions in Special Education*, Hehir says, “if these children receive high-quality services in school, they have a higher likelihood of being employed upon leaving school...Therefore, setting standards and policies without these children in mind may have a devastating impact on a relatively large number of students. Massachusetts has been grappling with this issue and has yet to reach a resolution” (2005, p. 135). Clearly, the educational system has overlooked the unique needs of students who are not

intending to pursue a traditional college experience after high school (Kohler, Johnson, Chadsey-Rusch, & Rusch, 1993).

In Massachusetts, attention to the issue of student preparedness for postsecondary education, employment and independent living has increased in recent years due to the Future Ready and Connecting Activities Initiatives in the state. “Future Ready Massachusetts is a campaign to promote understanding and use of the various tools that will help the Commonwealth’s students get ready for college, career and life! The purpose of Future Ready is not only to inform students about their options, but also to help them plan and take the steps necessary to achieve their goals” (MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2014). The Future Ready initiative is supported by the Massachusetts legislature and the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and works at both the state and local level to raise awareness among students, businesses, K-12 educators and the higher education community about tools that support all students to connect secondary education activities with postsecondary options. The Connecting Activities Initiative has been “providing students of the Commonwealth with opportunities for work experience and career development education through partnerships between the state’s education and workforce development systems since 1998” (MA DESE, 2014) . Both of these initiatives target students with and without disabilities and demonstrate the identified need and public concern for services to support students to transition effectively from school to postsecondary success in not only the academic domain, but also in the domains of employment and community living.

These concerns about preparing students for more than just academic success exist not only at the state level, but are echoed by practices at the federal level as well.

Because of these concerns, the U.S. Department of Education has maintained a long-standing interest in monitoring transition outcomes for students with disabilities. For two consecutive 10-year periods, the department has funded National Longitudinal Transition Studies (NLST, NLST2) to collect data regarding transition services and outcomes experienced by over 11,000 students who were 13-16 years of age at the start of the study and who benefitted from these services. In spite of the continued attention in research and in compliance monitoring processes by state departments of education, transition outcomes for youth with cognitive disabilities continue to show surprisingly limited positive effects. For example, as the result of NLTS2, only 1 in 10 youth with mental retardation reported having a checking account (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005a); only 52% of students with mental retardation participate in further training, employment or postsecondary education programs after finishing high school (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Garza, 2006); and, the social lives of students with mental retardation are characterized by a low likelihood of connecting with friends outside of school or structured groups (Wagner et al., 2005a). The results of NLTS2 demonstrate significant gaps between the transition outcomes for students with intellectual disabilities and those of their peers. “The smooth transition of students with severe handicaps from the school setting to life in the community requires a planned, systematic process...well before the student graduates from the school program” (Glasenapp, 1990, p. 4). The results of NLTS2 show that development of processes to support students with cognitive impairments absolutely needs additional attention.

The purpose of this study is to explore the intersection of special education leadership and effective transition services for high school students with severe

disabilities. Specifically, this study will address the question, ““What skills and knowledge do special education leaders prioritize when leading transition programs for secondary students with intellectual disabilities?” By combining the strands of educational leadership models, evidence-based practices, and improved student outcomes, it is possible to develop a framework to shape effective administrative decision-making (Boscardin, 2007). “The gap that exists between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ needs to be narrowed if persons with moderate and severe disabilities are to maximize the benefits of the entitlements given to them” through the educational system (Wheeler, 1987, p. 6). The application of evidence-based special education leadership practices to secondary transition services for students with cognitive disabilities has the potential to address long-standing barriers to success for this student population and serve as a guide for educator preparation programs and policy decisions.

CHAPTER 2

EVIDENCE-BASED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TRANSITION SERVICES

Evidence-based School Leadership

One of the most exciting developments to emerge in the field of educational leadership is the recent attention to connecting leadership actions to student outcomes. While Leithwood and Jantzi noted in 1998, “empirical evidence concerning the actual effects of either formal or informal teacher leadership are limited in quantity and report mixed results” (p. 5), by 2005, Leithwood and his colleagues were able to report evidence-based connections between key leadership actions and improved outcomes for students in turnaround schools. In fact, a whole cadre of researchers have designed and implemented studies to gather evidence about the connections between specific leadership activities by teachers and principals and their effects on the learning of students (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; O’Brien, 2006; Ross & Berger, 2009; Scanlon, 2009). A review of the literature identifies key actions that educational leaders can implement in schools in order to improve educational outcomes for all students. While the studies reviewed apply to a wide array of school leadership roles (e.g. superintendents, principals, head masters, and special education administrators), Table 2.1 below illustrates four broad educational leadership practices that are demonstrated to improve student outcomes in schools in which these activities are applied.

Table 2.1

Key Research Establishing Evidence-based Leadership Practices

Building Vision and Setting Directions	Engaging Stakeholders & Building Capacity	Using Data to Monitor Progress & Inform Decisions	Spanning Boundaries to Facilitate Communication & Problem-Solving
<p>Lashley & Boscardin (2003)</p> <p>Type of article: Literature/Theory</p> <p>Key concept: Special Ed Administrative Support includes establishing a “common vision.”</p>	<p>Leithwood, et al. (2004)</p> <p>Type of article: Literature/Theory</p> <p>Key concept: Common core of evidence-based leadership practices linked to positive outcomes for students includes setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization.</p>	<p>Hallenger & Snidvongs (2008)</p> <p>Type of article: Literature/Theory</p> <p>Key concept: Effective educational leaders must have both leadership and management skills including “increasing awareness of the importance of data in decision-making” (p. 14).</p>	<p>Blank, Berg, & Mellaville (2006)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: Cross-boundary leaders understand that educating young people to high standards means connecting children and families to sources of opportunity and support in their own communities” (p. v)</p>
<p>Day, Leithwood, & Sammons (2008)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: Nested leadership concept centers on communicating a vision for student learning.</p>	<p>DiPaola & Walther-Thomas (2003)</p> <p>Type of article: Literature/Theory</p> <p>Key concept: Effective special education leaders must be prepared to “advocate effectively for the educational rights of diverse learners” (p. 21).</p>	<p>Passman (2008)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: Special education leaders build systemic capacity by demonstrating effective problem-solving and mediation skills including the ability to use data effectively.</p>	<p>Ross & Berger (2009)</p> <p>Type of article: Literature/Theory</p> <p>Key concept: Effective school leaders emphasize community involvement and the development of positive partnerships with parents and social service agencies.</p>

<p>Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis (2008)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: The public interest is best served by special education leaders who bring the skills and commitments to actualize essential beliefs about social justice & inclusion.</p>	<p>Leithwood & Jantzi (2006)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: “The potency of leadership for increasing student learning hinges on the specific classroom practices which leaders stimulate, encourage, and promote” (p. 223).</p>	<p>Zaretsky (2008)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: One key aspect of special education leadership identified by principals is the ability to develop “sound instructional and assessment practices linked to measureable goals” (p. 168).</p>	<p>Scanlon (2009)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: “Variable coupling and boundary spanning play important roles in systemic reform efforts” for special education (p. 652).</p>
<p>Wiggins & McTighe (2007)</p> <p>Type of book: Practice-based</p> <p>Key concept: Effective leaders implement 10 practices systematically, beginning with establishing a vision for schooling to accomplish school change.</p>	<p>Spillane (2006)</p> <p>Type of book: Literature/Theory</p> <p>Key concept: Effective leadership is the result of distributing leadership roles to many leaders and attending to the “collective interactions among leaders, followers, and their situations” (p. 4).</p>	<p>Boscardin (2007)</p> <p>Type of article: Literature/Theory</p> <p>Key concept: “It is becoming increasingly important for leaders to select and present only meaningful data linking leadership, instruction, and learning in ways that are understandable and clear to stakeholders” (p. 190)</p>	<p>Rusch (1995)</p> <p>Type of article: Research</p> <p>Key concept: Effective leadership must include a focus on interpersonal relationships, reciprocal boundary spanning, and democratic and participatory decision-making processes.</p>

Before proceeding to discuss the evidence that supports each of these practices, it is important to clarify the term “evidence-based.” While there have been many studies regarding educational leadership over the past decade, few have empirically considered how leadership actions interact and affect student learning (Marks & Prouty, 2003; Boscardin, 2007), and few have considered the roles of leaders other than the principal (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Stewart, 2006). Many studies that have emerged in the past decade have relied upon surveys or questionnaires to gather information about the preferences, skills, and competencies of leaders (Evers & Lamoski, 2000). In spite of the need to expand quantitative research that links leadership actions to student learning (Boscardin, 2007), mixed methods and qualitative studies have offered significant insights regarding the core attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of practice associated with effective school leadership (Blank, Berg, & Mellaville, 2006; Day et al., 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The goal of this study will be to explore a model that uses mixed methods to connect specific leadership actions with effective transition service delivery. A review of the literature and the design of this study must rely on the theoretical and applied frameworks that have emerged, most which rely heavily on the methods listed above, that some may consider subjective measures. For the purposes of this review, studies which have employed these methods will be considered “evidence-based” if the results were conducted by expert researchers in the field and the methods used are clearly identified and validated in the literature. Hence, scholars such as Leithwood et al., O’Brien, Theoharis, Causton-Theoharis, Wiggins, and McTighe and others listed above are viewed as researchers whose conclusions are evidence-based and whose work informs sound practice for educational leadership.

Building a Vision and Setting Directions

The vision, mission, and beliefs of a school can be explicitly stated or implied. Briefly defined, the mission, vision, and beliefs are the overarching purposes for which the school exists (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998). While most schools in the 21st century have a written vision or mission statement and core values and beliefs, many educational leaders continue to struggle to understand how to turn these strategic statements into actions (Hallenger & Snidvongs, 2008). It is critical for leaders, particularly those in special education, to articulate and implement a shared construct for decision-making given the many different interests that seek to inform educational practice in public schools (Alford, Perreault, Zellner, & Ballenger, 2011; Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Pazey, 1993; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). Mission-building activities have been demonstrated to be the most influential leadership practices by principals (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 2005). One key consideration for educational leaders is to ensure that the vision, mission, and core values and beliefs of the school are known by members of the school community. Unless stakeholders are aware of the overall purpose for schooling, the mission of the school cannot effectively impact student learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998).

Another evidence-based leadership practice is the active use of the school's vision, mission, and core values and beliefs to inform ongoing decision-making (Spillane, 2006). In fact, those who inspire others in their schools to join together to build capacities in order to accomplish a shared purpose are recognized in the literature as educational leaders, whether they are officially working in leadership positions (e.g. principals, assistant principals, or department heads) or simply exercising their authority

and influence as teacher leaders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Educators who act in formal or informal leadership capacities by influencing school-wide goals have been shown to have a positive influence on the sense of the professional community of teachers (Leithwood, 2005). Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) report that evidence from studies of transformational leadership show that there are significant positive effects on the confidence level of teachers about their ability to implement educational initiatives to improve student achievement when principals set clear goals and motivate people toward a common vision for schooling. Developing and communicating shared goals is also strongly linked with increased student achievement (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Ross & Berger, 2009). In addition, declining performance is also linked with leaders who demonstrated limited involvement with direction setting in underperforming schools (Leithwood, 2009).

Effective educational leaders are also described as people who make the school values highly visible by consistently aligning their language and actions with the mission and core values and beliefs of the organization (Rusch, 1995). As special education leader Richard Villa states, “For leaders to be successful, they need to see the issues in the broader context” (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008, p. 236). In other words, a leader sees every interaction in the context of the school’s mission, and makes that context visible in the words that she speaks and the actions that she embraces. Two critical dispositions identified in the literature about effective educational leaders include having a “bold vision” and the tenacity to bring this vision into practice (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Effective schooling results when leaders embody a clear and consistent vision for teaching and learning and persist in enlisting a network of educators

in promoting the alignment of instruction and the overall vision for schooling (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). In spite of the complexity of the task, educational leaders must commit to turning strategies into actions (Hallenger & Snidvongs, 2008).

Engaging Stakeholders and Building Capacity

Public schooling happens in the context of an extensive community of invested people. Another finding that is particularly important for public school leaders is that educational reform efforts are successful when all of these invested people, or stakeholders, partner effectively (Blank, Berg, & Mellaville, 2006; Zaretsky, 2008). DiPaola & Walther-Thomas (2003) describe the impact that of educational leaders who can successfully bring various stakeholders together: “By creating and supporting relational networks that facilitate dialogue, support, and sharing between teachers, administrators, students and families, the social capital grows as stakeholders work together for the benefit of all learners, including those with disabilities and others at risk” (p. 12). In order to accomplish the outcomes described in the literature, educational leaders need to prioritize specific activities associated with these outcomes.

One evidence-based leadership action associated with engaging stakeholders is the provision of opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate (Morgan & Demchak, 1996; Scanlon, 2009). By encouraging a variety of stakeholders to participate in decision-making, attending to the design of educational conditions such as scheduling time and strategic facilitation for networks to meet, and promoting positive family and community relationships, educational leaders are able to establish a collaborative school culture (Day, Leithwood, & Sammons, 2008; Leithwood, 2005; McClean, 2007; Spillane, 2006).

Effective school leaders seek information from students, families, teachers and community members and also strive to communicate information effectively to these involved constituents (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). When combined with professional development to address gaps in shared practice, the effect of these actions is cumulative, allowing schools to provide the highest quality of instruction based on the resources of the instructional community as a whole (Pugach & Johnson, 2002). The ability to support collaboration is especially critical in the area of special education leadership. Especially in the area of inclusive education, successful schools have almost always used collaborative problem-solving approaches with representation from a variety of different perspectives in order to move forward (Hehir, 2005). The interpersonal and personal capabilities of administrators are central to effective special education leadership (O'Brien, 2006). As Lashley & Boscardin (2003) note: "Becoming an effective special education leader for the 21st century requires that administrators work collaboratively with teachers, parents, and other school administrators, and policymakers to bring resources, personnel, programs and expertise together to solve problems of practice for all students" (p. 4).

Another evidence-based leadership action that builds the capacity of people associated in schools is professional development (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Zaretsky, Moreau, & Faircloth, 2008). Much of the literature emphasizes the vital importance of training and support for teachers, parents, and even school leaders (Leithwood et al., 2004; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; McClean, 2007). Effective leaders use professional development as a tool to support desired changes in policy and practice (Blank, Berg, & Mellaville, 2006). Additional key

leadership and management practices include the development of professional learning communities (Day et al., 2008; Leithwood, 2009); facilitation of meetings and structured planning and problem-solving activities (City et al., 2009; Passman, 2008); and ensuring that the amounts and types of professional development are adequate to meet identified needs (Leithwood, 2009). In addition, the content of professional development activities should be used to provide practitioners a chance to examine the theories that underlie practice, especially in special education, where many practices have arisen from a medical model that is based on the incapacity of students rather than a more positive approach that assumes all students can achieve at high standards (Zaretsky et al., 2008). Effective leaders must apply their understanding of how the school is organized and strategically target repeated cycles of professional development activities to address needs related to individual, small group, and whole school capacities to implement the school's overall mission and vision (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

A third evidence-based leadership practice is providing the opportunity for teachers to share their expertise and embrace the responsibility for accomplishing improved outcomes for students (Smith, 1993; Symes, 2011). "School leadership, from both formal and informal sources, helps to shape the nature of such school conditions as goals, culture, structures, and classroom conditions" (Leithwood, 2005, p.6). For this reason, effective leaders empower and equip local teachers who know, use, and can train colleagues in effective teaching and management practices (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Symes, 2011). They plan time and create structures to support collaborative leadership (O'Brien, 2006). The more widely these leadership responsibilities are distributed, the greater the impact on student outcomes and school culture (Elmore, 2004;

Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Spillane, 2006). For this reason, school leaders who attend to both formal professional development and informal networks of support build a culture in which the power of the team is greater than the power of the individual (Rusch, 1995; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008), a paradigm that fits well with the founding principles of the special education team process described in IDEA.

Using Data

Effective school leaders also understand and use data to inform their practice and guide decisions about educational initiatives (Boscardin, 2007; Passman, 2008; Blank, Berg, & Mellaville, 2006; Day, Leithwood & Sammons, 2008; McClean, 2007; Ross & Berger, 2009). Evidence-based practices associated with this type of progress monitoring include developing a system for data collection and analysis, gathering various sources of data, and dissemination of data in a transparent manner to all stakeholders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998; Ross & Berger, 2009). Frequent collection and analysis of assessment data to support continual monitoring and evaluation of instructional strategies is another evidence-based strategy implemented by school leaders to improve student outcomes (Day et al., 2008). While many tasks associated with data collection and analysis might be viewed as more closely associated with the management functions of a school leader, the overall framework for the use of data and the development of a culture that values data as a source of information, support for instructional decision-making, and transparency about student progress falls under broader evidence-based leadership practices. The role of an effective leader is to conduct these tasks by establishing a collective purpose and guiding informed and sustainable changes to improve instruction and student outcomes (Stewart, 2006). Therefore, a critical leadership competency is to

blend the leadership and management functions associated with data collection by focusing not only on the task of creating systems for progress monitoring, but also to consider how to develop these systems in a way that motivates stakeholders, promotes sustainability and use of data collection and analysis, and legitimizes the use of data as a central value informing educational decision-making (Hallenger & Snidvongs, 2008).

Spanning Boundaries

In addition to the stakeholders directly involved in supporting the educational process, effective school leaders cross the boundaries of the school building and engage the larger community of people who support public education (Blank, Berg, & Mellaville, 2006; Ross & Berger, 2009; Scanlon, 2009). Boundary spanning refers to the connecting activities that leaders accomplish when enlisting partners from beyond the immediate school community. One example of boundary-spanning activity occurs when administrators at the district level (such as superintendents or special education administrators) and administrators at the building level (such as principals, special education coordinators or department heads) are able to cross boundaries posed by budgetary, regulatory, and supervisory constraints to partner when implementing reform efforts (Scanlon, 2009). Another boundary-spanning action occurs as educational leaders reach out to community partners such as local businesses, human service organizations, health care centers, or university-based consultants to support educational initiatives. When partnering with outside consultants, leaders are advised to design initiatives of a reciprocal nature, benefitting both the school community and the partnering agency (Rusch, 2009). Research demonstrates that school leaders can improve their schools and build support for community-based initiatives by crossing “traditional barriers to achieve

shared goals” (Blank, Berg, & Mellaville, 2006, p. 7). Whether enlisting support from central office administrators or building relationships with key community members, leaders who implement boundary-spanning activities have been shown to enhance understanding of reform efforts and strengthen the capacity of their schools (Scanlon, 2009). Effective school leaders commit time and attention to strengthen cross-boundary relationships in order to integrate expectations for students and merge resources to accomplish desired outcomes (Reimer, 1997; Ross & Berger, 2009).

A broad overview of evidence-based leadership demonstrates that effective school leaders in any role can influence outcomes for students by engaging in the following activities: establishing a vision and goals for schooling and high expectations for students; engaging stakeholders and developing their capacity and investment in the vision and values for schooling; using data to monitor student progress and inform decision-making about schooling; and, crossing boundaries that exist between the community within the school building, central office, and community organizations. While abundant research exists to demonstrate the effectiveness of these practices, additional research is needed to make explicit connections between improved student outcomes and how school leaders implement these leadership activities (Boscardin, 2007; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Young, Fuller, Brewer, Carpenter, & Mansfield, 2007).

Evidence-based Leadership for Special Education and Transition

While there is evidence that the actions of creating a vision, engaging stakeholders, using data to monitor progress and crossing boundaries are essential for

educational leaders in both building- and district-level roles, the focus of this study is to explore the specific skills and knowledge essential to leadership in special education. A critical step in understanding effective leadership for transition is the narrowing the focus from the wide scope of educational leadership to a more narrow look at leadership that is specific to special education and transition service delivery.

Fortunately, a significant start on a review of the research in special education administration has been made in recent years. This began with the work of researchers associated with the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), a professional organization for special education leaders affiliated with the Council for Exceptional Children. Researchers such as Mary Lynn Boscardin, Jean Crockett, Mary Kealy, and Carl Lashley began to consider the unique roles and responsibilities which leaders in special education hold which are distinct from some of the conditions under which other educational leaders must operate. In 2007, Boscardin published a key article entitled, “What is Special About Special Education Administration?: Considerations for School Leadership.” In this article, Boscardin notes that to date, many models for educational leadership have focused more on process than on specific outcomes. She identifies 3 evidence-based practices in which special education leaders must have proficiency (responsive leadership interventions and system progress monitoring; problem-solving; and, developing collaborative leadership practices) and states that “pairing the concept of evidence-based practices with leadership models provides a framework for guiding the actions of administrative teams and for helping them to decide which leadership models are the most effective for a given situation” (Boscardin, 2007, p. 196). Building on this work, Boscardin, McCarthy and Delgato (2009) presented an

approach to establishing standards for special education leaders using a collaborative approach involving educational leaders, professional organizations and policy makers. In this article, they present national standards for professional practice that identify the “knowledge and skills thought to be important to the foundations of professional identifies” (Boscardin et al., 2009, p. 69). Following the emergence of professional standards for educational leadership and policy by organizations such as the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for Exceptional Children, the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) established professional standards to identify the knowledge and skills that characterize competent leaders of special education (Boscardin, 2007). From their first presentation in 2003, the CASE standards were revised using an integrative research design consisting of a review of evidence-based literature, Q-sort analysis of previous standards, and a survey.

The results of this research are a framework for effective practice for special education leaders is articulated in the standards for special education administrators proposed by the Council for Exceptional Children (2009), the leading professional agency for special education in the United States. These standards are designed to articulate the priorities for ethics and practice for leaders in the field of special education administration. The framework put forth by the Council for Exceptional Children is currently being revised; however in its current iteration there are six identified standards. These standards are outlined in Figure 2.1 below:



Figure 2.1. Standards Representing Advanced Knowledge for Special Education Administrators (CEC, 2009). This figure represents the six highest priorities for leadership in special education.

In addition to identifying 6 standards which guide the professional and ethical practice of special education leadership, The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) has identified the specific skills and knowledge needed by special education leaders to administer specific programs effectively (Miller & Baker, 2011). The knowledge and skills are aligned to the 6 professional standards and are detailed in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2

Advanced Knowledge for CEC Special Education Administrators (2009)

Standard 1	Leadership and Policy
Knowledge	

SA1 K1	Models, theories, and philosophies that provide the foundation for the administration of programs and services for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA1 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 exceptional learning needs and their families
SA1 K3	Local, state, and national fiscal policies and funding mechanisms in education, social, and health agencies as they apply to the provision of services for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
Skills	
SA1 S1	Interprets and applies current laws, regulations, and policies as they apply to the administration of services to individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA1 S2	Applies leadership, organization, and systems change theory to the provision of services for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA1 S3	Develops a budget in accordance with local, state, and national laws in education, social, and health agencies for the provision of services for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA1 S4	Engages in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state, and national laws as they apply to personnel serving individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA1 S5	Communicates a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
Standard 2 Program Development and Organization	
Knowledge	
SA2 K1	Programs and services within the general curriculum to achieve positive school outcomes for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA2 K2	Programs and strategies that promote positive school engagement for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA2 K3	Instruction and services needed to support access to the general curriculum for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA2 K4	Administrative plans that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies.
Skills	
SA2 S1	Develops and implements a flexible continuum of services based on effective practices for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.

SA2 S2	Develops and implements programs and services that contribute to the prevention of unnecessary referrals.
Standard 3 Research and Inquiry	
Knowledge	
SA3 K1	Research-based administrative practices that supports individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
Skills	
SA3 S1	Engages in data-based decision-making for the administration of educational programs and services that supports exceptional students and their families.
SA3 S2	Develops data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
Standard 4 Evaluation	
Knowledge	
SA4 K1	Models, theories, and practices used to evaluate educational programs and personnel serving individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
Skills	
SA4 S1	Advocates for and implements procedures for the participation of individuals with exceptional learning needs in accountability systems.
SA4 S2	Develops and implements ongoing evaluations of education programs and personnel.
SA4 S3	Provides ongoing supervision of personnel working with individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA4 S4	Designs and implements evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and practices.
Standard 5 Professional Development and Ethical Practice	
Knowledge	
SA5 K1	Ethical theories and practices as they apply to the administration of programs and services with individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA5 K2	Adult learning theories and models as they apply to professional development and supervision.

SA5 K3	Professional development theories and practices that improve instruction and instructional content for students with exceptional learning needs.
SA5 K4	Impact of diversity on educational programming expectations for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
Skills	
SA5 S1	Communicates and demonstrates a high standard of ethical administrative practices when working with staff serving individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA5 S2	Develops and implements professional development activities and programs that improve instructional practices and lead to improved outcomes for students with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA5 S3	Joins and participates in local, state and national professional administrative organizations to guide administrative practices when working with individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
Standard 6 Collaboration	
Knowledge	
SA6 K1	Collaborative theories and practices that support the administration of programs and services for with individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA6 K2	Administrative theories and models that facilitate communication among all stakeholders.
SA6 K3	Importance and relevance of advocacy at the local, state, and national level for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
Skills	
SA6 S1	Utilizes collaborative approaches for involving all stakeholders in educational planning, implementation, and evaluation.
SA6 S2	Strengthens the role of parent and advocacy organizations as they support individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA6 S3	Develops and implements intra- and interagency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
SA6 S4	Facilitates transition plans for individuals with exceptional learning needs across the educational continuum and other programs from birth through adulthood
SA6 S5	Implements collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among all stakeholders.

SA6 S6	Engages in leadership practices that support shared decision making.
SA6 S7	Demonstrates the skills necessary to provide ongoing communication, education, and support for families of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
SA6 S8	Consults and collaborates in administrative and instructional decisions at the school and district levels.

Research which supports the connections between the skills and standards put forth by professional organizations such as the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and student outcomes demonstrates that the work of special education administrators is “truly making a difference where it counts most” (Boscardin, Mainzer, & Kealy, 2011, p. 77).

Transition Practices that Predict Post-school Success

Since 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has required public schools to provide transition services to students with disabilities. During this time, the U.S. Department of Education has funded two longitudinal studies, the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2), to gather information about transition services and outcomes for students with disabilities across the nation. The overall results of these studies are clear. In spite of the continued attention to research and in compliance monitoring processes by state departments of education, transition outcomes for youth with cognitive disabilities continue to demonstrate surprisingly limited positive effects. For example, as the result of NLTS2, only 52% of students with intellectual disabilities participate in further training, employment or postsecondary education programs after finishing high school (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Garza, 2006). In 2005, youth with disabilities “remained less likely than those in the general population ever to have been enrolled in

postsecondary education (46 percent vs. 63 percent)” (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, & Shaver, 2010, p. xxi). The results of NLTS2 demonstrate significant gaps between the transition outcomes for students with disabilities affecting cognition and those of their non-disabled peers.

During the time of these longitudinal studies, the U.S. Department of Education funded the development of a national resource organization to assist students, families and schools to understand and implement evidence-based practices to address the needs of students with disabilities as they prepare for the transition from school to adult life. This organization, the National Secondary Transition and Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), maintains a website to gather information about evidence-based practices to support transition. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) specifies that public schools must provide students who are eligible for individualized educational programs (IEPs) coordinated transition activities that consider the individual strengths, interests and preferences of the student and develop both functional and academic skills needed to prepare the student for continuing adult education, work, and life in the community after high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). While districts are generally able to meet paperwork requirements attached to these regulations, the literature suggests that there is significant concern about whether adequate transition experiences for students with disabilities are being provided by public schools (Davies & Beamish, 2009; Fraser as cited in Browning & Rabren, 1997; Gillis, 2006; Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, & Mack, 2002; Lehman, Hyatt, & Sample, 1997; National Council on Disability, 2008; Pieroth, Pumpian, Hesch, & Campbell as cited in Nathanson et al., 1993, Smith 1993). Transition experiences include activities such as holding a job

with pay in the community; driving a car, using public transportation independently or using adapted transportation to meet daily travel needs; taking college or adult-education courses; maintaining a bank account and living consistently within a budget; and/or keeping a calendar and maintaining a schedule with enough accuracy and independence to allow access to these transition experiences. When students with disabilities participate in transition experiences as a regular part of their educational program in high school, they transition from high school ready to work, enjoy recreational activities, and live in the community.

Fortunately, extensive research has been conducted regarding best practices for supporting students with disabilities to transition from school to adult life. In order to understand and utilize the body of research that has been conducted regarding transition services, the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) has supported the completion of two comprehensive literature reviews to identify evidence-based instructional practices and predictors of postsecondary success for students with disabilities (Test, Fowler, Richter, White, Mazzotti, Walker, Kohler, & Kortering, 2009; Test, Mazzotti, Mustian, Fowler, Kortering, & Kohler, 2009). The first literature review sought to identify instructional practices that emerged based on quality single subject and group designed research. As a result of this literature review, 28 evidence based practices (EBPs) were identified (Cook, Tankersly, & Landrum, 2009). The importance of this review was to provide information about which methods of teaching specific skills to students with disabilities are most effective. Once this work was done, it became clear that the literature review did not address one primary concern: the correlation between

specific elements of transition service delivery and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

For this reason, a second literature review was initiated to evaluate only correlational studies that had demonstrated that a specific transition activity (predictor) is linked to improved student outcomes for postsecondary education, employment or community living. The methodology used involved an electronic search that resulted in 162 identified articles focused on the relationship between predictor and outcome variables. These articles were further analyzed by two independent reviewers to identify only correlational studies. Another series of reviews were conducted to exclude studies in which activity variables were not related to secondary transition practices; outcome variables were not related to the 3 areas of transition service delivery identified in federal regulations (postsecondary education, employment or independent living); people with disabilities were not included in the population studied; or only demographic items were analyzed (e.g. gender, age, etc.). Again, articles were reviewed by independent reviewers and in both cases, inter-rater reliability was 100%. Next, each article was reviewed using the Quality Indicator Checklist for research in special education included in Table 2.3 below and developed based on the research of Odom, Brantlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thompson, & Harris, 2005 (NSTTAC, 2014).

Table 2.3

Quality Indicator Checklist: Correlational Research (NSTTAC, 2014)

Analytic Method (must meet 1 and 3; or 2 and 3)

- (1) Hypotheses are not formulated prior to conducting analysis (i.e., *exploratory*)
- (2) Hypotheses are planned and formulated prior to conducting analysis (i.e., *a priori*)
- (3) Significant correlations of (± 0.1) are reflected between predictor and outcome variables

Measurement (suggested)

- (4) Score reliability coefficients are reported for all measured variables based on induction from a prior study or analysis of data within current study

If score reliability based on a measure from a previous study, the sample in the current study is comparable to the previous study

- (5) Score validity coefficients are reported for all measured variables based on induction from a prior study or analysis of data within current study

If score validity based on a measure from a previous study, the sample in the current study is comparable to the previous study

Practical Significance (must meet)

- (6) Effect sizes are reported or may be calculated for each outcome (relevant to this review), even when the outcome was not statistically significant

Examples of effect categories include: (a) standardized differences (e.g., Cohen's *d*, Glass's Δ); (b) "uncorrected" variance-accounted-for (e.g., n^2 , R^2); and (c) "corrected" variance-accounted-for (e.g., adjusted R^2 , ω^2)

When comparing multiple related studies with related variables and outcomes, comparison of effects to evaluate consistency of results across studies is recommended.

Macro-analysis (must meet 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; suggested 12)

- (7) General Linear Model (GLM) weights (e.g., beta weights, factor pattern coefficients, discriminate function coefficients) are interpreted as reflecting correlations of predictors with outcome variables only in the exceptional case that the weights are correlation coefficients

- (8) If multiple regression analysis, exploratory Factor Analysis, confirmatory Factor Analysis, descriptive discriminate analysis, or canonical correlation analysis are used, the interpretation of results includes examination of structure coefficients (i.e., correlations of measured variables with latent variables actually being analyzed)

- (9) Univariate methods are not used in the presence of multiple outcome variables

- (10) Univariate methods are not used post hoc to multivariate tests (i.e., multivariate post hoc methods (e.g., descriptive discriminant analysis) are conducted when multivariate methods are employed)

- (11) Interval data (e.g., IQ scores) are not converted to nominal scale (e.g., "low", "high") unless such choices are justified and thoughtfully considered

- (12) Evidence is presented that statistical assumptions are sufficiently met for results to be deemed credible (e.g., homogeneity of variance, normal distribution, measures of central tendency)

Confidence Intervals (suggested)

- (13) Confidence intervals are reported or can be calculated for:

- (a) reliability coefficients derived for study data,
- (b) sample statistics (e.g., means, correlation coefficients) of primary interest in the study
- (c) study effect sizes

After this review, twenty-five articles were identified that met the criteria for rigor set forth in the quality correlational research checklist (see Appendix B for detail regarding the results of this review). Ultimately, this second literature review identified 17 predictors of post-school success that are correlated to positive outcomes for students with disabilities in postsecondary education, employment and independent living. These practices are included in Table 2.4 below:

Table 2.4

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center Predictors of Post-school Success (2013b)

<u>Predictors/Outcomes</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Independent Living</u>
Career Awareness	X	X	
Community Experiences		X	
Exit Exam Requirements/ High School Diploma Status		X	
Inclusion in General Education	X	X	X
Interagency Collaboration	X	X	
Occupational Courses	X	X	
Paid Employment/ Work Experience	X	X	X
Parent Expectations	X	X	
Parental Involvement		X	
Program of Study		X	
Self-Advocacy/ Self-Determination	X	X	
Self-Care/Independent Living	X	X	X
Social Skills	X	X	
Student Support	X	X	X
Transition Program	X	X	
Vocational Education	X	X	
Work Study		X	

This information is critical to the development of transition programs for secondary students with disabilities that are likely to result in improve outcomes in the areas of postsecondary education, employment and independent living.

These practices are included in Table 2.4 above in the introduction to this study. As schools provide activities listed on the table above as part of the secondary educational programs of students with disabilities, students with disabilities are more likely to leave school and engage in postsecondary education, employment and independent living. Yet, in order to offer these types of learning experiences to students with disabilities, schools must incorporate evidence-based practices systematically, so that all students, including those with severe disabilities, have the opportunity to succeed in postsecondary settings (Glasenapp, 1990).

Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment

Another impetus for systematic approaches to transition service delivery at the local level comes from the U.S. Department of Education. Beginning in 2012, the U.S. Department of Education is monitoring compliance with transition service delivery and postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. This is true not only at the secondary level, but also at the postsecondary level of education. In August, 2008, the Higher Education Opportunities Act (reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965), new provisions which prioritized and funded transition and postsecondary included programs for students with intellectual disabilities. As a result, 27 federal grants were issued “to create or expand college programs that focus on academic activities, employment experiences and independent living” and offer the chance for students with

intellectual disabilities to attend college alongside peers without disabilities (Think College, 2014).

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been at the forefront of the movement to create inclusive postsecondary and employment programs to support students with intellectual disabilities. One such initiative is the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Program, a statewide initiative which began in 2006. Students who are eligible to participate in ICE are between the ages of 18-22 and have severe disabilities. In their report to the legislature, DESE identifies students with severe disabilities as those who are 18-19 years old and have not passed the state-wide exam (MCAS) to attain a competency determination for a high school diploma (2013a). Students who are 20-22 years old and who have severe disabilities are eligible for participation regardless of their competency determination status. All students with severe disabilities who participate in ICE must continue to be eligible for special education services in their local public schools, meaning that these students have not met the requirements for a high school diploma, usually due to an inability to pass required exams for graduation or to earn the required credits for graduation. The majority of students served in the ICE program are students with intellectual impairment, a condition defined by DESE as “the permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts. Such term shall include students with mental retardation” (DESE, 2013b).

The ICE initiative is designed to provide a fully inclusive campus-based experience for students with severe disabilities. To date, students enrolled in ICE programs take at least one college course with support from an educational coach (instructional staff provided by the local public school) who facilitates full inclusion in coursework and classroom activities. While students in ICE may take college classes and earn credits or participate as non-credit students, the courses they take are fully inclusive and students in ICE are required to participate fully in all course activities with accommodations as indicated on their IEPs. In addition to college courses, students in ICE have full access to campus facilities including fitness facilities, disability services and technology, campus centers, clubs and student life activities. These activities afford students in ICE the chance to build relationships with age appropriate peers and explore their interests on campus. Finally, ICE program participants have access to job search and development activities with support from an employment specialist. The program seeks to demonstrate that students with severe disabilities can complete college-level courses and benefit from participation in campus life in a way that improves their opportunities for future employment, independent living, self-advocacy, and life-long learning (DESE, 2013b). Eight standards have been developed by Think College at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts to align program practices with the requirements of the Higher Education Opportunities Act. These standards are included in Figure 2.2 below.

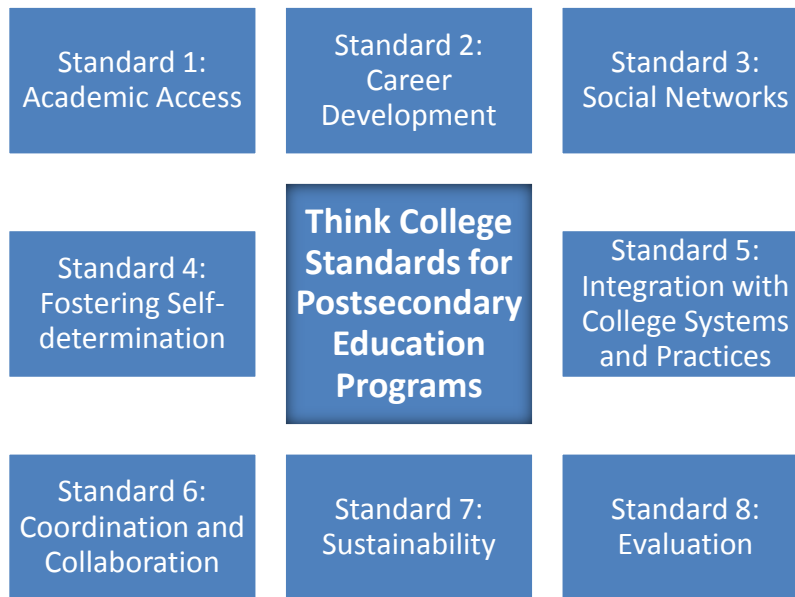


Figure 2.2. Think College Standards for Postsecondary Education Services for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (Grigal et al., 2012). This figure represents eight priorities for developing postsecondary transition programs which fit with the requirements of the Higher Education Opportunities Act.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has adopted these standards as a resource for practice for Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Programs in the state and further identify the priorities for implementation of service delivery in these programs. Each standard also has corresponding quality indicators, which describe the actions and activities of postsecondary education programs which align with the definition of comprehensive postsecondary and transition service delivery in the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA). The quality indicators for each of the standards are listed in Table 2.5 below:

Table 2.5

Think College Standards and Quality Indicators for Inclusive Higher Education (Grigal et al., 2013)

STANDARD 1: ACADEMIC ACCESS

To facilitate quality academic access for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

- *Quality Indicator 1.1: Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students*
- *without disabilities*
- *Quality Indicator 1.2: Address issues that may impact college course participation*
- *Quality Indicator 1.3: Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities,*

STANDARD 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT

To facilitate career development leading to competitive employment for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

- *Quality Indicator 2.1: Provide students with the supports and experiences necessary to seek and sustain competitive employment*

STANDARD 3: CAMPUS MEMBERSHIP:

To facilitate campus membership for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

- *Quality Indicator 3.1: Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities, and technology,*

STANDARD 4: SELF-DETERMINATION

To facilitate the development of self-determination in students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

- *Quality Indicator 4.1: Ensure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals*
- *Quality Indicator 4.2: Ensure the development and promotion of the self-determination skills of students with intellectual disabilities*
- *Quality Indicator 4.3: Have a stated process for family involvement*

STANDARD 5: ALIGNMENT WITH COLLEGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

To facilitate alignment with college systems and practices for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

- *Quality Indicator 5.1: As required in the HEOA, identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g., degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program*
- *Quality Indicator 5.2: Provide access to academic advising*
- *Quality Indicator 5.3: Provide access to college campus resources,*
- *Quality Indicator 5.4: Collaborate with faculty and staff,*

- *Quality Indicator 5.5: Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and procedures, public relations, and communications*

STANDARD 6: COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

To facilitate collaboration and coordination, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

- *Quality Indicator 6.1: Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments*
- *Quality Indicator 6.2: Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program*

STANDARD 7: SUSTAINABILITY

To facilitate sustainability, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

- *Quality Indicator 7.1: Use diverse sources of funding*
- *Quality Indicator 7.2: Have a planning and advisory team*

STANDARD 8: ONGOING EVALUATION

To facilitate quality postsecondary education services for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary program should:

- *Quality Indicator 8.1: Conduct evaluation of services and outcomes on a regular basis*

In order to implement transition services consistently and to meet requirements for compliance with federal regulations, transition service delivery must be a focus for special education leaders. While much is currently known about the practices that fit with successful transition outcomes for students, there is a need for further research to determine what administrative structures need to be in place to support the work of individual teachers and the experiences of individual students as they prepare for transition (Davies & Beamish, 2009; Park, 2008; Li, Bassett, & Hutchinson, 2009; Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009). The mandate to provide transition services rests solely in the realm of special education, the leaders who have the most direct responsibility and can most significantly impact change related to these services are special education leaders. Therefore, a critical step in addressing school and district-level

change is to explore the skills and knowledge prioritized by special education leadership teams overseeing evidence-based transition programs.

A Conceptual Framework for Special Education Leadership and Transition

To date, no research studies have been identified which have considered leadership skills and knowledge needed for transition service delivery (Piewansky, 2013). One theoretical framework that outlines what school leaders can do to support transitions to postsecondary settings has been proposed by Test, Mazzotti and Mustian in the *Handbook of Leadership and Administration in Special Education* (2012). In this book chapter, the proposed framework suggests that school leaders can support transitions to postsecondary settings by individualizing programming based on the student's vision; creating student-centered instructional practices; building collaborative leadership; and, using data strategically to inform programmatic decisions (Test, et. al., 2012).

By combining the frameworks for evidence-based special education leadership activities, predictors of post-school success, and the leadership priorities identified by Test and his colleagues, a new model for special education leadership to improve transition outcomes emerges. Figure 2.3 below illustrates the new model being proposed based on this review of the literature.

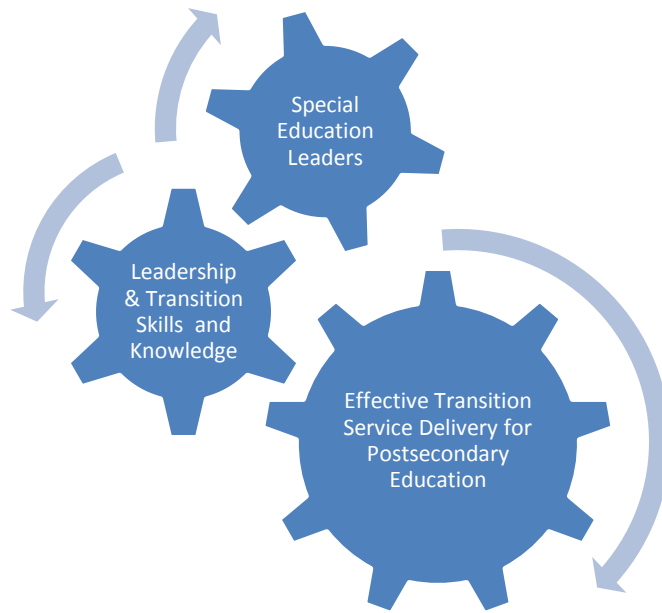


Figure 2.3. Conceptual Framework of Special Education Leadership for Secondary Transition. This figure demonstrates how special education leaders prioritize specific skills and knowledge to drive the development of effective transition services.

The model theorizes that there are specific competencies that special education leaders prioritize when partnering together to develop and lead postsecondary and transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities. The model also suggests that the specific skills and knowledge prioritized by leaders are the driving force for effective transition service delivery. By engaging special education leaders in the activity of prioritizing the skills and knowledge they view as essential for transition services for students with intellectual disabilities, study is designed to take the next step in understanding the connection between leadership and effective transition service delivery.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to consider the intersection between special education leadership and transition service delivery. A review of the literature has indicated that there is a new body of research linking overall educational leadership practices with improved outcomes for school-aged children. Yet, longitudinal student outcome data, compliance monitoring and federal funding priorities for special education suggest that special education leadership for transition services has not resulted in significantly improved outcomes for secondary students with disabilities as they prepare to enter the adult world (Hehir, 2005; Kohler et al., 1993; Wagner et al., 2005a; Wheeler, 1987).

A review of the literature has also revealed that much research has been done to understand the instructional practices and programmatic predictors that assist students with disabilities to transition successfully from school to postsecondary education, employment, and community living (Cook et al., 2009; NSTTAC, 2014; Odom et al., 2005; Test et al., 2008; Test et al., 2009). As a result of federal grants and the clarity of two national longitudinal studies regarding transition services (NLTS & NLTS-2), there are a number of transition programs arising on college campuses in more than 23 states that are working to apply evidence-based transition practices to college-based programs for students with intellectual disabilities (Think College, 2014).

In Massachusetts, the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston has acted as the coordinating organization for supporting college-

based transition programs. As of the 2013-14 school year, Massachusetts hosted inclusive campus-based transition programs for students with severe and intellectual disabilities on 8 different public college campuses across the state (DESE, 2013a). Yet, when the staff at the Institute for Community Inclusion, Boston, staff at Think College, and staff at three different inclusive campus-based programs were contacted, none of these professionals were able to identify even one study that had considered not only the instructional strategies and learning experiences that predict post-school success for students with intellectual disabilities, but also the leadership skills and knowledge necessary to support and sustain evidence-based transition programs (personal communication, M Piewansky, 6/10/14; personal communication, R. Hougen, 6/2/14; personal communication L. Nunes, 6/5/14; personal communication, F. Smith, 7/24/14).

In addition, a search of the ERIC database for transition and special education leadership yielded no results other than Chapter 19 in *The Handbook of Leadership and Administration for Special Education* (Crockett, Billingsley, & Boscardin, 2012) written by Test, Mazzotti, and Mustian. In this chapter, Test et al. review NSTTAC's evidence-based practices as well as the predictors of post-school success published by NSTTAC; however, in the conclusion of this chapter, the authors acknowledge, "this chapter has focused on providing school leaders information about evidence-based practices and predictors for secondary transition, as well as strategies for use at classroom and school levels" (Test, Mazzotti, & Mustian, 2012, p. 352-353). They include a few paragraphs about secondary transition and school reform, emphasizing the need to individualize programming by personalizing the high school environment, creating student-centered instructional practices, building collaborative leadership, and using data in a strategic

fashion (Test et al., 2012). The summary ends with an additional paragraph urging school leaders to “develop programs to increase school completion rates for students with disabilities, as well as all students” (Test et al., 2012, p. 354). This is the only published information available and it did not address specific leadership competencies but rather, focused on quality indicators for transition service delivery. There appears to be a dearth of information about transition service delivery and the related skills and knowledge that special education leaders need to bring in order to support effective transition leadership. The focus of this study is to explore the perspectives of special education leaders about which leadership and transition competencies should be prioritized in order to develop and sustain inclusive postsecondary educational programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

Research Questions

This study is designed to explore and understand the perceptions of transition competencies by special education leaders. Through quantitative analysis of the results of Q-sorts completed by members of special education advisory groups leading postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities, this study seeks to understand which leadership practices are prioritized by different groups, or factors, who sorted statements similarly. In addition, quantitative methods were used to determine whether participants who are members of ICE program advisory groups have leadership priorities that vary significantly from the priorities of similar participants who have not been involved with an ICE program advisory board. Qualitative methodology (coding and labeling) was also employed to identify specific standards that were prioritized, to

understand the reasons that participants gave for sorting in a specific manner, and to explore the connection between specific roles and the priorities shared by participants.

The questions that will guide this study are:

1. Is there variation in the way participants affiliated with ICE Programs prioritize leadership competencies when compared with the prioritization of leadership competencies for transition by participants not affiliated with ICE Programs?
2. What are the special education leadership competencies that participants who sort statements similarly consider as a priority for implementing postsecondary education and transition services?
3. Are there differences in the rationale used by participants who sort statements similarly to prioritize leadership competencies for transition?

The null hypothesis for this study is that there are no significant variations comparing the Q-sort data of participants and therefore, the results of the sorts are random. The alternate hypothesis is that significant variations and differences do exist and specific factors can be identified when comparing the results of individual Q-sorts. By answering these questions and addressing the null and alternate hypotheses, this study seeks an initial understanding of the skills and knowledge that special education leaders prioritize for the development of postsecondary and transition programs as described in IDEA and Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA).

Methods

Research Design and Rationale

The methodology used to identify these leadership practices includes the use of Q-sorts completed by participants described above. Q-sorts are mixed methods technique in which subjects respond to statements by prioritizing them according to specific parameters (Brown, 2003). In this case, participants were asked to sort items derived from two different tools. Fifty-four of the items initially considered for the Q-sort were taken from the Special Education Leader Appraisal Scale (SELAS), a tool developed by Dr. Michel Miller and Dr. Pamela Baker that is based directly on the specific knowledge and skills put forth in 2009 Advanced Standards for Special Education Administrators provided by the CEC (2011). While the SELAS was originally developed as a survey tool, for the purpose of this research, validated statements taken directly from the SELAS were used in a Q-sort. Eighteen additional statements were taken from the Think College Standards and Quality Indicators for Postsecondary Education and Transition Programs (Grigal et al., 2012).

The reason for using these tools in a Q-sort format is that Q- methodology allows the researcher to observe subjective, self-referent communications as “pure behavior” (Brown, 1980, p. 46). In other words, communications about participants’ personal understandings can be ranked in an objective fashion to provide “an empirical representation of the individual point of view regarding the matter at hand” (McKeown & Thomas, 2003, p. 3). By ranking validated statements, the participants can interact directly with these statements without the intervention or limitations of Likert scale ranking, allowing the researcher to gather the viewpoints of the participants more directly with less influence over their observed behavior. “Studies using surveys or questionnaires often use categories that the investigator imposes on the responses”

(VanExel & DeGraaf, 2005, n.p.). In this case, a Q-sort will be used to understand the perspectives of special education leaders regarding transition service delivery in postsecondary programs serving students with intellectual disabilities.

There are several reasons for choosing a Q-sort to conduct this study. First and foremost, Q-methodology is designed to apply quantitative analyses (correlational study and Q-factor analysis) and qualitative methods (coding and labeling) to subjective material gathered after participants sort statements which represent the concourse, or range of elements, of a particular subject of discussion. In this case, the SELAS, a previously validated tool aligned with the CEC advanced standards for special education leadership, was the source of some of the statements in the Q-sort. In addition, some of the items were drawn from the quality indicators for postsecondary and transition programs developed by Think College (TC) and presented in TC's tool for monitoring implementation recommended for use by Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Programs in Massachusetts. Second, a Q-sort has as its sample size the number of items in the sort (in this study, up to 54 statements from the SELAS and up to 18 statements from the quality indicators for postsecondary and transition programs). In order to complete a reliable study using Q-methodology, the number of participants can be relatively small ($n < 40$), which fits well with the membership of the 3 advisory groups being studied ($n =$ approximately 30) (Brown, 2003). Third, the use of Q-methodology allows these "group[s] to express themselves with minimal involvement from outsiders and minimal bias from externally imposed or ostensibly derived meanings" (Brown, 2003, p. 1). Because the tool requires minimal involvement from the researcher, concerns related to bias or undue influence on the results of each sort can be minimized, increasing the

validity of the study. Fourth, there are precedent studies using Q-methodology with non-random participant groups such as those advising program development at the college-based transition programs which are the subject of this study (Johnson, 1993; Militello & Janson, 2007; Provost, 2007; Tudryn, 2011). This also increases the validity of the study. Finally, in this study, Q-methodology allows the researcher to explore the connection between the perceptions of special education planning groups about the leadership skills and knowledge that connect directly to the quality indicators for postsecondary programs serving students with intellectual disabilities (Grigal et al., 2012). This connection is the key element in the proposed model for special education leadership and transition that has not been explored by previous research.

Development of Q-statements

For this study, the Q-sample consists of items selected from two different instruments, the SELAS (Miller & Baker, 2011) and the Think College Standards, Quality Indicators and Benchmarks for Postsecondary Education Services for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (Grigal et. al, 2012). Fifty-four of the items initially considered for the Q-sort were taken from the Special Education Leader Appraisal Scale (SELAS), a tool developed by Dr. Michel Miller and Dr. Pamela Baker that is based directly on the specific knowledge and skills put forth in 2009 Advanced Standards for Special Education Administrators provided by the CEC (2011). While the SELAS was originally developed as a survey tool, for the purpose of this research, validated statements taken directly from the SELAS were used in a Q-sort. These items are included in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

Q-sample statements from the SELAS (Miller & Baker, 2011)

1. Apply models of effective leadership that provide a foundation for the administration of programs and services for students with disabilities and their families.
2. Lead the development and implementation of Individual Education Programs for students with disabilities.
3. Use the current research on assessment of students with disabilities.
4. Facilitate an effective evaluation process to determine if students are eligible for special education and related services under IDEA.
5. Make decisions within the boundaries of ethical and legal practices.
6. Apply principals of distributed leadership.
7. Recognize the functions of school committees and boards.
8. Lead the implementation of processes to reduce unnecessary referrals.
9. Use research literature to determine professional practice.
10. Conduct educational program evaluation.
11. Employ adult learning theories in the creation of professional development programs.
12. Utilize dispute resolution systems that support students with disabilities and their families.
13. Lead change using my knowledge of organizational change theory.
14. Lead programs that are differentiated based on individual student needs.
15. Lead the use of data for making decisions regarding students with disabilities.
16. Conduct a district-wide needs assessment of services and supports for students with disabilities and their families.
17. Ensure students with disabilities receive ethical and legal discipline.
18. Promote shared decision-making among all stakeholders.
19. Lead the implementation of programs and services for students with disabilities that are in compliance with IDEA 2004.
20. Lead special education staff in implementing strategies that provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum.
21. Explain to staff formative assessment procedures to monitor instructional practice.
22. Lead special education staff in using appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities on assessments.
23. Provide effective professional development opportunities to increase regular and special education staffs' skills for working with students with disabilities.
24. Facilitate intra- and interagency agreements.
25. Lead the implementation of programs and services for students with disabilities that are in compliance with state regulations.
26. Secure and implement the effective use of assistive technologies for students with disabilities.
27. Examine student performance data to extract information needed for program improvement efforts.

28. Help Individual Education Program teams gain the skills needed to correctly determine what students with disabilities will take alternative state standardized assessments.
29. Maintain professional dignity throughout all interactions with parents, students and staff.
30. Cooperate with various advocacy groups and their roles in supporting families.
31. Lead the development of the local special education budget using available funding streams.
32. Lead programs that produce positive school outcomes for students with disabilities.
33. Implement research-based practices related to support of special education teachers.
34. Analyze subgroup data from state standardized assessments.
35. Use ethical administrative practices in all areas of my position.
36. Engage the “right” stakeholders in goal-oriented collaboration.
37. Ensure effective mentoring occurs for new special education teachers and staff.
38. Facilitate effective pre-referral intervention processes.
39. Evaluate educational research that is related to special education program delivery.
40. Prepare for compliance monitoring conducted by the State Education Agency (SEA).
41. Advocate for students with disabilities in the school and the community.
42. Work effectively with various health, social, and educational providers who interact with students, families and educators.
43. Recruit and hire special education teachers and staff members.
44. Direct a continuum of services and supports across grade levels for students with disabilities.
45. Implement evidence-based programs that account for the diversity of the students with disabilities in the program.
46. Evaluate teaching staff effectively.
47. Develop comprehensive professional development plans aligned with district wide and special education strategic plans.
48. Work as an integral part of the district and building administrative teams so that special education is perceived as an essential part of the education system.
49. Influence the development and implementation of district policies that are responsive to the needs of students with disabilities and their families.
50. Lead special education staff to deliver specialized instructional services that are connected to educational standards.
51. Stay current with the new research practices in the field of special education.
52. Provide instructional staff with ongoing supervision that leads to improvement in their instructional practice.
53. Engage in continued personal professional development.
54. Use effective conflict resolution skills.

Eighteen additional Q-statements were taken from the Think College Standards and Quality Indicators for Postsecondary Education and Transition Programs (Grigal et al., 2012). These statements represent the quality indicators for postsecondary transition programs as defined in the Higher Education Opportunities Act and are detailed in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

Q-sample statements from Think College (Grigal et al., 2012)

1. Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities.
2. Address issues that may impact college course participation.
3. Provide students with the skills to access on-going adult learning opportunities.
4. Provide students with the opportunity to seek and sustain integrated employment.
5. Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities and technologies.
6. Assure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals.
7. Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities.
8. Have a stated process for family involvement.
9. Identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g. degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program.
10. Provide access to academic advising.
11. Provide access to college campus resources.
12. Collaborate with faculty and staff.
13. Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and procedures, public relations and communications.
14. Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments.
15. Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program.
16. Utilize diverse sources of funding.
17. Have a planning and advisory team.
18. Conduct evaluation on services and outcomes on a regular basis.

These eighteen additional Q-sort statements were considered to reflect leadership competencies that are specific to Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs in Massachusetts. These statements are derived from the Think College Standards, Quality Indicators and Benchmarks for Postsecondary Education Services for students with Intellectual Disabilities (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012). These standards were initially developed for use by campus-based programs to improve the quality of inclusive educational programs for students with intellectual disabilities and are aligned with the definition of comprehensive campus-based postsecondary and transition programs identified in the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA) (Grigal et al., 2012). Currently, these standards are used by the Special Education Planning and Policy Development office of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to guide grant applications for planning grants to fund Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs in the state. These 18 statements represent specific competencies which align with the 8 standards for postsecondary and transition programs which guide the implementation of Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs in Massachusetts.

In order to ensure the clarity, accuracy and appropriateness of final items included in the Q-sample, a cohort of 5 special education leaders were asked to participate in a pilot of the Q-sort using all 72 statements taken from both surveys. These leaders included 3 special education teachers and 2 special education administrators. Of the group, 2 pilot participants had some previous connection with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) programs, and 3 had no previous experience or participation in ICE programs. Participants in the pilot were asked to sort items based on the following stem question: Which competencies are most necessary for special education leaders to

prioritize when serving students with severe disabilities in postsecondary education and transition programs? During the pilot, Q-cards were sorted individually by each participant using the Q-sorting diagram in Figure 3.1 below:

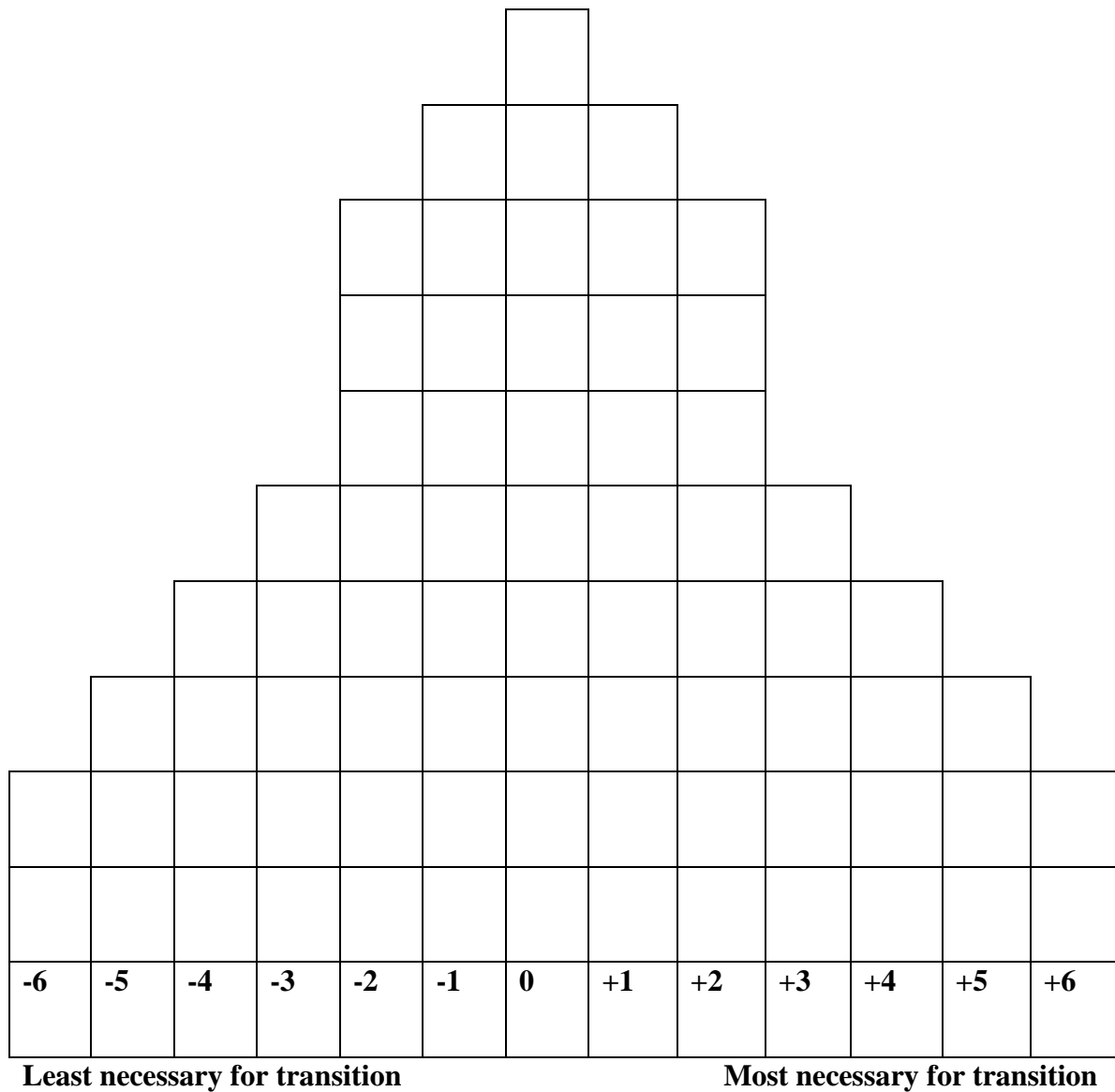


Figure 3.1. Q-sorting Diagram for Pilot Study. This is the diagram used by participants to sort Q-sample statements used in the pilot completed prior to beginning research for this study.

After completing this pilot of the Q-sort, participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Which of the statements that you sorted are duplicate statements?
- Which of the statements that you sorted should be eliminated from this sort? Briefly explain why.
- Which of the statements that you sorted should be kept in the sort? Briefly explain why.
- Which of the statements should be changed? Please indicate the number of the statement and write out an example of the revision that should be made.
- Would you recommend changing the stem question? If so, what is your recommended change?
- Any other suggestions?

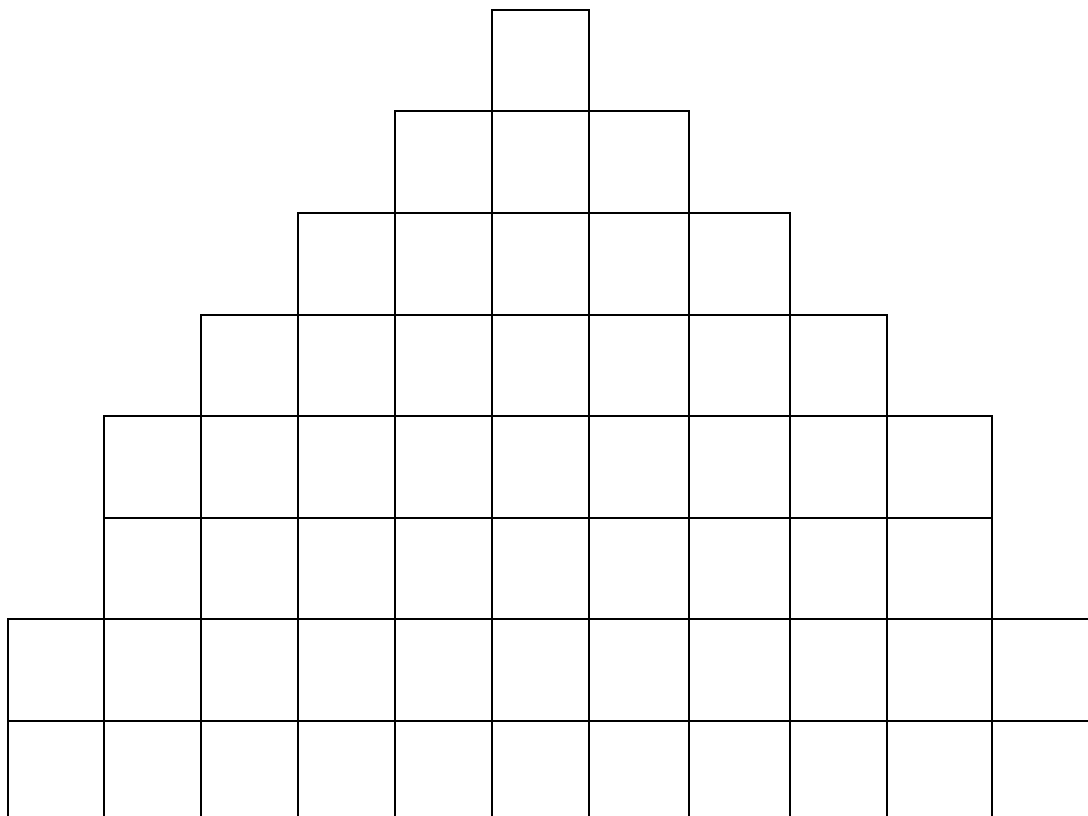
The purpose of this activity was to improve the quality of statements used in this study and to ensure that the stem question is clearly and accurately presented when the study is implemented. Results of this pilot were that the size of the Q-sample was reduced. Details regarding the reductions and feedback from pilot participants are included in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3

Summary of Q-Sample Item Recommendations of Pilot Participants

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Keep</u>	<u>Eliminate</u>	<u>Repeat</u>
CC—ICE	2A	1F	n/a
CC—ICE	3F	1i	
CC—ICE	3L	1K	
CC—ICE	3M	1R	
CC—ICE	4D	1Q	
CC—ICE	4K	2L	
CC—ICE	4P	2Q	
CC—ICE	4R	3R	
KC--non ICE	n/a	n/a	1Q-2Q-3J
JD--non-ICE	n/a	1G	1E-2Q
JD--non-ICE		4H	1i-2o
JD--non-ICE		4J	1J-4R
JD--non-ICE			2D-3N
JD--non-ICE			2i-2P
JD--non-ICE			2L-3F
JD--non-ICE			4E-4K
CP—ICE	n/a	2L	
CP—ICE		2N	
CP—ICE		3C	
CP—ICE		3F	
CP—ICE		4R	
MM--non-ICE	1N		1E-2Q
MM--non-ICE	1R		1H-3B
MM--non-ICE	3G		1i-3C
MM--non-ICE	3J		1J-4R
MM--non-ICE	3K		1L-3R
MM--non-ICE	3o		1o-2i
MM--non-ICE	3P		2M-4P
MM--non-ICE	4A		2N-3H
MM--non-ICE	4B		2R-3L-4L
MM--non-ICE	4C		4F-4G
MM--non-ICE	4i		
MM--non-ICE	4L		
MM--non-ICE	4N		
MM--non-ICE	4o		
MM--non-ICE	4Q		

As the result of the pilot, participants initially recommended the elimination of 15 items. Of these 15 items, there were two conflicting recommendations regarding items 1R (MM recommended keeping this item/CC recommended eliminating it) and 4R (CC recommended keeping this items/MM recommended eliminating it). Therefore, only 13 items were eliminated from the final sort. Finally, 3 additional items, 1J, 2i and 4R, were identified by pilot participants as repeated items. These 3 were also eliminated from the final Q-sample, bringing the total number of items eliminated to 16. In the end, the original Q-sample of 72 items was reduced to a final Q-sample of 56 items based on the results of this pilot. These items were labeled #1-56 for the purposes of reporting results. Because the pilot Q-sort resulted in a reduced number of items (40-60), the Q-sort diagram was adjusted to a (-5) and (+5) sort (Brown, 1980), rather than the (-6) to (+6) range used in the pilot. See Figure 3.2 below for the final Q-sort diagram.



-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Most necessary for transition						Least necessary for transition				

Figure 3.2. Q-Sort Diagram Final. This figure was adjusted after Q-sample items were removed based on the results of the pilot study and is the diagram used by participants in research conducted for this study.

Because this particular sort is derived entirely from previously existing surveys, the Q-sample for this study is considered quasi-naturalistic.

Participants

The participants in this study include a group of 17 special education leaders from the advisory groups leading Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) programs as well as 17 participants who are special education leaders not involved with ICE programs. The purpose of this study is to consider the question, “What knowledge and skills do special education leaders prioritize when developing and advising postsecondary transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities?”

The roles of participants in this study include special education administrators from local public schools, special education teachers, directors/coordinators of disability services from the colleges/universities,, parents of students with intellectual disabilities, , and adult service representatives who support students to transition from public education to the adult service system. Special education administrators are defined as participants who are currently employed as special education administrators in a public school setting and who hold a license in special education administration. Special education teachers

are defined as participants who are currently employed as special education teachers in a public school setting and who hold a license as a special education teacher. Directors or coordinators of college disability services programs are defined as people who are currently employed as either a director or coordinator of a disability services program at a college or university. Parents of children with disabilities are defined as people who have a child with an intellectual disability between the ages of 18-22 enrolled in a public school setting. Adult services representatives are people who are currently employed by a human service agency and who are actively engaged in work that supports students between the ages of 18-22 to transition from school to the adult service system.

Each individual ICE partnership advisory board has a unique composition; however, all of the boards include at least one college coordinator, one school district representative per district participating in the partnership, and one community agency consultant. The number of participants in each advisory group varies. The ICE program at Holyoke Community College has been in operation for 9 years and has an advisory partnership that currently includes representatives from all of the roles identified above except there is currently no student with a disability who attends the program participating on the advisory board. There are approximately 14 members of this advisory group when all active partners are present ($n = 14$). The ICE program at Westfield State University has a partnership advisory group that has worked together for 20 months and includes two representatives from the college, one special education teacher or administrator from each of 7 active partnering districts, and several community agency consultants ($n = 11$). The ICE program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst has also partnered for 20 months and includes 3 active district partners who send

either an administrator or special education teacher to partnership advisory meetings. In addition, the partnership coordinator and one consultant are active in the partnership advisory board ($n = 5$).

While each of these leaders has different experience and knowledge, all are asked to work together to guide, develop and monitor the implementation of ICE program activities in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines included in the RFP for the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment which funds this program (DESE, 2013a). The total number of people represented on the advisory boards from all three ICE program partnership advisory groups is thirty; however, several people participate on more than one advisory group. From this total number of people on all 3 boards, 17 participants were selected for this study ($N_{ICE} = 17$).

A second set of participants included special education leaders who have not been part of an Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Program advisory board. This group included special education administrators, special education teachers, college-based program coordinators, parents, and community service agency representatives who have participated in special education leadership activities, however, have not participated in an ICE partnership program. The composition of this group mirrors the composition of the group of participants from ICE partnerships in that an identical number of people in each identified role (special education administrator, teacher, college-based program coordinators, parents, and community service agency representatives) were selected ($N_{NON-ICE} = 17$).

Similar to Provost et al. (2010), Tudryn (2012), and Schulze (2014), the participants in this study were non-randomly selected. Participant selection was not based on sampling theory in this study. Therefore, a small purposeful sample was used as supported by the recommendations of Brown in describing acceptable sampling for studies using Q-methodology (1980). Participants were selected as described above. Background information collected using demographic surveys included information about the participants' ICE affiliation, roles and years of experience, gender, age and level of education.

For the purposes of this study, ICE affiliation was either with the Holyoke Community College ICE Program, the University of Massachusetts ICE program, the Westfield State University ICE Program, or non-ICE affiliated. The current position or role were described as one of the following: district special education administrator; district special education teacher/coordinator; college disability services program coordinator/director; adult service provider agency representative; parent representative; student representative; or general education/faculty representative.

None of the ICE programs had student or general education representatives participating on their advisory boards at the time this study was conducted; therefore, no data was collected from participants serving in these capacities. Data regarding years in the current role were defined as either less than 5 years or 5+ years. The highest levels of education were described as follows: current ICE student; high school graduate; associate's degree; bachelor's degree; master's degree; master +30; CAGS; or doctorate. Age was defined in 10 year intervals beginning with 18-19 years of age and continuing through 80 years of age. There were no participants in the 18-19 year old or 71-80 year

old categories. Gender was defined as either male or female. Data regarding the years of special education experience were defined as either less than 5 years or 5+ years. One item of note, regarding ICE affiliation, there were 4 participants who were affiliated with at least 2 different ICE advisory boards, which is why the total number of ICE participants identified with the 3 programs (Holyoke Community College, U-Mass and Westfield State) exceeds N. Refer to table 3.4 for details.

Table 3.4

Characteristics of Participants

		ICE	Participants	non-ICE	Participants
		N=17	%	N=17	%
ICE Affiliation	Holyoke CC	14	82%	0	0%
	U-Mass	3	18%	0	0%
	Westfield	4	23%	0	0%
Current Position/	SE Admin	4	23%	4	23%
	SE Teacher	6	35%	6	35%
	College Disability Services	3	18%	3	18%
	Adult Service Agency	2	12%	2	12%
	Parent	2	12%	2	12%
# of Years in Current Role	Less than 5	7	41%	8	47%
	5 or greater	10	59%	9	53%
Highest Level Of Education	HS Diploma	1	6%	0	0%
	Associate's	1	6%	0	0%
	Bachelor's	2	12%	2	12%
	Master's	6	35%	10	59%
	Master +30	0	0%	2	12%
	CAGS	3	18%	4	23%
	Doctorate	4	23%	1	6%

Gender	Male	2	12%	7	41%
	Female	15	88%	10	59%
Age	20-30	1	6%	2	12%
	31-40	5	29%	5	29%
	41-50	1	6%	3	18%
	51-60	10	59%	4	23%
	61-70	0	0%	3	18%
# of Years	Less than 5	10	59%	0	0%
In ICE	5 or greater	7	41%	0	0%

Prior to the onset of these procedures, the consent form included in Appendix A was submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Participants then were asked to complete a pre-sort questionnaire that asked them for demographic information. This information produced background data that captured information about ICE affiliation, roles and years of experience, gender, age and level of education for each participant.

During the study, participants completed 4 activities: (1) Review and signing of IRB approved consent to participate in the study, (2) a demographic questionnaire, (3) a Q-sort, and (4) a brief questionnaire to clarify why items were sorted in a particular manner. Copies of the documents used for these four activities are attached in Appendix A. Upon arrival at the designated meeting, the consent form and demographic tool were distributed to each member of the team and completed by individual participants.

After the demographic tool and consent forms were completed by each participant, the Q-sort was introduced and distributed to each participant. The stem statement for the Q-sort was, “What are the most important leadership competencies

(skills and knowledge) that special education leaders must have to support successful transition and postsecondary services for students with severe disabilities?” The final Q-sort consisted of 56 cards based on the results of the pilot survey, each including one statement. Responses were recorded by having participants tape each statement to a copy of the Q-sort diagram. Each original diagram completed by each participant was turned in to the researcher and retained by the researcher for reference during data review and analysis.

After each participant completed a Q-sort, a brief individual questionnaire was given to the participant in order to learn more about the participant’s reasoning when sorting the Q-sample statements. These questionnaires were distributed to each participant after the Q-sort was completed and all responses were provided by the participant in writing. Participants were able to see their sorted items while completing the questionnaire; however, they were asked not to change the position of Q-sample statements in the Q-sort grid once the questionnaire was provided. The responses of each participant were recorded by the participant directly on the questionnaire and originals of each completed questionnaire were retained by the researcher for reference during data review and analysis.

Data Analysis

In this study, three different sources of data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques in order to determine the leadership practices in special education that are perceived to be connected to effective transition and postsecondary services for students with severe disabilities. The primary sources of data

were the results of Q-sorts completed by ICE participants and non-ICE participants as described above.

Description of Quantitative Data Analysis

In Q-methodology, the focus of analysis is not a correlation of variables, but rather the identification of corresponding viewpoints among groups of participants (Eghbalighazijahani, Hine, & Kashyap, 2013). If a comparison of Q-sorts demonstrates specific patterns rather than a random array, this suggests that participants completing the sorts have shared perspectives about special education leadership activities that are necessary to support transition service delivery for students with severe disabilities.

The computer software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the results of the participants' sorts that resulted in a scree plot, principal component plot, rotated factor loadings for each participant, and the factor loadings for statements within each factor (IBM, 2012).

A scree plot was used to identify the number of factors through visual inspection of factors located above the elbow on the scree plot. The rotated principal components plot created a visual representation of participant factor membership. The rotated component matrix values were used to identify clusters of special education leaders who sorted the leadership statements similarly in a way that separated themselves from the rest of the participants' sorts as to represent common perspectives.

First, the rotated component matrix factor loading values (a) for each participant were squared (a^2). Next, the squared factor loadings (a^2) across the bona-fide factors are summed (h^2) and divided by 2 to explain more than half the common variance. The h^2 value can also generated from the extraction method from principal components analysis

resulting in communality values unchanged by rotation. Lastly, the standard error was calculated by dividing 1 by the square root of N , where N is the number of statements/items, $1/\sqrt{56} = .134$. The value for p was then calculated by multiplying the standard error ($\sigma = .134$) by ± 1.96 for $p < .05$ ($1.96 \times .134$) which equaled .26. Assignment to a factor was accomplished by participants meeting two conditions (Schmolck, 2002): (1) $a^2 > h^2/2$ and (2) $a > .26$ ($p < .05$).

Secondary sources of data that were analyzed included demographic data about the participants completing the Q-sorts and information gathered from brief individual questionnaires filled out by each participant. These data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods to determine additional patterns. The questionnaires provided specific feedback from individual participants about why they prioritized their highest and lowest ranked items.

Description of Qualitative Data Analysis

Q-methodology seeks to understand the subjective perspectives and opinions of participants through the identification of similar patterns or categories of response with as little involvement of the researcher as possible (Shinebourne, 2009; Thomas & Watson, 2002). A qualitative examination of each factor was conducted by coding and labeling of the Q-sample statements ranked highest (+5 statements) and lowest (-5 statements) by each participant for each factor. The examination involved review of statements describing why certain items were ranked highest or lowest by each participant. The qualitative data collected from the participants' post-sort questionnaires were analyzed to explain the high and low ranked items, as well as contribute to the eventual creation of descriptive labels for the emerging factors (Merriam, 1998). These qualitative

data along with the statement rankings provided the basis for the eventual emergence of factor themes and labels following the data analysis (Anderson, Pederson, Smith, & Sullivan, 1997). Consequently, the relationships with particular demographic and outcome variables and the sorts became more visible.

This data analysis approach stands out from other constructs in that it espouses a position toward research in which the researcher is focused on the perspectives of participants rather than on researcher-constructed conditions, and, the researcher seeks to understand an event or circumstance from a broader theoretical framework throughout the development of the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In this study, the theoretical framework being considered is the model proposed in Figure 2.3 above. Because this study employed Q-methodology by allowing participants to independently interact with the Q-sample items and to share additional details about their perspectives in writing using a questionnaire, there was little if any researcher influence during the collection of data. There was no outside source involved in the sorting activity and no collaboration during the completion of study activities; therefore, the responses represent the comparative choices of each participant “without *a priori* formulation” (Thomas & Watson, 2002, p. 143).

After collecting statements and comments from follow up questionnaires provided by participants about the highest and lowest ranked items for each factor, these statements were presented via PowerPoint to a cohort of colleagues for review and discussion. The cohort was a group of 18 colleagues who act in an advisory capacity for the program in which the researcher is enrolled and is completing this dissertation. Members of the cohort include professionals who are currently employed as college

faculty in the field of education or who currently work in public and private schools in the field of education and are certified as special education teachers, special education administrators, principals or superintendents. As part of an advisory session of this cohort, the researcher shared the highest and lowest ranked items for each factor as part of a presentation of the project. In a group discussion, members of the cohort were asked to identify specific characteristics to describe each factor group based on the highest and lowest ranked statements and comments provided by participants. The researcher facilitated the discussion which culminated in identification of the factor profiles which capture the larger themes and priorities expressed by the members of each factor. The use of this type of categorizing strategy is an established practice for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The involvement of colleagues in the identification of factor profiles is also a practice that enhances the trustworthiness of the factor labels and enhances the reliability of the study overall (Golafshani, 2003).

Chapter Summary

Using a mixed methods approach, this study explored the perceptions of special education leaders of leadership practices that support effective postsecondary education and transition service delivery for students with severe disabilities. In this chapter demographic data collection, the development of Q-sort statements and post-ranking questionnaire data were described along with the participant selection process and data analysis plans. This multi-pronged approach is intended to foster a better understanding of participant perspectives as part of data collection.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Overview

The results of this study exploring the perspectives of participants regarding the leadership activities most closely associated with successful transition service delivery for students with severe disabilities are detailed in this chapter. In this section, results are presented and address whether the sorting of transition statements resulted in factor membership by professional position or if factor membership was the result of other variables, such as educational background, leadership role, or years of experience. Item rankings comparisons helped to determine sorting commonalities within and between factors. Data from the post-sort questionnaires assisted with understanding the rationale participants used when prioritizing statements.

The questions that will guide the presentation of results are:

1. Is there variation in the way participants affiliated with ICE Programs prioritize leadership competencies when compared with the prioritization of leadership competencies for transition by participants not affiliated with ICE Programs?
(Factor Membership)
2. What are the special education leadership competencies that participants who sort statements similarly consider as a priority for implementing postsecondary education and transition services? (Postsecondary and Transition Services Statement Rankings)

3. Are there differences in the rationale used by participants who sort statements similarly to prioritize leadership competencies for transition? (Rationale for Statement Rankings)

Factor Membership

A Factor Analysis of the data collected from Q-sorts was completed to determine whether there were any groups of participants who sorted statements in a similar manner. Using principle component analysis, factors were extracted and the eigenvalues for each of the rotated components were compared. A scree plot was developed to illustrate the results of this analysis.

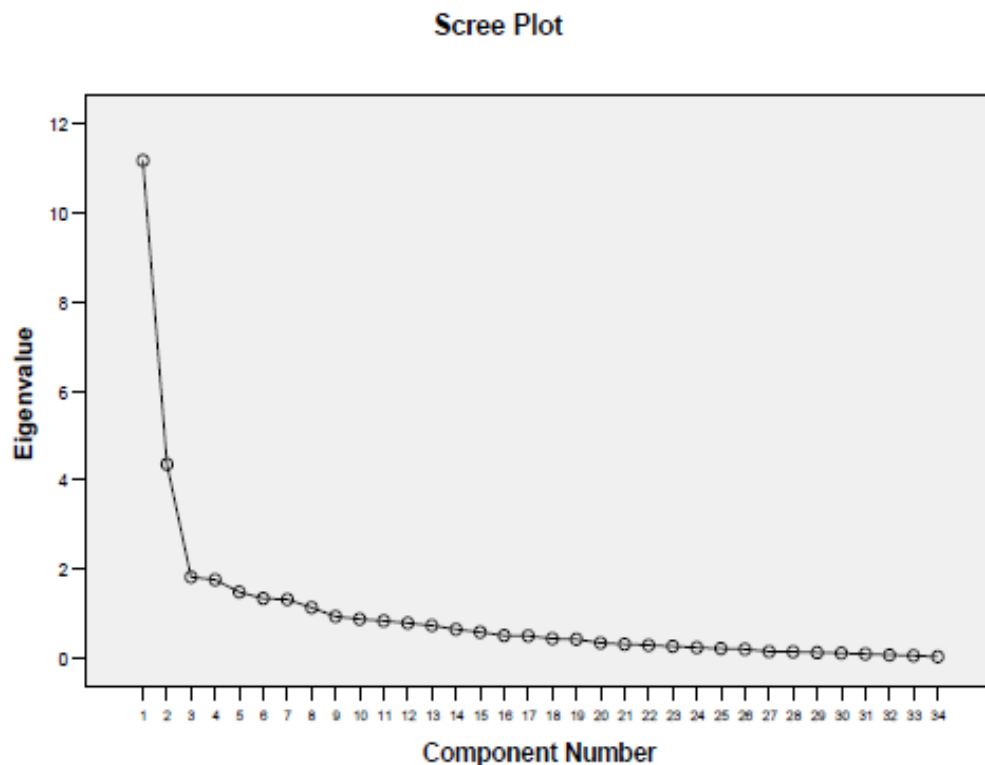


Figure 4.1. Scree Plot Illustrating the Results of the Principle Component Analysis. This figure illustrates the factor loadings for data.

As is demonstrated in the scree plot above, there were significant loadings on 2 factors referred to as Factor A and Factor B. Each of these factors (or groups of participants) sorted in a similar fashion and contributed most to the variance observed prior to the elbow in the scree plot above. Factor A had an extracted eigenvalue of 11.184 which accounted for 32.893 % of the variance. When rotated, the eigenvalue remained at 10.383 which accounted for 30.537% of the variance. Factor B had an extracted eigenvalue of 4.350 which accounted for 12.794% of the variance. When rotated, the eigenvalue remained at 5.151 and accounted for 15.151% of the variance. Together, both factors account for 45.688 percent of the total variance observed.

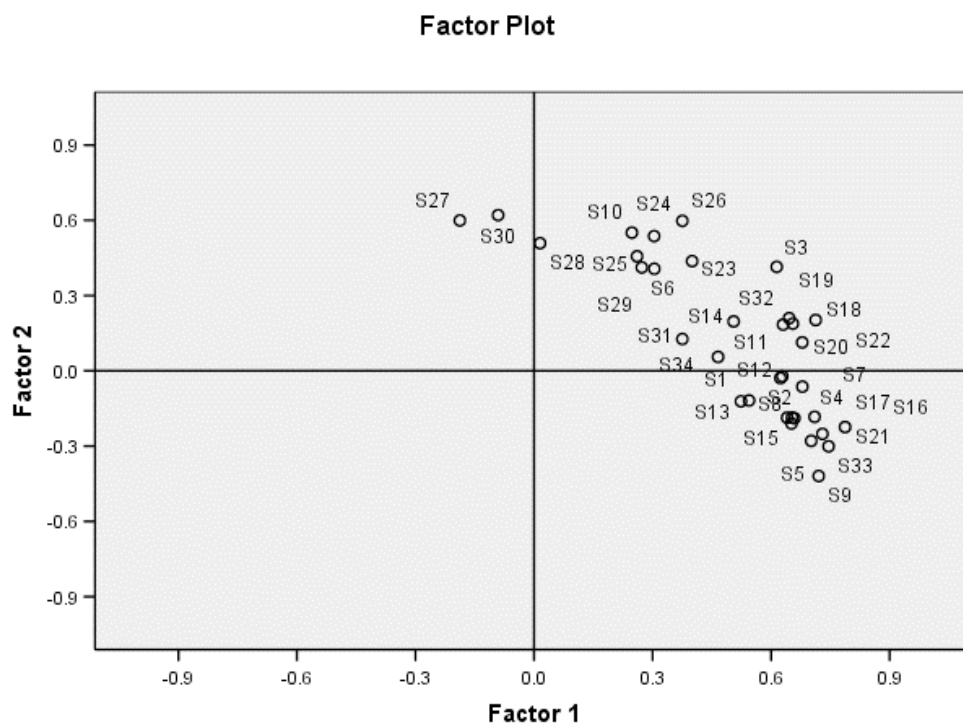


Figure 4.2. Component Plot in Rotated Space. This figure illustrates the distribution of responses to each Q-sample item.

Of the 34 participants who participated in the study, 23 participants were members of Factor A, 11 participants were members of Factor B (see Table 4.2). Using Schmolck's (2002) pre-flagging algorithm, it was determined Factor A was composed of 14 ICE members, while Factor B included 3 ICE members. In addition, Factor A and Factor B consisted of a total of 9 and 8 non-ICE members, respectively. Table 4.1 below shows the results of the correlation matrix generated with 2 components (Factor A and Factor B) extracted.

Pearson Correlation Between Sorts

[illegible]

When using this pre-flagging algorithm, all participants sorted into either Factor A or Factor B. Refer to table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Component Matrix Scores for Factors A and B

Participant	Factor A		Factor B		$h^2/2$	Member Factor A	Member Factor B
	a score	a^2 score	a score	a^2 score			
S1	.578	.334	.065	.004	.169	X	
S2	.706	.498	.034	.001	.250	X	
S3	.444	.197	.613	.376	.287		X
S4	.699	.489	.036	.001	.245	X	
S5	.769	.591	-.033	.001	.296	X	
S6	.145	.021	.534	.285	.153		X
S7	.680	.462	.168	.028	.245	X	
S8	.705	.497	.013	.000	.249	X	
S9	.824	.679	-.154	.024	.352	X	
S10	.039	.002	.648	.420	.211		X
S11	.616	.379	.342	.117	.248	X	
S12	.620	.384	.194	.038	.211	X	
S13	.560	.314	.055	.003	.159	X	
S14	.423	.179	.381	.145	.162	X	
S15	.688	.473	.032	.001	.237	X	
S16	.823	.677	.051	.003	.340	X	
S17	.746	.557	.061	.004	.281	X	
S18	.565	.319	.413	.171	.245	X	
S19	.549	.301	.429	.184	.243	X	
S20	.618	.382	.183	.033	.208	X	
S21	.785	.616	.003	.000	.308	X	
S22	.613	.376	.438	.192	.284	X	
S23	.229	.052	.587	.345	.199		X
S24	.099	.010	.651	.424	.217		X
S25	.084	.007	.569	.324	.166		X
S26	.149	.022	.719	.517	.270		X
S27	-.402	.162	.545	.297	.230		X
S28	-.178	.032	.540	.292	.162		X
S29	.113	.013	.529	.280	.146		X
S30	-.316	.100	.601	.361	.231		X
S31	.324	.105	.269	.072	.089	X	
S32	.544	.296	.401	.169	.233	X	
S33	.812	.659	-.037	.001	.330	X	

S34	.440	.194	.221	.049	.122	X	
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As is evidenced above, of the sorts completed by 34 participants, 23 loaded on Factor A and 11 loaded on Factor B.

Factor A Profile

The majority of participants in this study sorted on Factor A (23 of 34 participants). As indicated in Table 4.3, the Factor A group is comprised of 60.87% (14 of 23 members of Factor A) Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment participants and 39.13% (9 of 23 Factor A members) non-ICE participants.

When considering the current position of members, participants who sorted on Factor A can be described as follows. Out of 5 special education administrators in total who sorted on Factor A, 60% (3 of 5) were ICE participants, while 40% (2 of 5) were not affiliated with ICE. Of a total of 9 special education teachers who sorted on Factor A, 66.67% (6 of 9) were affiliated with ICE, while an additional 33.33% (3 of 9) were not affiliated with ICE. No parents who participated in this study sorted on Factor A. Of a total of 5 college disability services staff who sorted on Factor A, 60% (3 of 5) were affiliated with ICE, while 40% (2 of 5) were not affiliated with ICE. All adult service agency representatives who participated in this study sorted on Factor A. Of 4 total adult service agency staff members who sorted on Factor A, 50% (2 of 4) were ICE participants and 50% (2 of 4) were not ICE participants.

When considering gender, 82.61% (19 of 23 participants within Factor A) were female, while 17.39% (4 of 23 participants within Factor A) were male. Of the female participants who sorted on Factor A, 63.16% (12 of 19) were ICE participants while 36.84% (7 of 19) were not affiliated with ICE. Of the male participants who sorted on

Factor A, 50% (2 of 4) were ICE participants and 50% (2 of 4) were not affiliated with ICE.

When considering years of experience, 60.87% (14 of 23 participants within Factor A) had fewer than 5 years of experience in the field, and 39.13% (9 of 23 participants in Factor A) had five or more years of experience with special education. Of those participants in Factor A with fewer than 5 years of experience, 64.29% (9 of 14) were members of ICE advisory committees while 35.71% (5 of 14) were not affiliated with ICE. Of those members of Factor A with 5 years or more experience in special education, 55.56% (5 of 9) were participants in ICE while 44.44% (4 of 9) were not affiliated with ICE.

When considering highest levels of education, no participants in Factor A held high school diplomas or associate's degrees as their highest levels of education; 17.39% (4 of 23 participants within Factor A) had bachelor's degrees; 43.48% (10 of 23 Factor A members) had master's degrees; 8.70% (2 of 23 participants within Factor A) had master's degrees plus 30 additional credits and 13.04% (3 of 23) more had certificates of advanced graduate study; and 17.39% (4 of 23 members of Factor A) had earned a doctorate. Approximately half of the members who held bachelor's, master's, and MA +30 or CAGS degrees were ICE participants and approximately half were non-ICE participants. Of those in Factor A who held a doctorate, 75% were ICE participants and 25% were not ICE participants.

When considering age, 8.70% (2 of 23 participants in Factor A) were 20-30 years of age; 30.43% (7 of 23 Factor A members) were between the ages of 31-40; 8.70% (2 of 23 members in Factor A) were between the ages of 41-50; 39.13% (9 of 23 participants in

Factor A) were between the ages of 51-60; and 13.04% (3 of 23 Factor A members) were between 61-70 years of age. Of Factor A members who were 20-30 years of age as well as those who were 41-50 years of age, 50% (1 of 2) were ICE participants and 50% (1 of 2) were not ICE participants. In the 31-40 age group for Factor A, 71.43% (5 of 7) were members of ICE while 28.57% (2 of 7) were non-ICE affiliates. In the 51-60 age group for Factor A members, 77.78% (7 of 9) were ICE participants while 22.22% (2 of 9) were not affiliated with ICE. All 3 of the members of Factor A who were between the ages of 61-70 were not affiliated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs.

The pre-sort background information collected from Factor A members suggests that the Factor A profile includes a majority of participants affiliated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs. Notably, no parents who participated in this study sorted on Factor A. Another detail of note is that all of the adult service agency representatives who participated in this study were members of Factor A. Based on the data collected in this study, Factor A members have fewer years of experience in special education and hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Factor B Profile

In this study, 32.35% of participants (11 of 34 total participants) sorted on Factor B. The overall demographic composition of Factor B is described in Table 4.3. Of the 11 members of Factor B, 27.27% (3 of 11 members) were affiliated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs, while 72.73% (8 of 11) were not affiliated with ICE.

The following information describes the membership of Factor B in terms of the current position of participants who sorted on this factor. Of 3 special education administrators who sorted on Factor B, 33.33% (1 of 3) were affiliated with ICE while

66.67% (2 of 3) were not affiliated with ICE. Of these three special education administrators, the single ICE affiliated participant can be understood as an outlier because this participant had attended only one meeting of the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment partnership and had joined the group by sending the district's first student to ICE just 4 weeks prior to the date on which the Q-sort was administered. This member had no prior experience with ICE and had not attended any ICE activities prior to the date of this sort. Of 3 special education teachers who sorted on Factor B, 0% (0 of 3) were affiliated with ICE, while 100% (3 of 3) were not affiliated with ICE. Of four parents who participated in this study, 100% (4 of 4) were part of Factor B; 50% of the parents (2 of 4) were affiliated with ICE, 50% of the parents (2 of 4) were not affiliated with ICE. Only one college disability service provider sorted on Factor B and this person was not affiliated with an ICE program. In addition, none of the adult service provider agency staff sorted on Factor B.

Of the 11 members in the Factor B group, 54.55% (6 of 11) were female while 45.45% (5 of 11) were male. Of the female members of Factor B, 50% (3 of 6) were ICE affiliated and 50% (3 of 6) were not affiliated with ICE programs. Of the male members of Factor B, none were affiliated with ICE programs while 100% (5 of 5) were not affiliated with ICE.

When considering years of experience in special education, 27.27% (3 of 11 members of Factor B) had fewer than 5 years of experience in the field while 72.72% (8 of 11) had five or more years of experience. Of the members of Factor B with fewer than 5 years of experience in special education, 100% (3 of 3) were not affiliated with ICE

programs. Of those with 5 years or more of experience, 37.50% were affiliated with ICE while 62.50% were not affiliated with ICE.

When considering the highest levels of education, participants in Factor B were distributed as follows: 9.09% (1 of 11) had a high school diploma; 9.09% (1 of 11) had an associate's degree; 54.54% (6 of 11) had master's degrees; none indicated that they held MA +30 credits; 18.18% (2 of 11) had certificates of advanced graduate study; and 9.09% (1 of 11) had earned a doctorate. Of these, all participants with the highest level of education at the high school diploma, associate's degree and doctoral levels were members of Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs and all of the participants in Factor B who earned master's degrees or CAGS were not affiliated with ICE.

The ages of participants in Factor B are as follows: 9.09% (1 of 11) were 20-30 years of age; 27.27% (3 of 11) were between the ages of 31-40; 18.18% (2 of 11) were between the ages of 41-50; 45.45% (5 of 11) were between the ages of 51-60; and none were between 61-70 years of age. In terms of ICE affiliation, all members below the age of 51 were not affiliated with ICE programs. In the 51-60 age bracket, 60% (3 of 5) were ICE affiliated and 40% (2 of 5) were not ICE affiliated. No members of Factor B were age 61 or older.

In summary, the overall profile of Factor B suggests that who are not affiliated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs are more likely to align with this factor profile. Parents are also most likely to be represented by this factor profile while adult service staff are least likely to fit this profile. In addition, leaders who are more experienced and whose highest levels of education are at a master's degree or below are more likely to be represented by this group.

Profile Similarities and Differences Between Factors

The pre-sort information provided by participants showed similarities and differences between Factors A and B profiles as indicated in the aforementioned Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Demographic Summary for Factor A and Factor B

Total # Of Leaders In Study N = 34 100%		Factor A N=23 67.64%			Factor B N=11 32.35%		
		Total # in Factor A	ICE N=14 60.87%	Non- ICE N=9 31.13%	Total # in Factor B	ICE N=3 27.27%	Non- ICE N=8 72.73%
Current Position	SE Administrat or	5 21.74%	3 60%	2 40%	3 27.27%	1 33.33%	2 66.67%
	SE Teacher	9 39.13%	6 66.67%	3 33.33%	3 27.27%	0 0%	3 100%
	Parent	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4 36.36%	2 50%	2 50%
	College Disability Staff	5 21.74%	3 60%	2 40%	1 9.09%	0 0%	1 100%
	Provider Agency Staff	4 17.39%	2 50%	2 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Gender	Female	19 82.61%	12 63.16%	7 36.84%	6 54.55%	3 50%	3 50%
	Male	4 17.39%	2 50%	2 50%	5 45.45%	0 0%	5 100%
Years of Experience In Special Education	<5	14 60.87%	9 64.29%	5 35.71%	3 27.27%	0 0%	3 100%
	5+	9 39.13%	5 55.56%	4 44.44%	8 72.73%	3 37.5%	5 62.5%
Level of Education	High School	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 9.09%	1 100%	0 0%

	Associate's	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 9.09%	1 100%	0 0%
	Bachelor's	4 17.39%	2 50%	2 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
	Master's	10 43.48%	6 60%	4 40%	6 54.55%	0 0%	6 100%
	MA + 30	2 8.70%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
	CAGS	3 13.04%	3 100%	0 0%	2 18.18%	0 0%	2 100%
	Doctorate	4 17.39%	3 75%	1 25%	1 9.09%	1 100%	0 0%
Age	20-30	2 8.70%	1 50%	1 50%	1 9.09%	0 0%	1 100%
	31-40	7 30.43%	5 71.43%	2 28.57%	3 27.27%	0 0%	3 100%
	41-50	2 8.70%	1 50%	1 50%	2 18.18%	0 0%	2 100%
	51-60	9 39.13%	7 77.78%	2 28.57%	5 45.45%	3 60%	2 40%
	61-70	3 13.04%	0 0%	3 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

Overall, Factor A and Factor B share some pre-sort profile similarities in terms of group composition. Both factors include representatives from both ICE and non-ICE affiliated participants, though the distribution of membership for ICE participants was most heavily weighted toward Factor A (60.87%), while Factor B was made up of a majority of non-ICE participants (72.73%).

When considering the current position of participants, membership of both factors included similar representation of special education administrators (21.74% in Factor A; 27.27% in Factor B). The majority of special education administrators in Factor A were ICE affiliated (60%) while the majority of special education administrators in Factor B were not ICE affiliated (66.67%). Special education teachers were represented in Factor A at a slightly higher proportion (39.13% in Factor A; 27.27% in Factor B), however,

there were no ICE affiliated special education teachers represented in Factor B. Parents were absent from Factor A; 100% of parents sorted on Factor B. Factor A included all college disability services staff who were affiliated with ICE programs as well as representatives who were not ICE affiliated; Factor B included only college disability services staff who were not ICE affiliated. All agency provider staff were included in the membership of Factor A.

When considering gender, the Factor A profile had a higher proportion of female members (87.61%), while Factor B included approximately equal proportions of female and male members (54.55% female; 45.45% male). One interesting feature of Factor B is that all male participants who sorted on Factor B were not affiliated with ICE programs, while the male participants who sorted on Factor A represented ICE and non-ICE affiliation in equal proportions.

When considering years of experience in the field of special education, Factor A included a higher proportion (60.87%) of members with fewer than 5 years of experience, while Factor B included a higher percentage of members with 5 or more years of experience (72.73%).

When considering the highest level of education of participants, both factors included approximately the same proportion of participants with master's degrees (Factor A 43.48%; Factor B 54.55%). Interestingly, Factor A included all participants whose highest level of education was a bachelor's degree. Factor A also included a slightly higher proportion of participants at or above the MA +30 level of education (39.13% of Factor A members at MA +30, CAGS or doctoral level), while Factor B included 27.27% of participants with these levels of education. In addition, Factor B included the only

participants who had a high school diploma or associate's degree as their highest levels of education.

In summary, Factor A membership included a majority of participants who were affiliated with ICE programs, and included all special education teachers, all provider agency staff and most college disability services staff affiliated with ICE. No parents were members of Factor A. In Factor A, female participants were represented at a significantly higher proportion than in Factor B. This group included participants of higher education and age levels when compared with Factor B; however, Factor A also included a majority of participants who have fewer than 5 years of experience in special education. Participants in the highest age bracket (61-70 years of age) are represented only in Factor A. Factor B membership was best described as being made up of non-ICE affiliated members. Parents were strongly represented in this group, as were those whose highest levels of education are a high school diploma or associate's degree.

Postsecondary and Transition Services Statement Rankings

In this study, a principle component analysis of the item rankings was performed to determine the number of factors. Each statement in the sort was ranked according to the rotated principle component scores showing how each participant in each factor ranked individual items. Table 4.4 below includes how the items were ranked comparatively for Factor A and Factor B. The factor score represents the average numerical rank given to each item within each factor, and the numbers in parentheses represent the comparative ranking of all items in order from 1 (highest ranked) to 56 (lowest ranked).

Table 4.4

Factor A and B Item Rankings

Item Number	Q-sample Statement	Factor A Rankings N=56	Factor B Rankings N=56
1	Apply models of effective leadership that provide a foundation for the administration of programs and services for students with disabilities and their families.	0.04607 (26)	0.92728 (11)
2	Lead the development and implementation of Individual Education Programs for students with disabilities.	-0.83863 (46)	1.02970 (9)
3	Use the current research on assessment of students with disabilities.	-0.22577 (32)	-0.95399 (46)
4	Facilitate an effective evaluation process to determine if students are eligible for special education and related services under IDEA.	-1.62028 (53)	-0.07870 (31)
5	Make decisions within the boundaries of ethical and legal practices.	0.20660 (22)	1.66693 (2)
6	Lead the implementation of processes to reduce unnecessary referrals.	-1.83388 (55)	-0.54299 (40)
7	Utilize dispute resolution systems that support students with disabilities and their families.	-1.36176 (51)	0.48709 (18)
8	Lead change using my knowledge of organizational change theory.	-0.32567 (35)	-1.40939 (50)
9	Lead programs that are differentiated based on individual student needs.	0.70882 (13)	0.28962 (26)
10	Lead the use of data for making decisions regarding students with disabilities.	0.13928 (24)	-0.85268 (45)
11	Conduct a district-wide needs assessment of services and supports for students with disabilities and their families.	-0.19405 (31)	-0.40363 (39)

12	Promote shared decision-making among all stakeholders.	0.56499 (16)	0.30619 (24)
13	Lead the implementation of programs and services for students with disabilities that are in compliance with IDEA 2004.	-0.64402 (42)	0.60661 (15)
14	Lead special education staff in implementing strategies that provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum.	0.03096 (28)	0.91353 (12)
15	Explain to staff formative assessment procedures to monitor instructional practice.	-1.29830 (50)	-0.25774 (37)
16	Lead special education staff in using appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities on assessments.	-0.68822 (44)	0.54033 (16)
17	Provide effective professional development opportunities to increase regular and special education staffs' skills for working with students with disabilities.	-0.15980 (29)	1.34785 (6)
18	Facilitate intro and interagency agreements.	0.38866 (17)	-1.16680 (49)
19	Lead the implementation of programs and services for students with disabilities that re in compliance with state regulations.	-0.77746 (45)	0.46122 (20)
20	Secure and implement the effective use of assistive technologies for students with disabilities.	0.32363 (19)	0.46848 (19)
21	Help Individual Education Program teams gain the skills needed to correctly determine what students with disabilities will take alternative state standardized assessments.	-1.03885 (49)	-0.64180 (43)
22	Maintain professional dignity throughout all interactions with parents, students and staff.	0.32130 (20)	1.58043 (3)
23	Lead the development of the local special education budget using available funding streams.	-0.64428 (43)	-0.56087 (42)

24	Implement research-based practices related to support of special education teachers.	-0.34344 (36)	-0.55194 (41)
25	Analyze subgroup data from state standardized assessments.	-1.87514 (56)	-1.11993 (48)
26	Engage the “right” stakeholders in goal-oriented collaboration.	0.61355 (15)	-0.07187 (30)
27	Ensure effective mentoring occurs for new special education teachers and staff.	-0.24987 (33)	0.62453 (14)
28	Facilitate effective pre-referral intervention processes.	-1.45883 (52)	0.27045 (27)
29	Prepare for compliance monitoring conducted by the State Education Agency (SEA).	-1.72701 (54)	-1.48197 (52)
30	Advocate for students with disabilities in the school and the community.	1.09344 (11)	1.70004 (1)
31	Recruit and hire special education teachers and staff members.	-0.59599 (40)	0.34701 (22)
32	Direct a continuum of services and supports across grade levels for students with disabilities.	-0.36803 (37)	1.12294 (8)
33	Implement evidence-based programs that account for the diversity of the students with disabilities in the program.	0.05888 (25)	0.19715 (28)
34	Evaluate teaching staff effectively.	-0.58748 (39)	0.11983 (29)
35	Develop comprehensive professional development plans aligned with district wide and special education strategic plans.	-0.98979 (48)	-0.10007 (32)
36	Work as an integral part of the district and building administrative teams so that special education is perceived as an essential part of the education system.	-0.26447 (34)	1.52884 (4)
37	Influence the development and implementation of district policies that are responsive to the needs of students with disabilities and their families.	-0.16726 (30)	1.18461 (7)
38	Lead special education staff to	-0.97611	0.39901

	deliver specialized instructional services that are connected to educational standards.	(47)	(21)
39	Stay current with the new research practices in the field of special education.	0.34786 (18)	-0.17097 (33)
40	Provide instructional staff with ongoing supervision that leads to improvement in their instructional practice.	0.04056 (27)	0.34064 (23)
41	Engage in continued personal professional development.	-0.54525 (38)	-0.21242 (35)
42	Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities.	1.24464 (9)	-1.63741 (53)
43	Address issues that may impact college course participation.	1.51628 (4)	-1.82729 (55)
44	Provide students with the skills to access on-going adult learning opportunities.	1.48049 (5)	0.48723 (17)
45	Provide students with the opportunity to seek and sustain integrated employment.	2.03874 (1)	0.29062 (25)
46	Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities and technologies.	1.45406 (6)	-0.23838 (36)
47	Assure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals.	1.84474 (3)	0.83021 (13)
48	Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities.	2.03248 (2)	1.42377 (5)
49	Identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g. degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program.	0.89761 (12)	-1.45752 (51)
50	Provide access to college campus resources.	1.27550 (8)	-1.80138 (54)
51	Collaborate with faculty and staff.	0.20637 (23)	0.98429 (10)
52	Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and	0.67406 (14)	-2.78198 (56)

	procedures, public relations and communications.		
53	Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments.	1.21821 (10)	-0.96142 (47)
54	Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program.	1.38941 (7)	-0.29026 (38)
55	Utilize diverse sources of funding.	-0.62226 (41)	-0.72153 (44)
56	Have a planning and advisory team.	0.26472 (21)	-0.18153 (34)

Factor A Rankings

The quantitative analysis of statement rankings from Table 4.4 above shows that Factor A members' principle component scores ranged from 2.04 to -1.88. Factor A members ranked items from the Think College standards for postsecondary education as their 8 highest priority items. As indicated in Table 4.5 below, items associated with providing access to integrated employment (item 45), self-determination skills (item 48), the establishment of personal goals (item 47), participation in college courses and adult learning opportunities (items 43, 44 and 50), coordination of postsecondary services (item 54) and providing access to college campus resources (item 46). All of these items prioritize access to postsecondary learning on college campuses for students with intellectual disabilities and are associated with the Think College standards for leadership.

Additionally, quantitative analysis of items ranked lowest by Factor A members helps to clarify the specific aspects of leadership that participants in Factor A felt were least important for effective transition service delivery. The statements that were ranked

lowest by this group (items 25, 6, 29, 4, 21, and 28) describe “managerial activities” or duties that are associated with compliance, standardized assessments, and the evaluation and referral process (see Table 4.5 below). These tasks are associated less with student-centered activities and more on the legal and regulatory requirements associated with special education leadership. Three of these items (25, 29, 21 and 4) are associated with leadership activities related to individual and program evaluation activities; two of these items (6 and, 28) are associated with the referral process and program development and organization skills.

Table 4.5

Factor A Highest and Lowest Rated Statements

Highest Ranked Statements			Lowest Ranked Statements		
Item #	Statement	Score	Item #	Statement	Score
45	Provide students with the opportunity to seek and sustain integrated employment.	2.03874 (1)	21	Help Individual Education Program teams gain the skills needed to correctly determine what students with disabilities will take alternative state standardized assessments.	-1.03885 (49)
48	Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities.	2.03248 (2)	15	Explain to staff formative assessment procedures to monitor instructional practice.	-1.29830 (50)
47	Assure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals.	1.84474 (3)	7	Utilize dispute resolution systems that support students with disabilities and their families.	-1.36176 (51)
43	Address issues that	1.51628	28	Facilitate effective	-1.45883

	may impact college course participation.	(4)		pre-referral intervention processes.	(52)
44	Provide students with the skills to access on-going adult learning opportunities.	1.48049 (5)	4	Facilitate an effective evaluation process to determine if students are eligible for special education and related services under IDEA.	-1.62028 (53)
46	Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities and technologies.	1.45406 (6)	29	Prepare for compliance monitoring conducted by the State Education Agency (SEA).	-1.72701 (54)
54	Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program.	1.38941 (7)	6	Lead the implementation of processes to reduce unnecessary referrals.	-1.83388 (55)
50	Provide access to college campus resources.	1.27550 (8)	25	Analyze subgroup data from state standardized assessments.	-1.87514 (56)

Overall, the membership of Factor A included most of the participants who were involved in Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs, as well as some participants not involved in these initiatives. Of the subjects in this study, most of the special education teachers, college disability services staff, and adult service providers were members of Factor A. There were no parents included in the membership of Factor A.

Factor B Rankings

Factor B accounted for the responses of 11 of 34 participants in this study. One notable characteristic of Factor B membership is that it is predominately non-ICE participants, with only three ICE participants, one who was a first time attendee at an ICE

meeting (e.g. a person new to ICE and not strongly affiliated with the program). When compared with the number of participants associated with Factor A, Factor B is the smaller group.

The quantitative analysis of items ranked highest by Factor B demonstrated scores ranging from 1.70 to -2.78. Factor B members ranked items 30, 5, 22, 36, 48, 17, 37 and 32 among their top priorities for effective transition service delivery (see Table 4.4 for details). These items reflect priorities associated with Collaboration (30, 5, and 36), Program Development and Organization (32), Professional Development and Ethical Practice (17, 22), Fostering Self-determination (48) and Leadership and Policy (37).

Quantitative data provides information to support the interpretation of the items ranked lowest by Factor B (see Table 4.6 for details). Members of this group ranked items 18, 8, 49, 29, 42, 50, 43, and 52 as their lowest priority for transition service delivery. Five of these lowest ranked items (items 42, 43, 49, 50 and 52) are associated with providing access to college-based programs for students with intellectual disabilities. One item ranked lowest (29) is associated compliance monitoring for State Education Authorities and is associated with individual and program evaluation. Another item (8) ranked as a low priority has to do with leadership for change and the use of organizational change theory. A third item (18) ranked at the lowest priority for transition services involves the facilitation of intra- and interagency agreements.

Table 4.6

Factor B Highest and Lowest Ranked Statements

Highest Ranked Standards			Lowest Ranked Standards		
Item #	Statement	Score	Item #	Statement	Score
30	Advocate for students	1.70004	18	Facilitate intra- and	-1.16680

	with disabilities in the school and the community	(1)		interagency agreements	(49)
5	Make decisions within the boundaries of ethical and legal practices.	1.66693 (2)	8	Lead change using my knowledge of organizational change theory.	-1.40939 (50)
22	Maintain professional dignity throughout all interactions with parents, students and staff.	1.58043 (3)	49	Identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g. degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program.	-1.45752 (51)
36	Work as an integral part of the district and building administrative teams so that special education is perceived as an essential part of the education system.	1.52884 (4)	29	Prepare for compliance monitoring conducted by the State Education Authority (SEA)	-1.48197 (52)
48	Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities.	1.42377 (5)	42	Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities.	-1.63741 (53)
17	Provide effective professional development opportunities to increase regular and special education staffs' skills for working with students with disabilities.	1.34785 (6)	50	Provide access to college campus resources.	-1.80138 (54)
37	Influence the development and implementation of district policies that are responsive to the	1.18461 (7)	43	Address issues that may impact college course participation.	-1.82729 (55)

	needs of students with disabilities and their families.				
32	Direct a continuum of services and supports across grade levels for students with disabilities.	1.12294 (8)	52	Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and procedures, public relations and communications.	-2.78198 (56)

Most of the subjects in Factor B were not involved in Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs. Factor B members were comprised of similar proportions of special education administrators and special education teachers as Factor A; however, this factor includes fewer college disability services staff and provider agency staff. Factor B membership was comprised of all parents who participated in this study. In addition, members of this Factor were the only group whose highest levels of education included high school diplomas, associate's, master's, CAGs and doctoral degrees. Factor B is also characterized by a majority of participants with 5 years or more experience in the field of special education.

Rationale for Statement Rankings

Factor A Rationale

Follow up questionnaires completed by respondents associated with Factor A support this interpretation of the leadership priorities of this group. In describing how participants arrived at their choices for leadership skills, knowledge, and activities that are most important for effective transition service delivery, participants commented as described in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7

Rationale of Factor A Members for Highest Ranked Items

Item #	Statement	Reason
45	Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have watched this work evolve over 12 years and I have come to believe that students achieve the post-school outcomes they expressed when staff listen to them, adjust their practices and believe that students with disabilities can work and learn like their peers. In order for students to achieve their goals, they need instruction and multiple opportunities to learn and practice self-determination and self-advocacy skills. I also believe that positive post-school outcomes are possible for many students when there is strong leadership and productive collaboration (S8). • [I prioritized] items that are most closely aligned to students versus where money comes from, evaluating teachers, etc. that tend to be more environmental factors in setting the stage for students. Specifically needed skills and opportunities—they are the focus—other columns reflect what the system needs to do to get to the point of providing these skills to students (S9).
48	Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence should be the ultimate goal for all students. Informed decisions are the best decisions. I feel the +4 column represents essential components of effective

		<p>transitioning: student involvement, opportunity, goal-setting and advocacy (S32).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students need base line self-determination in order to make their transition successful. Personal goals and shared decision-making need to occur to have a solid and comprehensive program with critical buy in (S4).
47	Assure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe that students need to be invested and involved in the transition process for it to be successful. I felt that these 2 statements (4F & 4G) spoke directly to motivation building, both in terms of students valuing the process and having the confidence because of acquired skills, to feel that they could succeed (S21).
43	Address issues that may impact college course participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to activities and a variety of learning styles. Access and values drive effective programming (S16).
44	Provide students with skills to access on-going adult learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is most important for students to have access to services to become more integrated into the community—job placement and continued employment—personal goals are also important for transition services (S19).

These responses to the follow up questionnaire suggest that the priorities of participants focus on self-determination skills, student participation in planning for postsecondary experiences, and collaboration by “the right people” to support transition service delivery.

When considering the specific details of lowest ranked statements, three aspects of leadership stand out. First, activities associated with standardized testing and mandated assessments were deemed less important for transition success. Second, activities related to the identification and referral of students with disabilities and their entry into special education services were deemed less important for effective transition service delivery than other leadership activities. Finally, compliance monitoring activities were deemed less important for designing and implementing effective transition services for students with intellectual disabilities.

Follow up questionnaires completed by respondents associated with Factor A support this interpretation of the leadership qualities deemed least important for transition service delivery. In describing how participants arrived at their choices for leadership skills, knowledge, and activities that are least important for effective transition service delivery, participants commented as indicated in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8

Rationale of Factor A Members for Lowest Ranked Items

Item #	Statement	Reason
28	Facilitate effective pre-referral intervention processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-referral should have happened before talks of transition occur (S4). • I chose them [low ranked items] because I would assume all others pertain to students already identified as special education, although transitioning all students is important. I feel the -4 column represents more technical (not student-centered) tasks that could cloud effective transition planning (S32)

4	Facilitate an effective evaluation process to determine if students are eligible for special education and related services under IDEA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was hard; I believe everything is important; however, I do believe that the positive transition and postsecondary experiences have been possible for students even when their secondary experiences have not been ideal. I'm ashamed to say that I placed in the -4 all of the DESE compliance issues. I don't believe that but am much more focused on the development and sustainability of effective transition practices (S8). • By transition to adulthood, MCAS is done and eligibility is usually a given for students with cognitive disabilities...I have not found standardized assessments to be overly helpful with this population (S7).
29	Prepare for compliance monitoring conducted by the State Education Agency (SEA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management related statements—all seem to feed management systems. While important, values should drive programming over data and management priorities (S16). • The statements in that column have more to do with administration and bureaucracy, and speak to roles that are important but not necessarily the first priorities for someone supporting students in transition (S21).
6	Lead the implementation of processes to reduce unnecessary referrals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the question, "what's least necessary for transition," I did not think that issues of eligibility and reduction of referrals support the transition process. I selected as

		important statements which seemed to be limiting, i.e. compliance with state standards or current budgets. Although these are essential components of special education, I see these points as potentially limiting individualization and creative dreaming (S22).
25	Analyze subgroup data from state standardized assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessments will already have been taken. These statements were more related to high school aged students. Compliance and data is not as important to transitional services (S19). • Having little if anything to do with transition—analyze subgroup data—I thought of MCAS, though I support some data could be of value if Thomas Hehir were creating the database...They are not directly tied to transition nor are they directly tied to what students need to know and be able to do in the transition process (S9)

These responses to the follow up questionnaire confirm that the perspective of Factor A members is that activities related to “management activities,” standardized assessment, the referral process and compliance with state regulations are least important to effective transition service delivery. Participants included in Factor A prioritized the opportunity to provide students with college and community-based learning experiences as well as student participation in college and career decision-making. All items ranked highest by this factor are associates with the leadership skills and knowledge expressed in

the Think College standards for postsecondary programs serving students with intellectual disabilities, suggesting that this group is characterized by a belief in supporting this population of students to participate in campus life. The group also expressed a particular interest in leadership activities associated with fostering self-determination and collaboration in their comments. Finally, Factor A members felt that aspects of leadership associated with the identification and referral of students with disabilities for special education, participation in standardized assessments and state-mandated testing, and compliance with special education regulations were less important to effective transition service delivery.

Factor B Rationale

Follow up questionnaires completed by respondents associated with Factor B enhance the understanding of the priorities of this group when considering postsecondary transition for students with intellectual disabilities. Table 4.9 below describes how participants arrived at their choices for leadership skills, knowledge, and activities that are most important for effective transition service delivery.

Table 4.9

Rationale of Factor B Members for Highest Ranked Items

Item #	Statement	Reason
30	Advocate for students with disabilities in the school and the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student focused with clear, strong ethical leadership in influential roles to ensure successful transition opportunities for students. As an administrative leader, we are positioned to ensure well-designed programming and services are in place to support students to transition. Without

		a solid foundation, transitional services can be superficial and without depth or meaningful connection (S26)
5	Make decisions within the boundaries of ethical and legal practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrity and ethical and legal should be honest and fair and for the student, not passed on money or ease...advocating gets services and attention where it is deserved and needed. It helps value different types of people. Professional development can prevent burn out and can be nurturing...this creates positive, productive work environment and allows gain for students (S25).
22	Maintain professional dignity throughout all interactions with parents, students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without professional dignity of all stakeholders, you will not have a foundation to move forward with a mission and a vision...it is important to lead good personnel relative to goals of your educational standards (S27). Being professional and supporting families was most important to me...professional development, collaboration, accommodations and lead are strong descriptions of services that are needed when transitioning into adult services (S30).
36	Work as an integral part of the district and building administrative teams so that special education is perceived as an essential part of the education system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with/among leadership team is valuable and impacts students (S10). I believe that every member of the IEP team plays an extremely important part...I feel that preparing and supporting educators is crucial to providing special education students the best possible

		education (S28).
48	Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I started with the statement that most represented the special education leadership team effectively doing their job (1N); I also wanted to prioritize student involvement and self-determination is a powerful tool and skill that students need, especially when they transition out of so much structure (S29).

Of 11 participants in Factor B, 6 mentioned collaboration in their description of their priorities when sorting (54.55%) and 4 of 11 explicitly mentioned professional development as a priority (36.36%). In addition, the responses of Factor B members clearly emphasize an interface with groups of people who support students with disabilities. Eight of 11 participants associated with Factor B explicitly mention *supporting families, supporting educators, leading teams, or protecting the rights of students and families*. The language used in the follow up questionnaire responses for all eleven participants in Factor B references service systems, leading and encouraging people to join in a shared mission or vision, or assisting the people who support the student to improve their practice and providing “value-added” services to students with disabilities.

Follow up questionnaires completed by respondents associated with Factor B add detail to the understanding about why subjects ranked certain leadership skills and abilities as having a lower priority for transition service delivery. Table 4.10 below describes how participants arrived at their choices for leadership skills, knowledge, and activities that are least important for effective transition service delivery.

Table 4.10

Rationale of Factor B Members for Lowest Ranked Items

Item #	Statement	Reason
29	Prepare for compliance monitoring conducted by the State Education Agency (SEA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance often lacks a comprehensive review and understanding of what meaningful transition looks like. Compliance does not mean quality, although it is still important (S 26)
42	Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am ambivalent about directing transition toward “college”—lack of inclusion of other postsecondary options such as trade, civil service, etc. (S26).
50	Provide access to college campus resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The least important were picked because although they would be a nice thing to provide, they are not the most necessary given my job and mission in serving students...Although important information to share, I don’t believe it is the responsibility of the secondary district to provide access to the college system (S27).
43	Address issues that may impact college course participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College is unimportant for the high majority of special education kids (S25).
52	Adhere to the college’s schedules, policies and procedures, public relations and communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s not get stuck with schedules—too rigid for transition planning (S3). • I put adhering to the college’s schedule last because the needs of the handicapped child need to come first (S28). • In my time in special education, college is usually not the number 1 priority when

		<p>transitioning out of high school and into adult services. Because of this, following college schedules and offering college resources would not be a priority. Offering these things are not essential to transitioning into adult services (S30).</p>
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The majority of respondents in Factor B were of the opinion that college access and planning for postsecondary education on a college campus would be the least important priority when planning for the transition of students with severe disabilities. Compliance monitoring was also an area that was viewed less critical to effective transition service delivery than other priorities.

Participants included in Factor B prioritized leadership activities associated with collaboration, professional development and ethical practice. Factor B members also felt that aspects of leadership for transition associated with individual and program evaluation, academic access at the college level, and integrating with college systems were less important to effective transition service delivery.

Statement Similarities and Differences Between Factors

Members of Factor A and Factor B ranked five items similarly among their highest and lowest priorities for transition service delivery. A summary of the similarly ranked highest items selected from the 15 highest ranked items by both groups is included in Table 4.11 below:

Table 4.11

Similarly Ranked High Priority Statements Between Factors A and B

Item #	Priority	Statement	Factor A Participant Rationale	Factor B Participant Rationale
30	High	Advocate for students with disabilities in school and in the community	<p>Ranked 11/56</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with learning disabilities need advocates because in my school, there are few teachers with SPED backgrounds or, they adhere to archaic notions of 'lazy' or 'dumb' as reasons for poor performance (S31) 	<p>Ranked 1/56</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interconnecting relationships between school, family and community [are important] because this is the support system for the student (S28)
47	High	Assure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals	<p>Ranked 3/56</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ultimately, we transition students to adult life—they must have the most powerful voice in steering their life (S7) 	<p>Ranked 13/56</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is critically important from my experience that the student is meaningfully involved with the establishment of goals. Services that do not align with the student's goals often fail (S23)
48	High	Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for	<p>Ranked 2/56</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically needed skills and opportunities for students— 	<p>Ranked 5/56</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I also wanted to prioritize student involvement and self-

		students with intellectual disabilities	they are the focus—other columns reflect what the system needs to do to get us to the point of providing these skills to students (S9).	determination is a powerful tool and skill that students need, especially when they transition out of so much structure (S29).
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Just as both factors agreed about several of the highest ranked items, there was also agreement between both factors regarding two of the lowest ranked items. Table 4.12 below summarizes the items that both factors agreed are among the 10 lowest priorities for effective transition service delivery.

Table 4.12

Similarly Ranked Low Priority Statements Between Factors A and B

Item #	Priority	Statement	Factor A Participant Rationale	Factor B Participant Rationale
25	Low	Analyze subgroup data from state standardized assessments.	Ranked 56/56 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze subgroup data—while this is important in my role as SPED director, it is not critical for transition services (S33). 	Ranked 48/56 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a special education teacher, I do not hold to high regard my students' performance on standardized testing. These tests were not designed for them, so I do not value them (S29).
29	Low	Prepare for compliance monitoring	Ranked 54/56 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management-related 	Ranked 52/56 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance often lacks a

		conducted by the State Education Agency (SEA).	statements all seem to feed management systems. While important, values should drive programming over data and management priorities (S16).	comprehensive review and understanding of what meaningful transition looks like. Compliance does not mean quality, although it is still important (S26).
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A review of the similarly ranked highest and lowest priorities for transition which Factor A and Factor B members share reveals common themes. Members of both factors agree that the highest priorities for transition service delivery include the need for leaders to advocate for students with disabilities in order to provide support and in order to overcome perceptions of limited capacity that can act as a barrier to the success of students with severe disabilities (Hehir, 2005; Wagner, et. al., 2005a). Another strong point of agreement between members of both factors is the need to foster self-determination and provide opportunities for student involvement in setting goals and making decisions (Kohler, et. al., 1993; NSTTAC, 2013a; Test, et. al., 2009). These highest ranked priorities are associated with the need to provide structure, skill development and support during the time when the service delivery systems that assist students with disabilities change. In addition, there is a strong theme that suggests that students with severe disabilities should benefit from services that are responsive to their expressed interests and preferences (DESE, 2013b).

In terms of the lowest priorities for transition service delivery, members of both factors agree that analyzing data gathered as the result of standardized testing is not

critical to the development of effective transition services for students with significant disabilities. Based on the comments provided by participants in follow up questionnaires, there appears to be a shared understanding that standardized testing is not designed to measure the skills that participants in this study associate with preparing this population of students for life after high school. In addition, members of both factors agree that compliance monitoring activities by the State Education Authority are a low priority when planning for effective transition service delivery. In a similar vein as the response to standardized testing, participants in this study seem to suggest that compliance monitoring activities are not designed to measure the activities that lead most directly to successful transitions from school to adult life for this population of students.

Chapter Summary

This study collected data from thirty-four subjects, seventeen who are affiliated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Programs and seventeen in identical roles who have not participated in the leadership groups associated with ICE. The data which was collected and analyzed was gathered from Q-sorts of 56 leadership statements derived from the standards for special education administrators and for postsecondary education programs developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and Think College (TC). Additional data included demographic information gathered from each participant and a follow up questionnaire completed by each participant after each Q-sort was completed. Data were analyzed using a mixed methods approach. Through a principle component analysis using SPSS, data collected from the Q-sorts were analyzed and two factor groups were identified (Factor A and Factor B).

As a result of this analysis, it is possible to identify patterns associated with the perspectives of special education leaders who participated in this study regarding leadership actions that are important to delivering effective transition services to students with severe disabilities. Factor A was the larger group and included the majority of ICE affiliated participants in this study. This group included special education teachers, administrators, college disability service providers and community-based adult service agency representatives. The quantitative analysis of highest ranked statements associated with Factor A demonstrated that this group valued collaboration, student self-determination and access to college-based learning experiences as essential for effective transition service delivery. Regulatory compliance, identification and referral activities and participation in standardized assessments were the items ranked lowest by the Factor A group.

Factor B, the smaller group of the two, represented the perspectives of participants who were not primarily associated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs. This group included special education teachers and administrators as well as all parents who participated in this study. Factor B participants joined Factor A members in prioritizing collaboration and student self-determination activities. In addition, professional development and ethical practice were areas prioritized by Factor B members. This group also shared the perception that standards associated with access to college were less important to transition service delivery than the areas mentioned above.

The qualitative data demonstrates that members of Factor A prioritized student involvement in ongoing learning, student goal setting, integrated employment, and the involvement of a transition coordinator/specialist in programming. Statements such as,

Students need to be invested and involved in the transition process for it to be successful and students achieve the post-school outcomes they expressed when staff listen to them, adjust their practices, and believe that students with disabilities can work and learn like their peers show the perspective of this group is to empower students. This group is aware of the need to allocate time and resources to a *designated person to coordinate* in order for transition services to be effective.

Factor B members prioritized professional development, professional boundaries, and dignity. Their comments highlighted the need for *integrity* and ethical and legal support for effective transition service delivery to occur. They find that *preparing and supporting educators* is a key to student success. This group understands that integrating services at the district and building level is crucial in order to support effective transition service delivery.

Leaders associated with both factors emphasized the importance of collaboration and student self-determination. Regardless of their roles or affiliations with ICE, all leaders agreed that these elements are essential in order for students with disabilities to transition from school to adult life.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Overview

Through the implementation of a mixed methods approach, this study explores the intersection of special education leadership and transition service delivery. By gathering data from special education leaders, the purpose of this study is to consider and respond to the following research questions:

1. Is there variation in the way participants affiliated with ICE Programs prioritize leadership competencies when compared with the prioritization of leadership competencies for transition by participants not affiliated with ICE Programs?
(Factor Membership)
2. What are the special education leadership competencies that participants who sort statements similarly consider as a priority for implementing postsecondary education and transition services? (Postsecondary and Transition Services Statement Rankings)
3. Are there differences in the rationale used by participants who sort statements similarly to prioritize leadership competencies for transition? (Factor Interpretation)

This chapter focuses on the perspectives of special education leaders who participated in this study in an attempt to understand their expressed priorities for leadership of transition programs for students with severe disabilities. By exploring the intersection of evidence-based practices suggested in the literature about leadership and transition and the perspectives of leaders in the field, it is possible to articulate a

framework that will assist educational leaders to identify models that are most effective under specific conditions (Boscardin, 2007). This study explores the emerging topic of special education leadership for effective transition service delivery and revisits the model proposed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. After connecting the results of this study with the broader context presented in the literature about special education leadership and transition services, the discussion culminates in recommendations for future study and implications for practice in the field.

Factor Membership

While the results of this study suggest that there is some variation in the way leaders affiliated with ICE programs and those who are non-ICE affiliated ranked Q-sample statements, there is also evidence that members of Factor A and Factor B shared some common perspectives about how to lead in a way that prepares students with disabilities to transition effectively from school to adult life. There are several elements of the factor profiles described in Chapter 4 above that may explain why leaders in this study sorted items similarly.

The first element is that both factors included representation from experienced leaders who have assisted students with intellectual disabilities to transition from school to the adult service system. Both Factor A and Factor B included educational leaders with more than 5 years of experience in special education. Factor A included 39.13% participants with 5+ years of experience in special education; Factor B was made up of 72.73% participants with 5+ years of experience in special education. Given this level of experience in the field, it is clear that both Factor A and Factor B represent the perspectives of educational leaders who have experience with the tenets of IDEA 2004,

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Under these provisions, leaders are required to design and implement individualized programs based on student strengths, interests and preferences and designed to promote measurable outcomes in the areas of postsecondary education, employment and community living (Glasenapp, 1990; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Having this experience in common may be one reason why members of both factors sorted some items similarly, particularly those that emphasize fostering student involvement in decision-making and planning.

In addition, the majority of members in both factors were people with a master's level of education or higher. Factor A was comprised of 82.61% of participants with a master's degree or higher level of education; Factor B was comprised of 81.82% members with a master's degree or higher. This level of education and experience in the field suggests that the perspectives shared by the two groups are informed by a higher level of formal education, especially in areas related to special education and human services. As training programs at the graduate and post-graduate levels have been influenced by the development of professional standards such as those articulated by the Council of Exceptional Children, participants who have completed these types of programs can be expected to have learned about the value of concepts such as collaboration, research, evaluation, and ethical practice (CEC, 2009). Completing professional development and educational programs that are based on these and other similar standards would certainly influence the perspectives of participants in a similar way. This may be another reason why members of both factors agreed about priorities such as supporting collaboration.

Finally, both Factor A and Factor B included members who had experience with three particular leadership roles: special education administrators, special education teachers and college disability services staff. Each of these roles is a professional leadership position, which suggests that many of the values shared by people in these roles will be common to those embraced by educational leaders as a whole. These values are clearly identified in the literature and were reviewed in Chapter 2. Specifically, professionals in the field of educational leadership share a common set of evidence-based leadership practices including building a vision and setting directions (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008), engaging stakeholders and building capacity (Leithwood et al., 2004; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003), using data to monitor progress and inform decisions (Boscardin, 2007; Hallenger & Snidvongs, 2008), and spanning boundaries to facilitate communication and problem-solving (Ross & Berger, 2009; Rusch, 1995). A final reason explaining why the perspectives of Factor A and Factor B have some shared elements is that both factors include members who are educational leaders who embrace the evidence-based leadership practices that are well-established for professionals in the field.

Leadership and Transition Services Statement Rankings

This study intended to explore the priorities of two groups of special education leaders: those who were affiliated with advisory groups of inclusive college-based transition programs (ICE) for students with severe disabilities who are eligible for special education under IDEA, and those who were not. The results of this study suggest that special education leaders who are active in ICE programs ranked some Q-sort statements differently than special education leaders who are not affiliated with ICE programs.

Factor A included most participants who were affiliated with ICE as well as all college disability services and adult service providers. The majority of participants in Factor A had fewer than 5 years of experience in the field of special education. Factor B membership was primarily composed of non-ICE affiliated participants. Special education teachers and administrators were represented in both Factor A and Factor B; however, parents were represented only in Factor B. The majority of participants in Factor B had 5 or more years of experience in the field of special education.

Fostering self-determination is a priority identified in the literature about effective transition service delivery. Factor A and B members agreed that statements such as #47: *Assure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals* and #48: *Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities* are among the highest priorities for transition. This priority is established in the predictors of post-school success identified by the National Secondary Transition and Technical Assistance Center (2013b). Members of Factor A and Factor B also described this priority in their comments about the sorts. One participant affiliated with Factor A said, *Students need base line self-determination in order to make their transition successful. Personal goals and shared decision-making need to occur to have a solid and comprehensive program with critical buy in.* Another affiliated with Factor B said, *It is critically important from my experience that the student is meaningfully involved with the establishment of goals.* Fostering self-determination is one of eight standards identified by Think College (Grigal et al., 2012) which aligns with the program practices and priorities of the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA).

Members of Factors A and B also agreed about the need to prioritize collaboration when planning for effective transition service delivery. Members of Factor A and B prioritized statements such as # 30: *Advocate for students with disabilities in the school and the community* and #51: *Collaborate with faculty and staff*. The first statement is aligned with the CEC standard for collaboration, and the second is aligned with the Think College standard for collaboration. The emphasis on collaboration echoes the research of Ross and Berger (2009) who found that effective school leaders emphasize community involvement and the development of positive partnerships with parents and social service agencies.

Members of Factor A and Factor B confirmed their commitment to collaboration in their comments. Members of Factor A and B specifically named the importance of collaboration in their comments. One participant from Factor A named *productive collaboration* as one of the conditions necessary for positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. A member of Factor B shared, *Collaboration with/among leadership team is valuable and impacts students*. Prioritizing collaboration among leaders fits well with the findings of Spillane (2006), who concluded that effective leadership is the result of distributing leadership roles to many leaders and attending to the “collective interaction among leaders, followers, and their situations” (p. 4). These ideas are closely linked to the assertions in the literature that strong leadership and collaboration are critical for positive student outcomes (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Pugach & Johnson, 2002). The results of this study build on these findings in the literature by emphasizing the importance of collaboration when leading transition programs for students with disabilities.

This study was designed to address an aspect of special education leadership about which very little research has been conducted. Though there are many studies about transition to postsecondary settings, prior to the onset of this study, only one publication about special education leadership and transition service delivery was available when conducting a key word search using the ERIC database. This publication, by Test, Mazzotti, and Mustian (2012), provides a theoretical framework that outlines what school leaders can do to support transitions to postsecondary settings. The priorities of the participants in this study fit well with the findings of Test et al. (2012) who conclude that building collaborative leadership is one of four key actions that leaders must prioritize in order to support students with disabilities to transition effectively from public school.

It is important to note that the study conducted for this dissertation builds on the literature about special education leadership and transition service delivery by establishing that, while all special education leaders who participated in this study shared the priorities of fostering self-determination and collaboration, there were other significant leadership actions that are prioritized differently based on whether the participants were affiliated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Program advisory groups. Details about the differences between the priorities of ICE affiliated leaders (Factor A) and non-ICE affiliated leaders (Factor B) are discussed in detail in the factor profiles below.

Factor Interpretation

Factor A Profile: Empowerment-oriented Leaders

Following analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from participants, Factor A members were labeled “empowerment-oriented” leaders based because they expressed a perspective that prioritized empowering students throughout their sorts and questionnaires. The term “empowerment-oriented” is derived from leadership research in social services and social justice education. Empowerment is “a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives” (Page & Czuba, 1999, para. 11). The concept of empowerment and self-determination are linked (Everett, Homestead, & Drisko, 1999); however, empowerment-oriented educational leaders are also interested in fostering critical reflection, group participation and decision-making, and promoting mutual respect in order to help people who lack an equal share of resources to gain more control over those resources (Friere, 1968).

Of the top ten statements prioritized by Factor A, all but three emphasize the need to provide students who are disabled with access to skills, services and opportunities that are comparable to those of their non-disabled peers. The following Q-sample statements were assigned the highest priority by Factor A and clearly align with the need to offer students with severe disabilities opportunities to access and control educational services in order to be ready for the transition from school to adult life: #45: *Provide students with the opportunity to seek and obtain integrated employment*; #48: *Assure the development and promotion of self-determination skills for students with intellectual disabilities*; # 47: *Assure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals*; #44: *Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities*; #46: *Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities and technologies*; #50: *Provide access to college campus*

resources; and, #42: Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities. Another statement that was rated in the top ten priorities of Factor A espouses the need to encourage group participation and decision-making: *#53: Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments.* These priorities expressed by the members of Factor A also emphasize the need for effective leadership to distribute the roles and responsibilities among many leaders and to be responsive to the collective interactions of leaders, students and specific local conditions that may influence learning (Friere, 1968; Spillane, 2006). The perspectives of Factor A fit well with the priorities espoused in educational leadership literature which suggest that effective leadership must include a focus on interpersonal relationships, reciprocal boundary spanning, and democratic and participatory decision-making (Ross & Berger, 2009; Rusch 1995).

This empowerment-oriented leadership focus was also evident in the comments shared by members of Factor A. One participant stated: *Students need to be invested and involved in the transition process for it to be successful.* Another shared, *Ultimately, we transition students to adult life—they must have the most powerful voice in steering their life.* A third member of Factor A said, *In order for students to achieve their goals, they need instruction and multiple opportunities to learn self-determination and self-advocacy skills. I also believe that positive post-school outcomes are possible for many students when there is strong leadership and productive collaboration.* While these priorities emphasize goal-setting at a personal level, using these goals to develop and communicate a shared direction for educational services fits well with the findings in educational leadership literature which demonstrate a clear connection between increased student

achievement and the establishment of shared goals (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Ross & Berger, 2009). Overall, the Factor A profile embrace a perspective that resonates with the work Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008) who assert that special education leaders need to bring the skills and commitments to actualize essential believes about social justice and inclusion.

Factor B Profile: Advocacy-oriented Leaders

The priorities of Factor B, a group that is characterized by representation that is not ICE affiliated and includes all parent participants in this study, are best described as advocacy-oriented. This term is derived from leadership literature in the field of school counseling, specifically, from the work of Lewis, Arnold, House, and Toporek (2002) who developed Advocacy Competency Domains to guide the work of counselors seeking to empower clients. Factor B sorted Q-sample items in a manner that demonstrated their commitment to understanding and supporting the “external factors that act as barriers to an individual’s development” (Lewis, et al., 2002, para. 2). In addition to the shared priority of Factor A and B members previously mentioned (*#30: Advocate for students with disabilities in the school and the community*), Factor B members focused on the need to advocate for students within the context of ethical, legal, professional and larger systemic conditions. In order for transition services to be effective, this group identified statements including: *#5: Make decisions within the boundaries of ethical and legal practices; #22: Maintain professional dignity throughout all interactions with parents, students and staff; and #36: Work as an integral part of the district and building administrative teams so that special education is perceived as an essential part of the education system.* These priorities fit well with the conclusions of researchers such as

Passman (2008) and DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003) who emphasize the need for effective educational leaders to focus on building systemic capacities and to “advocate effectively for the educational rights of diverse learners” (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003, p. 11).

Comments shared by members of Factor B confirm their emphasis on supporting staff and systems as one of the highest priorities for transition service delivery. One member said, *Advocating gets services and attention where it is deserved and needed. It helps value different types of people.* This statement by one of the parent-members of Factor B clearly echoes the research of DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003) mentioned above. Another member of Factor B stated, *Without professional dignity of all stakeholders, you will not have a foundation to move forward with a mission and a vision...it is important to lead good personnel relative to goals of your educational standards.* This statement also emphasizes the importance of leadership priorities established in the literature including the importance of mission, vision and goals in developing effective services (Day, Leithwood, & Sammons, 2008; Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). This statement also reflects the conclusions in research about educational leadership which find that positive partnerships with families and engaging all stakeholders are key factors in supporting student success (Blank, Berg, & Mellaville, 2006; Ross & Berger, 2009). Factor B members repeatedly highlighted the need to provide professional development and care for staff as a priority for transition service delivery. One said, *I feel that preparing and supporting educators is crucial to providing special education students the best possible education.* Another stated that *professional development can prevent burn out and can be nurturing...this creates [a]*

positive, productive work environment and allows gain for students. The need to build the capacity of staff is also well established in the literature about educational leadership. Researchers including Leithwood et al. (2004), Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), and McClean (2007) found that training and support for teachers, parents and school leaders is vital to the success of students. These members of Factor B also echo Zaretsky et al. (2008) who assert that there is a need in special education to support more positive approaches in professional development so that educators can maintain a capacity-oriented approach and avoid a deficit-focus that is inherent in the identification and service of students with disabilities.

Leadership Roles and Transition Service Delivery

This study considered the perspectives of leaders who are involved in the development and implementation of inclusive college-based transition programs for students with severe disabilities. Leadership of Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) programs in Massachusetts occurs through an advisory committee established on each college campus hosting a program. At the time of this study, members of ICE program advisory committees included participants who hold the following roles: special education administrator, special education teacher, parent of a child with a severe disability, college disability services staff, and adult service provider agency staff. While advisory committees can include students enrolled in ICE, there were no student representatives participating in the advisory committees at the time this study was conducted; therefore, students were not represented in this study.

The results of this study suggest that participants in certain roles have differing perspectives about the priorities for leadership of transition services. Factor A included

100% of the adult service provider agency staff who participated in this study as well as the majority (83.33%) of college disability services staff. Factor B included 100% of parents who participated in this study. This suggests that leaders who hold these roles may have differing perspectives and priorities regarding effective transition service delivery. A closer look at the results of this study can provide insight into the differences between the perspectives of leaders in these roles.

As mentioned above, Factor A is distinguished by an empowerment orientation. This orientation prioritizes actions that help people gain control of the resources and decisions that impact their lives (Friere, 1968). There are several reasons that could explain why college disability and other adult service provider staff in this study share an empowerment orientation. First, faculty and staff at undergraduate colleges are tasked with encouraging the empowerment and self-determination of young adults (Berzsenyi, 2011). In addition, the literature about supporting students with disabilities on college campuses also emphasizes self-determination and an “empowered-approach” to service delivery (Carpenter, 2002; Collins & Mowbray, 2008; Cook & Jonikas, 2002). One of the primary functions of postsecondary education and training is to encourage individual citizenship and personal responsibility in young adults (Donneson, 2007). Clearly the findings of this study support the literature which in suggests that college disability services staff bring a perspective that fits with the empowerment-orientation of Factor A.

Similarly, adult service providers who work with people with developmental disabilities have embraced an approach which promotes self-determination and decision-making by the individuals they serve. Historically, the adult service system for this population has moved from a focus on institutionalization to a focus on community-based

services that promote inclusion and access to work, leisure activities and social relationships (McKnight, 1995). The literature recognizes an ideological shift among community-based service providers for people with intellectual disabilities that emphasizes person centered planning and individualized support designed based on the preferences and strengths of the individual (Bradley, Ashbaugh, & Blaney, 1994; Shogren, Forber-Pratt, Nitttrouer, & Aragon, 2013). According to a recent literature review, even adult service providers supporting the most profound and multiply disabled individuals are trained and encouraged to promote self-determination and individual choice (Maes, Lanbrechts, Hostyn, & Petry, 2007). According to the Human Services Research Institute, a primary focus of public policy and research efforts in human services is on building a service delivery system that is responsive to the desires and choices of people with disabilities so that they can self-direct their lives (2015). Once again, it is clear that the values of individual empowerment are strongly supported in the culture and training of adult service providers. This may explain their strong association with the empowerment-oriented Factor A group.

The association of parents with Factor B can also be understood in the context of the advocacy-orientation of this group. According to a recent study, parents of transition-aged children with intellectual disabilities value self-determination skills; however, they also have significant concerns about their children's abilities to perform these skills (Carter, Lane, Cooney, Weir, Moss, & Machalicek, 2013). Mothers of children with intellectual disabilities express concerns about the ability of their children to develop and maintain relationships, access service systems and attain stability in areas such as work and maintaining a home (Dyke, Bourke, Llewellyn, & Leonard, 2013). Because parents

of children with intellectual disabilities often end up providing care well beyond the point of the transition from secondary school, strong interdependences can develop which result in parent fears about financial stability and relationships as well as fear about the quality of care that can be provided by the service system (Yoong & Koritsas, 2012). Such perceptions cause parents to see themselves as the primary advocates and driving forces for accessing services and supporting the quality of life of their children with intellectual disabilities. This may explain why parents in this study were identified primarily with the advocacy-orientation associated with Factor B.

The differences in perspectives and priorities that are expressed by leaders who have different roles are a significant finding of this study. In order to plan for effective transitions while supporting collaboration and ensuring that students with intellectual disabilities are given authentic opportunities for self-determination, it will be critical to understand both the empowerment-oriented approach to leadership expressed in Factor A and the advocacy-oriented approach expressed in Factor B.

Ultimately, the findings of this study suggest that effective leadership for transition prioritizes both empowerment-oriented and advocacy oriented approaches and emphasizes skills and knowledge to foster self-determination and collaboration among all stakeholders. One way to express the findings of this study is the model offered in Figure 5.1 below:

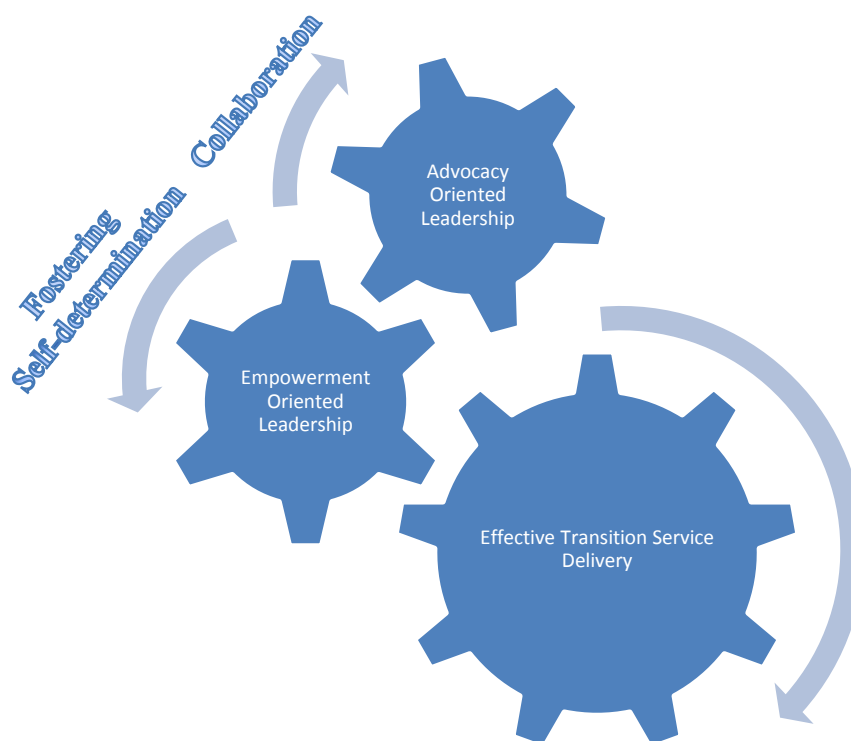


Figure 5.1. Model of special education leadership for effective transition service delivery. This model illustrates the results of this study which suggest that collaboration and fostering self-determination are key leadership skills that leaders must bring in order to develop effective transition services.

As suggested by members of Factor A, an empowerment-oriented approach to leadership emphasizing student involvement and direction is one of the priorities for effective transition services. Leaders adopting this orientation assist the student to take an active role in building the vision and setting directions for transition service delivery (O'Brien, 2006; Wheeler, 1987). A second priority is suggested by members of Factor B and involves an advocacy-oriented approach to leadership that focuses on professional development and ethics, effective integration with existing systems, and advocacy for students with disabilities in school and the community. Leaders who adopt this orientation seek to engage stakeholders and build their capacity within a context that

spans the boundaries posed by organizations and systems (Leithwood et al., 2004; Ross & Berger, 2009). In addition to these approaches, members of Factor A and Factor B identified two actions that special education leaders must prioritize in order to promote effective transition service delivery. These actions are fostering self-determination for students with severe disabilities and collaborating to lead the design and development of transition services (NSTTAC, 2013b; Test et al., 2012).

The proposed model describes the values that leaders bring as well as the actions that were identified by participants in this study as priorities for effective transition service delivery. The impact of this study is a first look at the perspectives of special education leaders who have invested in developing transition services for students with severe disabilities in public schools. While these results are best understood as a preliminary finding, the importance of this research is to begin a process of making explicit connections between the practice of special education leadership and improved services for students with disabilities (Boscardin, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2010; Young et al., 2007). Through a process of qualitative and quantitative analysis of information provided by a mixed group of leaders in the field, this research demonstrates the viewpoints of special education leaders about the actions and attitudes that they identify as most important for effective transition service delivery.

Implications of the Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of educational leaders about their priorities for effective transition service delivery for students with severe disabilities. The results of this research show that participants in this study agree about the need for leaders to prioritize fostering self-determination and collaboration among

stakeholders in order to promote effective transition service delivery. In addition to these shared leadership priorities, this study found that leaders associated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Programs adopt an empowerment-oriented approach to leadership; while those not associated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment tended to adopt a more advocacy-oriented approach to leadership.

While this study is an initial exploration of the nexus between special education leadership and transition service delivery, there are some implications for educational policy and practice that may merit consideration. These include the need for professionals interested in supporting effective transition service delivery to look more closely at the leadership literature that has emerged from the fields of school counseling and social work emphasize advocacy and empowerment competencies not explicitly prioritized in the leadership standards or quality indicators for special education and transition programs.

As increased funding is being made available for transition programs, particularly those on college campuses through the TIPSID initiative, this research suggests that additional attention to the leadership function of these programs may be merited. These findings may also influence professional development for special education leaders, particularly as transition service delivery becomes an increasing priority for compliance.

Though additional research is needed in order to discover whether the priorities expressed by leaders in this study represent the perspectives of a broader swath of leaders in the field, there is currently no required continuing education coursework or professional development for special education leaders that is specific to the area of transition service delivery. This study suggests that effective transition service delivery

may include a skill set that aligns with competencies related to empowering students and systems-level advocacy.

This study has also found that special educators and special education administrators prioritized skills and knowledge related to empowerment and advocacy, while college disability service and adult service providers tended to embrace an empowerment orientation and parents tended to embrace an advocacy orientation. In terms of effective leadership for transitioning students with severe disabilities from school to adult life, it appears that collaborative teams including representation from all of these stakeholder groups would provide the most balanced and effective groups to lead transition programs. Currently, the ICE model of an advisory group including representatives from all of these stakeholder roles may be worth exploring. ICE advisory groups develop programs and determine priorities on each campus community. This may be a model worth exploring for other transition services (i.e. vocational services, community-based services, or school-based transition programs). This study may also suggest that leaders involved in ICE advisory programs could benefit from additional training and support in the area of systems-level advocacy, particularly as this relates to professionals working in public school systems and the most effective ways to support these professionals.

Limitations

This study was designed as a first foray into considerations of special education leadership and evidence-based transition service delivery. To date, no previous research has been identified that has considered the perspectives of special education leaders regarding leadership competencies as they related to transition service delivery. One

limitation of this study is that the focus on postsecondary education and on programs serving students with severe disabilities is very narrow. Understanding the perspectives of participants in this study will yield only the most preliminary look at one specific circumstance in the broad field of transition services for students with disabilities. The inclusion of both ICE participants and non-ICE participants as a comparison group strengthened the study and provided additional understandings about the leadership priorities for transition service delivery from multiple perspectives; however, even the addition of this group provides a cursory glimpse of the larger issue of effective leadership for transition in public schools.

In addition, no individual student outcome data was collected or examined as part of this study; however, a follow up study with a more longitudinal scope (2-5 years) could be designed to collect and analyze data about short- and long-term participation in inclusive college-based programs; adult training programs; self-determination activities and skill development; paid competitive employment; the scope and involvement in social networks and recreation/leisure activities with non-disabled friends; and, independent community housing acquisition. Such a study would involve collecting quantitative data about the lives of students who participate in Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs in which the leadership practices and activities identified by this study are systematically applied.

Another limitation of this study arises from the population of special education leaders involved in the advisory groups overseeing Massachusetts' Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment programs. These advisory groups include not only licensed special education administrators and teachers, but also college and university educators and representatives

from community service organizations. On one hand, having a collaborative group of special education leaders that includes those with formal and informal special education backgrounds could result in compromised reliability due to the differing underlying knowledge and experiences of each participant. This underscores the need to conduct the study with members of at least 3 different advisory groups to improve the reliability of the results. One aspect of the current study that strengthens the results is the validity of the SELAS as a tool for measuring the perspectives of participations about special education leadership skills advanced by the Council for Exceptional Children.

A final limitation is the narrow scope of the setting being studied. The benefit of looking at the same program model across at least 3 different campuses and more than 12 different partnering school districts is that there is some basis for drawing conclusions about the leadership skills that correlate with the delivery of the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) model in Massachusetts. The limitation is that ICE is only one model for delivering transition services, albeit a very compelling one. It would be premature to draw conclusions about the leadership skills and knowledge that are associated with positive transition outcomes in a broader context without replicating this study or developing a study using experimental research design.

Suggestions for Future Study

The literature regarding effective transition practices is clear. There is a need for further research to determine what administrative structures need to be in place to support the work of individual teachers and the experiences of individual students as they prepare for transition (Davies & Beamish, 2009; Park, 2008; Li et al., 2009; Benitez et al., 2009).

Effective transition service delivery depends on the ability of schools to deliver services that fit with evidence-based predictors of post-school success. Given this, special education administrators need to exercise leadership that creates the conditions under which postsecondary success can occur. The results of this study are a first step in understanding what these conditions are. Participants have suggested that effective transition service delivery depends on the ability of educational leaders to create conditions that prioritize collaboration, foster self-determination and the direct involvement of students with severe disabilities in leadership, and promote the attributes associated with both advocacy-oriented and empowerment-oriented leadership.

The importance of improving special education leadership in ways that supports effective transition service delivery goes beyond meeting individual needs. As Pazez notes, “the proposed purposes for educational administration are framed within an ethic of justice and fairness” (1993, p. 13). In a field that is rife with litigation, conflicting interests, and pressure to comply with curricular standards and meet fiscal constraints, special education leaders will need to embrace a perspective of their work that can sustain them through times of challenge in order to avoid burnout (Burello & Zadnik, 1986; Lashley & Boscardin, 2003). Research which supports the connections between the skills and standards put forth by professional organizations such as the Council for Exceptional Children and student outcomes demonstrates that the work of special education administrators is “truly making a difference where it counts most” (Boscardin et al., 2011, p. 77). As specific transition outcomes are increasingly associated with specific practices and attitudes of special education leaders, people who have made a career of leading schools through the changes and challenges associated with special education

service delivery can be confident that they are fulfilling the main purpose of special education, ensuring that students with even the most severe disabilities leave school prepared to engage actively with their communities (Wagner et al., 2005a).

In addition to improving practices and outcomes at the local level, research that considers that perspectives and experiences of special education leaders that can be tied to programs in which evidence-based transition practices are implemented can inform educator professional development and the allocation of public resources. One critical consideration when providing professional development is the need to tie the content of development activities to specific knowledge and skills that are demonstrated to improve outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2007). By considering the intersection of evidence-based transition practices and the skills and activities undertaken by special education leaders, essential information can be gathered to inform the priorities for educator preparation programs in this area of identified need. In particular, this study suggests that consideration of the orientation of leaders could be significant and further understanding of the implications of empowerment-oriented leadership and advocacy-oriented leadership will be a key to supporting effective transition service delivery. As noted by Crockett et al. (2009), “Now is an opportune time not only to review the knowledge base supporting leadership for special education but also to strengthen it” (p. 66-7).

Finally, a better understanding of the link between leadership activities and transition services can inform public policy and legislative funding priorities for schools. Projects such as the “What Works Transition Research Synthesis Project” (US DOE grant #H324W010005) and the Future Ready Initiative in Massachusetts are examples of programs that have been funded as the result of extensive research related to dropout

prevention and evidence-based educational practices. While the past 20 years have seen significant attention given to the identification and promotion of specific instructional practices, very little attention has been given to supporting the development and consistent implementation of administrative activities to improve special education leadership (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003). “A considerable proportion of future educational leadership research should adopt a...’laser-like’ focus on discovering the leadership practices most likely to improve the condition or status of variables in schools for which there is already considerable evidence of impact on student learning” in order to avoid costly educational initiatives that do not school improvements (Leithwood et al., 2010b, p. 698). This study is significant because it explores the intersection of special education leadership and transition service delivery, a unique area of educational programming that is a high priority for improving individual student success and for compliance with state and federal requirements for special education.

Conclusion

As an initial foray into the examination of special education leadership and transition service delivery, this study documents the perspectives and priorities of special education leaders about the leadership activities that are most closely affiliated with successful transitions for students with severe disabilities. The participants in this study were able to prioritize leadership skills that resulted in factor groups representing both those primarily associated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment and those largely not affiliated with Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment. Demographic information was also analyzed and suggested that special education teachers and administrators shared leadership attributes that included both an advocacy and an empowerment orientation,

while parents were primarily leading from an advocacy oriented approach. College disability service providers and adult service providers demonstrated leadership attributes that were primarily empowerment oriented. In order to determine whether the perspectives expressed by participants in this study represent a broader trend in leadership for effective transition service delivery, it will be critical to replicate this study, both with other special education leaders in Massachusetts and with transition leadership groups in other areas of the country. The results of this study also suggest that it may be essential to identify professional development and support activities that raise leaders' awareness of both advocacy-oriented and empowerment-oriented leadership attributes.

APPENDIX A
INSTRUMENTATION

Doctoral Dissertation Research Consent Form: Special Education Leadership Practices that Support Postsecondary and Transition Service Delivery for Students with Severe Disabilities

Dear _____,

You are invited to participate in a small research study that is being conducted for a doctoral dissertation in special education leadership at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I am the doctoral student conducting the research, and would like to ask for your help in learning more about your perspectives about special education leadership practices that support effective transition services in postsecondary education programs serving students with intellectual disabilities. I am interested in understanding what you feel are the important aspects of special education leadership to improve transition service delivery for this population of students.

This study will last for one school year, beginning on July 1, 2014 and continuing through June 30, 2015. As a participant, you will:

- Be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire about your role
- Be asked to sort and prioritize all cards provided, each containing one statement about the skills and knowledge of special education leaders
- Be asked to participate in a brief questionnaire about why you sorted cards in the way you did

While this study is not designed to consider individual student outcome data, it is recognized that in talking with advisory group members, information about individual students may be shared with the researcher. All information will be maintained in a manner that protects the confidentiality of individual student information.

It is important for you to know that:

- Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may choose to participate or not participate. If you decide not to participate, you will not be penalized or treated in any prejudicial way. You can withdraw at any time.
- Your name and identifying information will not be shared in the final dissertation for this study. Neither will identifying information about individual students be shared in the final dissertation. The advisor for this dissertation, Dr. Mary Lynn Boscardin, and the dissertation committee members who review the research for

this project will see a copy of the consent form you sign and will know your name. No pseudonyms will be used.

- You can receive a copy of the final study if you would like it. Please email me at peltiersings@gmail.com if you are interested in receiving a copy of the final dissertation.
- There are no known risks involved in this study. The data collection process will be conducted in a way that minimizes your discomfort, and I will be responsive to your suggestions about when, where and how to complete this process. This study will contribute to our shared understanding about the activities that special education leaders should prioritize in order to create effective transition programs for students with intellectual differences. Results will be disseminated via the final dissertation and presented at the final dissertation defense at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be given 2 copies of the attached consent form. One form is for your records. The other should be signed and returned to me before you participate in any activities associated with this project. If you have any questions about the study, you can talk with me, or you can contact my advisor, Dr. Mary Lynn Boscardin, at mlbosco@educ.umass.edu or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Dr. Linda Griffin at lgriffin@educ.umass.edu

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Name of Study: Special Education Leadership Practices that Support Postsecondary and Transition Service Delivery for Students with Severe Disabilities

- Researcher: Laurel Peltier, doctoral candidate, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
peltiersings@gmail.com
- Advisor: Dr. Mary Lynn Boscardin, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
mlbosco@educ.umass.edu
- Associate Dean of Academic Affairs: Dr. Linda Griffin,
phone: [413-545-6985](tel:413-545-6985), email: lgriffin@educ.umass.edu

Participant Name: _____

By signing below, I agree that:

- I have read the information on page 1 of this consent form and would like to participate in this research study. I understand that my participation in voluntary.
- I have had a chance to ask any questions about this study, and I have gotten answers to my questions.
- I understand the purpose of the study and what I will be asked to do as a participant.
- I am aware that I can withdraw from this study at any time with no change in how I will be treated.
- Upon request, I will receive a written copy of the final dissertation.

Signature of Participant

Date

Please keep one copy of this document and return one copy to Laurel Peltier before participating in any of the activities associated with this study

**Special Education Leadership Practices that Support Postsecondary and Transition
Service Delivery for Students with Severe Disabilities**

Participant Demographic Questionnaire

Name of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Employer: _____

ICE Program Affiliation YES NO (if yes, circle program below):

Holyoke Community College
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Westfield State University

Current Position/Title (circle one):

District SPED Administrator
District Special Education Teacher/Coordinator
College Disability Services Director
College Disability Services Program Coordinator
Adult Service Provider Agency Representative
Parent Representative
ICE Student Representative
General Education/Faculty Representative

Years in Current Role (circle one):

Less than 5 years
More than 5 years

Highest Level of Education Completed (circle one):

Current ICE Student
High School graduate
Associates
Bachelor
Master
Master +30 / CAGS
Doctorate

Certification(s) held:

Special Education Administrator

Special Education Teacher

General Education Teacher

Clinician

Other: _____

Age (circle one):

17-19

20-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61-70

71-80

Gender (circle one): Female Male

Number of students with disabilities under your care/caseload (circle one):

0-2

3-5

6-9

10-20

20-30

30 +

Years of Special Education Participation Experience (circle one):

Less than 5 years

More than 5 years

APPENDIX B

NSTTAC RESULTS (NSTTAC, 2013c)

Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
Baer et al. (2003)	All disability categories except speech	140	1. Work study	1. Employment	Logistic Regression	3.67	$p < .01$	.45 (medium)
			2. Vocational education	2. Employment		2.60	$p < .05$	.34 (medium)
			3. Regular academics	3. Education		5.13	$p < .01$	.55 (large)
Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff (2000)	All disability categories	709	1. Number of paid jobs	1. Productive Engagement (employment or education)	Logistic Regression	1.80	$p < .001$	.22 (small)
			2. Transition goals met	2. Productive Engagement (employment or education)		3.82	$p < .001$	.46 (medium)
Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren (1997)	All disability categories	422	1. Social skills at exit	1. Employment	Logistic Regression	3.44	$p < .05$	.43 (medium)
			2. Number of jobs in school	2. Employment		2.03	$p < .01$	.26 (small)
			3. Job search skills at exit	3. Employment		2.11	$p < .05$	.27 (small)
			4. Career awareness at exit	4. Productive Engagement (employment or education)		1.89	$p < .05$	.23 (small)
Blackorby, Hancock, & Siegel (1993)	LD, MR, ED, Sensory Impairments, Physical Disabilities	939	1. Student's School Programs (percentage of time spent in regular education placement;	1. Employment, education, and independent living	Correlated Factor Analysis	.27	$p < .001$	.27 (small)

Results Table January 2013

1

Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
			student took academics in regular education placement)	2. Employment, education, and independent living		.42	$p < .001$	.42 (medium)
			2. Individual aptitude (student's self-care ability scale; student's IQ level)			Pearson <i>r</i>		
Bullis, Davis, Bull, & Johnson (1995)	Students with deafness or with disabilities plus deafness	308	1. Year-round job	1. Engagement (Education or employment)	Logistic Regression	4.94	$p = .05$	.54 (large)
			2. Paid work	2. Independent living		2.21	$p = .05$	.29 (medium)
			3. Assistance from 3-6 community-based agencies	3. Independent Living		2.34	$p = .05$	.31 (medium)
Carter, Austin, & Trainor (2012)	Severe Disabilities	450	1. Parent Expectations	1. Employment	Logistic Model		$p < .001$	.46 (medium)
Chiang et al., 2012	Autism	830	1. Parent Expectations	1. Education	Backward Logistic Regression	1.299	$p < .001$	.47 (medium)
Doren & Benz (1998)	All disability categories	422	1. Number of jobs in school (males only)	1. Employment	Logistic Regression	2.04	$p < .05$	.26 (small)

Results Table January 2013

Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
			2. Method used to find job (self-family-friend network)	2. Employment		Males: 2.33 Females: 3.77	$p < .05$ $p < .05$	.31 (medium) .46 (medium)
Doren, Gau, & Lindstrom (2012)	All disability categories	2127	1. Parent Expectations	1. Employment	Linear Logistic Regression	3.51	$p < .05$	.37 (medium)
				2. Education		5.84	$p < .05$	.37 (medium)
Fabian, Lent, & Willis (1998)	LD, MR, ED, other disabilities that included epilepsy, sensory impairments, head injury, and orthopedic and mobility impairments	2,258	1. Acceptance of post-internship job offer	1. Employment	Discriminant Analysis	.23 (.89 structure coefficient)	$p < .001$	.23 (small)
			2. Internship completion	2. Employment		.23 (.44 structure coefficient)	$p < .001$	.23 (small)
						Canonical Correlation		
Fourqurean, Meisgeier, Swank, & Williams (1991)	LD	123	1. High school employment	1. Employment (stability)	Multiple Regression	.05	$p < .01$	.05 (small)
			2. Parent participation	2. Employment (stability)		.03	$p < .05$	.03 (small)
			3. Math ability	3. Employment (stability)		.08 R^2	$p < .05$	.09 (small)
			4. Parent participation	4. Employment (status)	Discriminant Analysis	.43	$p < .01$	.43 (medium)
				5. Employment		Canonical		

Results Table January 2013

Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable (status)	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a Correlation	Significance level	Effect Size
Halpern, Yovanoff, Doren, & Benz (1995)	All disability categories	Oregon/ Nevada: 422	5. Math ability					
			1. Instruction received	1. Education	Logistic Regression	3.91	<i>p</i> <.05	.47 (medium)
			2. Transition planning	2. Education		3.21	<i>p</i> <.05	.41 (medium)
			3. Student satisfaction	3. Education		22.48	<i>p</i> <.01	.82 (large)
		Arizona: 565	1. Functional achievement	1. Education	Logistic Regression	12.67	<i>p</i> <.01	.74 (large)
			2. Instruction received	2. Education		4.82	<i>p</i> <.05	.53 (large)
			3. Transition planning	3. Education		6.61	<i>p</i> <.05	.61 (large)
			4. Student satisfaction	4. Education		27.65	<i>p</i> <.01	.85 (large)
Harvey (2002)	LD, orthopedic impairments, visual or hearing problems, deafness, speech problems, orthopedic problems, physical disabilities, learning problems, emotional	7,007	1. Vocational education credit in high school	1. Employment	Logistic and Ordinary Least-Squares Regression	1.75	<i>p</i> <.001	.21 (small)
			2. Vocational education credit in high school	2. Employment (wage earnings)		3.19	<i>p</i> <.001	.41 (medium)
			3. Vocational education credit in high school	3. Employment (hours worked)		3.65	<i>p</i> <.001	.45 (medium)

Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
Heal, Khoju, & Rusch (1997)	problems, or other health problems, mental or physical disabilities; students without disabilities All disability categories	713	1. Extent of school integration	1. Independent Living (QOL: Independence)	Hierarchical Multiple Regression	.37	$p < .001$.37 (medium)
			2. Percent of hours spent in regular education classes	2. Independent Living : (QOL: Independence) (QOL Esteem)				
Heal, Khoju, Rusch, & Harnisch (1999)	Mild disabilities, LD, ED, speech impairments ; sensory (vision, hard of hearing, deaf), orthopedic impairments	505	Amount of time per week students spent with friends or family (student support)	Independent Living: (QOL: Independence) (QOL: Social Relationships)	Multiple Regression	.26 .41 Semi-partial correlations	$p < .001$ $p < .001$.26 (medium) .41 (large)

Results Table January 2013

Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
	, other health impairments, severe disabilities							
Heal & Rusch (1994)	All disability categories; students without disabilities	2,686	High scores on adaptive and academic skills, self-care skills, GPA on academic activities, received a diploma, and higher IQs	Independent Living	Hierarchical Multiple Regression	.34 <i>R</i> ²	<i>p</i> = .001	.52 (large)
Heal & Rusch (1995)	ED, speech impairments, LD, MR, severe disabilities, physical disabilities, hearing impairments, visual impairments	2,405	Hours in vocational education courses, academic courses, occupational courses, percent of hours in regular education	Employment	Hierarchical Multiple Regression	.27 <i>R</i> ²	<i>p</i> < .001	.37 (large)
Leonard, D'Allura, & Horowitz	Individuals with visual impairments	167	1. Type of school (integrated) 2. Received	1. Employment	Logistic Regression	1.74	<i>p</i> < .05	.20 (small)

Results Table January 2013

Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
(1999)			technology training	2. Employment		2.20	$p < .05$	.29 (small)
Luecking & Fabian (2000)	MR, ED, LD	3,024	6-month follow up: 1. Internship completion 2. Post-internship job offer	1. Employment 2. Employment	Logistic Regression	4.50 5.28	$p < .01$ $p < .01$	.51 (large) .55 (large)
			12-month follow up: 1. Internship completion 2. Post-internship job offer	1. Employment 2. Employment		1.84 3.07	$p < .05$ $p < .01$	.22 (small) .40 (medium)
Rabren, Dunn, & Chambers (2002)	LD, MR, Other (not specified)	1,393	1. Job at time of high school exit	1. Employment	Logistic Regression	5.10	$p < .001$	.54 (large)
Repetto, Webb, Garvan, & Washington (2002)	• Students with disabilities (not specified)	Not specified	1993 follow up: 1. Interagency council characteristics 2. Transition support characteristics	1. Education 2. Education	Correlation	.26 .26	$p < .05$ $p < .05$	.26 (small) .26 (small)
		67	1997 follow up: 1. Interagency council characteristics	1. Education 2. Education 3. Education		.34 .39 .36	$p < .05$ $p < .01$ $p < .05$.34 (medium) .39 (medium) .36 (medium)

Results Table January 2013

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Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
Roessler, Brolin, & Johnson (1990)	Students with disabilities (not specified)	38	2. Transition program characteristics	4. Education		.45	$p < .001$	.45 (medium)
			3. Transition service characteristics			Pearson <i>r</i>		
			4. Transition support characteristics					
			1. Daily living skills (teacher rating)	1. Employment	Correlation		$p = .01$	.53 (large)
			2. Personal/Social skills (teacher rating)	2. Employment			$p = .02$	.47 (medium)
			3. Occupational guidance and preparation (teacher rating)	3. Employment			$p = .01$	.56 (large)
			4. Daily living skills (student rating)	4. Independent Living (QOL)			$p = .02$	.39 (medium)
			5. Personal/Social skills (student rating)	5. Independent Living (QOL)			$p = .01$	.44 (medium)
			6. Occupational guidance and preparation (student rating)	6. Independent Living (QOL)			$p = .03$	.37 (medium)
							Pearson <i>r</i>	
Shandra & Hogan (2008)	Moderate and severe disabilities (not	2,254	1. Participation in school-based program of study	1. Employment (stability, benefits, insurance, paid	Generalized Estimating Equations	1.27	$p < .05$.09 (minimal)

Results Table January 2013

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Reference	Population	<i>n</i>	Predictor Variable	Post-school Outcome Variable	Statistical Analysis	Relationship ^a	Significance level	Effect Size
						1.24	$p < .05$	.08 (minimal)
Wehmeyer & Schwartz (1997)	MR, LD	88	2. Participation in school-based program of study IQ, autonomy, psychological empowerment, self-realization, self-regulation, number of vocational education classes	2. Employment (full-time) Employment (hourly pay rate)	Multiple Regression	.81 R^2	$p < .05$	4.25 (large)
White & Weiner (2004)	Severe disabilities	104	1. Degree of school integration with age-appropriate peers 2. Duration of community-based training	1. Employment 2. Employment	Correlation	.36 Pearson r	$p < .001$ $p < .05$	.36 (medium) .39 (medium)

Note. ^a indicates all articles reported are odds ratio statistics unless noted otherwise.

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