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Roles and Responsibilities of the Georgia Special Education Paraprofessionals and the Impact of the NCLB Mandates: An Assessment by Georgia Administrators, Special Education Teachers, and Special Education Paraprofessionals

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THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GEORGIA
SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONALS AND THE IMPACT OF THE
NCLB MANDATES: AN ASSESSMENT BY GEORGIA ADMININSTRATORS,
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION
PARAPROFESSIONALS

by

DONNA ARCHIBALD

(Under the Direction of Linda Arthur)

ABSTRACT

This descriptive study was based on quantitative data from a total of 76 school personnel that consisted of 18 administrators, 37 special education teachers, and 21 special education paraprofessionals from two high schools, one middle school and two elementary schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate the frequency of roles and responsibilities performed by the Georgia special education paraprofessionals and the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) on those roles and responsibilities as perceived by administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals. A survey was sent to all respondents for their input that covered demographics (gender, education, and experience) roles and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessional, and respondents' perceptions/opinions of the NCLB mandates as they relate to the special education paraprofessional. Descriptive statistics were analyzed and summarized by using a SPSS 13.0 for Windows software. A one-

way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) .was used to test the differences between the three groups.

The data in the survey gives one a broader picture and understanding of the many times duties are performed by the special education paraprofessional as perceived by administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals. The data supports the fact that special education paraprofessionals perform a wide variety of roles and responsibilities that sustain the students, special education teacher, and the neighborhood community. Data revealed administrative respondents (principals and assistant principals) believe that special education paraprofessionals perform and complete duties more times per day than the other two groups (special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals) polled in the survey. Data also revealed special education teachers perceived special education paraprofessionals performing the tasks listed in this survey fewer times than the other two groups (administrators and special education paraprofessionals.) Special education paraprofessionals, according to the survey, listed many other tasks that they perform during the day. Disagreement on how many times some tasks are being done, versus the number of times some tasks should be done, seems to elicit different observations and thoughts from each group.

INDEX WORDS: Paraprofessionals, NCLB, Roles and Responsibilities of Special Education Paraprofessionals

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my son, Shane Archibald and my mother, Varnel Watkins. You both have been my inspiration and equipped me with the persistence and perseverance to continue this project. Shane, you have been my role model. You have shown and given me the determination, support, and stamina to continue. Through your own struggles, you have shown me the importance of finishing all things started. Mom, you who have always valued education and taught all your children how important it is and how it always opens doors. You have given me my love and thirst for education. I love you both and hope I have shown you both how your strength has lead me to this point.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, there are approximately 1.3 million paraprofessionals employed in the public/private schools and early childhood daycare settings (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). These individuals are also known as paraeducators, teaching assistants, educational assistants, instructional assistants, job coaches, and transition trainers (Pickett, Likens, & Wallace, 2002). The term paraprofessional, the word used in most legislation, is the most common term used throughout this paper; occasionally the term paraeducator will be noted. In today's public schools, paraprofessionals perform several functions and responsibilities (Riggs & Mueller, 2001). They play a significant role in linking the school system to the community. The paraprofessional not only interacts with the student in the classroom, but this position also links them to the community by acting as a liaison between the student and his/her guardian and the teacher, as well as interpreter of the school curriculum (Chopra, Aragon, Bernal, Debalderas, & Canal, 2004).

Some paraprofessionals provide services for special needs pre-schoolers, which include toddlers and infants and their families. When they provide this type of service in family centered practices, paraprofessionals are required to know and possess necessary cultural competencies, which include social, ethnic, as well as economic aspects of the family and community. Knowing this, the paraprofessional can best understand the particular needs of both the child and the family (Stiffler, 1993). When teachers utilized paraprofessionals in the inclusion model (This model believes that some students with disabilities can be taught with students without disabilities.), paraprofessionals modify

materials and lessons as directed by their general and special education teachers, taking and recording data and monitoring student behavior. They also correspond with the teachers to discuss behavior strategies for all or individual students, and communicate information to the students about class assignments (Carroll, 2001; Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005). Another role and responsibility of paraprofessionals is to accompany special education students into the general education class for instruction; these general education/inclusion teachers assume that the paraprofessional has the needed and required skills to teach those special education students (Giangreco, 2003).

Paraprofessionals are visible and vital individuals throughout the school setting. One can see them involved or performing in the following duties or tasks: assisting in kindergarten, resource, collaborative and other classes, monitoring students during bus duty, helping in technology labs, working as media aides, transporting students in wheelchairs from classes to buses, working with students with visual impairments, working with students with severe and moderate disabilities and facilitating Title I Programs.

Teachers reported in one study, that for the most part, paraprofessionals performed more responsibilities in teaching techniques (French, 1998). Paraprofessionals stated in one study that little or no training is given by the local school district in regards to preparation and education about tasks and responsibilities they will be doing (Riggs & Mueller, 2001). Paraprofessionals reported they wanted more information in regards to their job, including (1) instructional methods used in the classroom, (2) behavior management procedures, (3) characteristics of students they would be working with, (4) information in regards to the student's Individual Education Program (IEP), such as goals

and objectives, and (5) how these goals are to be implemented within the classroom. In addition, concerns from paraprofessionals included (1) lack of time to communicate and plan, and (2) lack of feedback on their performance (Railsback, Reed, & Schmautz, 2002).

According to the United States Department of Education Report entitled “School Implementation of Standards-Based Reform – Follow-up Public School Survey of Principals,” about two thirds of Title I schools employ paraprofessionals in 1997-1998 despite the paraprofessional’s lack of qualifications. As many as 76, 900 paraprofessionals were utilized in teaching and assisting students in Title I schools as opposed to 74, 700 teachers that same school year (Christie, 2002, U.S. Department of Education, 1999). In this report, it noted that instructional quality is very important to those students living in poverty in forecasting student success. However, this report found that only 25% of those paraprofessionals used during this study held a 4 year college degree and within the highest poverty schools only 10% of the paraprofessionals that worked in these schools held a degree. (The Title I program, which employs many paraprofessionals, as noted in the above study, is a component of the educational directive under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) authorized in 1965. This program insures all-at risk students (children that are displaying inadequate performance in schools) receive a high quality education. ESEA initially stated that individuals seeking employment as paraprofessionals only needed a high school diploma (Shirley, 2004, U.S. Department of Education, 1999). The Title I Program is a federal entitlement program, based on student enrollment, low-income and census poverty, and other data. (Low income is defined as students meeting free or reduced lunch programs.)

Title I schools have these characteristics:

1. a percentage of low-income students that is equal or higher than the district's overall percentage.
2. have at least 35% low income students.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the latest reform for the public school systems entitled the “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB) (P. L. 107-110), formally known as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965 (ESEA). This law included several directives that calls for the improvement of training requirements not only teachers but paraprofessionals as well. NCLB is based on pillars that seek to inform and empower parents, aid teachers, and build schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b). Public schools are now held accountable and this includes “high stakes testing.” High stakes testing is one of the major tools that drive NCLB. Its implementation shows individual and system-wide assessment results and determines whether or not schools make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (Altshuler & Schmautz, 2006). Schools that fail to make AYP must provide extra services for students, such as free tutoring, and/or school transfers (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b). If AYP is not achieved after a period of five years, the penalty is a restructuring of school administration and organization. This may include the removal of entire staff members to make way for new strategies and techniques to accomplish goals and objectives (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b).

Several issues have been revealed that call for the need of such a law. In the United States, it is noted that as schools become more multicultural, the achievement gap increases (Gordon, 2006). In the 1990s, the achievement gap between White and African

American students in mathematics resulted in a span of approximately 10 points wider (a year's worth of learning) than a decade ago (Education Trust, 2003a). As reported in 1999, the best indicator for future academic achievement is receiving a good start in elementary school, which puts students on track for good academic achievement in high school (The College Board, 1999). Researchers report that a Latino students' academic achievement in America by the end of four high school years is equivalent to the educational level of a White middle-schooler

Under NCLB, all teaching personnel are responsible for closing the achievement gap between all pupils. A provision in the NCLB states that all paraprofessionals must be certified as "highly qualified personnel." It redefines specific educational and training requirements for these support personnel. Pickens, Likens and Wallace (2003) reported that until the enactment of the NCLB, little or no attention had been given to the training and preparation needed by the paraprofessionals to perform their duties and responsibilities.

Pre-NCLB job requirements listed paraprofessionals as those individuals who worked under the supervision of a certified or licensed individual and were only minimally required to possess a high school diploma or equivalent (Stiffler, 1993). During Pre-NCLB only 13 states had established certification or credentialing requirements for those individuals wanting to be paraprofessionals. Before the passage of NCLB, 7 of those 13 states have made no adjustments to their certifications requirements since 1970. The following states had licensing requirements prior to NCLB: Georgia, California, Maine, Texas, Kansas, New Hampshire, Vermont, Iowa, Maine, and Delaware (Shikodriani, 2005).

NCLB requirements for “highly qualified” paraprofessionals state these individuals must complete one of the following criteria:

- At least two years of study at an institution of higher learning.
- Obtain an associate degree or higher, or meet a rigorous standard of quality.
- Demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing Reading, Writing, and Mathematics readiness as appropriate (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b).

Under NCLB, there is no grandfather clause for those paraprofessionals who worked in Title I programs and have many years of paraprofessional experience and employment in the school system they work in. The requirements of NCLB must be followed with no substitution or compromise if the paraprofessionals are utilized in Title I Programs (NCLB, 2002).

There are a few exceptions to the “highly qualified” paraprofessional requirements. These exceptions include the following:

- If the paraprofessional is proficient in English and a language other than English.
- If the paraprofessional acts as a translator for Limited English Proficient Students (LEP).
- If the paraprofessional works in the lunch room or food services or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance.
- If the paraprofessional is employed in a school district that does not use Title I funds, or if the district received Title I funds but the paraprofessional is employed in a school in that district that does not receive Title I funds.
- If the paraprofessional is an unpaid volunteer,

- If the paraprofessional works in programs in a Title I school that may not be part of Title I, such as Head Start, state-funded early childhood, or community-based before and after school programs (Public Education Network, 2003).

Before the formation of NCLB, The Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) authorized by President Gerald Ford and Congress was one of the first authorizations requiring training and utilization of the paraprofessional (U. S. Department of Education, 2002a). This legislation states the following “state education agency (SEA) personnel standards shall allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with state law, regulations, or written policy... to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities... (20 U.S.C. 1412 (a) (15) (R) (iii). IDEA also states that over 20 years of research and experience have shown that students with disabilities excel more by having high expectations and have access to the general education to the maximum extent possible (IDEA Section 601 – C5, Section A, B, E) IDEA is the nation’s foremost special education act. Authorized in 1975, and originally known as Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act. It was put in place to assure students with disabilities received a free appropriate education (FAPE) (NICHCY, n. d.) Under this act, more paraprofessionals were being introduced and used in the special education programs where they assisted special education teachers in behavioral management, crisis problems, and discipline, as well as monitoring bus duty and supervising students in the community learning environments (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2001). IDEA specified that students with disabilities were to be taught in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and removal from the general education classroom was acceptable only when the nature of

the severity of the disability suggested that no supplemental aids or related services would aid in the improvement of academic learning (Katsiyannis, 2000).) IDEA supports the belief that paraprofessionals who are adequately trained and supervised may aid in the delivery of special education and related services. It requires states to develop comprehensive systems of staff development that includes the training of the paraprofessional (Carroll, 2001). Title I, Part A of the NCLB, like IDEA, focuses on the training of paraprofessionals involved with the instructing of students as well.

Under the NCLB, paraprofessionals who are employed in the Title I program must fulfill the training requirements that are listed in the NCLB; however, many counties in the state of Georgia are requiring all paraprofessionals to have the “highly qualified” status. These mandates for paraprofessionals being “highly qualified” include the following:

- Complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education.
- Obtain an associate’s or higher degree or meet a standard of quality.

or

And demonstrate it through an academic assessment in instructing, Reading, Writing, and Mathematics readiness as appropriate (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b)

Although there has been an increase in the usage of paraprofessionals within the classroom and throughout the school, no clear role or job description has been noted for these individuals (Canady, 2001). In addition, as more legislation is passed in regards to the paraprofessionals’ roles and responsibilities, they have become more specialized and comprehensive.

The researcher's intent was to gather data to determine the frequency of occurrences of set roles and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessional in the classroom, the opinions of educational personnel on how often these roles and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessional should occur and the importance of the NCLB mandates on those roles and responsibilities.

Theoretical Perspective

Individuals learn to perform their roles and responsibilities at their workplace in a variety of ways. There are many theories of learning that try to explain the various ways this is accomplished.

In the proceeding paragraphs are two distinct ways that may apply to the way paraprofessionals learn to do their daily occupation and perform their daily tasks.

Learning is defined as a change in behavior (Smith, 1999); the learning is the end result or product of the process. It is the act of obtaining information, data, skills, and is a technique that allows this information, data, and skills to be retained and retrieved when needed.

Carl Rogers, a noted professor and influential American psychologist in 1983 stated the following in regards to learning "I want to talk about learning. But not the lifeless, sterile, futile, quickly forgotten stuff that is crammed in to the mind of the poor helpless individual tied into his seat by ironclad bonds of conformity! I am talking about LEARNING – the insatiable curiosity that drives the adolescent boy to absorb everything he can see or hear or read about gasoline engines in order to improve the efficiency and speed of his "cruiser." I am talking about the student who says, "I am discovering, drawing in from the outside, and making that which is driven in a real part of me." I am

talking about any learning in which the experience of the learner progresses along this line: “No, no, that’s not what I want”; “Wait!” this is closer to what I am interested in, what I need”; “Ah, here it is! Now I’m grasping and comprehending what I need and what I want to know!” It is here that we look at two theories in regards to how paraprofessionals learn, in this case, their roles and responsibilities, is it within the work environment itself (informal learning or on the job training) or with the acquisition of formal training (within the classroom as noted in the NCLB).

The theoretical framework for this paper lies in two learning theories, though opposite in learning styles they both relate to how the paraprofessional did learn the roles and responsibilities prior the NCLB mandates for paraprofessionals training and preparation (informal learning) while the other theory deals with individuals learning by way of formal training as noted by post-NCLB. Each theory focuses on the fact the students (in this case special education paraprofessionals), each perceive and process information in very different ways. These learning styles provide the means for special education paraprofessionals to perfect what they actually do as well as fulfilling the expectations of the administrators, and special education teachers. In other words, is there any common ground between what administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals believe is the “Ah, here, it is!” It is in that moment in which all school personal understands how special education paraprofessionals learn to work effectively and efficiently, and what kind of roles and responsibilities they successfully perform and how these roles affect the learning of the students which they work with everyday.

The investigation is predicated on two scientific principles or learning theories. One of theoretical learning foundation that forms the basis of this study is derived from Albert Bandura's "Social Learning Theory." The Social Learning Theory includes, situational factors (environmental stimuli), social modeling coping skills, self-efficacy and outcome expectations which are influenced by the expectations of others in and out of the organization (Brandon, Heszog, Irvin, & Gwaltney, 2004). This theory states that learning happens within a social context. It is more concrete, whereas the student immediately uses that information through immediately action or experience.

The other theoretical learning model/foundation is derived from David Kolb's Experimental Learning Model. In this model, Kolb (2005) states that effective learning consist of 4 phases.

1. Phase 1 – Concrete/ Reflective – Here the learner wants reasons from the instructor (motivator) on how course information correlates with their existence their wellbeing and careers. The "Why" question is asked here by the learner.
2. Phase 2 – Abstract/Reflective – These types of learners respond better to information presented in structured logical, manner by the instructor, who is considered the expert in the field. When this is done and the learner is given time to reflect the "Why?" question is presented for answering.
3. Phase 3 – Abstract/Active – These types of learners works best on precise, well-defined, and by trial and error, where they are allowed to make mistakes and have a safety net to catch them. Their question is "How?" The instructor is seen here as the coach provides guided practice and feedback on the lessons being taught.

4. Phase 4 – Concrete/Active – These types of learners like applying information learned to new situations to solve real problems. Their question is “What if?” Here the instructor allows the learner to further pursue and discover things on their own. In addition, this type of learner takes in the information, analyzes it, observes it and thinks about it.

With the passing of the NCLB, paraprofessional training now consists of fulfilling training qualifications by way of formal learning, and testing. Participation in college, junior or community college, classroom training or the passing of a rigorous assessment approved by the county, state, or educational company approved by that school district are just a few avenues by which formal learning may be obtained.

Formal learning is defined by Nancy French (2003) as providing core Knowledge competencies and skills needed by anyone to perform a job. This learning occurs within an education or training institution such as colleges and universities and leads to some sort of certification, diploma, or degree. Marsick and Watkins (2003, p. 25) define “formal learning” almost the same. They say that formal learning is typically institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured. In addition, formal learning has allowed universities to collect, over time, knowledge so each generation could know more than their parents, grandparents, etc This knowledge once obtained could be, and is usually, generalized, used and supplied across different ranges (Colleu, Hodkinson, & Malcom, 2002).

The National Research Center for Paraprofessionals in its exploration of schools that offer either two year degrees or one year certificate programs for paraprofessionals discovered 198 community colleges within the United States. Such noted institutions that

provide good programs include: Northeast Community College of Nebraska, and Ford Scott Community College in Kansas (Shikodriani, <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/49/58/4958pdf>).

In defining “Informal Learning” Marsick and Watkins, forerunners in the area of “informal learning” state it is “a process of learning that takes place in everyday experience, often at subconscious levels (p.118). In addition, Marsick and Watkins (2001, p.25) state the “Informal learning is a by product of some other activity, such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentations, or even formal learning.

Informal learning as defined by M. Eraut (2004) a professor of education at the Sussex School of Education, who conducted a study of which the results indicted that most workplace learning occurs on the job rather than off the job. In the study, he contributed four major factors to learning on the workplace:

1. Participation in group activities wherein individuals work for a common outcome or special purpose.
2. Working alongside others, wherein one can observe and listen to others, while actively engaging in learning new practices and gaining new knowledge and proficiencies.
3. Being confronted with difficult and challenging duties that demand on-the-job learning which ultimately leads to confidence and motivations.
4. Working with clients promotes learning about:
 - The client.
 - The problem.

- And gives the individual the opportunity to form and gain new ideas that come from the joint interaction between the client and individual.

Researchers have discovered that up to 70% of learning actually takes place during informal learning (Day, 1998). To obtain this information, researchers from many academic disciplines held focus groups to get people to discuss how they do their jobs, learn their jobs, and how they convey this information to other employees. In addition, these researchers shadowed employees. This research also showed small but statistically significant correlations between informal learning and production performance. Some of the benefits of the informal learning are: (1) it is cost-effective for the employer as well as the employee, (2) it is needs-specific, unplanned, and highly relevant to the individuals learning it, and (3) informal learning is used immediately.

When comparing the two different types of learning, formal and informal, one can see the difference; for example; formalized learning consists of decontextualization passivity and stimulation by teachers, while in informal learning consists of contextualizing which is activity based or experienced based, and activated by the individual or individuals (Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcolm, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Under the federal mandate of the NCLB, school personnel, including paraprofessionals that have any form of instructional contact with students are held “accountable” for administering high quality teaching and instructional practices. According to “NCLB, Title I, Part A Section 1119,” paraprofessionals who work in Title

I programs must complete the following mandated requirements in order to be employed and maintain paraprofessional positions:

- Complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education.
- Obtain an associate's or higher degree or meet a standard of quality.

or

- And demonstrate it through an academic assessment in instructing, Reading, Writing, and Mathematics.

Once paraprofessionals are certified of these credentials, they will be “highly qualified paraprofessionals.”

However, as states are hurrying to fulfill federal mandates, some extraordinary and effective individuals already working in the school system as paraprofessionals must be recertified in order to be “highly qualified”.

The researcher collected data about the roles, responsibilities, and duties performed by special education paraprofessionals in the classroom as assessed by administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals. In addition, the researcher to collected data information from administrators, special teachers, and special education paraprofessionals on what they perceive the duties, roles, and responsibilities of paraprofessionals should be in the classroom. The researcher will then determine from the data gathered how the NCLB paraprofessional's instructional mandates have impacted the duties and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals in the classroom and whether this act was necessary for the betterment of special education paraprofessionals in regards to their roles and responsibilities.

Research Questions

Overarching Question

To what degree does the actual work of the special education paraprofessionals in Georgia relate to the expectations of administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals, and has NCLB impacted the duties and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals in the classroom.

Sub-Research Questions

1. To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what the special education paraprofessionals do in the classroom?
2. To what degree do administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals should be doing in the classroom?
3. To what extent do administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals view the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified” mandates?

Significance of this Study

Research into the value of the NCLB, Title I, Part A is limited with regards to special education paraprofessionals, given the many duties and responsibilities performed by the special education paraprofessional. The findings from this study contributed to a better understanding of the gaps that existed between NCLB mandates and what administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals need

to know in regards to utilizing special education paraprofessionals for classroom effectiveness.

For school administrators, this study provided insight on the various roles and responsibilities as well as the education and training needs of the special education paraprofessional. This training was a link to student achievement and accountability. In addition, this served as resource for administrators on how to further integrate the special education paraprofessional's skills within the school organization.

This study provided some insight for policy makers into how effective NCLB provision is in preparing special education paraprofessionals to perform their assignments. Armed with this information, policy makers will be able to evaluate the usefulness of NCLB and revise it if necessary to establish more appropriate standards for special education paraprofessional preparation and credentials for licensure. (The NCLB provision will be reviewed by Congress for reauthorization in the year 2007.)

For educators who utilize special education paraprofessionals, this study provided insight to increase the productivity and effectiveness and relationship of the teacher/special education paraprofessional team.

For the researcher, this study provided information on the many roles and responsibilities that special education paraprofessionals performed. It may also satisfies the missing part of the puzzle that this group of individuals holds as it relates to schools being accountable and successful in regards to AYP. The researcher became more aware of the important roles special education paraprofessionals play in the educational environment.

Procedures

Research Design

The study was a descriptive, quantitative design that measured the differences in perceptions from school administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals in regards to the various roles, jobs, and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessionals, and the impact of the NCLB paraprofessional mandates in preparing those special education paraprofessionals for their duties. This type of method was used because it was deductive, was expressed numerically by statistical analysis and allows the researcher to remain detached and objective. (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 2003). “It is also noted that the most influential calls for reform of the educational system have used the findings of descriptive research based on the data for explaining or changing it” (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 2003, p. 290). Finally, this type of study was implemented because it yielded very important and vital information about opinions, attitudes, and practices that shaped and changed future educational policy and initiatives to improve existing conditions (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 2003). The researcher used a survey in order to collect data about the assessments and/or opinions of a sample of the identified population in order to make a generalized statement(s) from the information collected. The sample for this survey consisted of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals.

Setting

The study was conducted in a two urban counties that are located in the northern-metro area in the state of Georgia. One county had a total enrollment of over 161, 903 students. The county had 65 Elementary Schools (K-5), 20 Middle Schools (6-8), and 16 High

Schools (9-12). This amounted to a total of 101 elementary, middle and high school facilities. In addition to the elementary, middle, and high schools, this county had five additional distinctive schools, which consisted of two alternative schools, two vocational and technical schools, and an on-line campus. The school board consist of five members and the school district is led by the superintendent. Individual schools are led by principals and assistant principals (The number of assistant principals situated at the school is determined by the student population of the school). The average SAT score for high school seniors in this county was 1040, whereas the State average was 985, and the National was 1014. The county student enrollment ratio to all teachers was 15:1. The county teacher/support person ratio was 17:1, and county teacher/administrator ratio was 18:1 (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2006). The racial make up of the students was as follows: Asian (10%), African-Americans (25%), Hispanics (18%), Native Americans/Alaskan Natives (0%), White student (42%), and Multi-racial students (3%) (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2006). The following percentages represented the retention rates for students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade categorized by race, ethnicity and gender. Five thousand four hundred and sixty five (5,465) students were retained. Of this number, 1,835 (33.6%) were African-American; 1,500 (27.5%) were Caucasians; 1,620 (29.7%) were Hispanic; 351 (6.4%) were Asian; 3 (.1%) were American Indian; and 146 (2.7%) were Multi-racial. Three thousand three hundred and ten (60.7%) were male and 2, 145 (39.3%) were female. Enrollment in compensatory programs were the following: Special Education (grades K-12) 16,639 (11.6%), English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) 11,738 (8.2%), and Early Intervention Programs (EIP) 10,139 (14.7%). The county operated on a budget of \$1.4

billion dollars. This county provides educational services for students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria established by the Georgia Department of Education for the following areas of exceptionality: Autism, Deaf Hard of Hearing, Emotional and Behavior Disorders, Intellectual Disabilities, Orthopedics Impairments, Significant Developmental Delays, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech and Language Delays, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Visual Impairments, and Other Health Impairments. Special education money funding in this county is obtained from IDEA Flowthrough Funds, which are federal special education funds granted to the state that are then required to be sub-granted to local school districts (these funds used to be know as Title 6B). Funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are provided to school districts on an entitlement basis for programs and services to children with disabilities. Part B flow-through provides funds for special education services to children ages 3-21. Funds are then used for staffing, educational materials, equipment, and other costs that provide special education and related services, as well as supplementary aids and services, to children with disabilities. Funds may only be used for special education.

This county employed approximately 24, 000 employees, of these 1, 797 are paraprofessionals, 507 are administrators, and 9, 193 are teachers (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, <http://reportcards2005.gaosa.org/k12/persfiscal.aspx?TestType=pers&ID=667:ALL>).

The following schools in this county participated in the study: two high schools, due to the county limitations place on the researcher. These schools were selected because of the researcher's working relationship with the administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals at these schools. In addition,

special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals at these particular schools voiced concerns about the NCLB, paraprofessional mandates and their value, which in turn prompted the researcher's interest in this matter.

The second county had a student population of 24, 658 students, 3% over the fiscal year of 2006. This county totaled 33 schools, which consisted of 20 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 6 high schools, and 1 evening school. In the 2005-2006 Georgia Report Card, this county had a total of 103.97 administrators, 139.43 support personnel and a total number of 1,592.25 certified personnel. The student/teacher ratio was 15:1, teacher to support person ratio was 11:1, and teacher to administrator ratio was also 15:1 (Governor Office of Student Achievement, 2006). The school board was composed of four members. The county did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind Act. The average SAT score for the county was 1485 with 619 students being tested for the 2005-2006 school year. The average Verbal SAT score was 488, average Math SAT score being 495, and the Writing Section of the SAT was 476. In the school 2005-2006, 416 (38.4%) this county senior students entered Georgia Public Colleges, while 80 of those students required Learning Support (Learning Support are those classes needed by entering college students for remediation in order to be successful in their college classes.) Thirty-four (5%) of the graduating students entered Georgia Technical Colleges. In 2006, of this county 983 senior, 657 (66.8%) were eligible for the state's Hope Scholarship. For the 2005-2006 school years in this county had 1135 students retained throughout the grades k-12. This consisted of 95 (8.4%) students of African-American heritage, 592 (52.2%) Caucasian, 422 (37.2%) of Hispanic descent, 6 Asian Students, 3 American Indian, and 17 Multi-Racial students.

The of this total of 1135, 714 (62.9%) were male students and 421 (37.1%) were female students. During the 2005-2006 school year, the number of students enrolled in Compensatory Programs included the following: Special Education (grades K-12) 2917, 12.7% of the student population, Pre-K 126 students, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)(Grades K-12) 2586, 10.8% of the student population, and Early Intervention Program (EIP) 1603 students, 13.6% of the student population. Just like the other county that participated in the survey, this county received funding in the same manner. Special education money funding in this county is obtained from IDEA Flowthrough Funds, which are federal special education funds granted to the state that are then required to be sub-granted to local school districts (these funds used to be know as Title 6B). Funds under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are provided to school districts on an entitlement basis for programs and services to children with disabilities. Part B flow-through provides funds for special education services to children ages 3-21. Funds are then used for staffing, educational materials, equipment, and other costs that provide special education and related services, as well as supplementary aids and services, to children with disabilities. Funds may only be used for special education.

Population

The population for this study included administrators, special education paraprofessionals, and special education teachers. In the counties where participants were surveyed, all paraprofessionals whether working in a Title I school or not working in a Title I school are required to be "Highly Qualified." Participating special education paraprofessionals (1) have earned at least an associate degree, (2) passed the Georgia required test for paraprofessional certification, or (3) are currently pursuing standards

needed to obtain certification as “highly qualified.” Teachers selected for participation in this study had more than one year of service time, and worked with and supervised special education paraprofessionals, selected administrators (principals and assistant principals) had more than one year of administrative service. This descriptive study was based on quantitative data from 76 school personnel (37 teachers, 21 special education paraprofessionals, and 18 administrators from elementary, middle, and high school in the two participating counties.)

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was used to gather demographic data from the participants about position, gender, age, race, and experience. It consisted of statements and questions that referenced beliefs about actual job duties of special education paraprofessionals and the impact that the NCLB paraprofessional mandates. The respondents indicated their answers and level of agreement with the statements and responded similarly to their beliefs of NCLB mandates on the performance of special education paraprofessionals.

The draft of the survey was reviewed by a panel of veteran administrators, teachers, and special education paraprofessionals for accuracy and validity.

The survey was pilot tested by two administrators and two teachers who worked with special education paraprofessionals, along with two special education paraprofessionals who worked in this county. These individuals were not part of the final selected participants. The final instrument reflected the recommendations of the expert panel and the pilot test group.

Data Collection

The survey in this study was administered two ways. The survey was given to principals, assistant principals, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals in a meeting in which each individual filled out the designated survey then returned the completed survey to a slotted box at the end of the session. Names were not identified on the surveys. The other form of administration was done via the US Postal System. Participants were given self-addressed envelopes to return their surveys.

Limitations

The nature of the duties of the special education paraprofessionals may vary on the needs of the student(s) and the role of the teacher. This survey did not distinguish between the services of the special education paraprofessional being used as one-to-one for a student or designated for a particular special education program or area of disability. These factors may affect the administrators', special education teachers' and special education paraprofessionals' perception of what types of duties or performed by the special education paraprofessional.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was performed using employees of two northern school districts in Georgia and does not reflect the opinions of all school administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals across the state or country.

Definition of Terms

Accountability – Academic Gap that exist between the poor and minority students and White peers.

At-risk students - According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, at-risk students are defined as children that are displaying inadequate performance in schools. This term was used in the renowned report “A Nation at Risk” that was written by the commission and published in 1983.

Autism - Autism: A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3 that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has a serious emotional disturbance as defined below. Autism was added as a separate category of disability in 1990 under P.L. 101-476. This was not a change in the law so much as it is a clarification. Students with autism were covered by the law previously, but now the law identifies them as a separate and distinct class entitled to the law's benefits (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Deafness - A hearing impairment so severe that the child cannot understand what is being said even with a hearing aid (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Emotional Disturbance - A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics, displayed over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers or teachers
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

This term includes schizophrenia, but does not include students who are socially maladjusted, unless they have a serious emotional disturbance. P.L. 105-17, the IDEA Amendments of 1997, changed "serious emotional disturbance" to "emotional disturbance." The change has no substantive or legal significance. It is intended strictly to eliminate any negative connotation of the term "serious."

Formal Learning – Formalized learning rose from the process of facilitating learning, more so “educative learning” (Smith, 1999).

Hearing impairment - impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness as listed above (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Hispanic or Latino - Individuals who identify with the terms “Hispanic,” “Latino,” or “Spanish.” They see themselves connected by heritage, nationality group,

lineage, or counting of births of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before the entrance into the United States. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)

Inclusion – The process by which regular education and special education students are educated within the same classroom.

Individual Education Program – A written plan developed by teachers, parents, and students that details the student's academic goals and the methods and strategies that will be used to obtain these goals.

Informal Learning – The accumulation of experience (Smith, 1999).

Least Restrictive Environment – The educational setting that most closely resembles a regular school program and also meets the child's special educational needs. For many students with disabilities, the regular classroom is the LRE; however, the LRE is a relative concept and must be determined for each individual student with disabilities (Heward, 2003).

Orthopedic impairment - A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects educational performance. The term includes impairments such as amputation, absence of a limb, cerebral palsy, poliomyelitis, and bone tuberculosis (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Other health impairment - Having limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, rheumatic fever, asthma, hemophilia, and leukemia, which adversely affect educational performance (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Paraprofessional – Defined by Title I, Part A (NCLB, 2002) as employees who provide instructional support. Their duties include the following:

1. Provide one-to-one tutoring when this cannot be provided by the teacher
2. Assist with organizing instructional and other materials
3. Conduct parent activities
4. Assist in the technology department
5. Aide in the media center
6. Act as a translator

Special Education – Individually planned, specialized instruction (Heward, et.al, 2003).

Specific Learning Disability - A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. This term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. This term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation; or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Speech or language impairment - A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Title I – is the largest federal education program. It is intended to help ensure that

all children have the opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments (State Board of Education, North Carolina, (n. d.)

Title I School - A Title I school is a school that receives Title I money, the largest single federal funding source for education. (State Board of Education, North Carolina (n. d.)

Traumatic brain injury - An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma. As with autism, traumatic brain injury (TBI) was added as a separate category of disability in 1990 under P.L. 101-476 (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Visual impairment -: impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness (Knoblauch & Sorenson).

Summary

Paraprofessionals are also known a paraeducators, teachings assistant, educational assistants, instructional assistants, job coaches, and transition trainers. They perform

many roles and responsibilities in the educational environment: under the supervision of a certified teacher, they form partnerships to instruct and teach Reading, Writing and Arithmetic as well as being the connector between community and the educational institution. Paraprofessionals work in the media center, computer lab, and assisted students in special education classes as well as regular education classes.

By the year 1997, paraprofessionals had neither a defined job description nor a program of training and preparation, until the authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) was signed into law. This legislation stated that paraprofessionals would now assist students with disabilities in the special education classroom as well as in the general education classroom setting. These new duties entailed learning new strategies, terminologies, tutoring one-to-one in Mathematics, Language Arts, and Reading as well as taking notes.

In 2002, the NCLB, Section 1119 mandate was signed by President George W. Bush stipulating that paraprofessionals must obtain the following requirements to obtain a “highly qualified paraprofessional” status: (1) at least two years of study at an institution or higher, (2) meet a vigorous standard of quality and demonstrate through a formal state or (3) local academic assessment knowledge of and the ability to assist in the instruction of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics readiness (U. S. Department of Education, 2002).

In recent years, research has been conducted the value and utilization of the paraprofessional in the classroom; however, little or no research has been conducted and documented noting the value or benefits of the NCLB, paraprofessional mandates in

regards to job duties and responsibilities and the relationship this mandates have on the tasks, and functions of the paraprofessional.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Review of the Literature focuses on some of the most significant and critical issues surrounding the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional. Research detailing the evolution of the roles and responsibilities from beginnings to end is presented. The literature and research will focus on the following: who are paraprofessionals, what differences exist between instructional paraprofessionals and non-instructional paraprofessionals, what were the duties and responsibilities of paraprofessionals prior to, and after, the NCLB paraprofessional mandate implementation, and what research says about paraprofessional increasing student achievement and progress.

Who Are Paraprofessionals?

The roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals have evolved since such positions were created. Initially, they began as clerical assistants; later, through federal legislation, they became teacher's assistants; and now, through NCLB they are considered either: instructional personnel under the supervision of a certified teacher, or non-instructional personnel.

Paraprofessionals make sure all students get assistance when needed, as well as being the caretakers of children in their parents/guardians absence. In a study conducted by French (1999), in regards to gender and age, data revealed that on the average, the paraprofessional is a woman, who lives in the community. Additional data reported that the average age for the paraprofessional is 44 years old, and she works in an elementary or secondary school setting.

In 2001, French conducted a study, which reported the following demographics about paraprofessionals: paraprofessionals often have children or grandchildren who attend, or attended, the same school in which she is employed in and has a vested interest in the success of that school and its surrounding community. She has 6.5 years of experience in special education and 7.9 years as a paraprofessional overall (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, 2002). In addition, she often represents the racial and ethnic make-up of the community. (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2001).

In a study completed in 1977, before the passing of the NCLB, Mueller, Coordinator of the Paraeducator Training Project in Vermont, developed a questionnaire for paraprofessionals to complete. The survey was completed by 753 paraeducators, and the following demographics about paraeducators in Vermont were revealed. The survey had a 96% response rate from females, whose ages fell between 36 and 55 years, 40% of the paraeducators that responded had been employed for five years or less in the county in which they were currently employed. Most of the respondents reported working in special education (62%), with 17% working in the general education population. Ninety-eight percent had high school diplomas, or the equivalent, while of those 98%, 20% had college diplomas, and of those 20%, 20% of those respondents had advanced degrees.

In an investigative study entitled, “Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education,” completed by the U.S. Department of Education’s, Office of Special Education Programs (2002), in regards to job assignments in the schools, the special education paraprofessional is utilized in 5 different classes during the week and works with 21 students, 15 of which have disabilities. The Office of Special Education

Programs also reported in the study that 15% of all students with whom paraprofessionals work are students who are non-English speaking individuals.

In that same study, where interviews were held in the spring and fall of 2000 by the OSEP, it was discovered that 29% of paraprofessionals had high school diplomas, 38% had some college, 32% had an associate degree, and 6% had a college diploma. In addition, about 13% of these individuals had a paraprofessional certificate or credential.

It is interesting to note that the Urban Institute, a non-profit economic and social policy research organization, conducted a study of rural and urban districts in the United States. When assessing the states, the Urban Institute concluded that at the time of the passing of the NCLB mandate, 25-50% of all paraprofessionals had already met the mandated standards of being “highly qualified.” Their survey also concluded that on average, rural districts had a higher percentage of “highly qualified” paraprofessionals than the urban districts (The Urban Institute, 2005).

In an investigation in Georgia, conducted by Nweke, Eads, Afolabi, & Stephens, (2006), data collected from the year beginning in 1999 and ending in 2002 revealed comparative analysis, facts, and information about paraprofessionals who work in this southern state. Just like the OSEP study, the gender of the Georgian paraprofessional matches that of their survey, which notes that the majority of these workers are primarily woman. This study provided the following demographics about the population in the year of 2001: White paraprofessionals accounted for almost two-thirds of the personnel group (64.7%), followed by Blacks (32.9%), and Hispanic Paraprofessionals increased from 322 in 2001, to 377 in 2002, though they still only represented about 3% of

paraprofessional force. The years of experience among paraprofessionals span from 0-26 years.

According to The Educator Workforce Research and Development Division (EWRAD) of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC, the Research Division reported that one county under study for this report in the year 2006, employed 1340 paraprofessionals who were certified as “highly qualified,” while 438 individuals were not determined to be “highly qualified” at the time of this report. The Educator Workforce Research and Development is responsible for reporting annual educator data for the state of Georgia (Nweke, 2006).

Skills Possessed by Paraprofessionals Prior to NCLB

Success defined as Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) by NCLB has administrators utilizing paraprofessionals in differentiated staffing across many program lines in order to achieve academic success and accountability. “Increased reliance on paraprofessionals with greater emphasis on their instructional and learner support roles requires a serious look at their roles, supervision, and preparation.” stated Pickett (2003), a consultant and past executive director of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (OSEP, <http://www.nrcpara.org/report>).

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006) adapted several basic skills needed by paraprofessionals to perform the duties necessary to complete their jobs. Overall, the individuals were required to have a desire to work with children, listening to children and understanding their needs. In addition, several basic skills in content were needed, content knowledge included, proficiency in reading, writing, mathematical computation and mathematical reasoning, thinking skills which

include creative thinking, decision making and problem solving, integrating new knowledge, reasoning, organizing and processing information, and interpersonal relations such as communication skills, listening and speaking, respect for cultural diversity, respect for views of others, and the ability to work as a team member.

In denoting some of the academic abilities that paraprofessional possess, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) (1998) had identified 4 areas for paraprofessionals to know: (a) Content Knowledge, (B) Thinking Skills, (C) Interpersonal Relations/Human Relations and (D) Personal Qualities,

Content Knowledge is comprised of reading, writing, mathematical computation and mathematical reasoning. The determination for proficiency consisted of obtaining a GED or high school diploma.

The components that form the Thinking Skills concentration are comprised of creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, integrating new knowledge, reasoning, and organizing and processing new information. The determination for proficiency consisted of obtaining a high school diploma or a GED.

Interpersonal Relations/Human Relations consist of communication skills (listening and speaking), leadership skills, respect for cultural diversity, respect for views of others, and the ability to work as a team member. The determination for proficiency is a high school diploma, GED, and/or interview.

The last and final area of proficiency is related more with personal character or Personal Qualities. This category consists of responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity/honesty. The determination for proficiency for this area consists of references, interviews, and observation during pre-service training.

(The above skills were adapted from the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) of the U.S. Department of Labor.)

CEC developed the first set of national standards which identified skills and knowledge needed by paraprofessionals to work with students with disabilities (<http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/parastds.htm>). These competencies were needed by paraprofessionals who worked with students in inclusive classrooms, and also provided training in skill areas and modification of curriculum and activities.

Certification Requirements Prior to NCLB

Prior to 1999, 13 states had implemented certification standards for paraprofessional, and 12 states were in the process of introducing and implementing standards and guidelines. Alabama, which had paraprofessional standards since 1970, requires 30 clock hours of formal training. Delaware, established its standards in 1970, has three levels of standards for paraprofessionals, each having set training and guidelines. Florida established their standards in 1998, these standards also provides career ladder training. Illinois requires all LEAS to provide in-service training approved by the state superintendents. Iowa, established standards in the year 2000 (Humm & Pickett, 2003, Pickens, Likens, & Wallace, 2003).

Maine, Texas, Kansas, New Hampshire, and Vermont had implemented levels of certifications for their paraprofessionals. In some states levels, of certifications enable and allow for coursework that could be applied toward a college degree.

Prior to the passing of NCLB, Georgia required 50 hours of job-related training within the first year of employment with a minimum of 10 clock hours within the first 30

school days of employment. These licenses, like teacher's licenses, had to be renewed in 5 years with 20 hours of related-training (505-2-19 Administrative Code).

New Certification Requirements with NCLB

In the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I, Part A Section 1119, passed in the year 2002, certification requirements are now universal across the United States. Now, one wanting to be employed as a paraprofessional must have documentation or certification that verifies their professional qualifications and base of academic knowledge to do what this job requires, as mandated by the NCLB's job description.

The new requirements and standards for a paraprofessional who works in Title I programs are listed below: Paraprofessionals must:

- Complete at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education.
(The mandate does not specify any particular course of study during these two years of school but does state that the paraprofessionals should be able to demonstrate competency to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and math).
- Obtain an associate's or higher degree, or meet a standard of quality.
- Or demonstrate competency through an academic assessment in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).
(This can be done through a formal State Assessment.)

The Teaching Commission (2004) in their report "Teaching At Risk" stated the teacher/instructor quality is a critical factor in order to secure the United States, global effectiveness, security, and future. This report issued by the Teaching Commission was two fold, (1) luring and keeping the best teachers in the field and (2) try to put high-

quality teachers in every classroom. In another study completed by Kupermintz (2002), he stated that there is a correlation between quality teaching /instruction and test scores. In two other studies lead by Darling Hammond, (Darling-Hammond & Young (2002), Darling-Hammond (2000), the investigators confirmed the relationship between the effectiveness of teaching and student learning. Still another study lead by Webster, Mendro, Orsek, & Wearsinghe (1997) supports the claim that student learning is influenced by the instructor. Dr. Harold Wenglinsky (2000) noted in his study that classroom practices matters most.

Once paraprofessionals are certified for these credentials, they will be “highly qualified paraprofessionals.” The federal government wanted all paraprofessionals to be “highly qualified” in 2005.

Instructional or Non-Instructional Paraprofessionals

According to NCLB, paraprofessionals are classified into two categories: instructional and non-instructional paraprofessional. Each classification is governed under different directives.

In 2001, the American Federation of Teachers created a task force that wrote and published a document entitled “Standard for a Profession” in which they defined an instructional paraprofessional as a school employee whose position is either:

- (1) Instructional in nature and/or
- (2) Direct or indirect services to students and/or parents.
- (3) This individual works as a member of the teacher/paraprofessional team and is supervised and works under the instructions of a certified teacher, who is

ultimately responsible for the design and implementation of the educational program of the child or group of children, and for the evaluation of said program.

Further definition of the instructional paraprofessional's role is to enhance learning and provide for students by assisting in the classroom and carrying out both clerical and teaching duties that match and support the instructional plan and educational goals of the student(s) under the supervision of a certified teacher. To be more precise, the purpose of the paraprofessional is to complement, not displace, the effort of the teacher/instructor (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 1998).

In addition, to the required certification noted in NCLB, certification of paraprofessional personnel also provides a clearer model for the profession. As noted by the Chapel Hill- Carrboro school community (AFT, 1998, p.27), certification provides:

1. Standards for training and experience.
2. Structure for outlining proper roles and duties
3. A tool for maintaining a core group of skilled support personnel.

Non-instructional paraprofessionals are those individuals who are employed as translators, work with parent or community activities, work in the lunchroom, provide personal care services, assist as bus aides/bus attendants, perform clerical duties, provide non- instructional computer assistance, as well as non-instructional media/library supervision (NCLB,2002, Florida Department of Education, 2004).

Today, the vast majority of special education paraprofessionals perform many more instructional tasks in comparison to non-instructional tasks. A survey taken in Rhode Island revealed that in the year 2005, instructional paraprofessionals totaled 2,685.4, or 91%, out of 2,972.95 of all paraprofessionals in the state (Rhode Island

Department of Education, 2006). Further analysis, notes that 2065, or 77.5% of Rhode Island's paraprofessionals worked with children with disabilities, while the remainder of the paraprofessionals worked with general education, Title 1 or other students.

Paraprofessionals are known to spend much time performing many tasks and duties. In a descriptive quantitative study completed by Giangreco & Broer (2005), 737 respondents., which included administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, parents and paraprofessionals, who worked in or had children who attended a Inclusive School completed this survey. Ninety-six percent of the paraprofessionals were women, and the amount of experience between all paraprofessionals ranged from first year paraprofessionals to thirty year veterans. It was noted that paraprofessionals spend a significant percentage of their time performing the following tasks and duties: 47.34% of their time was spent on instruction planned by a certified teacher, 19.05% of their time spent on behavior support, 17.29% was dedicated to self-direction, 6.84% of the time spent on supervision of students, 4.40% of their time on clerical, 3.40% on personal care, and lastly 1.26% of their time spent on other things. In addition, the increase of job responsibilities may be due to the increase of early childhood special education services, the shortages of special education teachers, and increases of students with high intensity needs, such as students with autism, emotional/behavior disorders and multiple disabilities. Bergert and Burnette (2001) stated that 98% of school districts nationwide have teacher shortages and the situation will get worse as teacher retirement increases. Bergert and Burnette (2001) also state in their statistical profile that over a period of 10 years the group of preschoolers receiving services increased by 48.8 percent.

Another report entitled Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education's (SPeNSE, 2003), which was funded by the Office Of Special Education Programs (OSEP), disclosed that a majority of paraprofessionals in special education spend typically 90 percent of their time participating in instructional activities. The Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education was written to focus on the national shortages of personnel who work with students with disabilities.

Riggs (2001) interviewed paraprofessionals working in Inclusive Settings (classes in which students with mild to significant disabilities and general education students both participate in the general education classroom, as well as the general education program) in regards to their roles and duties; many responded by saying that they spent at least 50% or more of their time providing direct instructional services to student. During this instructional time, 60% of the paraprofessional in this study stated they were assigned to one student, while 38% of the paraprofessionals stated they worked with 7 to 10 students. The balance of their time was divided between clerical tasks, bus duty, monitoring the lunchroom, and recess, assisting in music and art classes and assisting in behavioral management of individual students.

Many studies have been completed noting the time paraprofessionals spent performing certain duties. In a study completed by Ashbaker and Young in 2001, 159 surveys were completed by paraprofessionals in which they stated that the greatest percentage of their work time was spent instructing students, and that this was mostly in the area of reading and math. In another study performed by Downing, Ryndak and Clark in 2000, 16 paraprofessionals were interviewed. The findings revealed that there were a wide range of activities that paraprofessionals were responsible for throughout the course

of the day, including teaching, behavior management and support of the students, monitoring students, adapting and modifying curriculum materials, facilitating interaction between peers, collaborating with teachers, and communicating with parents. Paraprofessionals disclosed how they taught students specific skills across a wide range of academic and non-academic subjects. The paraprofessionals also stated that their instructional efforts not only helped the students they were working with, but also the other students in the class. In another investigation performed by French, and Chopra (1999) mothers identified closely with paraprofessionals and believed they were compassionate, dedicated people, who worked in these four areas: instructor, connector, team member, and physical caretaker.

Duties

Paraprofessionals are considered “connectors” to the community. In a study by Chopra, Sandoval-Lucero, Aragon, Berhnal, DeBalderas, and Carroll (2004) focus groups were asked probing questions to gather information about the paraprofessional relationship to the students, schools, family, and community. The study revealed that paraprofessionals are connectors or bridges.

From this investigation, paraprofessionals’ functions were viewed as the link between the parent and the teacher, student and teachers, student and parents, families and social/family services, and students and their peers.

As “connector” between parents and students, paraprofessional stated that parents often sought them out when having problems with their children, with the hopes of understanding and solving the problems that their child might be encountering.

In regards to being a “connector” between teacher and student, paraprofessionals disclosed that they often encouraged students, especially those of a different language and culture, to talk to their teachers in situations where poor performance on test scores were obtained, or failure of a class was occurring. In many schools the cultural demographics of the teachers usually remain relatively stable and share the same conversational styles, background knowledge, and culture; however these teachers for the most part do not share the same cultural demographics as their students. Another reason why the paraprofessional were important links and components to the students’ education was acknowledged by Weiner (1993) when his research showed that students felt that teachers did not care about them because teachers in urban settings failed to reach the social responsibilities of the students. Weiner (1993) also reported that teachers fail to connect to students because teacher themselves have problems with overwhelming amounts of paperwork, instruction that is driven by standardized testing, lack of administrative support, and increased teacher isolation. Paraprofessionals who share the same culture of the students in the classroom can be utilized in a unique way to bridge the gap by using familiar terms and phrases, and providing comfort zones for the children (Rueda, 1999). In addition, Monzo and Rueda; (2001) findings indicate that familiarity with students, their language, and cultures at an individual level can promote interest in schools.

Downing, Ryndak, and Clark (2000) state in their study that paraprofessionals acknowledged that they prompted students to work together by asking other classmates to help the student with the disability. As a “connector” between students and other students, paraprofessionals felt that in some instances they encouraged and established

friendships between students with disabilities and other students without disabilities who would otherwise not socially engage.

In interviews conducted by Hermanson and Hoagland (2001), the findings indicated that paraprofessionals often are the individuals that greet and meet the family when students are picked up and dropped off at school. In addition, according to this study paraprofessionals often know where and how to get community-based materials for the classroom, and once they get these materials, they then modify the materials to reflect the culture of the community. They bring the community into the school with language and culture. Although, this role is undefined, when asked about their relationship with the community and students, paraprofessionals classify themselves as “friends of the family.” Some paraprofessionals indicated that they felt like big sisters to the students. Other paraprofessionals even went as far as to visualizing themselves as grandparents to the students, and when comparing themselves with the teacher in the classroom considered themselves the good half of the team (supporting, and nurturing individuals while the teacher was considered the bad half of the team (disciplinarian). Some paraprofessional’s relationships with the students and the parents extend beyond school time, for example: one paraprofessional stated that he babysat for the parents of his students. Some express sharing outside activities with the students. Paraprofessionals encountered students and their parents within the neighborhood, and at the stores, and at neighborhood activities. On such occasions they have conversations about what happened at the school that day, while still not breaking school policies and confidentiality regulations (Chopra, 2004).

According to statistics, with the increase of Latino and non-English speaking students in urban schools, the need for paraprofessionals that share the same culture as their students and live in the same community is vital (Haslekorn & Fideler, 1996, Hollins & Oliver, 1999). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported public school enrollment from Pre-K to 8th grade rose from 29.9 million in the Fall of 1990, to 34.2 million in 2003. As for high school statistics, the high school population rose from 11.3 million in 1990 to 14.3 million in 2003 (NCES, Fast Facts). As reported by the NCES reported for the year 2005-2006 reported that there were over 5.9 million public elementary and secondary students (approximately 14%) with existing Individual Education Programs, about 17.6 million (37%) of the total student membership were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Other statistics stated that 28 million were white, non-Hispanic, 9.1 million were Hispanic; 8.3 million were Black, non-Hispanic; 2.1 were Asian/Pacific Islander and 581,481 were American Indian/Alaskan Native. In addition, the National Center for Educational Statistician 2005 reported that individuals between the age of 15-19 were neither in school or employed (NCES, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2006/section2/indicator21.asp>). Rueda, Monzo, & Higareda, 2004 call paraprofessionals “cultural brokers” as well as “funds of knowledge” grounded in cultural and community experiences.

Finally, paraprofessionals felt that they were “connectors” between students and families and social and family services, especially in regards to language barriers and paraprofessionals were needed as translators.

Foster and Holbrook (2005) state that unless paraprofessionals accompany students in inclusive settings these students would be vulnerable to social and academic

failure. Stainback and Stainback (1990) defined the inclusive classrooms as a place where all students with disabilities belong, are accepted, support, and are supported by, their peers and other members of the school community, while having their educational needs met. Students with disabilities, who are served in inclusive classes, are reliant on the support and hard work of the paraprofessionals (Carter, 2006).

In inclusive classrooms paraprofessionals are responsible for the following duties:

- utilizing and assisting special education students one-on-one with special communication technology so that these students can participate in the classroom lessons,
- Changing diapers of student with disabilities and disposing of these soiled items.
- Work with one or more of teachers and try to maintain communication with each in regards to all students with disabilities (NEA, 1994-1995 Edition.).

In a study conducted by Broer, Doyle, and Giangreco (2005), students with intellectual disabilities reported that it was the paraprofessional who they relied upon for instruction and as their teacher, as opposed to the general education teacher. This was due to the fact that the students felt the general education teacher had little or limited time to interact with them. The students also felt that the teacher in the general education classroom did not know them as well and so many looked at the paraprofessional for support academically as well as emotionally.

In the library/media center, paraprofessionals are also known as library technical assistants (LTA) and wear many hats. Although he/she may not have the formal training as a librarian or a master's degree, that individual aids in the day-to-day functioning of

the library, as well as assisting the librarians and individuals who enter there (Burks, 2002).

Some excerpts were written on the National Resource Center for the Paraprofessional (NRCP) Message Board, in regards to the various duties performed by paraprofessional (NRCP, <http://www.nrcpara.org/forum/all-in-a-days-work> . One paraprofessional stated that she assisted students having difficulty following lessons plans, helped with small reading and spelling groups. She corrected homework, graded papers, took students to the library for research education and covered lunch and playground duty. Another paraprofessional stated how her main duty was to be one-on-one with a 7th grader, who she had been with since 5th grade. The student was diagnosed with ADHD and she followed him from class to class. In addition, she also helped other students, and ran errands for teachers. Finally, another paraprofessional noted that she prints out Braille lessons and keeps with the daily paperwork that is generated by Special Education. and Medicare.

Training

Merriam Webster Dictionary list several definitions for “Training,” such as (1) to form by instruction, (2) discipline, or drill, to teach so as to make fit, qualified, or proficient: to make prepared (as by exercise) for a test of skill. Training can also be defined as preparation and/or activity leading to skilled behavior. Training serves a very important function within any organization, even if those people to be trained have prior education or prior work experience (Smith, 1995). With increased pressure from legislation, and mandates such as the reauthorization of IDEA 97, ESEA, and the NCLB Act, which defined further job responsibilities and job duties as well as noted the

increased and wide use of paraprofessionals, much focus was directed on paraprofessional training provided by and putting much pressure on states and school districts. As stated, in preceding paragraphs, Pre-NCLB paraprofessional qualifications and training specified that in order to be hired as a paraprofessional, individuals applying for the position only needed only a high school diploma, and the desire to work with and around children. Once the individual was hired, the paraprofessional received a series of training. These training sessions could be delivered in three ways: pre-service training, on the job training, in-service training which was provided by the county the paraprofessionals worked (Trautman, 2004). In the piece entitled “Managing and Preparing Paraprofessionals” (2004), Trautman defines pre-service training as a prearranged amount of time used for instruction and observations. In the case of paraprofessionals, Trautman states that this pre-service time should occur prior to the paraprofessional’s start of the job, usually during the summer months. In addition, pre-service training is defined as an experience that will communicate job expectations and provide a level of knowledge appropriate for further training. During this time such information as the roles and responsibilities of the position, the school orientation, opening and closing times of the school, a description of the types of children with who the paraprofessional will be working, and instructional methods used by both the teacher and the paraprofessional would be discussed. Of the three forms of training, pre-service was the least recommended of the forms (Riggs & Mueller, 2001). . The trouble with pre-service training was: problems arise from scheduling paraprofessionals to come in early or stay late for such training. In most cases, these paraprofessionals are usually not paid to attend this pre-service training. In addition, Firth & Mim (1985) stated that

inadequate pre-service training was one of the major reasons that paraprofessionals in special education did not stay on the job. On-the-job training is defined as training provided by an employer on the job site. The United States Department of the Interior defines On-The-Job Training as one of the best training methods because it is planned, organized, and performed on the employee's worksite (US Department of Interior, <http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/ed6b.html>). The Vermont Paraeducator Survey conducted by Mueller, discloses that paraeducators in that state who completed the survey reported receiving 40% of their training on the job. The U. S. Department of Interior also concurs that by employee's conducting an effective on-the-job training program at their jobsite, moral, productivity, and professionalism will normally be high (US Department of Interior, <http://www.doi.gov/hrm/pmanager/ed6b.html>). The third type of training; in-service training is defined as training and professional development offered by the employer and given during the regular work hours. In a survey conducted by Causton-Theoharis and Malmgren (2005), which tried to increase the interaction rate between paraprofessionals and students with severe disabilities, by the use of in-service training of paraprofessionals. The training was held at two elementary schools and consisted of a four hours training session. held one-to-one with instructor and paraprofessional. This study consisted of four paraprofessionals who had not received any prior training prior to employment in the schools. Presented as an in-service, the purpose of this study was to increase purposeful behavior by paraprofessionals that would increase students with disabilities interaction with students without disabilities. Results indicted that by paraprofessionals applying interventions the interaction between students with and without disabilities increased. In the survey completed by Mueller (The

Vermont Paraeducator Survey) paraeducators (57%) were presented with in-service training and completed it, however of that 57%, 48% questioned its relevance. In one survey taken by Ashbaker and Morgan in 2001 when paraprofessionals were asked what type of training they received, 90% stated they had received training ranging from short workshops to college classes; however, the majority of the training came from the school district or colleges.

Another way to fulfill the requirements of NCLB lies in passing an assessment that is approved by the district and state in which the paraprofessional works. These written formal assessments determine whether a paraprofessional, has the skills to assist teachers in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. These types of assessment used can be classified as “Competency-Based Assessments.” Such assessments measure an individual’s performance against a standard of acceptable performance, or score, and are not compared against other individuals taking such assessment. There are several known types of assessments that have been developed to determine the proficiency of “highly qualified paraprofessionals (Imel, 1990)

Formal assessments that determine whether a paraprofessional has the skills to assist teachers in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics skills have been developed and include: ETS ParaPro Assessment, ACT’s WorkKeys, Project Para UNL (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), and the Basic Skills Tests.(Shikodriani, <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/49/58/4958.pdf>).

The ParaPro Assessment was created by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The creator of the Parapro Assessment is a company that has over 1100 professional staff members who that specialize in education, psychology, statistics, psychometrics,

computer sciences, sociology, and the humanities. Among the 1100 personnel, 600 hold advanced degrees and 230 individual hold doctorates (ETS, <http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.22f30af61d34e9c39a77b13bc3921509/?vgnextoid=7383be3a864f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>). The ParaPro is a two and a half hour test which is comprised of 90 multiple choice questions in reading, writing, and mathematics. More than half of the test is dedicated to basic skills and knowledge, and the rest of the test focuses on those skills and knowledge necessary in a classroom setting. This assessment makes no distinctions between grade levels as the No Child Left behind does not make distinctions to grade levels. Validity of the assessment was established by linking the basic skills to job knowledge requirements. This linking was made by a committee of 34 teachers and paraprofessional,. In addition, the ETS surveyed paraprofessionals and teachers across the country to add to the committee are finding (Education Testing Service, n.d.).

American College Test (ACT) is an independent, not for profit organization that also creates and assesses the academic and training development of individuals throughout the various stages of learning, which includes grades kindergarten through 12. They have created over one hundred assessments, and published research information and management programs serving the broad areas of education and workforce development (ACT, <http://www.act.org/aboutact/education.html>)

The ACT WorkKeys Proficiency Certificate for Teacher Assistants has been utilized for over ten years in schools as well as in the workforce. It combines training, testing, on the job training, as well as evaluation of the paraprofessional. This paraprofessional assessment has already been utilized in Eugene, Oregon, where 150

teacher assistants in 12 Title 1 schools meet the NCLB standards and gained certification as “highly qualified” ([Http://www..act.org/news/releases/2003/3-21-03.html](http://www.act.org/news/releases/2003/3-21-03.html)).

As of 2002-2003 through the 2006-2007 (Fall) school years, Georgia Professional Standards reported the cumulative total of paraprofessionals that worked for one of the county being surveyed was 3620. Of that number, 499 took the PSC – managed test, and of that number 331 passed. Of the number who took the ETS Parapro Assessment (331), 314 paraprofessionals passed. (Georgia Professional Standards, 2007).

By November, 2006 a new paraprofessional assessment program was introduced, under the umbrella of the new Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators (GACE). This test will now satisfy the requirements needed by individuals to become “highly qualified paraprofessionals” as stated in the “No Child Left Behind Act” (http://www.gace.nesinc.com/GA2_overview.asp). It replaced all other assessments within the state of Georgia. As per the Georgia Professional Standard Commission as of today, 4675 individuals have taken the GACE assessment and 3727 individuals have passed (79% pass rate).

Paraprofessionals and Student Achievement

Many individuals believe that paraprofessionals can reduce behavior problems in the classroom (Werts, Harris, Tillery, & Roark, 2004). The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) completed a study in which they found that the proximity of the paraprofessional did result in students being more academically engaged and on-task when the paraprofessional was near-by (OSEP, Special Reports, 2003, Young, Simpson, Smith-Myles, & Kamps, 1996). Young, Simpson, Smith-Myers and Kamps (1996)

investigated the paraprofessional proximity to 3 students with autism, results indicated that gestures and cuing to stay on task was also reduced.

In addition, verbal interactions between the paraprofessionals and students were common when engagement was high, and when the paraprofessionals removed himself/herself two feet or more academic on-task behavior dropped (OSEP, Special Reports, 2003).

In a study which investigated the assessments of individual who were receiving tutoring in reading and examined time-on-task and pupil-teacher relationships (paraprofessionals were used as the teachers) of pupils with early signs of academic and behavior deficiencies (these students were rated by their teachers as having below average academic skills and above average aggressiveness, results indicated that tutoring by paraprofessionals were positive, whereas those students increased their time on task and were also the ones that had the largest reading gains (Gest, Gest, the Pennsylvania State University, 2005).

In a study conducted by Giangreco (2003) where 46 sites were used in a 10-Step System for improving paraprofessional services, results indicated a better delivery of instruction and improved student achievement.

Kotkins (1998) in a quasi-experimental study showed consistent improvement in student behavior. While another study performed by Kotkins looks at two situations, where a controlled group of students were given social skill training, and another group of students were given a paraprofessional and social skills training. Students with the paraprofessionals improved in terms of less disruptive behavior.

Summary

The roles and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessional has evolved since these positions were created however, a visible shift has begun, whereas special education paraprofessionals are now taking on instructional responsibilities as well. It is no surprise that the requirements of the special education paraprofessional have also changed to accommodate the more vigorous curriculum skills needed to instruct the various types of students as well as being employed with the school system. These requirements come with additional training and certification demands which consist of having an associate's degree or 60 college credits or in lieu of these requirements passing a paraprofessional assessment test.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

According to the “NCLB, Title I, Part A Section 1119,” paraprofessionals who work in Title I programs and have any form of instructional contact with students must complete these following mandated requirements in order to be employed and maintain paraprofessional positions: (1) complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education, (2) obtain an associate’s or higher degree or (3) meet a standard of quality and demonstrate it through an academic assessment in instructing, Reading, Writing, and Mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Once paraprofessionals have these credentials, they will be classified as “highly qualified paraprofessionals.” However, there is reason for concern, as states and school districts are rushing to get “highly qualified mandates” in place, those extraordinary and effective personnel already employed by the school system may no longer be considered “highly qualified” under the NCLB mandates (Kings-Sears, 2005).

The researcher gathered data about the many roles and responsibilities performed by paraprofessionals in the classroom as assessed by administrators, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals. In addition, the researcher gathered data from administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals on what they perceive the duties, roles, and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals should be in the classroom and the impact the NCLB mandate has had on the performance of the roles and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessional.

Research Questions

Overarching Question

To what degree does the actual work of the special education paraprofessionals in Georgia relate to the expectations of administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals, and has NCLB, mandates impacted the duties and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals in the classroom.

Sub-Research Questions

- 1 To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what the special education paraprofessionals do in the classroom?
- 2 To what degree do administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals should be doing in the classroom?
- 3 To what extent do administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals view the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified” mandates?

Research Design

The study was a descriptive, quantitative design that measured the difference in perceptions from school administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals in regards to the various roles, jobs, and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessionals, and the effectiveness of the NCLB in preparing those paraprofessionals for those tasks. This type of study was used because it is deductive, can be expressed numerically by statistical analysis and allows the researcher to remain

detached and objective. (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 2003). It is noted that the most influential calls for reform of the educational system have used the findings of descriptive research based on the data for explaining or changing it (Borg, 2003, p. 290). Finally, this type of study was implemented because it yields very important and vital information about opinions, attitudes, and practices that may result in shaping and changing future educational policy and initiatives to improve existing conditions (Borg, 2003). Borg, Gall, and Gall (2003) state that a quantitative study is concerned when determining “What Is.”

Settings

The study was conducted in a two urban counties that are located in the northern-metro area in the state of Georgia. One county has a total enrollment of over 161, 903 students. The county had 65 Elementary Schools (K-5), 20 Middle Schools (6-8), and 16 High Schools (9-12). This amounted to a total of 101 elementary, middle and high school facilities. In addition to the elementary, middle, and high schools, this county had five additional distinctive schools, which consists of two alternative schools, two vocational and technical schools, and an on-line campus. The school board consisted of five members and the school district is lead by the superintendent. Individual schools are lead by principals and assistant principals (The number of assistant principals situated at the school was determined by the student population of the school). The average SAT score for high school seniors in this county was 1040, whereas the State average was 985, and the National was 1014. The county student enrollment ratio to all teachers was 15:1. The county teacher/support person ratio was 17:1, and county teacher/administrator ratio was 18:1 (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2006). The racial make up of the

students was as follows: Asian (10%), African-Americans (25%), Hispanics (18%), Native Americans/Alaskan Natives (0%), White student (42%), and Multi-racial students (3%) (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2006). The following percentages represent the retention rates for students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade categorized by race, ethnicity and gender. Five thousand four hundred and sixty five (5,465) students were retained. Of this number, 1,835 (33.6%) were African-American; 1,500 (27.5%) were White; 1,620 (29.7%) were Hispanic; 351 (6.4%) were Asian; 3 (.1%) were American Indian; and 146 (2.7%) were Multi-racial. Three thousand three hundred and ten (60.7%) were male and 2, 145 (39.3%) were female. Enrollment in compensatory programs are the following: Special Education (grades K-12) 16,639 (11.6%). English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) 11,738 (8.2%), and Early Intervention Programs (EIP) 10,139 (14.7%). The county operated on a budget of \$1.4 billion dollars. The special education paraprofessional is paid through IDEA Flowthrough funds that are federal special education funds granted to the State, who are then required to sub-grant these funds to local school districts, in other words these funds flow through the state to local school districts. Funds may be used for staffing, educational materials equipment, and other costs to provide special education and related services, as well as supplementary aids and services to children with disabilities. Funds may only be used for special education. This county offers educational services for students who meet the eligibility criteria established by the Georgia Department of Education for the following areas of exceptionality: Autism, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, Intellectual Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairments, Significant Developmental

Delayed, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech and Language Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Visual Impairments, and Other Health Impairments.

This county employed approximately 24, 000 employees, of these 1, 797 are paraprofessionals, 507 are administrators, and 9, 193 are teachers (Governor's Office of Student Achievement,

<http://reportcards2005.gaosa.org/k12/persfiscal.aspx?TestType=pers&ID=667:ALL>).

In addition, in this county all special education paraprofessionals are required to be able to perform the following tasks and possess the following knowledge as listed in the job description. The qualifications for the job of special education paraprofessional include having certification which is issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Education requirements consist of having an Associate's or higher degree; or have completed two years of college coursework (60 semester/90 quarter hours); or have passed the Praxis Parapro Assessment (prior to March 1, 2007) or the GACE Parapro Assessment required which is the same requirements listed in the No Child Left Behind mandate for the special education paraprofessional. Necessary skills desired are the following: knowledge of child development; computer skills; good interpersonal skills; clerical skills which may include typing; knowledge with office and media equipment preferred. Another precondition that this job description requests is experience in a licensed child care environment preferred. Primary responsibilities include the ability of the special education paraprofessionals in selected special education classrooms to work with teachers and other specialists in providing instructional, developmental, and vocational assistance to students with moderate to severe disabilities (primarily, but not limited to, intellectual disabilities, orthopedic impairments, emotional/behavioral

disorders, and autism) the education, care and development of mentally, physically, emotionally disabled and other special needs students. Employees at this level provide instructional, vocational and developmental assistance to students with special needs.

These responsibilities consist of the following essential functions:

- Provide instructional, vocational and developmental assistance to mentally, physically, emotionally disabled and other special needs students, as prescribed by the supervising teacher.
- Assist students as they arrive on buses taking them to and from learning areas.
- With appropriate training, assist students with gross motor activities, such as grasping, holding objects, posture, crawling, walking and running, as appropriate to individual development. With appropriate training, assists students with fine motor activities, such as playing with toys, cutting materials and coloring, as appropriate to individual development.
- Assist students with daily living skills, such as dressing, eating, lavatory needs, grooming and personal hygiene as appropriate to individual development.
- Apply effective principles and procedures of crisis intervention to students with aggressive behavior or other social difficulties; provide physical restraint as specified.
- Reinforce rules of the school and learning environment; acknowledge and encourage appropriate behavior and distinguish inappropriate behavior for the students' understanding.

- Assist in the preparation of lesson plans, behavior modification plans, and teacher's preplanning sessions; provide input and assistance in the development of learning activities; prepare or assist in the preparation of instructional and vocational materials.
- Maintain accurate and complete records of student activities and behavior; complete applicable forms, schedules, and instructional reports, as required.
- Assist teachers in the supervision of learning activities, circulating within the classroom and providing assistance and learning support to students.
- May be assigned monitoring duties, i.e., hallways, lunchroom, restrooms and bus duty; ensures appropriate student conduct during these periods; escorts students to designated activity areas.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

The employee frequently is required to stand; walk; sit; use hands to finger, handle, or feel; reach with hands and arms; climb or balance; and stoop, kneel, or crouch. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and ability to adjust focus. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform.

The second county had a student population of 24, 658 students, 3% over the fiscal year of 2006. This county had a total of 33 schools, which consist of 20 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 6 high schools, and 1 evening school. As of the 2005-2006 Georgia Report Card, this county had a total of 103.97 administrators, 139.43 support

personnel and a total number of 1,592.25 certified personnel. The student/teacher ration was 15:1, teacher to support person ratio was 11:1, and teacher to administrator ratio was also 15:1 (Governor Office of Student Achievement, 2006). The school board was composed of four members. The county did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind Act. The average SAT score for the county was 1485 with 619 students being tested for the 2005-2006 school year. The average Verbal SAT score was 488, average Math SAT score being 495, and the Writing Section of the SAT was 476. In the school 2005-2006, 416 (38.4%) this county's senior students entered Georgia Public Colleges, while 80 of those students required Learning Support (Learning Support are those classes needed by entering college students for remediation in order to be successful in their college classes. Thirty- four (5%) of the graduating students entered Georgia Technical Colleges. In 2006, this county had 983 senior, 657 (66.8%) were eligible for the state's Hope Scholarship. For the 2005-2006 school year in this county 1135 students were retained throughout the grades k-12. This consisted of 95 (8.4%) students of African-American heritage, 592 (52.2%) Caucasian, 422 (37.2%) of Hispanic descent, 6 Asian Students, 3 American Indian, and 17 Multi-Racial students. Of this total of 1135, 714 (62.9%) were male students and 421 (37.1%) were female students. During the 2005-2006 school year, the number of students enrolled in Compensatory Programs include the following: Special Education (grades K-12) 2917, 12.7% of the student population, Pre-K 126 students, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)(Grades K-12) 2586, 10.8% of the student population, and Early Intervention Program (EIP) 1603 students, 13.6% of the student population. In this county, Special Education supports children 3 – 21 years of age who meet eligibility

guidelines in the following areas: Autism, Deaf/Blind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Emotional Behavioral Disorder, Intellectual Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impaired, Significantly Developmentally Delayed, Speech/Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment The funding for the special education paraprofessional is the same as the first county mentioned. Funds flow through the state to this local school district.

The following schools in the two counties participated in the study: two high schools, one middle school, and two elementary schools. Some schools were selected because of the researcher's working relationship with the administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals at these schools. The other schools were chosen because the superintendent of the school system granted the researcher access to the administrators of those schools and allowed her to ask permission of those administrators to do the survey. In addition, some teachers and paraprofessionals at two of the schools surveyed voiced concerns about the NCLB, paraprofessional mandates and their value, which in turn prompted the researcher's interest in this matter.

Population

The population for this study included administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals. Participating special education paraprofessionals (1) have earned at least an associate degree, (2) the required test for paraprofessional certification or (3) are currently pursuing standards needed to obtain certification as "highly qualified." Teachers selected for participation in this study had more than one year of service time, and worked with and supervised paraprofessionals

and selected administrators (principals and assistant principals) had more than one year of administrative service.

Participants/Sample

The following schools in a northern metro Georgia county were chosen to participate in the study: two high schools; two middle schools; and two elementary schools. These schools were selected because (a) they were part of the same K-12 system, and (b) employed paraprofessionals who are highly qualified and paraprofessionals who are working toward certification as mandated by the NCLB.

The participants for this study were composed of special education paraprofessionals, those who have earned at least an associate degree or passed the required test for certification and those who are currently going through the standards needed to obtain certification, special education teachers who have at least one year of service time working and supervising special education paraprofessionals, and administrators which either at the principal or assistant principal level in either elementary, middle, or high school.

All the participants were given general directions in the faculty meeting on how to complete the survey and will remain anonymous or were given surveys via the U.S. Postal Service.

Instrumentation

A survey was developed for this study. Items for the survey instrument were constructed by the researcher of this study based on a review of the literature. The survey used a 5 point Likert Scale to gather the data. It consisted of closed- ended questions. The Likert survey showed response counts and weighted average responses to statements. The

instrument also consisted of demographic questions including, school setting (elementary, middle, or high school), highest earned degree, years of experience, gender, and race/ethnicity. Administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals were asked to rate their views on each of the items using “5” as the highest rating meaning “Agree” and “1” as the lowest rating meaning “Disagree.”

Several steps were taken by the researcher to insure content validity. First, all instrument items were developed after a careful review of the literature in the areas of job duties and responsibilities of the paraprofessional. .Next, the survey was reviewed and edited by a panel of veteran administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals, those individuals who were be the most knowledgeable of the duties and responsibilities of paraprofessionals for accuracy and validity. Lastly, the instrument was field tested or pilot tested by a group of administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals selected by the researcher.

Data Collection

The researcher received approval to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University. The surveys were distributed during a scheduled after school meeting, which special education teachers who worked with special education paraprofessionals, as well as special education paraprofessionals attended. The administrators completed the survey during the meeting as well. The completed surveys were then deposited into a slotted drop-box held by the researcher for later review. Surveys were also sent via the US Postal System to participants in the other county with self-addressed envelopes. Data was collected during the 2006 - 2007 school years.

Response Rate

One hundred percent of those who attended the meeting were eligible to participant in the survey. One hundred percent of those in attendance completed the survey. A sign in sheet was kept for each meeting. A secondary meeting was held to try to obtain questionnaires from those individuals not in attendance at the first faculty meeting. In the second county, surveys were sent out via the Postal Service.

Data Analysis

The data analysis tool was the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 13.0 Statistical Analysis). The data obtained from the participants of the study was entered into the (SPSS) software tables. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the characteristics of the sample. A mean score for each of the two domains in the survey was calculated and a final analysis compared the means of each domain that principals, teachers, and paraprofessionals scored in regards to what paraprofessionals are doing, what they should be doing and whether NCLB has any impact on job performance of Georgia paraprofessionals. The researcher used a One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) “that determined the level of statistical significance of the observed difference between the samples” (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 2003, p. 137). The data was reported in narrative form as well as in tables and charts.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine (1) if administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals agree on what the special education paraprofessionals do in the classroom, (2) if administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education

paraprofessionals should be doing in the classroom, and (3) has the NCLB mandates impacted the roles and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals as perceived by administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals.

Participants who responded to the survey were administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals from two large urban counties located in the northern-metro area in the state of Georgia. The data collected from the surveys of administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals were analyzed for statistical analysis. The findings from the data analysis were discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, data were gathered from administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals to answer the following overarching question: To what degree does the actual work of the special education paraprofessionals in Georgia relate to the expectations of administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals, and has NCLB mandates impacted the duties and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals in the classroom.

The following three sub questions guided the study:

Research Questions

- 1 To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals do in the classroom?
- 2 To what degree do administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals should be doing in the classroom?
- 3 To what extent do administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals view the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified” mandates?

Research Design

The study was a descriptive, quantitative design that measured the difference in perceptions from school administrators, special education teachers, and special education

paraprofessionals as they relate to the roles and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessional. Data collection began in May of 2007 and concluded in June of 2007.

The instrument utilized for the research consisted of a formatted questionnaire to examine the perceptions of the participants. The first section of the survey provided demographic information on each participant such as age, education, and work experience. The next section of the survey was designated for completion solely by special education paraprofessionals. This section was used to collect information about paraprofessionals' work experience and the employment conditions of the special education paraprofessional at work. The researcher obtained data about the number of ESOL students special education paraprofessionals work with, the total number of students with disabilities who are assigned to special education paraprofessionals, and the number of hours in which the special education paraprofessional is the sole instructor and supervisor of students. The third section of the study collected information about all participants' attitudes that related to the number of times respondents felt certain tasks were performed by special education paraprofessionals and how many times they should be performed. These tasks were listed under the following categories: (1) Academic Instruction, (2) Functional Life Skills and Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites, (3) Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Work, and Monitoring Duties, and (4) Other Responsibilities. Each category listed one or more tasks for each group to respond to an answer to. Responses on the assessment were indicated numerically on a 5 Point Likert scale. The last segment of the survey asked all participants to express their opinions in regards to the "No Child Left Behind" Mandates as they relate to paraprofessionals.

A total of 85 surveys were sent out to school administrators, special education teachers, and special education teachers, seventy-six surveys were completed and returned. Only 9 mailed surveys failed to be returned. Some surveys were completed by individuals during scheduled meetings, while others were sent out through the U.S. Postal Service. All surveys distributed at meetings or sent through the mail for administrators were returned completed - a 100% return rate for administrators. Thirty-seven responses from special education teachers were either completed at meetings or sent via the postal service and then mailed back to the researcher, again a 100% return rate. Lastly, of thirty surveys sent out to special education paraprofessionals, only 21 surveys were completed in meetings or returned via the mail, which amounted to only a 70% return rate. The investigator sent postcards to administrators of the schools who had received the mailed surveys to remind all answerers to return all surveys. The overall, response rate was 89%. The characteristics of the population used in the survey are noted in the subsequent paragraphs.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was driven by the responses to the research questions. The survey data were analyzed using SPSS 13.0 for Windows to calculate descriptive statistics (e.g., mean and standard deviation). (Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups. The standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data.) The number 999 was inserted for missing values in the SPSS program. A One-Way ANOVA (One-Way Analysis of Variance, a statistical procedure), was used to compare the differences in responses between the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals for Table 1-9. Table 9 also

used a 5 Point Likert Scale that provided percentages as an indication of respondents' agreement, no opinion and disagreement.

Respondent Demographics

The 76 respondents included 18 (24%) principals, 37 (49%) high school, middle school, and elementary school teachers, and 21(27%) special education paraprofessionals from two northeastern Georgia counties.

Administrators

Of the 18 administrators who received surveys, all administrators completed the survey; their gender consisted of 9 (50%) females and 9 (50%) males. The racial make-up of administrators was as follows: 3 (17%) African – Americans and 15 (83%) Caucasians. Participating administrators were employed at the following types of schools: 4 (22%) administrators were employed in elementary schools, two as principals and two as assistant principals 11(61%) administrators were employed in high schools, two as principals and nine as assistant principals and 3 (17%) worked in middle schools; two administrators were middle school principals, and one administrator was a middle school assistant principal. The highest level of education for administrators was graduate school.

Special Education Teachers

The total number of special education teachers who completed the survey was 37; of this number 23 (62%) were females and 14 (38%) were males. The special education teachers included: 1 (3%) African-American, 1 (3%) Multi-Cultural individual and 35 (94%) Caucasians. Special education teachers were employed in the following institutions: 2 (5%) individuals worked in elementary schools, 30 (81%) individuals were

employed in high schools and 5 (14%) worked in middle schools. The level of education attained by the special education teacher ranged from 10 (27%) teachers who held BA/BS degrees, and 27 (73%) teachers with graduate degrees.

Special Education Paraprofessionals

Of the 21 special education paraprofessionals, 18 (86%) were females and 3 (14%) males. The racial composition of the special education paraprofessionals was as follows: 1 (5%) African-American and 20 (95%) Caucasians. Two (10%) special education paraprofessionals were assigned to elementary schools, while 19 (90%) special education paraprofessionals were employed in high school. None of the special education paraprofessional participants in the survey represented the middle school level. The level of education attained by the special education paraprofessional ranged from 4 (19%) with high school diplomas only, 7 (33%) individuals holding an AA/AS degree, 9 (43%) holding a BA/BS degree, and 1 (5%) individual with an advanced degree. Special education paraprofessionals responded to several questions about their jobs. The average number of students that special education paraprofessionals interact with each day totaled 11. Special education paraprofessional participants responded that on average, they worked with 2 ESOL students. They also stated on average they had 5.7 years experience in special education, and 6.2 years as a paraprofessional in general. Finally, paraprofessionals responded that they spent at least 3 hours per day as sole classroom supervisor and instructor.

Findings for Research Question 1

In response to the first research question: To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special

education paraprofessionals perform in the classroom? Four tables were created to display descriptive statistics for the following categories:

(1) “Academic Instruction,” (2) “Functional Life Skills” and “Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites,” (3) “Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Task, Monitoring Duties,” and (4) “Other Responsibilities.”

Academic Instruction

Table 1 illustrates the frequency ratings of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals as they perceive the daily number of tasks/duties completed by special education paraprofessionals each day. The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

Under the category of “Academic Instruction,” in contrast with the other two groups (special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals) polled, administrators had the higher frequency rating for 4 of the 8 tasks. The four tasks were the following: “Following Lesson Plans” ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 2.04$), “Administering Instruction” ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 2.43$), “Preparation of Learning Resources” ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 2.62$), and “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time” ($M = 1.25$, $SD = 1.25$). “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time” ($M = 1.25$, $SD = 1.25$), received the lowest ratings by administrators, but still ranked higher in comparison with the other two groups. In

addition, “Following Lesson Plans” was the task with the highest frequency rating by administrators in regards to any assignment listed for Research Question 1.

Under this same category, in contrast with the other two groups polled (administrators and special education teachers), special education paraprofessionals rated 3 of the 8 tasks with the higher frequency rating. The three tasks were the following: “Assisting With Student Discipline” (M = 4.60, SD 2.32), “Performing A Task In this Category Not Mentioned” (M = 4.04, SD 2.21) and “Carrying Out Functional Assessment” (M = 3.67, SD = 2.60). Under the task "Performing A Task Not Mentioned," special education paraprofessionals listed other duties that they were asked to perform and complete during the course of their day. These tasks included: administering instruction at job work sites, grading students’ papers, watching other teachers’ classes, teaching toileting procedures to students, sewing classes and teaching computer technology to students. Also included were paraprofessionals conducting follow-up conversations on the teacher’s behalf with parents regarding student progress.

“Assisting with Student Discipline” received the highest overall frequency ratings by special education teachers under “Academic Instruction.” However, when comparing the frequency rating with the other two groups polled, “Assisting General Education Teachers with Inclusion” (M=3.24, SD= 2.49) was the task rated higher by the special education teachers. When comparing the lower ratings with the other 2 groups, special education teachers assessed “Following Lesson Plans” (M=3.99, SD=2.55), “Administering Instruction” (M=3.19, SD=2.59), “Carrying Out Functional Assessment” (M=2.35, SD=2.15) and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned” (M=2.00, SD=2.51) on a lower occurrence continuum. Notably, this was over half the items listed in this category.

Overall, examining the responses listed for all items in Table 1, no survey items were statistically significant at the .01 level ($p < .01$). The differences were not large enough to conclude that administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals view these issues differently. Their responses reflect agreement on their duties performed by the paraprofessional. Administrators and special education paraprofessionals are more in agreement with task frequency on the following duties: “Following Lesson Plans,” and “Carrying Out Functional Assessments.”

Table 1
“Academic Instruction”
Number of Times Duties/Tasks Are Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u>			<u>T</u>			<u>P</u>		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Administering Instruction	4.42	2.43	18	3.19	2.59	36	3.83	2.12	21
Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time	1.25	1.25	18	1.05	1.36	37	0.79	1.43	21
Preparation of Learning Resources	4.31	2.62	18	3.54	2.24	37	3.10	2.16	21
Following Lesson Plans	4.95	2.04	18	3.99	2.55	36	4.63	2.24	20
Assisting Gen. Ed. Teachers w/ Inclusion	2.56	2.12	18	3.24	2.49	37	1.88	2.49	20
Carrying Out Functional Assessment	3.33	2.27	18	2.35	2.15	37	3.67	2.60	21
Assisting with Student Discipline	3.17	2.73	18	4.00	2.67	37	4.60	2.32	21
Performing ATask Not Mentioned	2.50	1.15	4	2.00	2.51	14	4.04	2.21	11

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD,

3.5 = 3 -4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD

Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data.

n = number of scores or people with scores

$p < .01$

Functional Life Skills and Vocational Skills

Table 2 illustrates the frequency ratings of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals as they perceive the daily number of tasks/duties completed by special education paraprofessionals each day. The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

When comparing the three groups surveyed, administrators had a higher frequency score for all four tasks listed under the categories of “Functional Life Skills” and “Vocational Skills At Community Based Skills.” Under the category of “Functional Life Skills” the administrators gave the following frequency rating: “Providing Personal Care” (M = 4.88, SD = 2.44) and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned I” (M = 3.50, SD = 2.31). In regards to “Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites,” administrators gave the following rate of occurrence for the following tasks: “Performing A Task Not Mentioned II” (M = 3.50, SD = 3.46) and “Accompanying Students to Outside Organizations and Businesses For On-The-Job Training” (M = 2.84, SD = 2.28); “Providing Personal Care” received the second highest frequency rating by administrators when compared to all other tasks listed under Research Question 1.

Special education teachers differed from the other two groups and gave three of the four tasks the lower frequency ratings (See Table 2). These responsibilities included

“Performing A Task Not Mentioned I” ($M = 1.07$, $SD = 2.83$), “Accompanying Students to Outside Organizations for On-The-Job Training” ($M = 1.97$, $SD 1.75$), and “Performing Task Not Mentioned II” ($M = 1.97$, $SD 1.75$)

In addition to rating the aforementioned tasks, special education paraprofessionals stated they completed additional duties not mentioned in the survey such as: feeding students with disabilities through tubes, treating rashes and sores, and participating in overnight trips and day field trips with the students (e.g., Special Olympics).

No survey items under the category of “Functional Life Skills and Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites” were statistically significant at the .01 level ($p < .01$). As in Table 1, the differences were not large enough to conclude that administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals view the issues differently. Therefore, no significant differences of opinions exist in the three groups polled.

After reviewing the data under “Vocational Skills At Community Based Sites,” data revealed that special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals were in close agreement on the number of times tasks were completed for the following duties: “On-The-Job Training for Students” and “Performing a Task Not Mentioned II.”

Table 2
“Functional Life Skills” and “Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites”
Number of Times Duties/Tasks Are Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u>			<u>T</u>			<u>P</u>		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Providing Personal Care	4.88	2.44	12	3.50	2.67	36	2.79	2.78	21
Performing Task Not Mentioned "I"	3.50	2.31	4	1.07	2.83	7	2.83	1.15	3
On-The-Job Training for Students	2.84	2.28	16	1.97	1.75	35	2.05	2.34	21
Performing Task Not Mentioned "II"	3.50	3.46	3	1.97	1.75	9	2.04	2.33	8

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals
 Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD,
 3.5 = 3 -4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD
 Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.
 Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data.
 n = number of scores or people with scores
 p<.01

Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties

Table 3 presents the frequency ratings of the three groups as they perceived the number of completed tasks/duties performed and completed by special education paraprofessionals each day under the areas of “Collecting and Managing Data,” “Clerical Tasks” and “Monitoring Duties.” The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

Worthy of mention is the first task, “Maintaining Learner’s Records” (M = 3.69, SD = 2.83), which received the highest frequency rating from administrators than any

other task in this category. Administrators also perceived this job to be completed more times than the other two groups surveyed, special education paraprofessionals ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 2.44$) and special education teachers ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.95$). In addition, administrators responded higher than the other two groups to the following tasks: “Duplicating Learning Materials” ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 2.83$), “Displaying Data, Charts and Records On Bulletin Boards” ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 2.40$), “Performing a Task Not Mentioned II” ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.78$) and “Bus Duties” ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.58$). Administrators assessed 5 of 8 duties in this category with higher frequency ratings when compared to the other two groups who participated in the survey.

Special education paraprofessionals rated 3 of 8 tasks with a higher frequency rating. Under the category of “Collection and Managing Data, Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties,” special education paraprofessionals, in relationship to the other two groups, gave higher completion rates to the following tasks: “Performing a Task Not Mentioned I” ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 3.32$), “Lunch Duty Responsibilities” ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 2.27$) and “Collecting Monies, Fees” ($M = 1.36$, $SD = 1.75$). Special education paraprofessionals also listed additional responsibilities that they perform. These duties included monitoring car riders, after school hall duty, unloading students in wheelchairs before and after school, and changing the classroom display board twice a week. Interestingly, special education teachers were again the group that had the lower frequency ratings when comparing all three groups with particular tasks. Data revealed that of the tasks listed under this category, special education teachers rated 5 of the 8 with lower scores: “Maintaining Learner’s Records” ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.95$), “Duplicating Learning Materials” ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.97$), “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs,

Pictures, Decorating Of Bulletin Boards” ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.78$), and “Performing a Task Not Mentioned I” ($M = .50$, $SD = .75$).

No survey items listed under the heading of “Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties” were statistically relevant at the .01 level.

Special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals are more in agreement with task frequency on the following duties: “Maintaining Learner’s Records” and “Duplicating Learning Materials.” Administrators and special education teachers are more in agreement with task frequency on the following duties: “Collecting Monies and Fees,” and “Lunch Duty Responsibilities.”

Table 3
“Collecting, Managing, Data Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties”
Number of Times Duties/Tasks Are Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u>			<u>T</u>			<u>P</u>		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Maintaining Learner Records	3.69	2.83	18	2.21	1.95	37	2.50	2.44	20
Duplicating Learning Materials	3.44	2.83	17	2.41	1.97	34	2.50	2.44	20
Displaying Data, ...Bulletin Boards	3.02	2.40	17	1.86	1.78	33	2.52	2.14	19
Collecting Monies, Fees	0.70	1.36	18	0.97	1.42	34	1.36	1.75	21
Performing Task Not Mentioned "I"	2.17	1.15	3	0.50	0.75	9	2.62	3.32	4
Bus Duties	2.03	1.58	17	1.54	1.56	36	1.95	2.31	20
Lunch Duty Responsibilities	1.35	1.72	17	1.37	1.29	35	2.02	2.27	21
Performing Task Not Mentioned "II"	2.70	1.78	5	0.50	0.75	7	2.00	2.79	6

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD, 3.5 = 3 - 4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals, Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data.

n = number of scores or people with scores

p<.01

Other Responsibilities

Table 4 displays the results from those tasks regarding the number of times tasks related to “Other Responsibilities” were actually completed each day by special education paraprofessionals. The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a total of 76

individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

“Providing Library Assistance” received a higher frequency ranking from administrators ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 1.87$) in contrast to the other two groups of special education paraprofessionals and special education teachers ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 2.48$, $M = 1.11$, $SD = 1.30$), respectively. Administrator response was also higher for “Performing Housekeeping Duties” ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 2.19$), “Operating Audiovisual Equipment” ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.66$), “Providing Physical or Occupational Therapy” ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 2.09$), “Translating for Students” ($M = 1.30$, $SD = 2.06$) and “Translating for Students, Families/Teachers” ($M = .95$, $SD = 1.63$) than the other two groups.

Special education teachers gave lower frequency rating in 8 of 11 tasks that special education paraprofessionals performed and completed than the other two groups of respondents. Those tasks included “Providing Library Assistance” ($M = 1.11$, $SD = 1.30$), “Providing Physical or Occupational Therapy” ($M = .98$, $SD = 1.41$), “Operating Audiovisual Equipment” ($M = 1.32$, $SD = 1.50$), “Performing Housekeeping Duties” ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 2.30$), “Translating for Students, Families and Other Teachers,” ($M = 0.43$, $SD = 0.82$), “Attending IEP Meetings” ($M = 0.42$, $SD = 0.68$), “Calling a Parent” ($M = 0.74$, $SD = 0.99$), and “Performing a Task Not Mentioned II” ($M = 0.00$, $SD = 0.00$).

Special education paraprofessionals responded with higher occurrence ratings in contrast to the other two participating groups for the following tasks: “Transitioning Students from School to Work” ($M = 1.61$, $SD = 2.28$), “Attending IEP Meeting” ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 2.41$), “Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families in Homes” ($M = 1.3$, $SD = 2.32$), “Calling A Parent In Regards to A Student” ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 2.81$), and

“Performing A Task Not Mentioned” ($M=2.25$, $SD = 3.56$). Special education paraprofessionals included the following duties which were not listed on the survey as part of the job responsibilities: participating in community activities and translating from Braille to script.

No survey items listed under the heading of “Other Responsibilities” were statistically significant at the .01 level ($p<.01$).

All three groups to some extent agreed on the number of times special education paraprofessionals performed “General Housekeeping Duties.” Special education teachers gave a “0” response to “Performing a Task Not Mentioned,” a first throughout the survey.

Table 4
“Other Responsibilities”
Number of Times Duties/Tasks Are Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u>			<u>T</u>			<u>P</u>		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Providing Library Assistance	2.06	1.87	18	1.11	1.30	36	1.55	2.48	19
Physical/Occupational Therapy	2.20	2.09	18	0.98	1.41	36	1.21	2.02	21
Translating [Sign Language]	1.30	2.06	18	0.90	1.75	36	0.53	1.71	20
Operating Audiovisual Equipment	2.42	1.66	18	1.32	1.50	37	1.63	2.29	20
Transitioning Students (School to Work)	1.06	2.11	18	1.14	1.58	36	1.61	2.28	19
Performing Housekeeping Duties	2.89	2.19	18	2.40	2.30	37	2.64	2.30	21
Translating Students/Families/Teachers	0.95	1.63	18	0.43	0.82	36	0.73	2.03	20
Attending IEP Meetings	0.92	1.50	16	0.42	0.68	36	1.57	2.41	21
Carrying Out Learning Activities	0.81	1.19	18	0.93	1.47	36	1.30	2.32	20
Calling a Parent In Regards to a Student	1.28	2.45	18	0.74	0.99	36	1.48	2.81	21
Performing Task Not Mentioned "I"	2.12	1.70	4	0.00	0.00	7	2.25	3.56	4

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD, 3.5 = 3-4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals, Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data.

n = number of scores or people with scores

p<.01

Summary for Research Question 1

Administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals responded to 31 tasks listed in four tables under Research Question 1, “To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals do in the classroom?” When tallying responses supplied by the three groups of participants to Research Question 1, the sums indicate the following: administrators responded with higher frequency levels for 19 of 31 items when compared

with the other two groups of respondents (special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals). Special education paraprofessionals responded to the survey by answering 11 of the 31 survey tasks with a higher frequency rating, while special education teachers rated only 1 of the 31 assignments with a higher rate of occurrence. Special education teachers rated a majority of the tasks with the lower occurrence of completion rating for 21 of the 31 items.

The tasks receiving the higher frequency by administrators were the following:

(1) “Administering Instruction,” (2) “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” (3) “Preparation of Learning Resources,” (4) “Following, Lesson Plans,” (5) “Providing Personal Care,” (6 & 7) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned ‘I’ and ‘II’ (Under Functional Life Skills and Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites), (8) “Accompanying Students To Outside Organizations and Businesses for On-The-Job Training,” (9) “Maintaining Learner Records,” (10) “Duplicating Learning Materials,” (11) “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs, Pictures, Bulletin Boards,” (12) “Bus Duties,” (13) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned II” (Under Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties), (14) “Providing Library Assistance,” (15) “Physical/Occupational Therapy” , (16) “Translating” (Sign Language), (17) “Operating Audiovisual Equipment,” (18) “Performing General Housekeeping Duties,” and (19) “Translating for Students/Families/ Teachers.”

Special education teachers rated “Assisting General Education Teacher with Inclusion” ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 2.49$) as the task with the higher completion occurrence per day by the special education paraprofessional when compared to the other two groups of participants.

Special education paraprofessionals rated the following tasks with the higher occurrences: (1) “Carrying Out Functional Assessments,” (2) “Assisting With Student Discipline,” (3) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned “(Under Academic Instruction), (4) “Collecting Monies, Fees,” (5) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned “I” (Under Collecting, Managing Data, Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties), (6) “Lunch Duties Responsibilities,” (7) “Transitioning Students From School to Work,” (8) “Attending IEP Meetings,” (9) “Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families in Homes, Worksites, and Communities,” (10) “Calling A Parent ,” and (11) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned” (Under Other Responsibilities).

Administrators and special education paraprofessionals are more in agreement with task frequency on the following duties: “Following Lesson Plans” and “Carrying Out Functional Assessments.”

Special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals were in close agreement on the number of times tasks were completed for the following duties: On-The-Job Training for Students, “Performing a Task Not Mentioned II,” “Maintaining Learner Records” and “Duplicating Learning Materials.”

Administrators and special education teachers are more in agreement with task frequency on the following duties: “Collecting Monies and Fees,” and “Lunch Duty Responsibilities.”

All three groups to some extent agreed on the number of times special education paraprofessionals performed “General Housekeeping Duties.” Special education teachers gave a “0” response to “Performing a Task Not Mentioned,” a first throughout the survey.

Findings for Research Question 2

In response to the second research question, which was “To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals should do in the classroom,” four tables were created to display descriptive statistics for the categories of (1) Academic Instruction, (2) Functional Life Skills, Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites, (3) Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Task, Monitoring Duties, and (4) Other Responsibilities.

Table 5 through 8 reflects the ratings of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals.

Academic Instruction

Table 5 illustrates the frequency ratings of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals as they perceive the daily number of tasks/duties that should be completed by special education paraprofessionals each day. The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

In Table 5, administrators rated “Administering Instruction” ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 2.75$), “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time” ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 1.92$), “Preparation of Learning Resources” ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 2, 18$), “Following Lesson Plans” ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 2.33$) and “Carrying Out Functional Assessment” ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 2.52$) with higher

frequency ratings than the other two groups of respondents. It is interesting to note that the first four tasks listed in the above grouping were also assessed with higher rates of frequency by administrators in Table 1. Special education teachers rated “Assisting with Student Discipline” ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 2.55$) with higher frequency rates than the other two groups in Table 5. They rated “Assisting General Education Teachers with Inclusion” ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 2.58$) higher in comparison to the other respondents, just as in Table 1. Special education paraprofessionals rated “Performing A Task Not Mentioned” higher than the other two groups just as they had done in Table 1.

It is also worth noting that responses for the following tasks listed under Table 1 had the same order of group ranking under Table 5. These tasks were the following: “Administering Instruction” “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” “Preparation Of Learning Resources,” “Following Lesson Plans,” “Assisting General Education Teachers With Inclusion,” and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned I.” For example, in contrast with the other two groups, when reviewing “Administering Instruction” and “Following Lesson Plans,” in both Table 1 and Table 5, administrators’ perceptions of task completion was the highest of the three groups of participants, followed by special education paraprofessionals, and the lowest frequency rating held by special education teachers. When reviewing “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” and “Preparation of Learning Resources,” the order of ranking for Table 1 and Table 5 was the following: administrators had the highest frequency rating, followed by special education teachers, and lastly by special education paraprofessionals. Special education paraprofessionals gave the higher rating to the task of “Performing A Task Not Mentioned I” Special education teachers scored the highest frequency ratings for “Assisting General Education

Teachers with Inclusion,” followed by administrators, and finally special education paraprofessionals having the lowest rating in both Table 1 and Table 5.

Administrator responses for “Administering Instruction,” “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” “Preparation of Learning Resources,” “Assisting General Education Teachers With Inclusion,” and “Carrying Out Functional Assessment” in Table 5 compared to Table 1 imply that administrators believe these areas of task completion are underperformed by the special education paraprofessionals. Administrators’ frequency ratings for “Following Lesson Plans,” “Assisting With Student Discipline,” and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned” in Table 5 as compared to Table 1 imply that administrators feel these tasks of completion are being executed too often. Furthermore, in comparison to Table 1, special education teachers believe “Administering Instruction,” “Assisting With Student Discipline” and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned” were being performed more times than necessary by special education paraprofessionals. Special education paraprofessionals themselves stated in their response that under “Academic Instruction” tasks such as “Administering Instructions,” “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” “Following Lesson Plans,” “Assisting With Student Discipline,” and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned” are duties actually over-performed.

Overall, administrators rated 5 of the 8 items with the higher frequency ratings in contrast to the other two groups. Special education teachers rated 2 of 8 tasks with the higher values when compared to the administrators and special education paraprofessionals. Special education paraprofessionals only rated 1 of 8 tasks with the higher occurrence rating. Special education teachers rated 4 of 8 tasks with the lowest occurrence ratings under the category of “Academic Instruction.”

No survey items listed under “Academic Instructions” were statistically significant at the .01 level ($p < .01$).

Table 5
“Academic Instruction”
Number of Times That Tasks Should Be Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u>			<u>T</u>			<u>P</u>		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Administering Instruction	4.56	2.75	18	3.18	2.57	34	3.38	2.20	20
Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time	1.71	1.92	17	1.68	2.00	36	0.45	0.71	20
Preparation of Learning Resources	4.72	2.18	18	3.74	1.93	36	3.10	2.20	21
Following Lesson Plans	4.75	2.33	18	4.23	2.49	36	4.50	2.38	20
Assisting Teachers w Inclusion	3.67	2.61	18	4.24	2.58	36	2.50	2.70	18
Carrying Out Functional Assessment	4.00	2.52	18	3.30	2.30	35	3.74	2.35	19
Assisting with Student Discipline	2.56	2.53	17	3.99	2.55	36	3.68	2.51	20
Performing Task Not Mentioned “I”	1.63	1.43	4	1.55	2.08	11	1.89	1.91	9

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD, 3.5 = 3-4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals, Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data

n = number of scores or people with scores

$p < .01$

Functional Life Skills and Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites

Table 6 illustrates the frequency ratings of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals as they perceive the daily number of tasks/duties that should be completed by special education paraprofessionals each day. The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

Administrators rated 2 of the 4 tasks listed under this category with the higher frequency responses in contrast to the other two groups of participants. The tasks were as follows: “Performing a Task Not Mentioned I” (M = 3.62, SD = 3.47) and “Performing a Task Not Mentioned II” (M = 3.00, SD = 3.97). Special education teachers provided answers that rated “Providing Personal Care” (M = 4.02, SD = 2.25), “Accompanying Students to Outside Organizations and Businesses For On-The-Job Training” (M = 2.51, SD = 1.67) with the higher frequency rates between the three groups.

In comparison to Table 2, administrators and special education paraprofessionals stated that “Providing Personal Care” is performed more times than necessary, while special education teachers believed that this duty was not performed enough. When examining the task “Performing A Task Not Mentioned I,” administrators and special education teachers reported higher frequencies however; they named no additional or particular tasks under this category. In their responses on the survey, special education

paraprofessionals listed other jobs that they perform under this category. Those tasks included monitoring car riders, after school hall duty, unloading students in wheelchairs before and after school, and changing the classroom display board twice a week. Special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals stated when comparing Table 6 to Table 2, that special education paraprofessional should be "Accompanying Students to Outside Organizations for On-The- Job" training more times than they already do. All groups agreed and said "Performing A Task Not Mentioned II" should be decreased.

No survey items listed under this category were statistically significant at the .01 level ($p < .01$). Item 1 reveals the lowest p value among the three groups; however, the differences were not substantial enough to conclude that administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals view these issues differently.

Table 6
"Functional Life Skills" and "Vocational Skills At Community Based Sites"
Number of Times That Tasks Should Be Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u> M	SD	N	<u>T</u> M	SD	n	<u>P</u> M	SD	n
Providing Personal Care	3.91	2.37	17	4.02	2.25	34	2.53	2.23	18
Performing Task Not Mentioned "I"	3.62	3.47	4	1.50	3.35	5	2.83	1.15	3
Students On-The-Job Training	2.25	2.00	16	2.51	1.67	33	2.10	2.22	20
Performing Task Not Mentioned "II"	3.00	3.97	3	0.71	1.34	7	1.57	1.02	7

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD, 3.5 = 3-4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals, Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data.

n = number of scores or people with scores

$p < .01$

Collecting and Managing Data, and Clerical Tasks” and “Monitoring Duties”

Table 7 illustrates the frequency ratings of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals as they perceive the daily number of tasks/duties that should be completed by special education paraprofessionals each day in the area of “Collecting, Managing Data and Clerical Tasks” and “Monitoring Duties.” The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

Administrators responded with higher scores than the other two groups of participants (special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals) to “Assisting Teachers with Maintaining Learner’s Records” ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 3.07$), and “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs, Pictures, Decorating Of Bulletin Boards” ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.77$). Special education teachers responded higher when compared to the other two groups surveyed to “Duplicating Learning Materials” ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 2.15$), and special education paraprofessionals responded highest to “Collecting Monies, Fees” ($M = 1.02$, $SD = 1.12$), “Bus Duties” ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.85$), “Performing a Task Not Mentioned in This Category I and II” ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 2.60$) and “Lunch Duty Responsibilities” ($M = 1.74$, $SD = 1.90$). Administrators noted under this category the following tasks: “Assisting Teachers with Maintaining Learner Records,” “Duplicating Learning Materials,” “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs, Pictures, Decorating

Of Bulletin Boards,” “Collecting Monies, Fees,” and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned I” should be performed less often than what is actually being done. In contrast, special education teachers believed only four tasks, “Collecting Monies, Fees,” “Performing A Task Not Mentioned I & II,” and “Lunch Duty Responsibilities” should be performed less by special education paraprofessionals (when comparing Table 3 to Table 7). Finally, special education paraprofessionals, by their responses, believe that “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs, Pictures, Decorating Of Bulletin Boards,” “Collecting Monies, Fees,” and “Performing A Task Not Mentioned In this Category 1” should be performed less (when comparing Table 3 to Table 7).

When assessing the three groups polled, administrators assigned higher scores to 2 of 8 tasks, while special education paraprofessionals rated 5 of 8 tasks higher in regards to occurrence rating, and special education teachers rated only 1 of 8 items higher than the other two groups.

No survey items listed under the categories of “Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Tasks” and “Monitoring Duties” were statistically significant at the .01 level.

According to Table 7, data reveals that all three groups are in agreement with the number of times special education paraprofessionals performed the following tasks: “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs, Pictures, Decorating of Bulletin Boards” and “Lunch Duty Responsibilities.”

Table 7
“Collecting, Managing Data, Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties”
Number of Times That Tasks Should Be Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u>			<u>T</u>			<u>P</u>		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Maintaining Records	3.31	3.07	18	2.66	2.43	35	2.74	2.42	19
Duplicating Learning Materials	2.84	2.28	16	3.09	2.15	32	2.65	1.81	20
Displaying Data, .. Boards	2.75	1.77	16	2.22	1.80	32	2.37	1.49	19
Collecting Monies, Fees	0.50	0.73	18	0.81	1.22	32	1.02	1.12	20
Perform Task Not Mention "I"	1.00	0.87	3	0.21	0.57	7	1.75	2.60	4
Bus Duties	1.78	1.26	18	1.51	1.30	34	2.17	1.85	20
Lunch Duty Responsibilities	1.14	1.32	18	1.30	1.17	33	1.74	1.90	20
Perform Task Not Mention II"	1.83	0.82	6	0.00	0.00	6	2.71	2.71	21

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD, 3.5 = 3-4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals, Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data

n = number of scores or people with scores

p<.01

Other Responsibilities

Table 8 illustrates the frequency ratings of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals as they perceive the number of occurrences of tasks completed by special education paraprofessionals each day in regards to “Other Responsibilities.” The following measurement scale represented the number of times participants believed special education paraprofessional performed and completed certain tasks: 0 = 0 times per day, 1.5 = 1-2 times per day, 3.5 = 3-4 times per day, 5.5 = 5-6 times per day, and 7.5 = 7 or more times per day. Moreover, although a

total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

Administrators responded with higher occurrence rating among the three groups for the following tasks: “Providing Library Assistance” (M = 1.85, SD = 1.39), “Providing Physical or Occupational Therapy” (M = 1.56, SD = 1.56) , “Operating Audiovisual Equipment” (M = 2.39, SD = 1.92) , “Attending IEP Meetings” (M = 1.32, SD.= 2.09, and “Calling A Parent In Regards To A Student” (M = 1.11, SD = 2.39).

Special education teachers responded with higher occurrence rates for “Translating for Students (Sign Language)” (M = 1.78, SD = 2.30) and “Performing General Housekeeping Duties” (M = 2.54, SD = 1.98), while special education paraprofessionals responded with the top rankings among the three groups to “Transitioning Students from School To Work” (M = 1.41, SD = 1.77), “Translating for Students, Families, and Other Teachers” (M = 0 .91, SD = 2.0), “”Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families in Homes, Worksites, and Communities.” (M = 1.25, SD = 1.95) and “Performing A Task in This Category Not Mentioned” (M =3.00, SD = 3.97). When comparing Table 8 To Table 4, administrators noted in their responses that “Providing Library Assistance,” “Providing Physical or Occupational Therapy,” “Translating for Students (Sign Language),” “Operating Audiovisual Equipment,” “”Performing General Housekeeping Duties” and “Translating for Students, Families, and Other Teachers” should be performed less by the special education paraprofessional. Special education teachers noted in their responses that special education paraprofessionals do not perform the following duties enough: “Providing Library Assistance,” “Translating for Students (Sign Language),” “Operating Audiovisual Equipment,” “Transitioning Students from

School to Work,” “Performing General Housekeeping Duties,” “Translating for Students, Families, and Other Teachers,” “Attending IEP Meetings” and “Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families, Homes, Worksites, and Communities.” Special education paraprofessionals believed that they should be doing the following duties less than what they are actually do, “Providing Library Assistance,” “Transitioning Students from School to Work,” “Performing General Housekeeping Duties,” “Attending IEP Meetings,” “Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families in Homes, Worksites, and Communities,” and “Calling A Parent In Regards to a Student.”

No survey items listed under the categories of “Other Responsibilities” were statistically significant at the .01 level ($p < .01$).

Data revealed that all three groups were in agreement with the following tasks performed by special education paraprofessionals: “Providing Library Assistance,” Physical/Occupational Therapy,” “Transitioning (School to Work), and “General Housekeeping Duties,”

Table 8
“Other Responsibilities”
Number of Times That Tasks Should Be Completed Each Day
By Special Education Paraprofessionals

	<u>A</u>			<u>T</u>			<u>P</u>		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Providing Library Assistance	1.85	1.39	17	1.41	1.18	34	1.26	1.89	17
Physical/Occupational Therapy	1.56	1.56	18	1.10	1.49	34	1.24	1.90	19
Translating [Sign Language]	1.28	1.83	18	1.78	2.30	34	0.71	1.55	17
Operating Audio. Equipment	2.39	1.92	17	1.62	1.43	33	1.88	2.07	17
Transitioning (School to Work)	1.12	2.04	17	1.33	1.58	33	1.41	1.77	16
General Housekeeping Duties	2.44	2.01	18	2.54	1.98	35	2.34	1.99	19
Translating Students/Families	0.68	1.21	17	0.76	1.47	34	0.91	2.00	17
Attending IEP Meetings	1.32	2.09	17	0.96	0.98	34	1.17	1.75	18
Carrying Out Learning Activities	0.82	1.01	17	1.21	1.68	34	1.25	1.95	16
Calling a Parent	1.11	2.39	18	0.67	1.10	35	1.02	2.15	19
Performing Task Not Mentioned	2.16	1.15	3	0	0	2	3	3.97	6

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 0 = 0 Times Per Day (TPD), 1.5 = 1 -2 TPD, 3.5 = 3-4 TPD, 5.5 = 5-6 TPD, and 7.5 = 7+ TPD

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals, Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data

n = number of scores or people with scores

p<.01

Summary of Research Question 2

Administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals responded to 31 tasks listed in four tables under Research Question 2, “To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals should do in the

classroom?” When comparing the replies of all three groups, the tables indicate the following: administrators responded with the higher frequency rating levels for 14 of 31 items. Special education paraprofessionals responded to the survey by answering 10 of the 31 survey tasks with higher frequency rates, while special education teachers only rated 7 of the 31 assignments with higher frequency rates. Special education teachers rated a majority of the tasks with the lower frequency rating, 16 of the 31 tasks, while administrators and special education paraprofessionals each rated 4 of the tasks with the lower rates: the two groups tied in their lowest mean rating on one statement.

Administrators rated 14 of 31 tasks higher than the other 2 groups of participants. These tasks included: (1) “Administering Instruction,” (2) “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” (3) “Preparation of Learning Resources,” (4) “Following Lesson Plans,” (5) “Carrying Out Functional Assessment,” (6 & 7) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned In This Category I” and II” (Under Functional Life Skills at Community Based Sites), (8) “Assisting Teachers With Maintaining Learner’s Record,” (9) “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs, Pictures, Decorating of Bulletin Boards,” (10) “Providing Library Assistance,” (11) “Providing Physical or Occupational Therapy,” (12) “Operating Audiovisual Equipment,” (13) “Attending IEP Meetings,” and (14) “Calling A Parent In Regards to A Student.”

When reviewing special education teachers’ responses, one can note that under Research Question 1, this group rated only one of the tasks higher than the other two groups. This was “Assisting General Education Teachers With Inclusion,” while under question number 2, special education teachers rated the following tasks higher than the other two groups, (1) “Assisting General Education Teachers With Inclusion,” (2)

“Assisting With Student Discipline,” (3) “Providing Personal Care,” (4) “Accompanying Students To Outside Organizations And Businesses For On-The-Job Training,” (5) “Duplicating Learning Materials” , (6) “Translating for Students (Sign Language),” and (7)“Performing General Housekeeping Duties.”

Special education paraprofessionals replied with higher frequency ratings to these tasks: (1) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned” (Under Academic Instruction), (2) “Collecting Monies, Fees,” (3 & 4) “Performing a Task Not Mentioned I” and “II”(Under Collecting, Managing Data, Clerical Tasks and Monitoring Duties), (5) “Bus Duties,” (6) “Lunch Duty Responsibilities,” (7) “Transitioning Students from School To Work,” (8) “Translating for Students, Families and Other Teachers,” (9) “Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families in Homes, Worksites, and Communities,” and lastly (10) “Performing A Task Not Been Mentioned” (Under Other Responsibilities).

Findings for Research Question 3

In response to Research Question 3, “To what extent do administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals view the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified mandates?” the researcher asked all respondents to answer 14 tasks relating to the relevance of the mandates to the special education paraprofessionals. The scale used to measure the degree to which the NCLB mandates were important to the participants was set as follows: 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = No Opinion, 4 = Agree, and 5 + Strongly Agree. Moreover, although a total of 76 individuals took part in the survey, some participants chose not answer certain questions as evidenced by the totals listed on the tables.

Table 9 reflects the findings gathered from the participants regarding their perceptions on the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified” mandates for paraprofessionals. When given the statement “the NCLB paraprofessional mandates are necessary to increase student achievement,” mean ratings for the three groups ranged from 3.29 to 2.81 (See Table 9). Special education paraprofessionals ($M = 3.29$) and administrators ($M = 3.00$), both registered “No Opinion,” while special education teachers response ($M = 2.81$) noted “Disagreement” to the statement. When responding to the statement “NCLB paraprofessional mandates will deter individuals from entering paraprofessional careers,” all three groups had “No Opinion”: administrators ($M = 3.67$), special education teachers ($M = 3.57$), and special education paraprofessionals ($M = 3.15$). Data revealed that administrators ($M = 3.17$) and special education paraprofessionals ($M = 3.05$) responded with “No Opinion” to the statement “with the enactment of the NCLB mandates special education paraprofessionals will advance their careers and ultimately will become teachers” under the NCLB mandates, while special education teachers ($M = 2.95$) voiced “Disagreement.” . Special education teachers ($M = 3.03$) and special education paraprofessionals ($M = 3.19$) had “No Opinions” to the statement that “Your County has been helpful with providing information about the NCLB paraprofessional mandates and certification requirements,” while administrators ($M = 4.11$) “Agreed” that the County has been helpful in providing needed information to those groups of individuals. A Tukey post hoc test was used to determine which group’s mean rating was significantly different from the other groups. In this statement, administrators agreed and were statistically significant ($p < .01$) from teachers and special education paraprofessionals. In addition, the Tukey provided information showing that

teachers did not differ from special education paraprofessionals. All groups responded with “Disagreement” when asked if they believed that “the NCLB paraprofessional mandates helps to improve teacher/para relationships” (special education paraprofessionals (M = 2.86) administrators (M = 2.78), special education teachers (M = 2.45). Data revealed the following responses for the statement “the NCLB encourages inclusion of special education students in regular education classes,” administrators (M = 4.22) agreed, while both special education teachers (M = 3.37) and special education paraprofessionals (M = 3.20) had “No Opinion” in regards to this statement. Again, a Tukey post hoc test was used to determine which group’s mean rating was significantly different from the other groups. Administrators agreed as a group and were statistically significant ($p < .01$) from special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals. In addition, the Tukey provided information showing that teachers did not differ from special education paraprofessionals. All groups reported “No Opinion” when asked if they believed that “NCLB had created rigorous curriculum standards for the school systems (special education paraprofessionals (M = 3.50), administrators (M = 3.44) and special education teachers (M = 3.27). When responding to the statement “One of the consequences of NCLB is that spontaneity and/or creativity in the classroom has been lessened,” special education paraprofessional (M = 3.90) and special education teachers (M = 3.67) had “No Opinion” to the statement, while administrators responded “Disagreement” (2.94). Special education paraprofessionals (M = 2.95) and special education teachers (M = 2.64) answered with “Disagreement” while administrators (M = 3.11) had “No Opinion” to whether “the NCLB paraprofessional mandates are helpful in preparing paraprofessionals in performing their academic duties. All groups

“Disagreed,” (administrators (M = 2.77), special education paraprofessionals (M = 2.52), and special education teachers (M = 2.45)) when asked if “the NCLB paraprofessional mandates are preparing paraprofessionals in performing their non-academic duties and responsibilities.” Special education teachers (M = 3.81) and special education paraprofessionals (M = 3.71) had “No Opinion” when responding to the statement “In-Service training/staff development is important to the duties of the paraprofessional,” while administrators (M = 4.55) agreed to the statement. Administrators (M = 4.50) special education teachers (M = 4.54), and special education paraprofessionals (M = 4.28)) agreed with the statement that “On-the-Job training is important to the duties of the paraprofessionals.” All groups voiced “Disagreed” to the statement “Passing the paraprofessional standardized assessment enabled paraprofessionals to perform their duties and responsibilities better” and responded as follows: special education paraprofessionals (M = 2.76), administrators (M = 2.55), and special education teachers (M = 2.54). Finally, with the last statement on the survey “It is important for paraprofessionals to obtain an associate’s degree or 60 college credits to perform their duties,” all groups voiced “Disagreed”: (administrators (M = 2.50), special education teachers (M = 2.40), and special education paraprofessionals (M = 2.33).

Summary of Research Question 3

When looking at Table 9, the following results were noted: 5 of 14 statements administrators rated with “No Opinion” responses. Those statements were the following:

1. “NCLB is necessary to increase student achievement” (M = 3.00).
2. “Paraprofessionals will advance and be teachers” (M = 3.17).

3. "The NCLB paraprofessional's mandates will deter individuals from entering the paraprofessional career" (M = 3.67).
4. "NCLB created rigorous curriculums" (M = 3.44).
5. "The NCLB paraprofessional mandates are helpful in preparing paraprofessionals in performing their academic duties" (M = 3.11).

Administrators agree with 3 of the 14 following statements in regards to the

NCLB:

1. "Your county has been very helpful with informing paraprofessionals about the NCLB paraprofessional mandate's and certification requirements" (M = 4.11).
2. "NCLB encourages the inclusion of special education students in a regular education classroom" (M = 4.22).
3. "In-service training staff development is important to the duties of the paraprofessional" (M = 4.55).

Administrators disagreed with 6 of the 14 statements which were the following statements:

1. "The NCLB paraprofessional's mandates are preparing paraprofessionals in performing their duties and responsibilities not academic" (M = 2.77),
2. "It is important for paraprofessionals to obtain an associate's degree or 60 college credits to perform their duties." (M = 2.50).
3. "NCLB helps to improve teacher/para relationships" (M = 2.78).
4. "Spontaneity and/or Creativity have been lessened since NCLB" (M = 2.94).
5. "NCLB is helpful in preparing para in performing non-academic duties" (M = 2.77).

6. "Passing the Para Assessment enables paras to perform duties" (M = 2.55).

Special education teachers responded with "No Opinion" to 5 of 14 of the following statements.

1. "NCLB will deter individuals from entering the paraprofessional career" (M = 3.57).
2. "Your County has been very helpful with informing paraprofessionals about the NCLB paraprofessional working relationship" (M = 3.03).
3. "NCLB encourages the inclusion of special education students in a regular education classroom" (M = 3.37).
4. "NCLB has created rigorous curriculum standards" (M = 3.27).
5. "Spontaneity and/or Creativity have been lessened since NCLB" (M = 3.67).
6. "In-service Training is important to the duties of the para" (M = 3.81).

Special education teachers responded with "Disagreement" to 7 of the 14 following statements:

1. "NCLB is necessary to increase student achievement" (M = 2.81).
2. "NCLB helps improve teacher/paraprofessional relationships" (M = 2.45).
3. "NCLB is helpful in preparing paraprofessionals in performing academic duties" (M = 2.64).
4. "NCLB is helpful in preparing paraprofessionals in non-academic duties" (M = 2.45).
5. "Passing the Para Assessment enables paraprofessionals to perform duties and responsibilities better" (M = 2.54).

6. “It is important for paraprofessionals to obtain an AA Degree or 60 college credits to perform their duties” (M = 2.40).

7. “Paraprofessionals will advance and become teachers” (M = 2.95).

Special education teachers responded with “Agreed” only 1 of the following statements

1. “On-the-Job Training is important to the duties of the paraprofessionals” (M = 4.50).

Special education paraprofessionals responded with “No Opinion” to 8 of the 14 following statements:

1. “The NCLB paraprofessional’s mandates were necessary to increase student achievement” (M = 3.29).

2. “NCLB has created rigorous curriculum standards” (M = 3.50).

3. “One of the consequences of NCLB is that spontaneity and/or creativity in the classroom has been lessened” (M = 3.90).

4. “NCLB will deter individuals from entering the paraprofessional career” (M = 3.15).

5. “Paraprofessionals will advance and become teachers” (M = 3.05).

6. “The County has been helpful with information for the paraprofessional” (M = 3.19).

7. “NCLB” encourages the inclusion of special education students” (M = 3.20).

8. “In-service training is important to the duties of the paraprofessionals” (M = 3.71).

Special education paraprofessionals disagreed with 5 of the 14 the following statements:

1. “The NCLB paraprofessional mandates have helped improve teacher/paraprofessionals working relationships” (M = 2.86).
2. “Passing the Para Assessment enables paras to perform their duties and responsibilities better” (M = 2.76).
3. “NCLB is helpful in preparing para in performing academic duties” (M=2.95).
4. “NCLB is helpful is preparing para in non-academic duties” (M=2.52).
5. “It is important for para to obtain AA degree or 60 credits” (M=2.33)

Special education paraprofessionals agreed with 1 of the 14 the following statements:

1. “On-The-Job Training is important to the duties of the para” (M=4.28).

Of the 14 sub-categories, two statements showed statistical significance: “Your County has been very helpful with informing paraprofessionals about the NCLB paraprofessional’s mandate and certification requirements” and “NCLB encourages inclusion of special education students in a regular education classroom”

Table 9
“The Impact of the No Child Left Behind Mandates”

	A				T				P				N
	M	SD	n	Miss.	M	SD	n	Miss.	M	SD	n	Miss.	
NCLB is necessary to increase student achievement	3.00	1.08	18	0%	2.81	1.12	37	0%	3.29	1.34	21	0.0%	76
NCLB deter individuals from entering para career	3.67	1.08	18	0%	3.57	1.04	37	0%	3.15	0.93	20	4.8%	75
Para will advance and be teachers	3.17	0.98	18	0%	2.95	1.05	37	0%	3.05	1.11	21	0.0%	76
County has been helpful with inform para	4.11	0.83	18	0%	3.03	1.09	37	0%	3.19	1.32	21	0.0%	76
NCLB helps improve teacher/para relationships	2.78	1.00	18	0%	2.45	0.91	37	0%	2.86	1.10	21	0.0%	76
NCLB encourages inclusion of Sp Ed students	4.22	0.81	18	0%	3.37	1.20	37	0%	3.20	0.89	20	4.8%	75
NCLB created rigorous curriculums	3.44	1.19	18	0%	3.27	1.30	37	0%	3.50	1.19	20	4.8%	75
Spontaneity and/or Creativity has been lessened since NCLB	2.94	1.10	18	0%	3.67	1.33	37	0%	3.90	0.78	20	4.8%	75
NCLB is helpful in preparing para in performing academic duties	3.11	0.96	18	0%	2.64	1.15	37	0%	2.95	0.97	21	0.0%	76
NCLB is helpful in preparing para in performing non-academic duties	2.77	0.80	18	0%	2.45	0.98	37	0%	2.52	0.81	21	0.0%	76
In-Service Training is important to the duties of the para	4.55	0.51	18	0%	3.81	1.10	37	0%	3.71	1.21	21	0.0%	76
On-The-Job Training is important to the duties of the para	4.50	0.61	18	0%	4.54	0.60	37	0%	4.28	1.00	21	0.0%	76
Passing the Para Assessment enables paras to perform duties	2.55	0.85	18	0%	2.54	1.21	37	0%	2.76	1.33	21	0.0%	76
It is important for para to obtain AA degree or 60 credits	2.50	1.09	18	0%	2.40	1.25	37	0%	2.33	0.96	21	0.0%	76

Based on a 5 Point Scale where 1 = Strongly Disagreed, 2 = Disagree, 3 = No Opinion, 4 = Agree, 5+ = Strongly Agreed

A = Administrators, T = Special Education Teachers, P = Special Education Paraprofessionals,

Mean is defined as the average number between groups and/or within groups.

Standard deviation is defined as the spread between the data.

n = number of scores or people with scores

p<.01

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In these days of high stake testing and accountability all personnel employed in the public school systems have one common goal - to close the achievement gap among the student body. Special education paraprofessionals play a role in this process of assisting students in furthering their education and making the atmosphere conducive for learning.

There has been little research in the literature regarding the frequency of task completion performed by the special education paraprofessional throughout the day, and the impact and/or importance of the “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB) on the training of those individuals. This study was designed to probe and gather the perceptions of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals in regards to the above subject matter. In the following pages, the research will be summarized and discussed. Conclusions and implications will be addressed and recommendations will be made for possible future studies. In addition, this literature will be an additional body of evidence that will add additional information for researchers, administrators, special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals’ stakeholders, and politicians.

Summary

In the United States there are over 1.3 million paraprofessionals employed in the educational system. These individuals work in preschools, day care centers, elementary schools, junior and senior high schools. They support instruction, tutor and supervise individual students or small groups of students. They act as community liaisons, as well

as assist in the management of student behavior, bus duty, clerical duties, collecting monies, decorating bulletin boards, operating audiovisual equipment, working in technology labs and performing general housekeeping duties (Riggs and Mueller, 2001, Downing, Ryndak & Clark, 2000).

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the latest educational reform entitled the “No Child Left Behind Act.” This law is the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This act has increased the federal government’s role in regards to the country’s educational policy. It focuses primarily on closing the achievement gap between all children, regardless of race, gender, creed or economic status. “At the core of the “No Child Left Behind Act” are a number of measures designed to drive broad gains in student achievement and to hold states and schools more accountable for student progress. They represent significant changes to the education landscape (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).” A number of measures designed to promote gains in student achievement through the NCLB include annual testing, students meeting proficient levels or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In addition, other measures by the NCLB require States to send out report cards showing student achievement information broken down by subgroups, and school-by-school data. Due to the NCLB Act, any individual who teaches students must be classified as a “Highly Qualified” included in this group is the special education paraprofessional.

Paraprofessionals under this “highly qualified directive” must fulfill the following requirements.

- Have at least two years of study at an institution of higher learning
- Obtain an associate degree, or higher, or meet a rigorous standard of quality

- Demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing Reading, Writing, and Mathematics readiness as appropriate (U. S. Department of Education, 2002b).

The research was guided by the following questions:

Overarching Question

To what degree does the actual work of the special education paraprofessionals in Georgia relate to the expectations of administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals, and has NCLB impacted the duties and responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals in the classroom?

Sub-Research Questions

1. To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what the special education paraprofessionals do in the classroom?
2. To what degree do administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals should be doing in the classroom?
3. To what extent do administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals view the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified” mandates?

Discussion of Research Findings

Research Question 1: To what degree do the administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals agree on what the special education paraprofessionals do in the classroom?

The results of the study reveal that all three groups of survey participants agree that special education paraprofessionals perform many roles and responsibilities. By measure of task frequency, administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals, confirmed this point by acknowledging the regularity by which various tasks were observed to have been performed on a daily basis by special education paraprofessionals. This supports the findings in the literature that reference to many tasks being performed and completed by special education paraprofessionals. (Ashbaker & Morgan (2001), Ashbaker, Young, & Morgan (2001), Boomer (1994) Chopra, Sandoval, Bernal, Berg, Debalderas, & Lorenzo (2004), Downing, J.E., Ryndak, D.K. & Clark, D. (2000), French (1998), French (2001) and French (2003), French and Pickett (1990, French & Pickett (1990). These tasks include the following duties: clerical duties such as copying, filing, student supervision during bus and lunch duty, attending IEP meeting, monitoring behavior, direct instruction, as well as adapting and modifying curriculum, supporting personal care of students, translator, job coach, and connector between parent and teacher, parent and student, teacher and community. Special education paraprofessional participants listed additional duties, not mentioned on the survey, such as being pulled to cover other classes, toileting, grading, parental follow-up, scanning, translating Braille to sign language, and participating in Special Olympics, that further confirms that paraprofessionals do more than what is expected of them and are performing many tasks of an academic nature. The data concurs with past literature (Pickett, 1996) which states that paraprofessionals do perform clerical tasks; however, a visible shift has begun, whereas special education paraprofessionals are now taking on instructional responsibilities as well.

The data from the current study for Research Question 1 indicate that administrator's perception of the roles and responsibilities of the special paraprofessionals are more in agreement with the special education paraprofessional participants in the survey however not consistent with that of the special education teachers.

Administrators gave some of the highest frequency ratings. in the survey under the category of Academic Instruction. This aligns with the American Federation of Teachers (2001) that states that instructional paraprofessionals provide direct or indirect instructional services to students and/or parents. This data supports what French (1998), and Giangreco and Broer (2003) stated in their literature; in regards to teachers reporting that paraprofessional perform more teaching responsibilities. With paraprofessionals performing more academic chores this may have been the major rationale for the need for additional job training for paraprofessionals which was deemed necessary by the federal government. . This highly qualified provision was created by the federal government to help ensure that students regardless of disability have access to quality instructions and a challenging curriculum. As noted in the literature prior to NCLB job requirements for paraprofessionals stated: "paraprofessionals are individuals who work under the supervision of a certified or licensed individual and were only minimally required to possess a high school diploma or equivalent" (Stiffler, 1993). Today they are required to possess either an Associate Degree, or have at least 60 credits from a college or pass the assessment test (NCLB, 2002). In total, administrators who participated in this survey rated 19 out of 31 items listed under Research Question 1 higher than the other two groups. These 19 items fell under the categories of "Functional Life Skills and

Vocational Skills at Community-Based Skills”, “Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Task and Monitoring Duties” and “Other Responsibilities.”

Special education paraprofessionals gave high frequency rating for tasks in Research Question 1. They responded to the survey by answering 11 of the 31 survey statements with higher frequencies than the other two groups of participants. It is the researcher’s belief that the high frequency rating by special education paraprofessionals is due to the organizational influence and expectations, which may be a significant factor in determining the productivity of all special education paraprofessionals. It has been noted in literature that individuals produce outcome expectations that are influenced by the expectations of others in and out of the organizations. (Bandura, 1977) The high rating of job frequency by special education paraprofessionals could be the result of what the literatures states in regards to the increase of job responsibilities, the increase of early childhood special education services, the shortages of special education teachers, and increases of students with high intensity needs, such as students with autism, emotional/behavior disorders and multiple disabilities (Bergert and Burnette, 2001). This is further supported by a study completed by Marks, Schrader, and Levine (1999), where paraprofessionals themselves stated that they believed as if they were the “primary burden of success.”

The interpretation of the findings show special education teachers rating frequency of task completion by special education paraprofessionals lower in a majority of the task (21 of the 31 items) than the other two groups (administrators and special education paraprofessionals.). This group did not respond positively in their selections. Of the 21, five out of the eight academic skills in Research Question 1 were rated lowest

by special education teachers as opposed to the other groups. Special education paraprofessionals have expectations for what the daily role of the special education paraprofessional is and what they think the special education paraprofessional has completed each day. .

Research Question 2: To what degree do administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals agree on what special education paraprofessionals should be doing in the classroom?

The data from the current study for Research Question 2 in combination with the results from Research Question 1 indicate that administrator's perception of the roles and responsibilities of the special paraprofessionals are more in agreement to the frequency ratings of the special education paraprofessionals who participated in the study but not consistent with that of the special education teachers.. In addition, administrators and special education paraprofessionals do agree that special education paraprofessionals do complete more duties than they should be doing.

Repeated findings from the data for Research Question 2 show administrators' rating in Tables 5-8 at a lower scale than in Research Question 1 These numbers suggest that administrators may perceive a dependency on paraprofessionals to complete more duties. These statements were: (1) "Following Lesson Plans," (2) "Providing Personal Care," (3), "Accompanying Students to Outside Organizations and Businesses For On The Job Training," (4) "Performing A Task Not Mentioned "II," (5) "Assisting Teachers With Maintaining Learner Records," (6) "Duplicating Learning Materials," (7). "Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graphs, Pictures Bulletin Boards in Research," (8) "Collecting Monies, Fees," (9) Performing a Task In This Category Not Mentioned," (10) "Bus

Duties,” (11) “Lunch Duty Responsibilities,” (12) Performing a Task In This Category Not Mentioned,” (12) “Providing Library Assistance,” (13) “Providing Physical or Occupational Therapy,” (14) “Translating for Student (Sign Language), (15) “Operating Audiovisual Equipment,” (16) “Performing General Housekeeping Duties,” (17) Translating for Students, Families, and Other Teachers,” and (18) “Calling A Parent in Regards to A Student.” Giangreco and Broer (2005) say that teachers and parents have used paraprofessionals for a variety of reason to support students with disabilities and stress clarifying roles to ensure an appropriate match between skills and duties. They also state in the literature that many schools are over-reliant on paraprofessionals. . The data supports this fact that special education paraprofessionals perceive their position as one that performs too many duties. Special education paraprofessionals rated items in Research Question 2 lower than those in Research Question 1. These items that special education paraprofessionals believed they should perform less were the following: (1) “Administering Instruction,” (2) “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” (3) “Preparation of Learning Resources,” (4) “Following Lesson Plans,” (5) “Assisting with Student Discipline,” (6) “ Performing A Task In This Category Not Mentioned “I,” (7) “Providing Personal Care,” (8) “Performing A Task Not Mention In This Category “II,” (9) “Displaying Data, Charts, Records, Graph, Pictures, Bulletin Boards,” (10) “Collecting Monies Fees,” (11) “Performing a Task In This Category Mentioned In This Category “I,” (12) “Lunch Duties Responsibilities,” (13) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned In this Category,” (14) “Providing Library Assistance,” (15) “Transitioning Students from School to Work,” (16) “Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families in Homes, Worksites and Communities,” and (17) “Calling a Parent In Regards to A

Student.” This is supported in several other studies, Miles and Riggio (1999), Topor (2000), and Hatlen (2000) all state in their literature that special education paraprofessionals have often reported that they have been assigned tasks that they feel that they are not qualified to do. In some cases, the abilities of paraprofessionals are simply misused.

Special education teachers rated special education paraprofessionals in Research Question 2 with higher scores than in the previous research question. Together, these increased ratings from the special education teachers along with their answers from Research Question 1, may imply that special education teachers have defined the role of the special education paraprofessionals as an individual who assist in increasing learning and providing for students by assisting in and out of the classroom doing both instructional as well as clerical duties (National Center of Learning Disabilities). The data shows special education teachers rated 19 of the 31 items under Research Question 2 higher. The tasks on the survey were divided into areas that benefit and support both the special education teacher and student. These tasks were the following: (1) “Administering Instruction,” (2) “Tutoring Outside Normal Class Time,” (3) “Preparation of Learning Resources,” (4) “Assisting General Education Teachers with Inclusion,” (5) “Providing Personal Care,” (6) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned In This Category “I,” (7) “Accompanying Students To Outside Organizations And Businesses For On – The – Job Training,” (8) “Performing A Task Not Mentioned In This Category “II,” (9) “Assisting Teachers With Maintaining Learner Records,” (10) “Duplicating Learning Materials,” (11) “Bus Duties,” (12) “Providing Library Assistance,” (13) “Providing Physical or Occupational Therapy,” (14) “Translating for Students (Sign Language), (15)

“Operating Audiovisual Equipment,” (16) “Transitioning Students from School to Work,” (17) “Performing General Housekeeping Duties,” (18) “Translating for Students, Families and Other Teachers,” and (19) “Carrying Out Learning Activities for Families in Homes, Worksites, and Communities.” In addition, the data also implies that some teachers, at times may fail to distinguish between the ethical and legal responsibilities of their position by delegating some tasks forbidden to be completed by special education paraprofessionals. For example: both special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals noted in the survey that special education paraprofessionals administer assessments, which is a task that by the Georgia Department of Education policy, special education paraprofessionals should not do (<http://www.gapsc.com/TeacherEducation/Rules/505-3-.87.pdf>).

Research Question 3: To what extent do administrators, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals view the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified” mandates?

In regards to the importance of the NCLB “Highly Qualified” mandate for special education paraprofessional when given the statement “the NCLB paraprofessional mandates are necessary to increase student achievement” special education paraprofessionals and administrators both voiced “No Opinion” and special education teacher disagreed. The special education teachers’ answers seem to imply that the mandates do not necessary increase or may not be the sole criteria needed for student achievement. Literature has noted that the proximity of the paraprofessional result in students being more academically engaged on-task (Office of Special Education Programs (2003), Young, Simpson, Smith-Myles & Kamps (1966),

However, the three groups were in consensus on the following statements involving the NCLB: “On-the – Job Training,” which got a response of agreement from all groups. “NCLB will deter individuals from entering the special education paraprofessional career”, and “NCLB has created a rigorous curriculum” both received a “No Opinion” response from all three groups. “NCLB helps improve teacher/special education paraprofessional relationships.”, “NCLB is helpful in preparing special education paraprofessionals in non-academic duties.”, “Passing the Para Assessment enables special education paraprofessionals to perform duties”, and “It is important for special education paraprofessionals to obtain an AA degree or 60 credits.”. all received a disagreement from the three groups of participants.

For many of the queries posed under Research Question 3, the three groups of participants answered many of the inquiries with a “No Opinion” response. This could lead one to believe that the respondents could not offer any quality information, but this is quite the contrary in the researcher’s view. The researcher believes that the many “No Opinion” answers from the special education teachers and special education teachers could mean a lack of understanding of the “NCLB” mandates. It could also mean that special education teachers, as well as special education paraprofessionals fear retaliation or reprisals by their administrators who may one day read this dissertation, even though the administrators are not aware of who actually filled out the responses, but do know their school participated in the study.

In regards to the statement about “On-the – Job Training” is important to the duties of the special education paraprofessionals received agreement from all three groups. Comments on the reasons why each group responded was not noted on the

survey, but the researcher believes that this response was given because “on-the-job training” is one of the best training methods because it is planned, organized, and conducted at the employee's worksite. In addition the researcher believes all groups agree that it is important because it boosts morale, productivity and professionalism in the organization (Mueller, .2002). As noted and supported in the literature (US Department of Interior) “on-the-job” training will generally be the primary method used for broadening employee skills and increasing productivity.

In addition, two statistically significant relationships were established from this research. They were the following: “Your County has been helpful with providing information about the NCLB paraprofessional mandates and certification requirements.” and “NCLB encourages the inclusion of special education students in a regular education classroom.” To both of these statements, administrators, as a group, agreed, while significantly differing from the teachers and special education paraprofessionals, both of whom supplied “No Opinion” to the statement.

From the data collected, the researcher concluded that all the groups agree that it is not necessary to pass a standardized test or obtain an Associate Degree in order to perform the job of a special education paraprofessional. In addition, they also feel that this reform will not improve teacher/paraprofessional relationships or help paraprofessionals in performing non-academic duties. (Rethink)

Analysis of Research Findings

Although educational personnel know the valuable role of a good trained and supervised special education paraprofessional, literature states educational personnel have had an over reliance on paraprofessionals (OSEP, <http://www.nrcreport.org/report>,

2005). Administrators, as well as special education teachers, have assigned paraprofessionals to instructional, curricular and behavior supports for students with disabilities. The review of the literature along with this data will lead administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals to understand the proper utilization of paraprofessionals.

This study raises important issues around developing shared frameworks, outlooks, and justification for the allotment of training and personnel resources, because of this school may not be as effective. These issues could be future area of improvements for administrators.

Conclusions

The data collected from the survey allow stakeholders with timely and accurate information related to the tasks and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessionals as well as informing them about the impact and importance of the No Child Left Behind. Making sure that each student is taught by a “Highly Qualified” individual is an important goal under the No Child Left Behind and every school system. Addressing the above topics (frequency rates and No Child Left Behind) has the potential to have substantial positive effects on the school environment especially the academic success of the student with disabilities.

Based on the findings of this study and the extent of the literature the researcher concluded:

1. Administrators and special education paraprofessionals are in more agreement of what special education paraprofessionals do.

2. Administrators and special education paraprofessionals are in more agreement of what special education paraprofessionals should be doing.
3. Two statistically significant statements was: “Your County has been helpful with providing information about the NCLB paraprofessional mandates and certification requirements.” and “NCLB encourages the inclusion of special education students in a regular education classroom.” To both of these statements, administrators as a group agreed while significantly differing from the two other groups of special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals, both of whom supplied “No Opinion” to the statement.

In lieu of the “No Child Left Behind Act,” further studies may want to revisit and redefine the responsibilities and roles of the special education paraprofessional and see if it matches their skills, required training, and what they are actually being asked to do.

Implications

Several implications may be derived from this research. Training and hiring of special education paraprofessionals, under the mandates of the “No Child Left Behind Act” and preparing special education teachers to work with special education paraprofessionals are both challenging tasks for administrators in today’s educational environment. The study may assist in achieving the standards/guidelines set by the “No Child Left Behind Act” in order to reduce the achievement gap between students. Counties looking to raise the achievement of special education students will find this research informative. It has been noted that most special education students are having a difficult time meeting the standards set by “NCLB,” which could ultimately prevent a county from achieving AYP. Schools nationwide are now struggling with how to meet

the requirements of NCLB for special education students without excluding them from realistic assessments and/or negatively impacting their educational progression (Harvey, 2004). This information may lead administrators to reposition some of the tasks of the special education paraprofessional to further align paraprofessionals as supports for students instead of aids for teachers. The findings for this research project also has been important for the researcher, who is a special education teacher, to ensure the students placed under her instruction are as academically successful as those regular education students graduating from high school and entering either post-secondary institutions of learning or joining the work force.

The research suggest that all personnel involved with the hiring, training or working with and including the special education paraprofessional understand and review the daily routine of the special education paraprofessional by way of discussion and periodic meetings. The researcher strongly encourages administrators to make a concerted effort to visit the classrooms and become more visible, while viewing the duties of special education paraprofessionals. Today principals are still too far removed to truly assessed paraprofessionals on the job, whose performance has been in the most part assessed by the teachers under whose direct supervision they work. This suggests that administrators should become more effective instructional leaders instead of just simply acting as managers. By doing this administrators can also offer more relevant instructional development for special education paraprofessionals

The researcher also strongly encourages administrators to create and provide a well-defined job description, which should be updated regularly for the special education paraprofessionals. This job description should be uniform throughout the school and

county. Anecdotal records should be kept by the special education paraprofessional as documentation of their everyday tasks and chores in order to provide administrators with information needed to update job descriptions. This would be a more effective way of collecting data versus gathering perceptions of administrators, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals. Frequent monitoring of paraprofessional roles and responsibilities need to be put in place. Ron Edmonds, in his “Seven Correlates of Effective Schools” (<http://www.Mes.org/correlates.html>) states “You cannot improve something if you are not willing to measure it. Though the remark was in regards to student progress, it, too, can be applied to the improvement of the roles and responsibilities of the special educational paraprofessional which in turn does affect the progress of all students.

Recommendations

Future studies using larger sample sizes should be performed to seek answers from administrators, special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals and parents as to what tasks and duties special education paraprofessionals do and should be doing. Other research and studies that will explore the following areas in regards to the special education paraprofessional and NCLB include:

1. Research should begin on staff hiring problems that may arise from the new law and finding qualified individuals that have all the educational requirements under the NCLB.” In addition, research on paraprofessional attrition, assignment training (minority staffing and staffing to reflect the community of the school) and how the NCLB mandates affects those areas.

2. A qualitative study on what new revisions or changes should occur with the re-ratification of the NCLB.
3. A qualitative research study on the opinions of school personnel on whether salaries for paraprofessionals who meet the new requirements should be upgraded sufficiently to make these employees effort worthwhile and appreciated.
4. Further study on measuring special education paraprofessional effectiveness. Counties and states will use the same longitudinal data systems that allow them to include student achievement in AYP calculations to measure special education paraprofessional effectiveness in and out of the classroom and to target professional development to the paraprofessionals who may need improvement in the effectiveness.
5. The researcher now suggests using a 4 Point Likert Scale rather than a 5 Point Likert Scale thereby forcing the participants to decide on either “Agreement” or “Disagreement” of a statement.
6. With this new shift in paraprofessional training, further studies should be done to determine if old routines and skills used by special education paraprofessionals have changed or have remained the same.
7. A post hoc study should be performed.
8. Recognition of special education paraprofessional’s impact on the organization and classroom.
9. Administrators’ attitudes and perceptions on all school personnel performance.

10. Student recognition of special education paraprofessional abilities to assist them in enhancing their education
11. Parents' recognition of the special education paraprofessionals within the classroom and what they think the duties and responsibilities of the special education paraprofessional are.

In closing, Dennis Perkins (2000) stated, "A unified team is one in which every member understands the task to be done and feels a sense of deep personal responsibility for the success of the group's effort. For this to happen each person must have a clear picture of the challenges faced by the team. This implies the open sharing of information, options, and potential consequences of the choices

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

March 22, 2007

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a study conducted as part of my requirement for my doctoral degree at Georgia Southern University. The title of the investigation is: "The Roles and Responsibilities of The Georgia Special Education Paraprofessionals and the Impact of the No Child Left Behind Mandates: An Assessment By Georgia Administrators, Special Education Teachers, and Special Education Paraprofessionals." The study is voluntary, and at any time during the study you are free to withdraw your participation or decline to answer any questions should you become uncomfortable. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the impact of the No Child Left Behind Mandates on the roles and responsibility of the Title I Special Education Paraprofessionals. For this study, I will be using a 5 Point Likert scale.

There will be no discomfort or risks with this study. It will be anonymous and no names or identification numbers will be used. . The benefits of this research, for school administrators will help provide insight on the various roles and responsibilities, as well as the education and training needs of the paraprofessional. In addition, this research may establish a strong link between student achievement between paraprofessional's skills and student achievement. For teachers and paraprofessionals who work together, this research will provide insight to increase productivity and effectiveness of the teacher/paraprofessional team.

For this research, I will be distributing surveys. This survey should require approximately 15 minutes to complete. There will be no compensation for completing it.

Completion and return of the survey questionnaire implies that you agree to participate, and your data may be used in this record.

Thank you very much for your help in giving me the opportunity to share in your experiences and viewpoints.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

Title of Project: "The Roles and Responsibilities of The Georgia Title I Special Education Paraprofessional and the Impact of the No Child Left Behind Mandates: An

Assessment By Georgia Administrators, Teachers, and Title I Special Education Paraprofessionals.”

Principal Investigator: Donna Archibald, P.O. Box 464581, Lawrenceville, GA
Arch383@bellsouth.net 678-772-0041

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Linda Arthur, P.O. Box 8131, Georgia Southern University,
Statesboro, Georgia 912-681-0697

Participant's Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date

APPENDIX B
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required by the year 2006, all employees who provide instructional support (paraprofessionals, teacher aides, tutors, etc.) in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds have one of the following: an associate degree or higher, two years of college, or a passing score on a test that measures reading, writing, and mathematics competency.

The following paraprofessionals are exempt from the requirement: those working in non-Title I schools, those working as translators for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and those working in non-instructional capacities (e.g. food service, hall monitoring, etc.)

In Georgia, some counties require all paraprofessionals to have these requirements.

Please check or fill in the appropriate answer

1. Principal _____ Assistant Principal _____ Teacher _____
 Highly Qualified Paraprofessional _____ Not Highly Qualified Paraprofessional _____
2. Male _____ Female _____ Age _____
3. African-American ____ Asian ____ Hispanic _____ Multi-Racial _____ Native American _____
 White _____
4. Years of Experience _____
5. Do you work in the following?: Elementary _____ Middle _____ High School _____
6. Highest Level of Education
 GED _____ High School Diploma _____ AA/AS Degree _____
 Less than two years of College coursework (No Degree) _____
 Two or more college coursework (No Degree) _____ BA/BS Degree _____

 Graduate School Credits or Degree _____ Other _____

TO BE ANSWERED BY PARAPROFESSIONALS ONLY

ALL OTHERS BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE

7. How many students do you work with in a typical day? _____
8. How many of your current students are English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) Students?

9. How many years have you worked as a special education paraprofessional?

10. Overall, how many years have you worked as a paraprofessional? _____
11. How much of your day is spent implementing instructional tasks with students?

12. How much of your day, are you the sole supervisor or care-taker of the students?

TO BE ANSWERED BY ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Directions: Read each statement and circle the number that best represents your views. There are no wrong or right responses.

	HOW OFTEN ARE THE FOLLOWING TASKS PERFORMED PER DAY IN YOUR SCHOOL BY THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL?					HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE FOLLOWING TASKS BE PERFORMED PER DAY IN YOUR SCHOOL BY THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL/				
Academic Instruction										
13. Administering instruction in academic areas	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
14. Tutoring outside normal class time	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
15. Assisting teachers with the preparation of learning resources (Adapting Materials)	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
16. Following lessons plans and learning strategies developed by teacher	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
17. Assisting general and special education teachers with Inclusion Strategies	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
18. Carrying out functional assessment activities to assist teachers in documenting information about learner strengths and needs	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
19. Assisting with student discipline.	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
20. Performing a task in this category that has not been previously mentions. Name of Task _____	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+

TO BE ANSWERED BY ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Directions: Read each statement and circle the number that best represents your views. There are no wrong or right responses.

	How often are the following tasks performed per day in your school by the Special Education paraprofessional?	How often should the following tasks be performed per day in your school by the special education paraprofessional?
Functional Life Skills		
21. Providing personal care (Bathroom Needs, Dressing Needs, etc.)	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
22. Performing a task in this category that has not been previously mentioned. Name Task _____ _____	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
Vocational Skills at Community Based Sites		
23. Accompanying students to outside organizations and business for on-the-job training (Community Skills)	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
24. Performing a task in this category that has not been previously mentioned. Name of Task _____ _____	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Task		
25. Assisting teachers and other team members with maintaining learner records, required by federal, state, and district policies	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
26. Duplicating learning materials (Copying)	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
27. Displaying data, charts, records, graphs, pictures, decorating of bulletin boards	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+

TO BE ANSWERED BY ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Directions: Read each statement and circle the number that best represents your views. There are no wrong or right responses.

	How often are the following tasks performed per day in your school by the special education paraprofessional?	How often should the following tasks be performed per day in your school by the special education paraprofessional?
Collecting and Managing Data, Clerical Task		
28. Collecting monies, fees 29. Performing a task in this category that has not been previously mentioned. Name Task _____ _____	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+ 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+ 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
Monitoring Duties		
30. Bus duty responsibilities 31. Lunch duty responsibilities 32. Performing a task in this category that has not been previously mentioned. Name of Task _____ _____	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+ 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+ 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+ 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+ 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+

TO BE ANSWERED BY ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Directions: Read each statement and circle the number that best represents your views. There are no wrong or right responses.

	How often are the following tasks performed per day in your school by the special education paraprofessional?	How often should the following tasks be performed per day in your school by the special education paraprofessional?
Other Responsibilities		
33. Providing library assistance	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
34. Providing physical or occupational therapy	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
35. Translating for students (Sign Language)	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
36. Operating audiovisual and equipment	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
37. Transitioning students from school to work	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
38. Performing general housekeeping Duties	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
39. Translating for students, families, and other teachers	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
40. Attending IEP Meetings	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
41. Carrying out learning activities for families in homes, worksites, and communities	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
42. Calling a parent in regards to student	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
43. Performing a task in this category that has not been previously mentioned.	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+	0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+
Name of Task _____ _____		

Please check the appropriate box

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
<p>44. The NCLB paraprofessional mandates were necessary to increase student achievement</p> <p>45. The NCLB paraprofessionals mandates will deter individuals from entering the paraprofessional career</p> <p>46. With the enactment of the NCLB paraprofessional mandates, paraprofessionals will advance their careers and ultimately become teacher</p> <p>47. Your county has been very helpful with informing paraprofessionals about the NCLB paraprofessional's mandate and certification requirements</p> <p>48. The NCLB paraprofessional mandates has helped improve teacher/paraprofessional working relationships</p> <p>49. NCLB encourages the inclusion of special education students in a regular education classroom</p> <p>50. NCLB has created rigorous curriculum standards</p> <p>51. One of the consequences of NCLB is that spontaneity and/or creativity in the classroom has been lessened</p> <p>52. The NCLB paraprofessional mandates are helpful in preparing paraprofessionals in performing their academic duties</p> <p>53. The NCLB paraprofessional mandates are preparing paraprofessionals in performing their duties and responsibilities not academic</p> <p>54. In-service training/staff development is important to the duties of the paraprofessional</p> <p>55. On-the-job training is important to the duties of the paraprofessional</p> <p>56. Passing the paraprofessional standardized assessment, enabled paraprofessionals to perform their duties and responsibilities better</p> <p>57. It is important for paraprofessionals to obtain an associate's degree or 60 college credits to perform their jobs</p>					

APPENDIX C
ITEM ANALYSIS

Item Analysis of Duties Noted In Survey

Study	Purpose	Subjects	Design	Outcomes	Duty
Riggs C. (2001). ”	Explores paraeducator’s experiences in inclusive settings, job responsibilities, and relationship with the school community.	4224 Subjects	Qualitative and Quantitative	Para Job Descriptions were meaningless Retention of paraeducator workforce is an issue confronting school system	Clerical Copying Student Supervision Direct Instruction Bus Duty Attending IEP meetings
Werts, M., Harris, S., Tillery, C., & Roork, R. (2004)	Examined parents’ perception of the paraeducator’s role.	28 Parents	Qualitative Interviews	25% of the parents reported paraeducators were there to keep their children focused 21% of the parents reported paraeducators were there because of behavioral issues 75% of the parents spoke of paraeducators positive	Parents stated Paraeducators were in class for academic help, behavioral problems, and there to keep the child focused. Parents noted the need for more training. Limit extra duties for paraeducators

Study	Purpose	Subjects	Design	Outcomes	Duties
Downing, J., Ryndak, D., & Clark, D. (2000)	Identify paraeducator's perception of their roles and responsibilities in inclusive classrooms	16 paraeducators who served in elementary through high school students with moderate to several disabilities	Qualitative Interview	5 Main themes were described by the paraeducators (1) a wide range of activities for which they had responsibility throughout the work day (2) interactions and relationships with team members and school personnel (3) a high level of responsibility for the quality of services provided for the students (4) training and personal qualities needed for the activities interactions and responsibilities they described (5) concerns and challenges.	Providing Behavioral Support Monitoring Students Teaching Adapting and Modifying Curricula, Materials and Activities Supporting Personal Care Facilitating Interaction with Peers Clerical Tasks Cleaning Grading Training Other Educational Assistants Communicating with Parents

Study	Purpose	Subjects	Design	Outcomes	Duty
Giangreco, M. & Broer, S. (2005).	This study addresses (a) how special education and paraprofessionals spend their time (b) perspectives of paraprofessionals about certain paraprofessional practices and (c) perspectives of professionals and parents about school wide practices associated with inclusive special education that may contribute to reducing inappropriate utilization of special education paraprofessional	737 school personnel and parents	Quantitative Study	The findings highlight concerns and suggest that focusing change efforts on paraprofessional issues without corresponding attention to general and special education issues is akin to addressing the symptoms of a problem rather than its roots	Behavior Supports Personal Care Clerical Supervise Students Provide Instruction
Chopra, R.V., Sandoval-Lucero, el. Bernal, C., Berg, H., Debalderas, H. Lorenzo, A.	This study presents the perceptions of paraeducators in the role they play in the school and community	Five Focus Groups- 49 Individuals	Qualitative Study	The study confirmed that paraprofessionals are “connectors” to parents, students, and the community.	Availability to student’s family. Directing before and after school activities Connector between parent and teacher, teacher and student. Translator

Study	Purpose	Subjects	Design	Outcomes	Duty
Broer, S. Doyle, M. & Giangreco, M. (2005)	This study fills the gap by interviewing young adults with intellectual disabilities about their experiences attending general education classes with paraprofessionals	16 young adults with intellectual disabilities	Qualitative Design	Four descriptives were discovered which were provided by the participants (a) consider the social validity of supports (b) increase teacher involvement (c) highlight the importance of listening to students with disabilities and (d) include them in decisions about their own supports	Para as mother Para as friend Para as Protector Para as Primary teacher
French, N. (2001)	The purpose of this study was to examine the practices of special education teachers with responsibility for the supervision of paraprofessionals	321 teachers who were highly experienced and educated.	Quantitative Study	The findings stated that a third of the respondents said that very often that they had no plans that the paraeducator follows along and gets oral instructions as they work together throughout the day or ahead of time. Only 13% had lesson plans for paraprofessionals	Personal Attention To Students Lunch, bus and Playground Supervision Exclusive Planning for small group instruction and individual Lessons Correcting Papers

Study	Purpose	Subjects	Design	Outcomes	Duty
Griffin-Shirley, N. & Matlock, D. (2004)	To elicit information about the roles, responsibilities, and training of individuals who work in roles in educational and rehabilitation settings.	97 Individuals	Qualitative	Paraprofessionals are important allies in teaching children with visual disabilities.	Prepare Braille materials for students Job coaches Rehabilitation Assistant One – to- One Instruction
Ashbaker, B. Young, J. & Morgan, J. (2001).	To investigated the education and training of paraeducators to learn how they viewed their role in the instructional process and to explore the assign tasks given to them.	159 Subjects	Quantitative	Data showed that paraeducators served in the instructional process in all areas of the curriculum and at all levels, particularly in providing guided practice for students.	Housekeeping, duties of instructions, and clerical work.

Study	Purpose	Subjects	Design	Outcomes	Duty
<p>Trautman, M. (2004)</p> <p>Preparing and Managing Paraprofessionals</p>	<p>Article summarizes current legislation regarding the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<p>Cleans classroom,</p> <p>Prepares materials students may need during the day</p> <p>Follows programs as written by the teacher.</p> <p>Reinforces appropriate student behavior</p> <p>Assists teacher in carrying out toileting and feeding programs.</p> <p>Assists school specialists in P.E., music, and art classes</p> <p>Responds to emergency situations calmly and appropriately</p>

APENDIX D
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-681-5465		Administrative Annex P. O. Box 8005 Statesboro, GA 30460-8005
Fax: 912-681-0719	OvrSight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	

To: Donna Archibald
P.O. Box-464581
Lawrenceville, GA-30042

Cc: Dr. Linda Arthur, Faculty Advisor
P. O. Box-8131

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: May 10, 2007

Subject: Status of Research Study Modification Request

After a review of your Research Study Modification Request on research project numbered: "**H07207**" and titled "**The Roles and Responsibilities of the Georgia Special Education Paraprofessionals: An Assessment by Administrators, Teachers, and Special Education Paraprofessionals**", your request for modification appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your modification request.

The IRB approval is still in effect for one year from the date of your **original application approval** and will expire on **May 03, 2008**. If at the end of that time, there have been no further changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, another change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary; you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



N. Scott Pierce
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs