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Administrative Accountability in Special Education: A Survey of Area Middle-Management Personnel in Iowa

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ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: A SURVEY OF
AEA MIDDLE-MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL IN IOWA

An Abstract of a Thesis
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Arnold Ernie Lang

December 1978

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ABSTRACT

The past decade has recorded increased demands by parents and legislators for leadership accountability in special education. However, contemporary research on special education leadership accountability has been largely directed at instructional or support professional personnel. Literature on accountability concerns at supervisory, middle-management, and top management positions is noticeably sparse. This study centered on the collection and comparison of survey data concerning middle-management accountability attitudes and practices utilized in Iowa's fifteen area education agencies (AEAs). The major concern of this study was how middle-management/supervisory functions in special education were viewed and held accountable by both top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel. Participants in the study were fourteen directors of special education (top management) and nineteen middle-management/supervisory personnel employed in Iowa's intermediate system of special education administration. The data were collected by two self-report mail questionnaires over a three-month period in 1978. The questionnaires were designed to: (a) collect demographic information on AEA special education middle-management/

supervisory personnel; (b) collect data on the accountability attitudes held by top management; (c) identify the evaluation practices utilized by top management to assess job performances of AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel; and (d) sample middle-management/supervisory attitudes concerning accountability and assessment practices used by their AEA top management superiors. Responses were treated primarily by frequency counts, percentages, and descriptive statistics. The analysis and interpretation of data have been reported by narration, graphs, and a frequency polygon. Results of the study identified attitudinal differences between the two participant groups and the absence of any formal established accountability standards for Iowa AEA special education middle-management/supervisory personnel. There was a consensus among participants that middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education should be accountable. There was a lack of agreement between participant groups on the most desirable evaluative methods. Significant differences of opinion between the groups were obtained on questionnaire items related to perceptions of middle-management/supervisory roles and functions and the involvement of parents or special interest groups in the evaluation of middle-management/supervisory job performances. Implications of the study support the contention that special education management responses to increased demands for accountability in Iowa AEAs are inadequate and related to: (a)

unsettled issues of role identification and the delineation of functions; (b) creation of new positions at the middle-management/supervisory levels; (c) decentralization of the administrative hierarchy brought about by rapid expansions in special education; (d) the relatively autonomous operations of Iowa's fifteen individual AEAs; and (e) the absence of any uniform and viable management accountability measures. A final implication drawn from the study is that Iowa AEA top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel recognize the emergence of management accountability in special education, are receptive to evaluation of management performances in agency operations, but appear to be a long distance from the implementation of any viable management accountability measures. Conclusions suggest a need for further research.

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This Study by: Arnold E. Lang
Entitled: Administrative Accountability in Special
Education: A Survey of AEA Middle-Management
Personnel in Iowa

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Abstract

The past decade has recorded increased demands by parents and legislators for leadership accountability in special education. Contemporary research on administrative accountability has been sparse. This study centered on the collection and comparison of survey data concerning middle-management accountability attitudes and practices utilized in Iowa's fifteen area education agencies (AEAs). Participants in the study were fourteen directors of special education (top management) and nineteen middle-management/supervisory AEA personnel. The data were collected by two self-report mail questionnaires over a three-month period in 1978. Responses were treated primarily by frequency counts, percentages, and descriptive analysis. Results of the study identified attitudinal differences between the two participant groups and the absence of formally established accountability standards for agency middle-management/supervisory personnel. Noteworthy differences of opinion between the groups were obtained on questions related to perceptions of middle-management/supervisory roles and functions in special education and reactions to the involvement of parents or special interest groups in the evaluation of middle-management/supervisory job performances. The conclusions indicate that Iowa AEAs appear to be a long distance from the implementation of any viable middle-management accountability measures and suggest a need for further research.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Special education in America can be characterized as in an unsettled state of transition. During the past decade there have been few constants in the field of providing educational services to the nation's handicapped. Many forces and factions have converged to make change the one common denominator during this tumultuous time. The roots of special education's unique and current revolution can be traced back to the civil rights movement during the 1950s and early 1960s. Progressive legislation encouraged by the Warren Court's liberal interpretation of the equal protection concept embodied in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution forced a public policy shift on equal educational opportunities for the handicapped. Increased federal intervention in education during this period, highlighted by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, signaled the onset of a "quiet revolution" (Diamond, 1973; Weintraub and Abeson, 1974). History has well documented the subsequent policy changes of the late 1960s and early 1970s that reverberated through the nation's judicial system. The recognition,

promotion, and provision of educational welfare for handicapped were no longer a passive patronization.

Federal concern for the constitutional rights of "minority" students was not the only force promoting unsurpassed acceleration of change in special education (Cook, 1974). Additional impetus was being supplied by both the private and professional sectors. Dramatic advances in medicine and pharmacology, the maturation of research in allied disciplines, the growth of teacher education, and the formal development of parents' organizations and professional child advocacy groups have been of major influence since 1965 (Ferguson, 1977). The literature is replete with studies and statistics that give testimony to the rapid escalation of funds, programs, and personnel in special education.

Despite the controversy that has provided impetus to special education's growth during the past decade, there has been a persistent lag between legislative policy and local compliance with legal declarations. This lag can be attributed to many factors. One of the major factors has been the inability of state, intermediate, and local service administrative agencies to efficiently and effectively deliver the comprehensive services the laws require. In their haste to meet legislative edicts, many agencies appear to have, at times, sacrificed quality for quantity (Hentschke, 1975). They have also neglected to create mechanisms whereby these deficiencies can be identified and corrected.

According to Reynolds (1970)

The schools of the United States are engaged in a very rapid expansion of specialized school programs. The leaders who have allocated resources to support the programs have begun to insist upon systematic program evaluation . . . there is some danger that we have let evaluation procedures slip to perfunctory levels. (p. 188)

This shortcoming reveals itself more vividly when attention is focused on the evaluation of leadership personnel in special education.

The increased demand for leadership accountability in special education has given the once "quiet revolution" a pronounced personal audibility to administrative and management personnel. Yet there is a paucity of research in this area (Willenberg, 1966). A few astute educators recognized the demands for accountability on special education leaders that emerged during the 1970s (Connor, 1963; Lessinger, 1971; Meisgeier and King, 1970; Sage, 1968; Willower, 1970). However, the accountability studies of the 1970s were largely confined to assessing teacher performances or appraising program effectiveness in the classroom. Vergason (1974) reviewed the research on leadership accountability during this period and commented on the absence of research attention to management personnel. With a few exceptions (Jones, 1973; Vergason, 1974; Willower, 1970) contemporary research on special education leadership

accountability has been directed at instructional or professional support personnel. Literature on accountability concerns at supervisory and middle-management positions is noticeably absent (Twait, 1976). There is an urgent need for well conceived and thorough evaluations at all levels of leadership in special education.

Special education in America has become big business as indicated by the current large investments of human, fiscal, and material resources (Cook, 1974). Individual state responsibility for identifying handicapped children was clearly established by Congress in the Education Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-380). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142) mandates that accountability procedures be designed to ascertain the quality of the services provided by state, intermediate, and local educational agencies. This directive has a particular meaning for administrative services. According to Cook (1974) "The Congress and the public expect, and are asking, special education leaders to account for the large expenditures of resources" (p. 367). The special educational needs of eight million children will demand an expeditious, economical, and judicious utilization of resources with a vigilant monitoring of the various delivery systems. This is a Herculean challenge that requires the efficacious use of special education personnel which places a heavy burden on those who are responsible for management functions.

Statement of the Problem

Special educators, affected little in the past by accountability, are faced with increasing pressure to monitor individual and program performance. Extensive increases in the number of and expenditures for special educational services have given impetus to public sentiment and policy considerations for service efficacy (Hayes and Higgins, 1978).

The increased demand for accountability has a special significance for the administrative hierarchy. The statutory language of Public Law 94-142 and its compliance timetable place service responsibilities directly on management and supervisory personnel with only limited time to comply.

While the accountability movement is not new to education, it is recent in special education and novel to administrative personnel (Turnbull, 1975). Despite an abundance of research on the philosophy and practice of educational management, there is an almost total absence of literature on the relationship of special education management and accountability. The research literature is particularly devoid of studies that focus on accountability concerns for middle management and supervisory positions (Twait, 1976).

Administrative attitude and behavior are vital elements in the overall success or failure of a service agency (Hentschke, 1975). Policy decisions and the administrative arrangements made by individuals in leadership positions have serious ramifications for the delivery of services.

There is an urgent need for assistance if management personnel in special education are to achieve a greater understanding of contemporary accountability roles and functions (Vergason, 1974). There are additional needs to develop evaluative standards and procedures that reflect the specific process of special education administration (Reynolds, 1970). The limited research in response to these needs (Cook, 1974; Jones, 1973; Turnbull, 1975; Vergason, 1973; Weintraub, Abeson, Ballard, and LaVor, 1976; Willower, 1970) has focused on the accountability functions of top management positions. Little research attention has been given to accountability concerns relevant to middle-management/supervisory positions.

The old boundaries of special education have been re-examined in the Courts and are rapidly being renegotiated and realigned (Olson, 1975). As special education becomes a more integrated and essential part of the main educational system, there will be a concomitant need for comprehensive requirements related to leadership accountability. These requirements must not only be comprehensive in scope, they should be directed at all levels of leadership. According to Olivia (1976) ". . . administration should no longer be construed as the decision making behavior of one individual alone at the top" (p. 303). The increased size and complexity of special education have necessitated a larger and more complex leadership hierarchy.

The major concern of this study was how middle-management/supervisory functions in special education were viewed and held accountable by both top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel. An appropriate response to this concern required investigation into current administrative attitudes and accountability practices in the field.

Purpose of the Study

Education is a legislative function of the individual state governments. State constitutions have, in turn, recognized local school districts or intermediate agencies as basic administrative units. Historically, special education management has been under the direction of regular school administration (Meisgeier and King, 1970). The political arrangement of state and local control has given rise to a myriad of special education administrative units and services. The size and diverse complexity of special education administration on a national level defies comprehension and investigation. This necessitates that study focus on a single state's administrative organization for the delivery and monitoring of special education services.

The State of Iowa enacted Senate File (S.F.) 1163 in 1974 which abolished the existing county school system and established fifteen regional area education agencies (AEAs). These intermediate delivery systems and their management personnel were delegated the primary responsibility for

special education administration in Iowa. Senate File 1163 constituted a radical change in the State of Iowa's approach to the provision and management of educational services to handicapped children (Ferguson, 1977). The public policy set forth in the act required the AEAs to be accountable in their assigned administrative roles. Accountability concerns at middle-management/supervisory levels in Iowa AEA management hierarchies provided the focus of this study.

The purposes of the study were twofold: (a) to survey current evaluative attitudes and the practices used by Iowa AEA directors of special education to assess the job performances of middle-management and supervisory personnel and (b) to sample agency middle-management and supervisory personnel attitudes on accountability.

Definition of Terms

Accountability: Lessinger (1971) has defined accountability as

. . . a regular public report by independent reviewers of demonstrated accomplishment promised for the expenditure of resources (p. 73).

Vergason (1973) has expanded Lessinger's definition to include

administrative arrangements and tools directly and indirectly related to the delivery of special education services (p. 371).

Area education agencies (AEAs):

In 1974 the Iowa Legislature enacted Senate File (S.F.) 1163, a melange of educational measures which, among other things, . . . abolished the county school system and established fifteen regional area education agencies. The legislature charged these agencies with primary responsibility for special education (Ferguson, 1977, p. 1287).

Directors of special education: Section 12.26(1) of the Rules and Regulations of the State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction (DPI) (1977) has role-defined the director of special education

to function as an advocate for children requiring special education and serve as an extension of the state division of special education in meeting the intent of the special education mandate and compliance with statutes and roles (p. 22).

Evaluation: Cook (1974) considers evaluation as any process or procedure that is

. . . concerned primarily with effectiveness and the degree to which the institution or system succeeds in doing whatever it is trying to do (p. 368).

Special education: Section 12.3(6) of the Rules and Regulations of the State of Iowa DPI defines special education as

. . . a continuum of program and service options in order to provide the intervention which is required to meet the educational needs of each pupil regardless of the disability (p. 4).

Middle-management and supervisory personnel: For the purposes of this study, the author has operationally defined middle-management/supervisory personnel as those professional individuals employed in special education with Iowa AEAs who spend 50% or more of employment time in a quasi administrative capacity. Excluded are AEA administrators, special education directors, or management personnel employed on a parttime or special consultive basis only.

Special education coordinator: Section 12.26(3) of the Rules and Regulations of the State of Iowa DPI has defined the role of the special education coordinator as being to

. . . assist the director of special education in coordinating special education programs and services within a specific geographic area or as approved by the department (p. 22).

Supervisor: Section 12.26(3) of the Rules and Regulations of the State of Iowa DPI has defined the special education supervisor as

. . . the professional specialist who has been assigned responsibility by the director of special education for the development, maintenance, supervision, improvement and evaluation

of professional practices and personnel within a specialty area (p. 23).

Top management: The author has operationally defined top management in this study as a synonym for the Iowa AEA directors of special education.

Management functions in special education: Twait (1976) has identified and assigned management functions in special education under four major categories.

Administrative functions are those concerned with creating, maintaining, and stimulating the educational unit to accomplish its goals and objectives. Administrative functions include the main categories of general policy development, implementation, maintenance, and accountability (p. 81).

Coordinative functions are those duties to synchronize and unify the programs and personnel within the educational unit. Coordinative functions can be both internal and external of the unit (p. 85).

Miscellaneous functions are those duties performed to enhance the goals and objectives of either the educational unit or the individual (p. 87).

Supervisory functions are those duties performed to stimulate, supervise, and evaluate activities that accomplish the goals and objectives of the educational unit (p. 89).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction to the Review of the Literature

Education is the nation's largest industry. It employs approximately three million instructional personnel to educate approximately sixty million individuals. It requires an annual budget of nearly \$100 billion, about one-ninth of the Gross National Product (Hentschke, 1975). According to Olson (1975), special education constitutes a significant portion of the educational industry and reflects major investments of human and material resources toward reform in meeting the needs of exceptional children. Concomitantly, the past decade has recorded an unparalleled legislative movement to obtain a free and appropriate public education for some eight million handicapped children (Vergason, 1974). The apex of the movement is Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

As the special education sector of the economy has grown in response to public sentiment and policy, professionals are being required to adopt new role responsibilities in regard to those they serve (Weintraub and Abeson, 1974). One area of concern is management accountability. The increased expenditure of resources on meeting the

educational needs of the handicapped has given rise to numerous problems of monitoring the efficacious management of resource investments. Since administrative behavior has such critical impact on special education personnel and services, it seems imperative to examine and gauge their leadership (Connor, 1966).

The review of literature has been directed at the levels of administration in special education and contemporary demands for accountability in management roles. Beginning with an historical overview, a developmental approach has been utilized to guide the reader toward a comprehension of accountability concerns with special education leadership, particularly at the middle-management/supervisory levels.

Review of the Literature

The United States is unique in that there is no federal system of education. No mention of public education or public schools is found in the Constitution. The result of that omission is the multiplicity of state-administered school systems; fifty states - fifty individual educational systems. Historically, special education has operated as a subset to public education. This functional schema is true of both public and special education and it effects a substantial dependency upon state, intermediate, and local administrative hierarchies.

Since the Colonial period, America's long tradition of local control in education has been

dependent upon the participation and conduct of educational officers nearer the scene where the school is in operation (Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, and Usdan, 1975, p. 50, 59).

Any substantial overview of the organization and control of the nation's complex educational bureaucracy would necessarily involve comprehension of the leadership and decision-making processes of its local administrative hierarchy.

Despite the core position of administration in the educational system, there is a notable void in the early literature on administrative organization, functioning, and performance accountability. According to Grieder, Jordan, and Pierce (1969), ". . . educational administration was the subject of little study prior to the beginning of the twentieth century" (p. 99). The emergence of educational administration as a professional field early in the current century generated much needed research into its philosophy and practice (Connor, 1961).

The literature is replete with studies (Baer, 1959; Cain, 1953; Connor, 1961; Knezevich, 1969) that reflected the developmental stages of educational administration during the period of the early 1900s to the middle of the century. Novotney (1973) in reviewing the literature for this period cited three basic developmental stages in educational administration. The initial stage emphasized school management with its infamous organizational charts.

The second stage was more authoritarian in philosophy and adhered to a linear rigidity in its leadership hierarchy. The last stage was reactionary and initiated concerns for the democratic process in decision-making. Many of the present philosophical approaches and practices of public and special education management were inherited from this era.

Contemporary special education administration evolved out of this period of trial and error maturation of public school administration. According to Connor (1963) the first college program for special education administrators was offered at Teacher's College, Columbia University, about 1907. Connor's historical landmark is somewhat deceptive, however, as much earlier Baker (1944) noted that, with the exception of a few special schools, special education administration was under the auspices of regular school administrators.

After World War II and during the 1950s the public and professional sectors became increasingly aware of the needs of exceptional children. With the centralization of larger school districts, parental pressures, increasing costs, and the legislative concerns for the rights of minorities, the educational problems of atypical children gained visibility and importance. According to Connor (1961) the field of special education began to develop its own separate and distinct identity during the late 1950s. While the increasing awareness of special education needs

generated national interest and emphasis during the period following World War II until the early 1960s, the problems of special education administration and supervision received little attention from researchers. A number of educators (Baer, 1959; Cain, 1953; Milazzo and Blessing, 1964; Voelker and Mullen, 1963; Wiseland and Vaughan, 1964) reported a great deal of interest in special education teaching, intervention strategies, and classroom evaluations, but only limited attention to administration or leadership accountability. Willenberg (1966) reviewed the educational research during this period and commented that "a paucity of specific research on administration of special education continues to plague the reviewer" (p. 134).

According to Cook (1974), Leon Lessinger, former Associate Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education in the United States Office of Education, is credited by most writers with initiating the accountability concept in special education administration in the late 1960s. As Commissioner, Lessinger was responsible to Congress for the justification of huge federal expenditures in Title VII and Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Prior to this point, accountability measures with educational management were limited to assessment techniques originated in the business sector. Bell (1974) has commented on the use of management evaluation models from industry.

. . . although the problems of educational management were obviously quite different from

those of the private sector, there was much to be learned from industry's systems approach in gaining more efficiency in educational management (p. 22).

The three most popular "borrowed" approaches according to Hentschke (1975) were: self-appraisal (Bassett and Meyer, 1968); performance appraisal (McGregor, 1957); and management by objectives (Odiorne, 1965). While none of the techniques adapted from other sectors provided an adequate solution, they provided impetus and prototypes for early efforts in educational evaluation (Bell, 1974). As allied disciplines and professions sought solutions to their own problems of leadership evaluation, it would seem as if they also advanced the cause of management accountability in special education as a by-product.

During the past decade, interest and activity in research on special education administration have accelerated (Connor, 1966; Lessinger, 1971; Sage, 1968; Willenberg, 1964; Willower, 1970). Barro (1970) viewed the research acceleration as having a direct response relationship with ". . . the unusual rapidity with which the accountability concept has been assimilated in educational circles" (p. 196). Barro's remark is somewhat deceptive since the majority of the studies conducted during the late 1960s and early 1970s were concerned with descriptions of special education administrative tasks and skills. Barro was insistent that the antecedents of the contemporary

accountability movement in special education could be identified as:

(a) the new, federally stimulated emphasis on evaluation of school systems and their programs; (b) the growing tendency to look at educational enterprises in terms of cost effectiveness; (c) increasing concentration on education for the disadvantaged as a priority area of responsibility for the schools; and (d) the movement to make school systems more directly responsive to their clientele and communities (p. 196).

According to Gearheart (1974) "the accountability movement gave rise to numerous problems for education in general and specific problems in education of the handicapped" (p. 73). Most special education administrators caught up in the accountability push were defensive and resistant to the new competency demands. Cook (1974) summarized the major strategies of response taken by special education management as follows:

1. Performance contracting. In this approach, the amount paid the contracting agent is tied directly to the degree of achievement of the pupil;

2. Turn-keying. This approach encourages that the program established and demonstrated viable be institutionalized, i.e., become part

of the school system and operated by its personnel;

3. The voucher system. In this approach the local authority responsible for the overall operation of the educational endeavor in the community provides the parents with vouchers. The parents, in turn, select from several educational alternatives available, submit the voucher as the child's tuition and the chosen school redeems the voucher for cash from the local authority; and

4. Incentive rewards. This approach is essentially similar to historical examples of merit pay plans (p. 369-370).

Administrative responses to accountability concerns reflect a theme that appears recurrent in the review of literature: education's traditional perception of management immunity to performance evaluation (Bell, 1974). With a few exceptions (Jones, 1973; Vergason, 1973; Willower, 1970) contemporary research on accountability in special education has been directed at instructional personnel, support professionals, or programs in general. There is a void in the literature on the relationship between the need for newly created positions in supervision/middle-management and performance evaluation.

According to Olson (1975) " . . . to limit educational accountability solely to instructional personnel is neither

correct nor advisable" (p. 40). This resistance to traditional one-way accountability was iterated by Olivia (1976) " . . . if special education is to be accountable, we must begin with its administrative action and policies" (p. 372).

According to Cook (1974) the accountability movement in special education has not progressed rapidly enough to satisfy the pace of public and legislative demands. A major factor in the lag is attributed to administrative ignorance of educational evaluation and a determination to retain the traditional position of immunity to performance assessment for administration personnel. Cook listed the following essential elements of accountability as a general concept that must be considered by management.

1. The administrator must decide what he is after in terms of performance and be responsible for getting those results.

2. The concept also implies streamlined management such as a concise analysis of needs and arrangement of priorities, a precise definition and description of the inputs, the processes, and the output-related goals of the educational endeavor.

3. Not least in importance is that the accountability process should be communicable to the consumer (i.e., the public) in an easily understood language of the particular public.

That this might be a difficult chore for the educator is readily evident when one looks at the largely redundant, confusing, and often irrelevant jargon which characterizes the educational discourse.

4. Finally, the whole process of governance in special education must be tied to a fiscal and/or time-base so that the undertaking can be demonstrated to be thrifty, sensible, and, in general, presenting evidence of good stewardship. (p. 368).

The accountability movement is far from over (Jones, 1975). The inevitable confrontation between special education management and the accountability movement currently is vivid in the comprehensive management responsibilities established by Public Law (P.L.) 94-142 and Section 504 which mandates an individualized education program (IEP) for each handicapped pupil. The Council for Exceptional Children (Ballard, 1977) interpreted the IEP as a

. . . management tool that is designed to assure that, when a child requires special education, the special education designed for that child is appropriate to his or her special learning needs, and that the special education designed is actually delivered and monitored (p. 4).

This interpretation of leadership accountability mandated by P.L. 94-142 is supported by Hayes and Higgins (1978).

Over thirty years ago Harleigh Trecker, a professional educator, (Baker, 1944) authored a basic text on education administration. The following quote is relevant to the present concerns of this study.

. . . it is the primary function of administration to provide leadership of a continuously helpful kind so that all persons engaged in the workings of the agency may advance the delivery of services to a higher level of accomplishment. Continuous evaluation of administrative processes and performances is therefore a necessity. Administration is one of the resources for program and it generally controls program extent and quality (p. 215).

Summary of the Literature

The historical development of special education administration has occurred since World War II. Specific attention was given in the review to studies providing background for a comprehension of current accountability concerns with special education management. A recurring theme appearing throughout this review has been the neglect of research attention to administrative organization, functioning, and performance accountability. The majority of studies on accountability concerns with leadership personnel in special education have been confined to the instructional and support professional levels. The limited studies conducted at management levels have focused on the

roles and activities of top management. There is an absence of research on efficacy concerns with newly created positions in middle-management and supervisory levels. The paucity of information available in the literature on this area encourages more attention to researching the subject of administrative accountability in special education.

Chapter III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Special educators, affected little in the past by accountability, are faced with increasing pressure to monitor individual and program performance. The increased demand for accountability by parents and legislators has prompted the administrative hierarchy to assign greater importance to this activity. The statutory mandates of Public Law 94-142 require responsible feedback on the performances of special education personnel serving in top management, middle-management, and supervisory capacities. A review of literature revealed that sparse attention has been given to the impact of the accountability movement in special education administration. There was a noticeable absence of studies on contemporary accountability concerns within leadership populations at the middle-management/supervisory levels. This study centered on the collection and comparison of survey data concerning management accountability attitudes and practices utilized in Iowa area education agencies (AEAs).

Population and Sampling

Participants in this study were top management and

middle-management/supervisory personnel employed in the fifteen Iowa AEAs (see Appendix A). Top management consisted of the appointed directors of special education for the fifteen individual agencies. All fifteen AEA directors were requested to participate in the study. Middle-management/supervisory personnel were operationally defined as professional individuals employed in special education with Iowa AEAs who spent fifty percent or more of their employment time performing administrative functions. The middle-management/supervisory participants were state certified employees serving in special education support service sections of Agencies II, VI, and VII (see shaded areas, Appendix A). The Iowa Department of Public Instruction estimated that between 90 and 110 individuals were employed at these levels of special education administration by the fifteen AEAs during the 1976-77 school year. Agencies II, VI, and VII reported a combined population of twenty-one middle-management/supervisory personnel. All twenty-one middle-management/supervisory personnel employed in the three agencies sampled had met state certification standards and were invited to participate in the study as representatives of the larger state AEA middle-management/supervisory population.

In Iowa the authority and responsibilities for special education administration assigned to the fifteen individual agencies are standard and pursuant to Chapter 1172, Acts of the 65th G.A., 1974 Session, (S.F. 1163) and

the Rules of Special Education issued by the State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction (Ferguson, 1977). Agencies II, VI, and VII were selected as typical of the state's rural and urban populations. According to the Iowa Official Register (1977-78), the geography of AEAs II and VI is more rural in population and agricultural in economy while AEA VII, with its predominant Cedar Falls-Waterloo metropolis, includes an urban population with a trade-industrial economy.

Table 1 depicts the number of special education top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel contacted and the actual number who participated in the study. A total of fourteen directors of special education and nineteen middle-management/supervisory personnel composed the two groups of study participants. As indicated in Table 1, 93 percent of the AEA top management personnel

Table 1
Identification of Participants

Respondents	Number of Contacts	Number of Responses	Response Percent
Iowa AEA Directors of Special Education	15	14	93
AEA middle-management/ supervisory personnel	21	19	90
Total	36	33	92

and 90 percent of the middle-management/supervisory personnel contacted responded to the survey.

Instrument Construction

The lack of appropriate survey instruments for investigating the accountability attitudes and selected practices of top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education required the development of an instrument. Two questionnaires were developed for use in the study.

Questionnaire 1 (see Appendix B) was prepared as a self-report mail survey to be completed by Iowa AEA directors of special education. The questionnaire was designed to: (a) collect demographic information on middle-management/supervisory personnel employed in the individual AEAs; (b) collect data on the accountability attitudes held by top management; and (c) identify the evaluation practices utilized by top management to assess the job performances of agency middle-management/supervisory personnel.

Questionnaire 2 (see Appendix C) was prepared as a self-reporting instrument for middle-management/supervisory personnel employed in the three agencies sampled. The second questionnaire was designed to collect data from middle-management/supervisory personnel regarding their attitudes concerning accountability and assessment practices utilized by agency top management.

In constructing the instruments, attention was given to the total number of items, appropriateness of individual item content, and ease of response. Section II of Questionnaire 1 and Section I of Questionnaire 2 are identical in form and content for purposes of statistical and analytical comparisons.

Data Collection

A general mail-survey approach was used to contact the fifteen Iowa AEA directors of special education. A cover letter (see Appendix D), Questionnaire 1, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope were mailed to the individual agency directors during the first week of January, 1978. Approximately one month was allotted for completion of the questionnaire. Participants were requested to return completed questionnaires by February 1, 1978. Four of the agency directors failed to return the questionnaires by this date. Follow-up postcards were sent to these individuals. By February 8, 1978, three additional questionnaires had been returned. Only one agency director failed to return a completed questionnaire.

The survey of AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel included visitations to the respective geographical locations of the three agencies. Visitations were made to explain the survey purposes and to expedite data collection. Initial contacts with the three selected agencies were made during the weeks of February 13-17 (AEA II), February 20-24

(AEA VI), and March 6-10 (AEA VII), 1978. Sixteen of twenty-one questionnaires were completed during these visitations. Three additional questionnaire responses were received by mail prior to the data collection deadline of March 20, 1978.

Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics were used in the analyses of the data collected. The analysis and interpretation of the data are presented in six parts and have been organized to follow closely with the sequence of items on the two questionnaires. Part one includes all data for items A through H in Section I of Questionnaire 1. The findings are reported in tables that summarize the frequency counts and percentages for each of the individual questionnaire items. Part two includes a narrative description of top management responses to open-ended item I in Section I of Questionnaire 1.

Items A through D of Questionnaire 1, Section II, are identical in form and content to items A through D in Section I of Questionnaire 2. All data collected in response to these items have been included in part three and treated by frequency counts and percentages for purposes of comparing top management versus middle-management/supervisory attitudinal responses.

Part four includes a comparison and contrasting of an identical item that was responded to by all the survey

participants. Item E in Section II of Questionnaire 1 and in Section I of Questionnaire 2 requested both groups to place methods of evaluation for middle-management/supervisory personnel in rank order. A comparison of group median rankings is graphically illustrated in a frequency polygon.

Part five includes a tabled summary of middle-management/supervisory responses to items A through C in Section II of Questionnaire 2. The findings have been treated by a frequency count and tabulation of percentages.

Part six includes the final treatment of the data collected. Item E in Section II of Questionnaire 2 requested middle-management/supervisory participants to list their six primary management functions. Item E also requested that the listed functions be ranked according to degree of difficulty, amount of time consumed, and the importance of each function as perceived by top management personnel. The data collected have been grouped into one of four categories and presented with measures of central tendency.

There was an insufficient number of responses to that portion of item E which requested a ranking of functions according to top management perceptions of their importance to permit statistical treatment. A response frequency of less than fifteen percent was obtained from middle-management/supervisory participants to item D, (Questionnaire 2, Section II) which was open-ended in design. The response frequency to item D was also insufficient for

purposes of reporting and treatment. All other data that were collected have been included for treatment and reporting.

Chapter IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introduction

The purposes of this study were to: (a) survey current evaluative procedures used by Iowa AEA directors of special education to assess the job performances of middle-management/supervisory personnel; (b) sample agency top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel attitudes on accountability; and (c) provide a descriptive analysis of inter-group survey responses. For the purposes of this study, the administrative structure of Iowa AEAs was operationally divided into two distinct groups of personnel designated as top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel. The study involved the construction of instruments, the conducting of a survey of top management personnel, the use of visitations to collect data from middle-management/supervisory personnel, and data analysis.

This chapter includes the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The chapter is presented in six parts.

Part one: items A through H, Questionnaire 1, Section I. Items A through F in Section I of Questionnaire 1

requested the directors of special education to provide demographic data on middle-management/supervisory personnel employed in the individual area agencies. The absence of any formal census on this specific population prompted the inclusion of these items in the instrument. All fourteen top management participants responded to these specific questionnaire items. Table 2 contains a summary of the demographic data and provides frequency counts, percentages for appropriate response categories, and a mean value for selected items. A total of 97 individuals were identified as being currently employed as special education middle-management/supervisory personnel in fourteen of fifteen Iowa AEAs.

The general findings indicate that the majority of Iowa AEA special education middle-management/supervisory personnel: (a) are in their upper thirties; (b) hold teaching endorsements; (c) have had lengthy experience in public and special education with special education experience averaging over ten years; (d) have secured their positions through an intra-agency promotion; and (e) remain in their positions as there is an annual turnover of less than fifteen percent. Less than half of the reported 97 middle-management/supervisory personnel have administrative endorsements and fewer than one fourth of the positions are held by women.

Table 3 provides a summary of top management responses, by frequency count and percentage, to items G and H in

Table 2
Iowa AEA Middle-Management/Supervisory Personnel
Demography as Reported by Agency Directors
by Frequency and Percentage

Items (A - F)	Responses (N = 14)		Mean (\bar{x})
	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	
A: Number of middle-management/ supervisory personnel (Fourteen AEAs)	97	100	6.9
B: Administrative endorsement	41	42	—
Teaching endorsement	86	89	—
Principal's certificate	17	18	—
C: Chronological age	—	—	37.5
Years of experience in education	—	—	13.8
Years of experience in special education	—	—	10.3
Number of men	76	78	—
Number of women	21	22	—
D: Number attending adminis- trative workshops	67	69	—
E: Intra-agency promoted	63	65	—
F: Turnover	12	12	—

Table 3
 Middle-Management/Supervisory Accountability
 in Special Education: Top Management Responses
 to Section I Questionnaire 1

Items (G - H)	AEA Directors (N = 14)					
	Yes		No		NR	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
G: Does your Agency provide specific job descriptions for middle-management/supervisory personnel?	14	100	0	0	0	0
If yes, are the job descriptions for this group distinct from subordinate personnel?	14	100	0	0	0	0
Are job descriptions for this group required in board policy?	8	57	5	36	1	7
H: Do you have an established system or procedure for complaints against middle-management/supervisory personnel?	5	36	9	64	0	0
NR: denotes no response						

Section I of Questionnaire 1. All fourteen directors reported the use of specific job descriptions for middle-management/supervisory personnel. The use of job descriptions is unanimous although it is mandated by board policy in only eight of the fourteen AEAs. The universal use of specific job descriptions to assist AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel in defining and delineating their roles and responsibilities is contrasted with only 36 percent of the AEAs reporting established procedures for handling complaints about the job performances of this group. The comparison suggests that accountability policies and procedures in terms of criticizing the performances of Iowa AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel are poorly articulated and implemented.

Part two: item I, Questionnaire 1, Section I. Agency directors were requested to specify procedures, other than job descriptions, they use to assess the performances of middle-management/supervisory personnel. Thirteen of the fourteen top management participants responded to item I. A breakdown of the responses indicates that the interview is the most widely used technique by the AEA directors to assess the job performances of their middle-management/supervisory personnel. Six directors reported the use of interviews. Four of the thirteen respondents listed some form of annual evaluation by staff and consumer groups as an assessment procedure. Two directors reported the use of a formal assessment instrument, locally constructed, to

evaluate the job performance of agency middle-management/supervisory personnel. The limited number and variety of evaluation procedures listed in response to item I indicated that there was a lack of instrumentation and consensus among top management personnel for assessing the job performance of special education middle-management/supervisory personnel in Iowa area education agencies.

Part three: items A through D, Questionnaire 1, Section II, and Questionnaire 2, Section I. Both groups were presented the identical items A through D in order to ascertain the extent of agreement with regard to the evaluation of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education. All data collected were analyzed by frequency counts and percentages for purposes of discerning similarities and differences between group attitudinal responses on these identical items.

Frequency counts indicated that both groups favored formal assessment of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education. Eighty-six percent of the top management and 89 percent of the middle-management/supervisory participants were found to favor a formal evaluation. Both groups agreed that the formal assessment should not directly involve the Iowa Department of Public Instruction. There was strong agreement between the two groups against the involvement of any college, university, or training institution in the assessment. One hundred percent of the top management participants and 84 percent of the middle-

management/supervisory participants indicated they did not favor such involvement. Data concerning the involvement of parents or special interest groups in evaluation of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education indicated a difference between the attitudinal positions of the two groups. Slightly less than half (47 percent) of the middle-management/supervisory participants favored such consumer involvement while 86 percent of the top management responses were opposed to this practice. Seventeen of nineteen (89 percent) middle-management/supervisory participants considered their roles and functions sufficiently unique from top management in special education to warrant a distinct evaluation format. Only three (21 percent) of the top management responses favored a distinct evaluation. Eight of fourteen top management and fourteen of nineteen middle-management/supervisory participants were in agreement that evaluation methods in industry and/or public education could not effectively evaluate middle-management/supervisory personnel performances in special education.

Part four: item E, Questionnaire 1, Section II and Questionnaire 2, Section I. Both groups were requested to rank a prepared list of ten methods they favored for use in the evaluation of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education with a rating of 1 as the most favored and a rating of 10 as the least favored. The prepared lists were presented identically on both instruments.

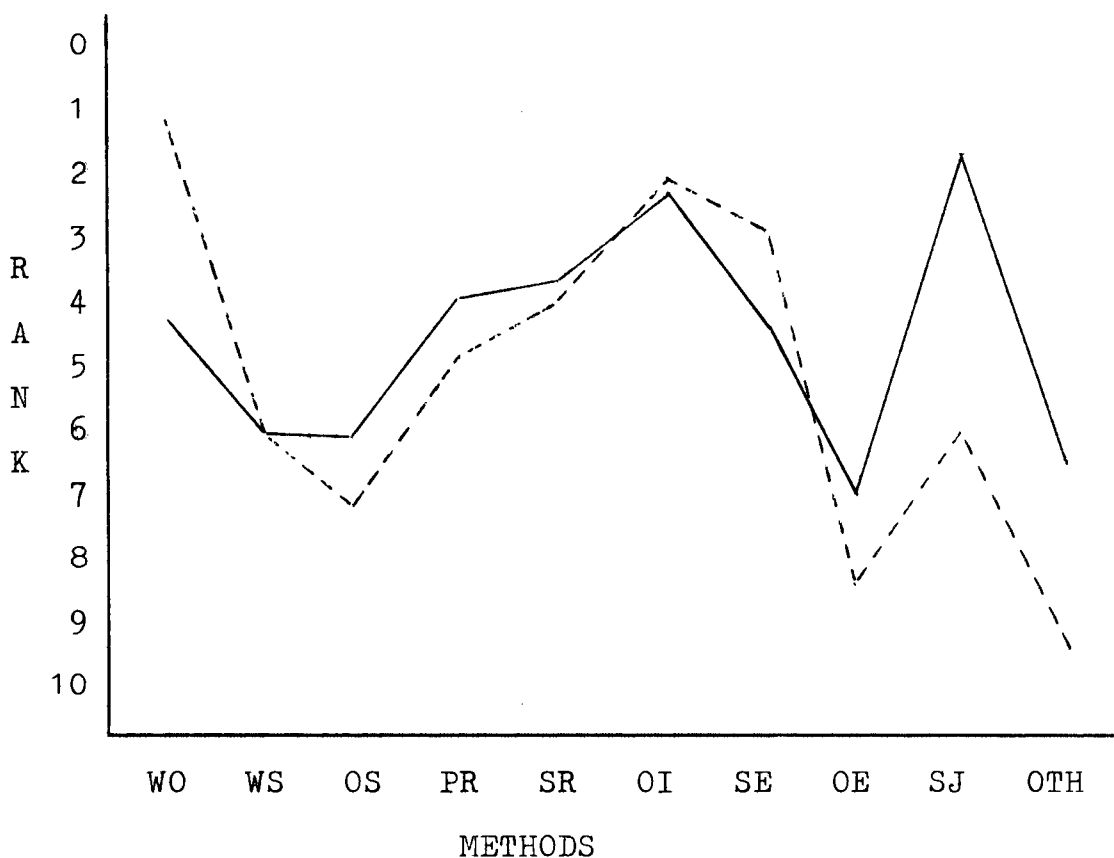
A frequency polygon (Table 4) has been constructed to compare the median ranks of the two groups. Median frequency differences greater than two points were considered noteworthy for reporting purposes (Tyler, 1971). This graphic illustration indicates a general agreement of frequency ranks between the two groups on seven of the ten evaluation methods. Median frequency differences greater than two points were noted when written objectives, superiors' judgments, and other were compared. Middle-management/supervisory participants ranked written objectives as their most favored evaluative method and ranked other as the least favored. Top management response frequencies indicated a superior's judgment and observations/interviews were their favored methods. Both groups agreed that observations and interviews should occupy an important place in the evaluation of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education. They also agreed that the use of outside evaluators is one of the least desirable ways to carry out the evaluative process.

Part five: items A through C, Questionnaire 2, Section II. Eighteen out of nineteen middle-management/supervisory participants (94 percent) reported the availability of specific job descriptions in their respective agencies in response to the first half of item A. A disclaimer by one respondent revealed a discrepancy between this report and the unanimous affirmative response to an identical question by top management participants (Table 3).

Table 4

Frequency Polygon of Median Rankings
to Item E by AEA Top Management and Middle-
Management/Supervisory Personnel

Middle-management/supervisory personnel: MM/S - - - - -
Top Management: TM —————



Item E: Please rank the following methods of evaluation you would favor most for middle-management/supervisory personnel

Methods	Code	Methods	Code
written objective	WO	observations/interviews	OI
written subjective	WS	self-evaluations	SE
oral subjective	OS	"outside" evaluators	OE
peer reports	PR	superiors' judgments	SJ
subordinate reports	SR	other	OTH

Table 5
 Assessment of Accountability Practices in
 Special Education by
 AEA Middle-Management/Supervisory Personnel

Items (A - C)	AEA middle-management/ supervisory personnel (N = 19)		
	f	%	Responses
A: How well does your job description reflect your management duties and responsibilities?	2	11	very good
	10	53	good
	7	36	fair
	0	0	poorly
B: How well do criteria other than your job description reflect your management duties and responsibilities?	1	5	very good
	8	43	good
	7	36	fair
	3	16	poorly
C: How well do current agency evaluation procedures measure your job performance?	1	5	very good
	3	16	good
	14	74	fair
	1	5	poorly

Table 5, the last half of item A, indicates that 64 percent of the middle-management/supervisory participants rated their available job descriptions as good or very good in reflecting middle-management/supervisory duties and responsibilities. Thirty-six percent thought them fair while none of the participants rated job descriptions as poor.

Nine (48 percent) of the respondents rated agency criteria, other than job descriptions, as very good or good in reflecting middle-management/supervisory duties and responsibilities (item B). Seven (36 percent) of these eight respondents rated agency job descriptions as only fair in response to item A. When the ratings of very good and good are compared between job descriptions and other unspecified criteria, the latter represent a drop of only 16 percent. The ratings of fair for job descriptions and other criteria were identical.

Item C on performance evaluation generated the largest variability in rankings. Nearly three-fourths of the middle-management/supervisory participants rated current agency evaluation procedures as only fair in measuring their duties and responsibilities. Eight of the ten respondents who had rated agency job descriptions as good in reflecting their duties and responsibilities responded only fair to agency evaluation procedures as a measure of the performance of middle-management/supervisory personnel.

Part six: item E, Questionnaire 2, Section II. In item E middle-management/supervisory participants were to list the six primary functions they associated with assigned levels of management and supervision. Participants were then requested to rank these functions according to degree of difficulty, time consumed in performing them, and the perceived importance top management assigned to them. A total of ninety-five different functions were listed by the nineteen participants. These responses were grouped in each of four categories of management functions in special education (Administrative, Coordinative, Supervisory, Miscellaneous) as determined by Twait (1976) and designated in Chapter I, Definition of Terms. Table 6 provides a summary of the frequency count and percentages for each category.

Table 6

Distribution of Primary Job Functions as Identified by
AEA Middle-Management/Supervisory Personnel

Item E: Categories	Responses (N = 95)	
	f	%
Administrative Functions	28	29
Coordinative Functions	37	39
Supervisory Functions	12	13
Miscellaneous Functions	18	19

Sixty-five of the ninety-five different functions (68 percent) listed by middle-management/supervisory participants were identified as either administrative or coordinative. Administrative functions include those duties directed toward policy development and accountability. Coordinative functions include those duties directed toward program and personnel unification. Only twelve of the ninety-five responses (13 percent) by the group were listed as supervisory functions. Supervisory functions include those duties involving the accomplishment of agency goals and objectives.

Seventy-seven of the ninety-five functions listed were ranked (1 as highest, 6 as lowest) according to degree of difficulty and time consumption. Table 7 provides the median and mean rankings of the functions assigned to each of the four categories. Mean rankings reveal that middle-management/supervisory participants ranked supervisory functions as the least difficult to perform and coordinative functions as those tasks which were the most difficult. Administrative functions were ranked by the group as the most time-consuming while supervisory functions were ranked as those tasks which required the least amount of time.

Only five middle-management/supervisory participants responded to the request for a ranking of the importance of listed functions as perceived by top management personnel. These data were insufficient for treatment.

Table 7

Difficulty and Amount of Time as Indices of
AEA Middle-Management/Supervisory Job Functions

Item E: Categories	Responses (N = 77)					
	Degree of Difficulty			Time Consumption		
	Ranking			Ranking		
	f	Mdn	Mean	f	Mdn	Mean
<hr/>						
Administrative						
Functions	26	3	3.50	26	2	2.67
Coordinative						
Functions	33	2	2.43	33	3	3.29
Supervisory						
Functions	11	3	3.75	11	4	3.51
Miscellaneous						
Functions	7	2	3.23	7	3	3.30

Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Special education in America during the past decade has been characterized by expanded efforts to recognize, promote, and provide for the educational welfare of the nation's handicapped. The large investment of resources directed toward meeting the special educational needs of over eight million exceptional children has brought concomitant concerns for accountability. Special educators, affected little in the past by accountability, are suddenly faced with increasing public and legislative demands to evaluate professionals and programs. The increased demands for accountability have particular significance for those individuals responsible for management functions in state, intermediate, and local special education delivery systems. An efficacious use of resources is dependent upon administrative arrangements and policy formulations by leadership personnel at the various system levels.

Summary

This study was concerned with management accountability at the middle-management/supervisory levels in special

education. The study centered on the collection and comparison of survey data concerning administrative accountability attitudes and practices in Iowa area education agencies (AEAs). The participants were divided into the two operationally defined administrative groups comprised of top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel. The specific purposes of the study were to: (a) survey accountability attitudes of AEA top management and ascertain the evaluative practices they use to assess job performances of middle-management/supervisory personnel; (b) sample similar attitudes and preferred evaluative practices among AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel; and (c) compare and contrast the survey responses from the two groups of participants. Both groups completed questionnaires designed and constructed specifically for this study. Descriptive statistics were employed in the analysis of the data collected.

General Results of the Study

1. There was a consensus among participants in this study that middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education should be accountable. Both groups were presented the identical question of whether or not they would favor formal assessment of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education. Eighty-six percent of the top management respondents and 89 percent of those in middle-management/supervisory capacities were

in agreement that job performances of middle-management and supervisory personnel should be subject to formal evaluation.

2. There was unanimous agreement among participants in this study that the formal assessment of Iowa AEA special education middle-management/supervisory personnel should not involve the Iowa Department of Public Instruction nor any of the state's institutions of higher learning.

3. There was a noteworthy difference of opinion between the two groups on the question of involving parental or special interest groups in the evaluation of agency middle-management/supervisory performances. Eighty-six percent of the top management responses were negative toward parental or special interest group involvement in the evaluative process while only 53 percent of the middle-management/supervisory participants responded negatively to their involvement.

4. A difference of opinion between the two groups was also obtained when the participants were asked to consider whether the roles and functions of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education were sufficiently unique from those of top management to warrant a distinct evaluation format. Less than 20 percent of the top management respondents supported such a role and function distinction. Nearly 90 percent of the middle-management/supervisory group considered their agency roles and

functions distinct enough from top management to warrant specific evaluation.

5. There was agreement between the two groups that evaluative methods used in public education administration and/or industry would not be appropriate for assessment of middle-management/supervisory accountability in special education.

6. There was a difference of opinion between groups on the most desirable evaluative methods for assessing middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education. Middle-management/supervisory participants ranked written objectives as their most favored evaluative method. Top management ranked the more subjective evaluative method of a superior's judgment as their favored method. Both groups rated observations and interviews as a highly favored evaluative method for assessing middle-management/supervisory performance in special education.

7. The current AEA top management evaluations of agency middle-management/supervisory personnel in the three areas sampled are informal and lack uniformity. The interview was reported as the most frequent evaluation procedure, but this response was made by less than half of the top management group. Nearly three-fourths of the middle-management/supervisory group rated current agency evaluation methods as only fair.

8. The demographic information obtained on Iowa AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel indicated that

members of this group had lengthy experience in public and special education but that less than half of them held administrative endorsements. Fewer than one-fourth of such positions were held by women. Intra-agency promotion was given as the most popular way for appointment to middle-management/supervisory positions.

9. Nearly two-thirds of the assigned primary functions listed by middle-management/supervisory participants were identified as either administrative or coordinative. Both of these functions include agency responsibilities for the unification and accountability of programs and personnel. Administrative functions were ranked by the group as the most time-consuming and coordinative functions as the most difficult to perform.

Major areas of concern identified from results of the study were:

1. Job descriptions appeared to be the only common and consistently used method to identify and delineate middle-management/supervisory roles and responsibilities in Iowa AEAs. The use of job descriptions is not sanctioned by state statute nor consistently mandated in all fifteen Iowa AEAs.

2. There appeared to be differences in the two group's perceptions of middle-management/supervisory roles and functions. Middle-management/supervisory personnel considered their agency roles and responsibilities distinct from those of top management. Top management did not

perceive such functional differences at the various levels of agency special education management.

3. It would appear that the majority of AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel were promoted into their positions and assigned administrative functions with little or no formal preparation in special education administration.

4. The wide variety of tasks and functions performed by AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel resists intra- and inter-agency personnel comparisons and encourages accountability procedures that are informal and varied.

5. There appeared to be an absence of any formal or established accountability standards for middle-management/supervisory personnel employed in the fifteen Iowa AEAs.

Implications

The general findings and specific areas of concern identified from the study results support the contention that special education management responses to increased demands for accountability in Iowa AEAs were inadequate at the time. The importance of these findings is apparent. The statutory language of Public Law 94-142, which mandated September 1, 1978, as the date of compliance, required agency management to make an immediate inspection of their personnel policies and service agreements to ascertain their accountability status.

A second implication may be that special education management's slow response to current accountability

demands is, in part, related to unsettled issues of role identification and the delineation of functions. The increased size and complexity of provisions for special education have required a larger and more complex management hierarchy. Rapid changes in the recognition, promotion, and provision of appropriate educational services for the handicapped have necessitated that management personnel perform many diverse roles and functions at all levels in the leadership hierarchy. As administrative decentralization has proceeded toward more responsiveness to the increased investments and expansion of special educational services, the roles and the functions of its management personnel have changed from those of a former straight-line bureaucracy. This may be especially true at the top management level where traditional administrative tasks were once confined. Recently, however, such tasks have been diffused through middle-management/supervisory levels. It is not unreasonable to expect that agency top management would find it difficult to define its new roles.

A corollary of the enlarged special education administrative hierarchy has been the creation of new positions at the middle-management/supervisory levels. Many of these positions were initiated by trends and forces not affiliated with any individual AEA nor with the state's intermediate agency system. It is entirely possible that, in the haste to fill service gaps, positions were created

and filled in the absence of any clear job descriptions or accountability standards. There is a need for AEAs to develop cogent definitions of the comprehensive roles and responsibilities required at all levels of management in special education. It appears that many of Iowa's AEA middle-management/supervisory personnel are being assigned, and expected to perform, administrative and supervisory functions for which they have had little formal education and training.

There also exists a need for Iowa AEAs to develop a formal evaluation system of middle-management/supervisory job performances in special education. The findings indicated that evaluation procedures would be welcomed by middle-management/supervisory personnel but that they have definite opinions regarding the assessment format and authorship. If the principle and process of accountability are to be implemented in Iowa's intermediate system of special education administration, the component questions of "who", "what", and "how" must be answered to the satisfaction of those whose performances are being evaluated. The relatively autonomous operations of Iowa's fifteen individual AEAs and the diversification of management roles and functions cited earlier suggest that the development of a viable evaluative process must be an individual agency undertaking. Common sense dictates that accountability measures will evolve from the already established middle-management/supervisory roles and responsibilities commented

on earlier. It is unlikely that such an undertaking will be successful unless entered into cooperatively by management personnel from all intra-agency levels. The establishment of a formal evaluation process would signify a positive change of status in management's response to federal and state accountability mandates.

A final implication drawn from the study is that Iowa AEA top management and middle-management/supervisory personnel recognize the emergence of management accountability in special education and are receptive to the evaluation of management performance in agency operations. The results of the study indicate that Iowa AEAs appeared to be a long way from the implementation of any viable management accountability measures.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to the state of Iowa and special education management personnel employed in area education agencies. Results of the study may not be generalized to other states, educational delivery systems, or personnel.

2. The sample surveyed in the study represented only a portion of the total number of middle-management/supervisory employees in Iowa AEA divisions of special education. Furthermore, the data collected did not lend themselves to inferential statistical treatments. Therefore, care should be exercised in generalizing findings to that population.

3. The instruments used in the study were designed by the researcher. No reliability data are available concerning these instruments.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study indicated that management responses to increased demands for accountability in Iowa AEAs were inadequate at the time. In order to assist Iowa AEA administrative personnel in their understanding and development of management accountability in special education, further research as listed below is suggested.

1. The establishment of Iowa's intermediate system of area education agencies and assignment of special education administration is a recent development. There is a need to expand on the research of Ferguson (1977) as it relates to federal and state requirements for administrative accountability at all management levels.

2. There is an urgent need for Iowa AEAs to develop a formal evaluation system for management personnel in special education. Research is needed that would provide special education management personnel information on the various theoretical and applied models of leadership accountability.

3. In order to develop effective means of evaluating management performance within area education agencies the effects of certain extraneous factors need to be determined. For example, what influence do such factors as the

philosophical positions, amount and type of training, and personnel assessment expertise of top management officials have on their evaluations of middle-management/supervisory personnel.

4. Twait (1976) identified the roles and functions of top management personnel employed in Iowa AEAs. There is a need to expand this taxonomy to include agency individuals serving in newly created positions of supervision, coordination, or middle-management.

5. This study should be replicated outside the State of Iowa. This would provide comparative data and permit the greater generalization of results for those investigating management accountability in special education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Iowa Area Education Agencies

APPENDIX B
Survey Questionnaire 1

Appendix B

Survey Questionnaire 1Instructions

This questionnaire is composed of two sections. Section I is an inventory on the characteristics of your current Agency middle-management population and the methodology you employ, if any, in evaluation of their job performances. Section II is more theoretical and deals with the general concept of management accountability in special education. Middle-management/supervisory personnel can be defined as those individuals in your Agency who spend 50% or more of their time in a supervisory, management, or quasi-administrative capacity; excluded are Agency administrators and directors. Please attempt to be both candid and concise in your responses. Thank you!

Section I

- A. According to the above criteria, approximately how many middle-management personnel are employed in your Agency? _____
- B. Approximately how many of this group have an administrative endorsement? _____ A teaching endorsement? _____ A principal's certificate? _____
- C. What is the average age of this group? _____
 Years of experience in education? _____
 Special education? _____ Number of men? _____
 _____ Number of women? _____
- D. How many have attended workshops on administration techniques? _____
- E. Of the present group, how many represent a "vertical mobility" or within-Agency promotion?

- F. What was the approximate turnover or mortality percentage for this group last year? _____
 The most common reason _____
- G. Does your Agency provide specific job descriptions for middle-management/supervisory personnel?
 _____ If yes, are the job descriptions for this group distinct from subordinate personnel?

_____ Are job descriptions for this group required in board policy? _____

- H. Do you have an established system or procedure for complaints against middle-management/supervisory personnel? _____ Please describe

- I. Please specify the criteria other than job descriptions used to assess the performances of middle-management/supervisory personnel. _____

Section II

- A. Do you favor formal assessment of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education? _____

- B. Do you consider the roles and functions of this group to be sufficiently unique as to warrant evaluations distinct from top management? _____ If not, why? _____

- C. Do you favor DPI or state involvement in the group's evaluation? _____ Parent or interest groups? _____ Training institutions? _____

- D. Do you feel existing evaluative methods in private industry and/or educational administration are adequate to evaluate middle-management/supervisory personnel? _____ If no, why? _____

- E. Please rank the following methods of evaluation you would favor most for this group: (1 is high, 2 is next, etc.)

___	written objective	___	observations and
___	written subjective	___	interviews
___	oral subjective	___	self-evaluations
___	peer reports	___	"outside" evaluator(s)
___	subordinate reports	___	superiors' judgment
___	other (specify)	___	_____

Please indicate if you would like an informal summary of the survey results. _____ yes _____ no

APPENDIX C

Survey Questionnaire 2

Appendix C

Survey Questionnaire 2Instructions

Iowa AEA Directors of Special Education were recent participants in a survey on the theory and practice of middle-management/supervisory accountability and evaluation. Middle-management/supervisory personnel can be defined as Agency employees who spend 50% or more of their time in a supervisory, management, or quasi-administrative capacity; excluded are AEA administrators and directors. This survey/interview provides for input from those in Agency middle-management/supervisory positions. The response data will provide for a comparative study with the previous study. Please attempt to be candid. Thank you.

Section I

- A. Do you favor formal assessment of middle-management/supervisory personnel in special education?

- B. Do you consider the roles and functions of middle-management/supervisory personnel to be sufficiently unique as to warrant evaluations distinct from top management? _____ If not, why? _____
- C. Do you favor DPI involvement in the group's evaluation? _____ Parent or interest groups? _____
_____ Training institutions? _____
- D. Do you feel existing evaluative methods in private industry and/or educational administration are adequate for this group? _____ If no, why? _____
- E. Please rank the following methods of evaluation you would favor most for this group: (1 is high, 2 is next, etc.)
- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ written objective | _____ observations and |
| _____ written subjective | _____ interviews |
| _____ oral subjective | _____ self-evaluations |
| _____ peer reports | _____ "outside" evaluator(s) |
| _____ subordinate reports | _____ superiors' judgment |
| _____ other (specify) _____ | |

Section II

- A. Do you have a specific job description? _____
How well does your job description reflect your management duties and responsibilities?
___ very good ___ good ___ fair ___ poorly
- B. How well do criteria other than your job description reflect your management duties and responsibilities?
___ very good ___ good ___ fair ___ poorly
- C. How well do current Agency evaluations measure your job performance?
___ very good ___ good ___ fair ___ poorly
- D. What specific changes, if any, would you like to see made in the method(s) of evaluating your job performance?

- E. Please list the six most primary functions you associate with your management position.

	<u>Primary Functions</u>	<u>Rank According to Difficulty</u>	<u>Rank According to Time-Consuming</u>	<u>How Would Your Superior Rank Their Importance?</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX D

Cover Letter for Questionnaire 1

Appendix D

Arnold E. Lang
411 North Third Street
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158
January 4, 1978

Mr.
Special Education Director
Area Education Agency
Street
City, State Zip Code

Dear

You and the other Area Education Agency Directors of Special Education are being contacted and requested to participate in a survey. This survey is part of a thesis research project, conducted by myself, to complete degree requirements for endorsement in the field of special education administration.

The focus of my project is on special education management attitudes about accountability. I am especially interested in accountability attitudes and procedures at the middle-management/supervisory levels in the AEAs.

The enclosed two-page questionnaire has been constructed to be cognizant of your busy schedule, yet provide **sufficient information relevant to the research needs.** Please be candid **in your response.** A self-addressed, stamped envelope has been included for your convenience in mailing. A return of the survey is requested by February 1st.

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Sincerely,

Arnold E. Lang

Enclosures (3)