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Ginger R. Woods

*East Tennessee State University*

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Middle and High School Principals' Knowledge of Discipline Provisions of the Individuals With  
Disabilities Education Act in the Upper East Tennessee Region

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Ginger R. Woods

December 2004

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Dr. Nancy Dishner, Chair

Dr. Cecil Blankenship

Dr. Louise MacKay

Dr. Russell West

Keywords: Discipline, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Special Education

## ABSTRACT

### Middle and High School Principals' Knowledge of Discipline Provisions of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act in the Upper East Tennessee Region

by

Ginger R. Woods

The purpose of this study was to determine school principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 and to determine what additional training opportunities may be needed to ensure that school systems in the upper East Tennessee region are in compliance under IDEA. As instructional leaders, it is imperative that principals understand their responsibilities and the importance of adhering to the legal obligations under IDEA. Principals who do not comply with the act not only deny students the education to which they are entitled but also expose the school system to costly litigation.

The Survey of Knowledge about the Discipline Provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments as developed by Lyons (2003) was used to obtain the middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. The survey instrument contained 12 demographic questions and 35 knowledge-level questions. Principals in the upper East Tennessee region demonstrated inadequate understanding of all five areas measured: (a) manifestation determinations, (b) functional behavior assessments, (c) behavior intervention plans, (d) interim alternative educational settings, and (e) general procedural safeguards.

The findings of this research project were analyzed using the software program SAS System for Elementary Statistical Analysis version 8.0. Descriptive statistics in the form of total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97's discipline amendments.

The data analyzed for this study reflected that principals in the upper East Tennessee region need additional training regarding the discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The provisions least understood by school administrators were: (a) manifestation determinations, (b) functional behavior assessments, (c) behavior intervention plans, (d) interim alternative educational settings, and (e) general procedural safeguards.

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated:

To my parents, Joan and Elijah Woods, who have taught me so many things during my life. Their trust and faith in God has shown me unconditional love, patience, and understanding to fulfill my life-long dreams. Through my parents' exemplification of their own life, I am truly a unique person. I love you both.

To my sister, Pam Kindle, for her enduring love and support. She is my best friend. In memory of my brother, Timmy Woods, who passed away when I was nine years old. The memories I hold dear of our childhood will never be forgotten.

To my supervisor, colleague, and dear friend, Dr. Susan Belcher. Her continuous support, understanding, and friendship will never be forgotten. She has truly been an inspiration in my life. Thank you.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Background of the Problem*

The education of students with disabilities is a contentious endeavor for school systems and has been since the passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) in 1970; this was the first law in the history of education that had exclusively addressed students with disabilities. In 1975, the EHA was amended and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, otherwise known as Public Law 94-142, was enacted to ensure that children with disabilities received a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001). Public Law 94-142 also gave parents of students with disabilities the right to be involved in decision-making and provided an appeal process for use if they were not satisfied (Hammill, 1993). The law was amended again in 1990 and The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) emerged. In 1997, IDEA was amended and for the first time the law included discipline provisions for students with disabilities (Hammill).

Discipline of students eligible under IDEA will be a controversial issue for school personnel for many years to come. Discipline problems continue to consistently increase in schools across the nation. Actions and procedures that violate the rights of students with disabilities prevent them from receiving the free appropriate public education to which they are entitled (Wright & Wright, 2000). The most common form of discipline used in schools is removal, suspension, and even expulsion of students with behavior problems. Concerns and controversies continue to develop regarding students with disabilities' rights to an education. Implementing regulations of IDEA are reasonably detailed in the law but specific guidelines are lacking for the suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities (Council of Administrators of Special Education, 1997). Public schools have received guidance on discipline issues from

many sources other than federal laws and regulations. As noted by Johns, Carr, and Hoots (1997), court rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court as well as letters of policy from the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education and the Office for Civil Rights have afforded school systems with interpretations of procedures deemed to be best practice in the educational process of students with disabilities.

The passage of the 1997 IDEA amendments included provisions to specifically address discipline of students eligible under the law (IDEA, 1997). The intention of including such provisions was to “expand the authority of school officials to protect the safety of all children and to maintain orderly, drug-free, and disciplined school environments, while ensuring the essential rights and protection for students with disabilities” (Yell, Katsiyannis, Bradley, & Rozalski, 2000, p. 3). The intentions of Congress to include the discipline provisions in the law was to assist school officials in responding appropriately when students with disabilities exhibit serious behavior problems and to challenge the dilemmas in a positive and proactive manner through the individual educational process (Office for Civil Rights, 2000).

The discipline procedures mandated by federal law are very complex for school personnel particularly for those who are not knowledgeable of rules and regulations governing special education in public schools. School officials with no formal training in educating students with disabilities have a tremendous responsibility when it comes to disciplining students eligible under IDEA '97. A principal must be well informed about specific disabilities and how they relate to the student's misconduct as well as IDEA regulations when disciplinary measures are necessary for students being served in special education programs. Principals must also be knowledgeable of curriculum and behavior intervention planning in order to comply successfully with the law that requires a principal or a principal's designee to be involved in the development of Individual Education Programs (IEP) for all students with disabilities (Gorn, 1999).

School personnel who are accountable for disciplining students eligible under IDEA '97 have numerous obligations in the education of these students. Principals and other school

personnel who are not knowledgeable of the components of special education law may make decisions that violate the rights of students with disabilities. When the rights of students served under IDEA are violated, not only are they denied a free appropriate public education that is mandated by federal law but the possibility of litigation for the school system also increases.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to assess upper East Tennessee middle and high school principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 and to determine whether or not and to what extent additional training opportunities might be needed for school personnel who are responsible for disciplining students served in special education programs under the IDEA. As instructional leaders, it is imperative that principals understand their responsibilities and the importance of adhering to the legal obligations under IDEA. Principals who do not comply with the act not only deny students the education to which they are entitled but they also expose the school system to litigation that could result in costing the system thousands of dollars.

### *Research Questions*

1. Are school principals in the upper East Tennessee region knowledgeable of the IDEA '97 discipline provisions when disciplining students eligible for special education under IDEA?
2. Which, if any, specific provisions of the IDEA '97 discipline amendments are least understood by school principals in the upper East Tennessee region?
3. What additional training opportunities do principals in The upper East Tennessee region perceive they need to effectively implement IDEA '97 discipline amendments?
4. Is there a difference in principals' perceptions of their level of knowledge of discipline provisions of IDEA '97 and their knowledge level scores?

5. Is there a difference between middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?
6. Is there a relationship between a principal's years of service at his or her current school and knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?
7. Is there a relationship between the percentage of special education students served in each principal's school and a principal's knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?
8. Is there a difference in knowledge scores among principals whose highest degree is a bachelor's, masters, or doctoral degree?
9. Is there a difference between knowledge scores of principals who have attended formal training regarding the discipline of special education students under IDEA '97 and those who have not?
10. Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of manifestation determinations?
11. Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments?
12. Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans?
13. Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of interim alternative educational settings?
14. Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards?

### *Significance of the Study*

Maintaining discipline and safety in American schools has become a major area of concern in the United States (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2001). Violence and other

unacceptable student behaviors are key considerations for school officials, parents, and policymakers nationwide. Even though violence as a whole has decreased in schools (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999), the concern from citizens has grown. Gallup polls of community members' attitudes toward public schools have “consistently found discipline to be a major concern, along with drugs, smoking, teenage pregnancy, fighting and gangs” (Fields, 2000, p. 74).

Violent crimes in schools, such as school shootings, are a major spectacle in the eyes of the public because of substantial coverage by the media. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Justice (1999), the government reported that in 1995, approximately one million students had actually observed another student with a gun in school. School officials have responded to the need to prevent such crimes through the development of crisis plans and the implementation of safety measures. The presence of uniformed police officers are considered commonplace in middle schools and high schools across the country. Because of the severity of violent crimes, zero-tolerance policies have been developed to provide school systems with a means of removing dangerous students from the educational system (Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Sautner (2001) reported that measures such as removal from school were common forms of discipline that principals used to address the problem of students in public schools who exhibited severe behavior problems. The Office for Civil Rights reported in 2000 that get-tough disciplinary measures often failed to meet sound educational principles and, in many cases, their application simply defied commonsense. This practice provides school officials with short-term solutions but does nothing to teach students how to change the behaviors that caused their removal (Maag, 2001).

Forms of discipline frequently used by school personnel such as removal from the educational environment and recurrent suspensions have been found to be a violation of students' rights under the IDEA. The courts long before the passage of IDEA '97 addressed litigation regarding discipline practices used by school systems to discipline special education

students. Court cases such as *Doe v. Maher* in 1986 and *Honig v. Doe* in 1988 resulted in the requirement of determining whether a relationship exists between the misbehavior and the student's disability. Litigation in other areas such as the use of reasonable punishments, the necessity of procedural safeguards, and the educational placement during due process proceedings, were also challenged in the court system before the implementation of IDEA '97 (*Honig v. Doe*, 1988; *Kaelin v. Grubbs*, 1982; *S-1 v. Turlington*, 1981).

A call for the balance of school safety and the rights of students with disabilities by school officials resulted in Congress enacting the IDEA '97 Amendments and including discipline provisions (Heumann & Hehir, 1997). According to the director of the Office of Special Education Program (1997), four basic themes run throughout the federal statute regarding discipline of eligible students under IDEA '97. These themes include:

1. All children, including children with disabilities, deserve safe, well-disciplined schools and orderly learning environments;
2. teachers and school administrators should have the tools they need to assist them in preventing misconduct and discipline problems and to address these problems, if they arise;
3. there must be a balanced approach to the issue of discipline of children with disabilities that reflects the need for orderly and safe schools and the need to protect the right of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education; and
4. appropriately developed IEP's with well developed behavior intervention strategies decrease school discipline problems. (p. 1)

The discipline provisions of IDEA '97 are the most controversial aspect of the law for school personnel responsible for disciplining students served in special education (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000). The law created comprehensive procedural rules designed to provide school personnel and parents with specific requirements for discipline procedures as well as an obligation to provide a free and appropriate education. These procedures include: (a) proactive

requirements of the IDEA designed to ensure that students with disabilities adhere to school rules, (b) provisions regarding removal of students from their current educational placement when the behavior significantly violates school discipline codes, and (c) requirements for the continuation of services for students with disabilities who are disciplined (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

The discipline provisions of IDEA '97 specifically addressed five areas that affect school personnel in the discipline process: (a) short-term disciplinary procedures, (b) functional behavior assessments, (c) manifestation determinations, (d) long-term disciplinary procedures, and (e) interim alternative educational settings (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

Short-term disciplinary removals for students served under IDEA may be used if they are also used to discipline nondisabled students. Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) are mandatory for students who are suspended more than 10 days in a school year. The IEP team of a student who exhibits behavior problems must address the problem in an IEP meeting, complete an FBA, and develop an appropriate Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). A manifestation determination is required for a student who is suspended past ten days in a school year, has a change of placement, or is placed in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for a weapon or drug offense (Hartwig & Reusch, 2000).

The discipline provisions of IDEA '97 are one of the most controversial issues for school administrators responsible for educating students with disabilities. The majority of school administrators consider that the dual discipline approach is not a fair method. One set of rules applies to regular education students and other discipline provisions under IDEA apply for special education students. The requirement to provide services during suspensions for students served in special education programs and not for regular education students is especially disturbing for school administrators. Cessation of services for regular education students who commit a zero-tolerance offense is required whereas a special education student who commits the same zero-tolerance offense must be provided all educational services through the local

education agency (Office of Special Education Programs, 1997). The complete termination or cessation of educational services is not an option for students with disabilities under the 1997 Amendments of IDEA (Council of Administrators of Special Education, 1997).

The role of the school administrator is significantly disparate and has been since the reauthorization of IDEA. School personnel including regular education teachers and principals are required to be involved in the educational planning of students eligible for special education services. The main function for a school principal is to maintain an orderly and safe environment that is conducive to learning. The IDEA '97 amendments make this endeavor much more challenging for administrators because of the requirements of the law. In order for principals to ensure that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education as mandated by federal law, it is essential they are knowledgeable of the discipline components of IDEA '97.

### *Definitions*

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used:

1. *Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)*: A plan of strategies and supports to prevent a student from displaying inappropriate classroom behaviors and teach ones that are socially acceptable. The IEP-Team develops the plan, which becomes part of the students IEP, based on information collected from a functional behavior assessment (Gartin & Murdick, 2001).
2. *Change in Placement*: For purposes of removal of a child with a disability from the child's educational placement, a change of placement occurs if (a) the removal is more than 10 consecutive school days or (b) the child is subjected to a series of removals that constitutes a pattern of exclusion (Wright & Wright, 2000).
3. *Child with a disability*: In general, the term means a child "(i) with mental retardation, hearing impairments, speech or language impairment, visual impairments,

- serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services” (Grzywacz, McEllistrem, & Roth, 2000, p. 355).
4. *Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)*: This landmark federal legislation, also known as P.L. 94-142, was passed in 1975 with the intention of providing handicapped children with a right to an education. It has been amended and is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Wright & Wright).
  5. *Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)*: Special education and related services that (a) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; (b) meet the standards of the state education agency; (c) includes an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the state involved; and (d) are provided in conformity with the individualized education plan of a student with a disability. FAPE is available to all children ages 3-21 with disabilities, including those who have been suspended and/or expelled (Wright & Wright).
  6. *Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)*: “A systematic process for describing problem behavior, and identifying the environmental factors and surrounding events associated with the problem behavior” (Office of Special Education Programs Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 1999, p.13).
  7. *Individual Education Program (IEP)*: The IEP constitutes a written statement of each special education student’s present level of educational performance, including how the disability affects the student’s involvement and progress in the general curriculum, a statement of annual goals including benchmarks or short-term

- objectives, and a statement of the special education and related services that will be provided to the student (Grzywacz et al., 2000).
8. *Individual Education Program Team (IEP-Team)*: A team of individuals who have knowledge of the student and his/her disability. The group is responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP of a child with a disability. A team must consist of the following: the student's parent(s)/ guardian(s), a special education teacher, at least one general education teacher, and interpreter of evaluation results, and a local education agency (LEA) representative (Wright & Wright).
  9. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*: A federal law mandating that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment with related and supplementary aids and services. The IDEA was amended in 1997 resulting in several changes to the law, including the addition of a discipline provision for eligible students (Wright & Wright).
  10. *Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES)*: An alternative placement for students with or without disabilities. School personnel may order a change of placement for a student with a disability to an alternative setting for suspension of less than 10 days or for up to 45 days if the student is in possession of drugs or weapons. The IAES must allow the student to participate in the general curriculum and continue to receive services included in the child's IEP, and includes services to address behavior problems (Gorn, 1999).
  11. *Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)*: To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a

- child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (Wright & Wright).
12. *Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative*: A person who is knowledgeable about the curriculum and has the ability to commit resources. Generally, the school principal or his/her designee serves as the LEA representative (Bateman & Bateman, 2001).
  13. *Manifestation Determination*: An analysis of the causal relationship between a student's disability and the misconduct for which he/she is being disciplined. Such reviews must be conducted when a student served in special education is being removed from school over 10 days or due to a drug or weapon charge; or if an appeal is made to a hearing officer to remove a child who is a danger or threat to himself or others (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).
  14. *Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)*: The principle agency in the Department of Education for administering and carrying out the IDEA and other programs and activities concerning the education of children with disabilities (Wright & Wright).
  15. *Out of School Suspension (OSS)*: A removal from the school for disciplinary purposes (Johns et al., 1997).
  16. *Special Education*: Specifically designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability (Grzywacz et al.).
  17. *Supplementary aids and services*: Aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate (Wright & Wright).

### *Limitations and Delimitations*

The study is limited to middle and high school principals in the Upper East Tennessee Educational Cooperative or otherwise known as UETEC schools. Very few principals from small school systems participated in the study.

### *Overview of the Study*

This study was divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study, as well as a statement of the problem, pertinent research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature related to the issues being addressed in this study. Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology and design. The findings are discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, the summary, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature and research related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and principals' knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA Amendments of 1997. The first section of Chapter 2 outlines the history of discipline in public schools as well as the history of education for students with disabilities. The second section reveals the dual discipline system and the role that principals' play in special education. Principals' preparation regarding special education and best discipline practices conclude the second chapter of this study.

#### *History of Discipline in Public Schools*

The primary goal of the establishment of an educational system in the United States was, according to Bear (1998), reflected in Thomas Jefferson's philosophy that democracy could be protected by creating a nation of independently minded, self-governing learners who truly understand that virtuous behavior is critical for democracy's survival. When Jefferson began his model of school learning, he was in favor of self-government for students and minimal school discipline. Bear pointed out that Jefferson quickly realized through his own nephew's expulsion from school because of a students' riot that rigorous regulations were necessary in order to maintain an orderly and beneficial educational system.

Discipline in public schools has definitely changed since Thomas Jefferson began his model of school learning. Historically, school discipline centered on corporal punishment methods such as smacking and the use of a cane. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, wooden canes were used to enforce discipline in the classroom. The leather strap was introduced

in 1850 along with the hickory switch that was often cut by the student in trouble. By 1890, the paddle was introduced and it was usually kept within sight behind the teacher's desk. The threat of these devices was used as a motivator for students to behave in school (Stewart, 1998).

School discipline refers to students complying with a code of behavior often known as the school rules. School rules have often been associated with standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behavior, and work ethics. The term may also be applied to the punishment that is the consequence of transgression of the code of behavior. For this reason, the use of school discipline often meant punishment for breaking school rules rather than behaving within the school rules. According to Black (1982), the theory of school discipline was to create a safe and happy learning environment in the classroom.

Many of the most frequent classroom discipline problems in schools are the same as those that have plagued teachers for centuries. Teasing, talking without permission, getting out of one's seat, disrespect toward teachers, and bullying are common misbehaviors exhibited by students. However, over the past decade, school personnel have dealt with student behaviors that are more violent in nature such as physical violence, vandalism, and drugs (Bear, 1998; Crone & Horner, 2000; Maag, 2001; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Zurkowski & Griswold, 1998).

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2004), 71% of public elementary and secondary schools experienced at least one violent incident during the 1999-2000 school year. Approximately 1.5 million violent incidents occurred in about 59,000 public schools that year. Thirty-six percent of public schools reported at least one violent incident to police or other law enforcement personnel during 1999-2000 (National Center for Educational Statistics).

Because of the increase in school violence, measures used in today's public schools to deter student misconduct such as detention, in-school suspension, writing penalties, revoking of privileges, and out-of-school suspension are not enough to prevent school violence. School systems across the nation have been forced to adopt zero-tolerance discipline procedures that

many times result in exclusion for students from the educational system (Bear, 1998). Under current federal law, any student who brings a weapon to school is subject to a one-year expulsion.

Research has shown (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2001) that historically the most common methods used to combat student misbehavior are punitive and often involve the use of out-of-school suspension. Out-of-school suspension has often been used for inconsistent reasons and although the practice has been found ineffective, it is the most widely used discipline action taken by school personnel.

As reported by the Office of Civil Rights (2000), an advancement civil rights project from Harvard University reported that more than 3.1 million students were suspended during the 1998 school year. The U.S. General Accounting Office (2001) stated that out-of-school suspension was by far the most frequently used form of discipline for serious misconduct infractions exhibited by all students. Fifteen percent of general education students received out-of-school suspension during the 1999-2000 school year and 17% of special education students were suspended for violating behaviors considered acts of serious misconduct. The study included four types of serious misconduct: violent behavior (including fistfights), drugs, weapons, and firearms (U.S. General Accounting Office).

According to Johns et al. (1997), administrators used out-of-school suspension for a variety of reasons but most often suspension was used for minor offenses. Their research reported on several studies from the past decade regarding suspensions. The review found that suspensions were used for serious misbehavior incidents only a fraction of the time.

Dupper and Bosch (as cited in Johns et al., 1997) found similar results in a study of reasons for suspension in a public school district in a midwestern town. The researchers collected data from 1988 to 1995. They found that “10% of total suspensions was for criminal activity; 2% was for physical confrontations with staff; 44% was for other behavior problems” (p. 4). Disturbingly, out of the 44% of suspensions for other behavior problems, the study

showed the behaviors to be nondangerous and actually minor. Many students were suspended for behaviors such as disruptive behavior, failure to follow reasonable directions, and verbal abuse of staff.

In another study cited in Johns et al. (1997), the Commission for Positive Change in the Oakland Public Schools issued a report in 1992 regarding many issues related to suspensions. Their findings showed that 92% of student suspensions were for nondangerous behaviors. Less than 5% of suspensions were the result of weapons, drugs, or other dangerous items. The majority of suspensions were due to defiance of authority, fighting, and tardiness.

In 1996, the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning reported findings from a study regarding suspensions in that state. They reported that 70% to 80% of suspensions had been for offenses in the following categories: physical or verbal assault, disrespect/defiance, and attendance. Safety was an issue in 2.3% of suspensions in rural districts, 2.4% of suspensions in suburban districts, and 6.5% of suspensions in urban districts (Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning, 1996).

Cooley (1995) in a report to the Kansas State Board of Education found that although teachers had related concerns about assault and weapons, those offenses were only a small portion of the reasons students were suspended or expelled. His findings indicated that disobedience was the cause of 23% of suspension, and fighting resulted in 22% of the suspensions.

Several researchers have suggested that punitive and exclusionary disciplinary practices were highly ineffective in changing or preventing further behavior problems (Bear, 1998; Constenbader & Markson, 1997; Maag, 2001; Sautner, 2001; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Maag noted the basis of this problem as being a misunderstanding of the terms discipline and punishment. Maag explained that discipline is “training that is expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement” (p.177). On the other hand, Maag found punishment to only decrease inappropriate behavior

temporarily. Therefore, by only suppressing a behavior there is no way to ensure that a student has learned the appropriate behavior to use.

B.F. Skinner (as cited in Maslow, 1970) discussed punishment in the following way: “The trouble is that when we punish a person for behaving badly, we leave it up to him or her to discover how to behave well, and then he or she can get credit for behaving well” (p. 62). Maslow’s hierarchy of needs suggested that the most successful people are those who become intrinsically motivated rather than those acting out of coercion.

When school personnel exclude students for inappropriate behavior, they are doing nothing to teach students how to act appropriately. The literature revealed that many students who have been suspended had actually been suspended more than once. Morgan-D'Atro, Northup, LaFleur, and Spera (1996) found in a study of suspensions at one large urban high school, that 58% of students had been suspended more than one time in a school year. A study in Oakland revealed that in one school year, 43% of suspended students were suspended again and 24 % were suspended multiple times (Johns et al., 1997). Constendbader and Markson (1997) studied 620 middle and high school students regarding suspensions. They found that 33% of students who had been suspended said the suspension was “not at all helpful” and that they “probably would be suspended again” (p. 76).

Racial disproportionality has also been consistently demonstrated in exclusionary discipline (Holloway, 2002; Johns et al., 1997; Office of Civil Rights, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). According to the Office of Civil Rights, a report issued by Harvard University stated that while African American children accounted for 17% of American public school children, they accounted for 32% of out-of-school suspensions. Skiba and Peterson reported that virtually every study over the past 25 years regarding suspension has shown a racial disparity and that African American students were typically suspended at a rate two or three times higher than White students.

The loss of important instructional time is one negative effect of the use of out-of-school suspension for discipline issues. Out-of-school suspension has been found not only to be ineffective but also quite harmful (Brock, Tapscott, & Savner, 1998; Constenbader & Markson, 1997; Johns et al., 1997; Morgan-D'Atro et al., 1996; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Brock et al. determined in 1998 that students who face exclusionary discipline have been found to be more at-risk for retention and other academic failures and students who are suspended are the ones who need to be in school the most. A correlation between student suspension/expulsion and failing grades caused by disciplinary actions was found by Safer (1986). In 2000, the Office of Civil Rights reported that children and communities are hurt through such exclusionary practices and furthermore, suspensions and expulsions can lead to “alienation from the educational process, hostility on the part of the child, and eventually dropping out of school” (n. p.).

Studies have shown that there are correlations between suspensions and dropout rates (Brock et al., 1998; Dwyer, 1997; Hyman & Perone, 1998; Johns et al., 1997; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Skiba and Peterson reported that more than 30% of sophomores who dropped out of school had previously been suspended. Research has consistently found that the more frequently a student has been suspended, the higher the likelihood that the student will drop out (Constenbader & Markson, 1997; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Office of Special Education Programs Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 1999). One study revealed that “Over 30% of high school sophomores who dropped out of school had previously been suspended, a rate of three times that of their peers” (Skiba & Peterson, p. 338).

Rutherford (as cited in Constenbader & Markson, 1997) stated, “Suspension is effective only if the environment from which the student is removed is more interesting and reinforcing than the environment to which the student is moved” (p. 60). Unfortunately, this is often not the case. Irwin Hyman, a professor of school psychology at Temple University, was interviewed by the advancement project (Office of Civil Rights, 2000) and stated, “It is patently absurd to use suspension as a punishment for truancy or class-cutting, as it simply forces children to do what

they want to do anyway” (Conflict and Need for Bonds section, para. 3). Johns et al. (1997) pointed out that many students may already have poor attendance, failing grades, and the desire to be out of school, so suspension may seem more of a reward than a punishment.

As reported by Brock et al. (1998), whereas suspensions and expulsions are used to remove students with behavior problems from the classroom, many times such disciplinary actions do more to aid the teachers than the students. Suspension out-of-school is a short-term fix and will actually do nothing to change a student’s negative behavior or teach the student how to behave appropriately (Constenbader & Markson, 1997). Even though research has shown suspensions and expulsions to be ineffective disciplinary techniques, they continue to be practiced by school systems across the country.

### *History of IDEA*

Access to public education for students with disabilities had been extremely limited before the enactment of The Education of Handicapped Act of 1970. Prior to the passage of this legislation, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provided federal money for students with disabilities in state schools for the blind, deaf, and retarded. The Act also created the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped that later became known as The Office of Special Education Programs (Katsiyannis et al., 2001).

The Education of the Handicapped Act was the first law in the history of education that exclusively addressed students with disabilities. The main purpose of EHA was to expand federal grant programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to allow funding for higher learning institutions to develop teachers' preparation programs. A year later came an amendment to the law that required all states that received federal funds to provide full educational opportunities for all students including students with disabilities. Opportunities for students with disabilities to receive an education were just beginning. The law was amended

again in 1975 and Public Law 94-142, otherwise known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, emerged (Katsiyannis et al., 2001).

According to Shrybman (1982), the passing of Public Law 94-142 was the first major federal effort to ensure that children with disabilities received a free appropriate public education. The law also provided protection of the rights of students and their parents as well as a funding mechanism for educating students with disabilities (Turnbull, 1986). As reported by Yell, Rogers, and Rogers (1998), there were six major principles found in the Education of All Handicapped Children Act:

1. To ensure that all handicapped children have available a free appropriate public education to meet their unique needs;
2. to ensure the rights of handicapped children and their parents, nondiscriminatory testing, the development of an educational program from a variety of sources of information, and due process rights;
3. to ensure that students with disabilities have an individualized and appropriate education;
4. to ensure students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive appropriate placement;
5. to offer due process protections by an impartial hearing officer; and
6. to allow parents participation and shared decision making in their child's educational program (p. 13-14).

In 1990, Public Law 94-142 became what is known today as the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The new legislation was a comprehensive law that not only provided supportive funding but also governed how students with disabilities were educated. Other specific changes to IDEA included funding mechanisms by which states obtain federal money, principles under which students with disabilities have to be educated, and procedural safeguards to ensure parental involvement in the educational programming of their child

(Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001). Turnbull and Turnbull listed the six major principles that clarified the changes of IDEA:

1. Zero reject: All students eligible for services under IDEA are entitled to FAPE. States must ensure that all students with disabilities, from ages 3-21 are identified, located, and evaluated. No eligible students can be excluded.
2. Protection in evaluation: All students must have a comprehensive individual evaluation to determine (a) whether the student has a disability under IDEA, (b) the student's need for special education and related services, and (c) the student's levels of educational performance for the planning of the IEP.
3. FAPE: Students determined eligible for services under IDEA have the right to receive a free appropriate public education and related services provided at the public's expense and to have those services mapped out in an individualized educational program.
4. Least restrictive environment: Students with disabilities are to be educated with their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.
5. Procedural safeguards: All eligible students with disabilities are guaranteed to receive FAPE and to have parents as equal participants in the special education process.
6. Parental participation: Parental consent is required before an initial evaluation is conducted, an initial placement for the student is made, or a reevaluation is requested. Due process is also available to parents when they are not satisfied with identification, evaluation, placement, or FAPE (p. 54).

As reported by Grzywacz et al. (2000), IDEA was amended again in 1994 as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 to create Public Law 103-382. The major addition to the law at this time was to give permission for school districts to use interim alternative educational placements for students with disabilities who brought weapons to school. The interim placement had to be determined by the IEP- team and if parents requested a due process

hearing, the student was to remain in the interim alternative educational placement until court proceedings were finalized unless the parents and the local educational agency agreed on a different placement.

The year of 1997 brought about another reauthorization of IDEA, known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA 1997). These amendments marked the first time in 22 years that the law, originally EHA, had been thoroughly reviewed and revised (Morrissey, 1998). According to the Office of Special Education Programs (1997), congress sought to strengthen IDEA through the reauthorization by meeting the following goals:

1. Strengthening the role of parents;
2. ensuring access to the general curriculum and reforms;
3. focusing on teaching and learning while reducing unnecessary paperwork requirements;
4. assisting education agencies in addressing the cost of improving special education and related services to children with disabilities;
5. giving increased attention to race, ethnic, and linguistic diversity to prevent inappropriate identification and mislabeling;
6. ensuring that schools are safe and conducive to learning; and
7. encouraging parents and educators to work out their differences by using nonadversarial means. (n. p.)

### *Dual Discipline Approach in Public Schools*

All administrators and teachers are faced with the challenge of implementing discipline procedures that are effective and meaningful for all students. Talking without permission, teasing, not being prepared for class, and bullying are common misbehaviors reported by teachers and administrators alike. The past decade has introduced behaviors considered violent

in nature such as threatening behavior, physical violence, vandalism, and drugs (Crone & Horner, 2000).

As reported by Johns et al. (1997), the most common forms of discipline used in public schools were in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. In-school suspension was most commonly used for minor infractions of the codes of conduct in schools such as coming to class late, being unprepared, or being disrespectful toward teachers and/or administrators. Out-of-school suspension was used for more severe infractions of school rules such as fighting, use of foul language, and possession of tobacco. Expulsion was used for behavior considered extreme such as the possession of drugs, alcohol, or weapons on school property.

The IDEA '97 Amendments included discipline provisions that have changed the way administrators and school personnel discipline students served in special education programs. Prior to IDEA '97, the statute only specifically addressed the issue of discipline in a provision that allowed school personnel to remove a child for possession of a weapon (Office of Special Education Programs, 1997). The addition of discipline provisions was a means to strike a balance between the rights of students with disabilities and the pressures facing administrators to ensure safe schools.

As noted by Hartwig and Ruesch (2000), IDEA '97 regulated the methods by which schools were allowed to discipline students with disabilities. By the passage of the '97 amendments, congress addressed a number of issues related to discipline ranging from a school official's ability to unilaterally change placements for disciplinary reasons, to outlining requirements for making manifestation determinations, to conducting functional behavior assessments, and to developing behavior intervention plans. Congress intended for the law to protect the rights of students with disabilities without imposing excessively burdensome requirements on schools. Congress has sought to help schools (a) respond appropriately to behavior problems of students with disabilities, (b) promote the use of appropriate behavioral

interventions, and (c) increase the likelihood of success and school completion for at-risk students (Hartwig & Ruesch).

The discipline provisions of IDEA '97 have brought about much confusion for school personnel responsible for disciplining students served under the law. Five areas of the statute significantly regulated the manner in which students with disabilities must be disciplined: (a) short-term disciplinary procedures, (b) functional behavior assessments, (c) manifestation determinations, (d) long-term disciplinary procedures, and (e) interim alternative educational settings. Hartwig and Ruesch (2000) listed the disciplinary procedures required under IDEA:

1. The IDEA requires that parents be given an opportunity to participate in all meetings with respect to identification, evaluation, educational placement, and provision of FAPE.
2. School officials can remove a student to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting or suspend the student for not more than 10 days in the same year to the extent that such alternatives are applied to students without disabilities.
3. School officials must complete a manifestation determination and a functional behavior assessment if a student is to be removed more than 10 consecutive school days or if the removal constitutes a change in placement.
4. Parents must be notified of all procedural rights under IDEA, including expanded disciplinary rights, no later than the day on which the decision to take disciplinary action is made.
5. School personnel may remove a student with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days if the student has brought a weapon to school or a school function, or knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function.

6. School personnel have the option of requesting a hearing officer to remove a student with a disability to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days if the student is substantially likely to injure self or others in the current placement.
7. In case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, the IEP team must consider, when appropriate, strategies to address the behavior.
8. IDEA requires that an agency reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability must ensure that copies of special education records are transmitted for consideration by appropriate authorities, except as limited by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. (pp. 2-3)

The IDEA '97 discipline amendments have mandated that school systems adopt a dual discipline approach when punishing students who violate the code of conduct. Discipline of disabled students was never addressed in federal law before Congress passed the new amendments. According to Maloney (1999), the Office of Special Education Programs in 1989 developed a policy letter that required school districts to continue providing educational services to students with disabilities who were subject to removal from school for more than 10 school days for disciplinary infractions. Maloney noted that this policy statement applied to every disabled student in the United States regardless of disability or whether the disability was a manifestation of the student's handicapping condition. The law also assigned the determination of whether the behavior the student exhibited was a manifestation of the student's disability to an individualized education program team and completely removed the responsibility from school administrators. The IEP team was also held accountable for the decision of educational services for the student and how the student might be able to progress in the general curriculum (Maloney).

It is important to understand that under the interpretation of IDEA '97, the removal of a disabled student from his or her current educational placement for 10 school days or fewer during the school year is an option that does not require a manifestation determination to be

conducted by school personnel. In addition, the discipline amendments do not necessitate the provision of educational services during a short-term removal that is defined as a suspension of 10 days or fewer in the same school year (IDEA, 1997). Neither the federal statute nor the final regulations impose absolute limits on the number of days that a disabled student can be removed from his or her current educational placement in a school year. The limitations from the statute only come into play if schools and parents are not able to work out an appropriate program or placement for a student with disabilities who has violated a school code of conduct (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

The main reason for Congress to implement the continuation of services for disabled students suspended more than 10 school days in a school year results from the uncertainty of whether repeated suspensions of 10 days or fewer constitutes a change of educational placement for the student. In 1988, the Office for Civil Rights (2000) outlined specific factors to consider in deciding if repeated suspensions or removals constituted a change in placement. These factors were incorporated in the final regulations of IDEA '97. The factors that should be considered in determining whether a series of removals has resulted in a significant change of placement include: (a) the length of each removal, (b) the proximity of the removals to one another, and (c) the total amount of time the student is excluded from school (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

When educators suspend students with disabilities for 10 days or fewer in a school year, then the full array of IDEA's procedural requirements are not mandatory. For suspensions of more than 10 school days in a school year, school personnel must comply with all procedural safeguards mandated by federal law. For the 11<sup>th</sup> day a student with disabilities is removed from school, school personnel, in consultation with the student's special education teacher, must convene an IEP meeting to determine the following: (a) educational services for the student that will allow the student to progress in the general curriculum, (b) determination of whether the behavior exhibited was a manifestation of the student's disability, and (c) the administration of a functional behavior assessment (WCASS, 2000).

As reported by Hartwig and Ruesch (2000), long-term disciplinary measures for students with disabilities also require school personnel to follow IDEA '97 discipline amendments. Many state laws specify grounds for which a school board may expel a student and outline a legal and procedural framework for making the determination. In many states, school boards are given full discretion in determining the length of an expulsion. Expulsion from school takes away a student's right to an education that is otherwise guaranteed by the state (WCASS, 2000). Expulsion for students with disabilities from public school is considered a change in placement and requires school systems to adhere to change of placement procedures under IDEA '97. A change of placement generally results when the individual educational plan is altered to the degree that substantial programmatic modifications are made or when the new educational program is not comparable to the existing program (Hartwig & Ruesch).

School officials who expel a student with a disability for more than 10 consecutive school days in a given school year are required to reconvene an IEP meeting to complete an FBA and manifestation determination and develop a behavior intervention plan. If the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, then school personnel may expel the student but educational services must be provided. The IEP team is also required to develop an interim alternative educational setting in order to implement a free appropriate education to which the student is entitled (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

School systems that use interim alternative education settings for disabled students have to assure to the statutory language of IDEA '97. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to determine the interim alternative educational setting and provide a free appropriate education. The IEP team can change the student's IEP to reflect the practicalities of a disciplinary setting such as the location, structure, and content. According to the IDEA (1997) regulations, the interim alternative educational setting must: (a) enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum, (b) provide services and modifications described in the current IEP that

will enable the student to meet IEP goals and objectives, and (c) provide services and modifications to address the behavior so the behavior does not recur.

Long-term disciplinary measures such as expulsion of a disabled student also accord the student with certain due process protections. These procedures include written notice of (a) the expulsion hearing sent in advance to the student and the parents of the student; (b) the reasons for consideration of expulsion, and the possibility that the hearing may result in the student's expulsion; (c) the statement that the student has a right to legal counsel; and (d) the explanation of the right to appeal the school's decision to a state educational agency and/or review by the state court (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

The discipline process is more than mere punishment. Local school boards have been accorded broad latitude in the construction of disciplinary rules. The concept of fairness of balancing the competing interest of students with disabilities and those served in regular education programs must be emphasized. A balanced approach is necessary in order for school systems to comply with IDEA '97. It is imperative that every student feels safe and knows they have the opportunity to learn. All students should be held accountable for their behavior but at the same time, all students have a right to an appropriate educational program (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

### *A Principal's Role in Special Education*

The challenges for principals regarding special education have never been greater than they are today. Federal legislation has addressed the need to safeguard the educational rights of all students. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has specified that students with disabilities must have access to the general education curriculum and participate in school-wide assessments. The *No Child Left Behind* legislation redefined kindergarten- through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade education with the primary goal of closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

The principal's role has evolved from being a building manager and student disciplinarian to an instructional leader of child-centered communities based on shared values and beliefs. He or she must have a coherent vision of the future and share a mission to educate all students. According to DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2002), principals are the key to shaping a positive school culture and effective school leaders exhibit characteristics of stewards and coaches in the development of a school culture of inclusive education. Effective principals encourage teacher leadership, team learning, flexibility, and collegial self-governance. They emphasize innovation, collaboration, and professional growth as well as maintaining a clear focus on powerful academic outcomes for all students. In a study of 32 schools implementing inclusive education, DiPaola and Walther-Thomas also found that administrative leadership was the most powerful predictor of positive teacher attitudes regarding inclusive education.

Research has disclosed a body of literature regarding effective school leadership. Principals who focus on instructional issues, who demonstrate administrative support for special education, and who provide high-quality professional development for teachers produce enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities and for others at risk for school failure. A study conducted by Peterson and Deal (as cited in DiPaola and Walther-Thomas, 2002) reported that building-level support from principals and general educators had a strong effect on all aspects of special education. The values and supportive actions of principals and general educators influenced special educators' sense of collegial support. The study implied that effective principals needed to ensure the diverse needs of students and their families through five major elements of school: (a) organization, (b) curriculum and instruction, (c) professional development, (d) climate, and (e) student assessment.

Effective school leaders are committed to the success of all students and collaborate with others to achieve a school of excellence. Skillful principals invest the time necessary to devise policies and procedures that facilitate classroom support and provide teachers the necessary means to assure that all students are successful. One of the most crucial challenges school

administrators face in schools today is ensuring appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Neither legislative mandates nor noble intentions can assure an appropriate educational opportunity for all students. Capable and caring educational leaders are the key to guarantee that no child is left behind (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

### *A Principal's Preparation Regarding Special Education*

Special education and its relationship to general education has not been clearly articulated in programs designed to prepare school administrators (Sirotnik & Kimball, 1994). Davis (1980) in his article *An Analysis of Principals' Formal Training in Special Education* posed the question, "Is much of the negativism frequently attributed to building principals regarding special education programs within their schools directly related to their feelings of inadequacy in these areas as a result of lack of exposure to the field?" (p. 94). Research indicated the inadequate exposure to special education issues found in principal preparation programs appeared to be a common link across the decades since federal law initially mandated special education services.

Special education issues are not generally a part of the coursework for administrators' preparation programs nor are direct experiences with this population and their diverse needs (Harlin-Fischer, 1998). In 1996, a study of Alabama school principals was conducted regarding their perceptions of the practice of inclusion in their schools. One of the questions posed to these administrators related to their formal preparation regarding special education issues. Only 3.5% of the respondents indicated their training was excellent; 53% indicated that their training was adequate; and 44.5% stated that their training was inadequate (Dyal, Flynt, & Bennett-Walker, 1996).

Numerous studies have specified that a significant portion of educational leaders perceive themselves as unprepared, ill equipped, and inexperienced to provide effective leadership in special education. A 1992 study by Aspedon revealed that 40% of principals surveyed

responded that they had never had any formal coursework in the area of special education. Langley (1993) surveyed South Carolina secondary school principals and noted that 75% stated they had no formal training in special education. Payne (1999) conducted a study of 128 school principals in Texas and discovered the majority of principals had no background in and very little college training in the area of special education. Bateman (1998) stated that administrators who have had only one introductory course in special education were still inadequately prepared to meet the challenges of serving children in special education programs. His argument was based on the fact that an introductory course in special education had the expectation of covering all issues related to the field in a single semester. Included in a course of this nature is the identification and definition of various developmental disabilities, methods of instruction for students with disabilities in both special and regular classrooms, and an awareness of federal and state regulations.

Inconsistencies exist regarding the knowledge and skills that should be included in a school administrator's preparation program. School law was perceived by many to be an essential element in the preparation of educational leaders (Cairns, 1995; Hillman, 1988; Hirth & Valesky, 1990; Hughes, Johnson & Madjidi, 1990; Lovette, 1997; Smith & Colon, 1998; Van Berkum, 1994). Because more and more lawsuits have been filed in the area of special education, the amount of time allocated to special education issues in law courses is detrimental to the preparation of educational leaders (Johnson & Bauer, 1992).

Hirth and Valesky (1991) examined the extent of legal issues pertaining to special education and the content taught in principals' preparation programs. They discovered that special education law received little, if any, coverage and the most common approach used by universities was through addressing special education litigation as a subpart of the general school law course. Of the universities that responded to the survey, 74% indicated that less than 10% of instructional time in the general school law course was allocated to legal issues related to special education (Hirth & Valesky, 1991).

Potential lawsuits in the area of special education often result from inappropriate implementation of legal requirements under IDEA. According to Langley (1993), 90% of principals surveyed indicated the primary way they learned about special education law was by making mistakes. The consequences principals have endured caused by administrative errors regarding special education vary with each individual principal. Principals have been demoted, assigned to another school, fired, and left with tarnished reputations. Trial- and error-learning experiences can carry extreme consequences that possibly could be avoided with improved principals' preparation programs aimed at special education issues (Bradley, 1999).

### *A Principal's Best Discipline Practices*

The principal plays an important leadership role in establishing school discipline by effective administration and by personal example. As instructional leaders, principals must promote teaching and assist with practices for effective school discipline. Principals of well-disciplined schools are usually highly visible and easily accessible in the time of need. Effective principals promote leadership by walking around the school throughout the school day greeting students and teachers and monitoring possible problem areas (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Discipline is one of the most challenging duties of a school principal and effective discipline consists of a climate of mutual respect, an environment conducive to learning, and by taking steps to ensure the safety of all students (Day, 2000).

Blasé and Blasé conducted a study in 1998 in which more than 800 teachers were interviewed from public elementary, middle level, and high schools in various regions of the United States. They were asked their perspectives of effective instructional leadership and their views of discipline. They were asked, by the use of open-ended questionnaires, to describe in detail principal's characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, and goals that influenced the school environment. The study revealed that principals who were power oriented and who wanted to control teachers with bureaucratic measures were not effective. The supportive, inquiry-oriented

leader who encouraged collegiality and reflective professional development and who assisted staff in discipline matters was more successful.

The involvement of parents and the community in discipline related issues is a best practice method for all principals. It is evident by legislation such as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and IDEA '97 that parental involvement is a national priority (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2002; IDEA, 1997). Research showed that well-discipline schools were those that had a high level of communication and partnership with the communities they served. Such schools integrated parental involvement in all aspects of the schools' daily operations and informed the communities of school goals and activities. Schools with parent and community involvement were more likely to experience a positive school climate and less likely to experience major discipline problems (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas).

The ability of a principal to obtain commitment from all staff members in establishing and maintaining appropriate student behavior is a critical factor when developing best practices of school-wide discipline programs. When principals develop rules, sanctions, and procedures with input from students, parents, and the community, a sense of ownership is ascertained and discipline issues are more easily resolved (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### *Introduction*

This chapter describes the methodology and procedures used in this study to determine school principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 and to determine what additional training opportunities may be needed to ensure school systems in the upper East Tennessee region are in compliance under IDEA. The chapter is organized into the following sections: research design, population, instrumentation and data collection, data analysis, and summary.

#### *Research Design*

This is a quantitative study designed to determine the knowledge levels of school principals from the upper East Tennessee region regarding the discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. Data for the study came from the use of a survey instrument developed in 2003 by Lyons who designed the instrument to test school principals' knowledge of discipline under IDEA '97. Descriptive statistics were used to organize, summarize, and report the data.

#### *Population*

The target population of this study consisted of middle and high school principals from the Upper East Tennessee Educational Cooperative or otherwise known as UETEC schools. The state Department of Education's directory of public schools in the upper East Tennessee region identified 100 middle and high school principals from this area.

The directory of public schools in upper East Tennessee provided a complete e-mail listing of all directors of schools as well as all middle and high school principals in the upper

East Tennessee region. An e-mail distribution list was compiled for each school system from the region that was used for this study. A letter was sent to each director of schools requesting support and permission to survey middle and high school principals in his or her school system. A copy of this letter is included as Appendix C.

### *Instrumentation*

The survey instrument was developed by Lyons (2003), special education director for Carter County Schools, as the basis for her own dissertation. This was the first time the instrument had been used in a formal study. I obtained written permission from the developer to make use of her instrument for the study (see Appendix B). The instrument consisted of 12 demographic questions and 35 knowledge-level questions. The focus of the instrument was to assess knowledge levels of basic recall, comprehension, and application in the five areas of discipline provisions found in IDEA '97. The five areas identified were: (a) manifestation determination, (b) interim alternative educational settings, (c) functional behavior assessments, (d) behavior intervention plans, and (e) general procedural safeguards.

The first step in developing the instrument consisted of reviewing the actual discipline provisions found in the law (IDEA, 1997) and regulations (IDEA, 1998). Based on the review, a list of factual statements was devised regarding the five areas of provisions. The provisions in the law relating to Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) resulted in a greater listing of factual statements than manifestation determination, interim alternative educational settings, and procedural safeguards (Drasgow & Yell, 2001; Gartin & Murdick, 2001; Gorn, 1999).

The factual statements provided the basis for the second step of the instrument's design. The statements were used in each of the five areas of knowledge to develop multiple-choice questions. According to Thorndike (1997), "The multiple-choice item is the most flexible of the objective item types" (p. 453). The multiple-choice items were written to measure recall of

knowledge, comprehension, or application. The survey instrument used in this study resulted in 27 multiple-choice questions consisting of four answer options. Questions 1 through 27 of the knowledge portion of the survey represent these areas.

The next step of the instrument design consisted of eight scenario questions that were based on the list of factual statements regarding the five areas of provisions. Factual statements were used to develop situations that arise in schools regarding the disciplining of students with disabilities. The scenario questions were developed in order to assess the ability of those taking the test to apply knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA '97 in specific situations. For ease of scoring, yes/no questions were written for the scenarios that represented the last eight questions of the survey instrument.

The knowledge section of the questionnaire contained 35 questions pertaining to the five areas of discipline provisions found in IDEA '97. Manifestation determination consisted of questions 1, 5, 8, 14, 18, 23, and 29; functional behavior assessment contained questions 2, 4, 10, 16, 19, 22, and 32; behavior intervention plan included questions 3, 6, 11, 13, 26, 27, and 33; interim alternative educational setting was composed of questions 7, 15, 20, 21, 24, 30, and 35; and general procedural safeguards consisted of questions 9, 12, 17, 25, 28, 31, and 34. The 47-item survey instrument can be found as Appendix E.

The validity of the instrument was determined through a test-retest pilot study by Lyons (2003), the developer of the testing instrument. Fifty-eight students in graduate school programs in the College of Education at East Tennessee State University participated in the pilot study. Forty-six of those students were currently employed in a school setting. The instrument contained 53 multiple-choice and 15 yes/no questions based on the discipline provisions of IDEA '97. Data from the pilot study were quantified and entered into a computer data file using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 11.0), and also into the Lertap 2.0 program for item analysis. Data were analyzed in three phases in order to determine a final testing instrument of 35 questions. The design and refinement of this instrument followed all pertinent

steps recommended in the literature; the resulting product was considered both valid and reliable for assessing knowledge levels of the discipline provisions of IDEA '97 (Lyons).

To obtain a knowledgeable score for middle and high school principals, special education directors from the upper East Tennessee region were given the opportunity to review the testing instrument and provide their professional opinions of what they considered a knowledgeable score. Special education directors reported 30 correct responses out of a possible 35 would indicate middle and high school principals are knowledgeable of discipline provisions of IDEA '97.

### *Data Collection*

A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, a request for permission and participation in the research project, as well as a copy of the survey/testing instrument was e-mailed to all directors of schools in Northeast Tennessee (see Appendices C & E). From the directors contacted, 9 out of a possible 17 gave permission to administer the instrument in their school systems. The school systems that did not respond were sent a 2<sup>nd</sup> email requesting participation in the study. A follow-up telephone call was also made to the directors of the school systems that did not respond. School systems that granted permission were then contacted by telephone to schedule a date and time for the instrument to be administered to principals in their respective systems. The researcher or the researcher's designee administered the instrument at a regularly scheduled principals' meeting in the nine school systems that granted permission. Of the principals, 74 out of a possible 100 completed the survey/testing instrument. The letters to the principals eliciting participation in the study can be found as Appendix D.

The incentive for directors of schools to encourage the participation of principals in the study was the offering of a summary of the survey results for each school district. Directors were also extended the opportunity of inservice training in the key areas of the discipline

provisions that were identified as weak areas for their systems. Inservice training requested will be provided by the Tennessee Department of Education, division of special education, management consultant.

Access to the returned surveys was restricted to the researcher only; this protected confidentiality of all participants. Every attempt was made to maintain all respondents' confidentiality. Participants were identified by school systems only. The informed consent document was not used as requested by the IRB board that determined the use of the document could link the survey/testing results to a particular participant. Directors were given the option of obtaining an executive summary of the results as well as results for their particular system if requested. All statistical analyses were presented in summary form (no specific person or facility was identified).

### *Data Analysis*

The findings of this research project were analyzed using the SAS System for Elementary Statistical Analysis that is used to analyze data (Schlotzhauer & Littell, 1997). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographics of the population. The demographics included in the analysis were education, experience, current position, current total enrollment, special education enrollment, special education programs, and personal knowledge of discipline of special education students. Following are the research questions and the methods used to make determinations.

Research Question #1: Are school principals in the upper East Tennessee region knowledgeable of the IDEA '97 discipline provisions when disciplining students eligible for special education under IDEA? To examine school principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of IDEA '97, descriptive statistics in the form of total score mean of all five areas of the discipline provisions and standard deviation were used.

Research Question #2: Which, if any, specific provisions of the IDEA '97 discipline amendments are least understood by school principals in the upper East Tennessee region? The mean and standard deviation of each of the five areas were used to determine which, if any, were least understood by the school principals.

Research Question #3: What additional training opportunities do principals in the upper East Tennessee region perceive they need to effectively implement the IDEA '97 discipline amendments? To answer this research question, the frequency counts and percentages for question #10 of the survey questionnaire were used.

Research Question #4: Is there a difference in principals' perceptions of their level of knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA '97 and their knowledge level scores? Frequency counts and percentages for question #4 of the survey questionnaire were used to answer this research question.

Research Question #5: Is there a difference between middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions? Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

Research Question #6: Is there a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and knowledge score of IDEA '97 discipline provisions? Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between principals' years of experience and knowledge score of IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

Research Question #7: Is there a relationship between the percentage of special education students served in principals' schools and principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions? The total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the percentage of special education students enrolled in each principal's school and principals' knowledge scores of IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

Research Question #8: Is there a difference in knowledge scores among principals whose highest degree is a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree? Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a difference between principals' knowledge score of IDEA '97 discipline provisions and educational levels.

Research Question #9: Is there a difference between knowledge scores of principals who have attended a formal training regarding the discipline of special education students under IDEA '97 and those who have not? The median knowledge score was used to determine if there was a difference between principals who indicated they had attended a formal training regarding discipline under IDEA '97 and those who had not attended a formal training.

Research Question #10: Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of manifestation determinations? Total mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of manifestation determinations.

Research Question #11: Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments? Total mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments.

Research Question #12: Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans? Total mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans.

Research Question #13: Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of interim alternative educational settings? Total mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of interim alternative educational settings.

Research Question #14: Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards? Total mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards.

### *Summary*

This chapter included a description of the study, population, research design, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis that were used in this research study. This was a quantitative study designed to explore school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions and to determine what additional training opportunities, if any, school systems needed to provide for school principals to ensure compliance under IDEA. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data, analysis of the data, and relevant findings. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the data, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and for further research.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to determine school principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. It is imperative that school administrators have a working knowledge of the discipline provisions when disciplining students served in special education programs. As instructional leaders, it is crucial for school principals to ensure compliance under IDEA '97 and avoid the possibility of costly litigation for school systems.

The study's population consisted of principals in 17 school systems in upper East Tennessee. The schools systems are identified as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. Table 1 presents the number of principals by school system, the number of study participants by school system, and the response rate percentage. Those who are indicated by the number 0 under the number of participants column did not participate in the study because the director of the school system did not provide permission for the survey/testing instrument to be administered. The study was based on a specific population of middle and high school principals and not a random sample of principals; therefore, descriptive statistics were used.

During the summer of 2004, survey instruments were administered to 74 principals. Demographic information pertaining to position, preparation for disciplining special education students, and professional training needs was obtained. Simple descriptive statistics were used for initial analysis of data. In addition, a testing instrument containing knowledge-level questions regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA '97 was administered. The overall return rate was 74%.

Table 1

*Number of Participants by School System*

System	<i>n</i> Principals	<i>n</i> Study Participants	Response Rate
1	3	3	100.0
2	13	11	84.6
3	13	12	92.3
4	2	0	.0
5	16	15	93.4
6	2	0	.0
7	8	0	.0
8	1	0	.0
9	7	7	100.0
10	3	3	100.0
11	2	1	50.0
12	3	0	.0
13	1	0	.0
14	1	0	.0
15	12	11	91.6
16	2	0	.0
17	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Total	100	74	74.0

### *Analysis of Research Questions*

Data for this study were compiled from the results of the survey/testing instrument and various statistical methods were used to analyze the data. The organization of this chapter follows the order of the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

#### *Research Question #1*

Are school principals in the upper East Tennessee region knowledgeable of the IDEA '97 discipline provisions when disciplining students eligible for special education under IDEA? To examine East Tennessee school principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of IDEA '97, the form of total score mean and standard deviation was used. Information pertaining to principals' knowledge is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Knowledge Level Scores and Participants by Assignment*

Participants	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% of Correct Responses
Total Participants	74	22	9.3	60
Middle School	51	22	8.71	63
High School	23	22	7.9	63

Seventy-four participants responded to the study. Fifty-one participants represented middle school principals and 23 represented high school principals. The total score mean of 21 correct responses out of a total 35 resulted in a total knowledge score of 60% for the group as a whole.

A satisfactory passing score indicated by special education directors from East Tennessee would consist of 30 correct responses out of a possible 35. The total population of school principals from the upper East Tennessee region missed approximately 13 questions on the knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument. Principals from this region lacked knowledge in all five areas of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. These areas were (a) manifestation determinations, (b) functional behavior assessments, (c) interim alternative educational settings, (d) behavior intervention plans, and (e) general procedural safeguards.

*Research Question #2*

Which if any, specific provisions of IDEA '97 discipline amendments are least understood for school principals in the upper East Tennessee region?

The knowledge-level testing instrument consisted of 35 knowledge-based questions regarding the five areas of specific provisions of discipline amendments found in IDEA '97. The specific provisions consisted of (a) manifestation determinations, (b) functional behavior assessments, (c) behavior intervention plans, (d) interim alternative educational settings, and (e) general procedural safeguards. Out of the 35 questions, 7 questions pertained to each of the specific provisions. Information regarding principals' knowledge of the specific provisions can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

*Summary of Knowledge Levels of Specific Discipline Provisions*

Specific Provisions	<i>Mdn</i>	% of Correct Responses
Manifestation Determinations	5	71
Functional Behavior Assessments	4.5	64
Behavior Intervention Plans	4	57
Interim Alternative Educational Settings	5	71
General Procedural Safeguards	5	71

As shown in Table 3, manifestation determinations, interim alternative educational settings, and general procedural safeguards were the areas that principals were most knowledgeable regarding the specific provisions. In these areas, principals correctly answered five questions out of a possible seven. Behavior intervention plans and functional behavior assessments were the specific provisions least understood by school principals with correct responses of 4 and 4.5.

Tables 4 through 8 pertain to each specific provision and provide a breakdown of participants and correct responses for each area of the discipline amendment found in IDEA '97.

Table 4

*Manifestation Determination Provision and Number of Correct Responses*

Discipline Provision	<i>N</i> Participants	<i>N</i> Correct Responses
Manifestation Determination	1	0
	7	1
	7	2
	7	3
	11	5
	16	6
	17	7

As shown in Table 4, 74 participants responded to the questions pertaining to manifestation determinations of the knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument. The lowest response was one participant with zero questions answered correctly and the highest

response of 17 participants answered all items correctly in the manifestation determination area of the provisions.

Table 5

*Functional Behavior Assessment Provision and Number of Correct Responses*

Discipline Provision	<i>N</i> Participants	<i>N</i> Correct Responses
Functional Behavior Assessments		
	4	0
	6	1
	8	3
	6	4
	16	5
	13	6
	8	7

As shown in Table 5, 74 participants responded to the questions pertaining to functional behavior assessments of the knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument. The lowest response was from four participants with zero questions answered correctly and the highest response of eight participants answered all items correctly in the functional behavior assessment area of the provisions. A number of principals (16) correctly responded to five questions out of a possible seven.

Table 6

*Behavior Intervention Plan Provision and Number of Correct Responses*

Discipline Provision	<i>N</i> Participants	<i>N</i> Correct Responses
Behavior Intervention Plans	3	0
	7	1
	13	2
	5	3
	17	4
	13	5
	12	6
	4	7

As shown in Table 6, 74 participants responded to the questions pertaining to behavior intervention plans of the knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument. The lowest response was three participants with zero questions answered correctly and the highest response of four participants answered all items correctly in the functional behavior assessment area of the provisions. A number of principals (17) correctly responded to four questions out of a possible seven.

Table 7

*Interim Alternative Educational Setting Provision and Number of Correct Responses*

Discipline Provision	<i>N</i> Participants	<i>N</i> Correct Responses
Interim Alternative Educational Settings	6	1
	7	2
	10	3
	7	4
	10	5
	21	6
	13	7

As shown in Table 7, 74 participants responded to the questions pertaining to interim alternative educational settings of the knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument. The lowest response was 6 participants with one question answered correctly and the highest response of 13 participants answered all items correctly in the interim alternative educational setting area of the provisions. A number of principals (21) correctly responded to six questions out of a possible seven.

Table 8

*General Procedural Safeguards Provision and Number of Correct Responses*

Discipline Provision	<i>N</i> Participants	<i>N</i> Correct Responses
General Procedural Safeguards	1	0
	3	1
	9	2
	9	3
	14	4
	16	5
	10	6
	12	7

As shown in Table 8, 74 participants responded to the questions pertaining to general procedural safeguards of the knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument. The lowest response was one participant with zero questions answered correctly and the highest response of 12 participants answered all items correctly in the general procedural safeguard area of the provisions. A number of principals (16) correctly responded to five questions out of a possible seven.

General procedural safeguards, functional behavior assessments, and behavior interventions plans were the discipline provisions indicated by school principals as areas in which they need additional training. Manifestation determination and interim alternative educational settings were the most knowledgeable areas for school administrators.

*Research Question #3*

What additional training opportunities do principals in the upper East Tennessee region perceive they need to effectively implement the IDEA '97 discipline amendments?

To answer this research question, frequency count of total correct responses and percentages from question #11 of the demographic section on the survey/testing instrument was examined. Demographic question #11 of the survey/testing instrument stated, “What areas of IDEA ’97 discipline provisions do you feel you need additional training?” Participants were given six options for additional training opportunities and were instructed to check all the items that applied to their particular situation. The six options included the following: (a) no additional training needed, (b) manifestation determinations, (c) interim alternative educational settings, (d) functional behavior assessments, (e) behavior intervention plans, and (f) general procedural safeguards. Information pertaining to additional training opportunities perceived needed by school principals is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

*Principals' Perceptions of Additional Training Needs Regarding IDEA '97 Discipline Provisions*

Areas of Training	N Responses	%
No Additional Training Needed	4	.05
Manifestation Determination	45	60
Interim Alternative Setting	46	62
Functional Behavior Assessment	48	64
Behavior Intervention Plan	46	62
General Procedural Safeguard	52	70

As shown in Table 9, principals’ perception of training needs regarding IDEA ’97 discipline provisions included all five areas of the specific provisions. The highest area indicated as needing further training was general procedural safeguards with 70% of respondents

reporting. Only 4 participants out of the total 74 indicated they needed no additional training in disciplining special education students. The results of research question #3 coincide with research question #2. General procedural safeguards, functional behavior assessments, and behavior intervention plans were the discipline provisions identified by school principals as areas in which they needed additional training.

*Research Question #4*

Is there a difference in principals’ perceptions of their level of knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA ’97?

To answer this research question, total score median, frequency count, and percentages for demographic question #5 of the survey/testing instrument were used. Demographic question #5 stated “How would you define your knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA ’97?” Respondents were requested to define their knowledge of discipline of special education students by checking one of the following responses: poor, fair, good, or excellent. Information pertaining to research question #4 is shown in Table 10.

Table 10

*Principals' Perceptions of Level of Knowledge of IDEA '97 Discipline Provisions*

Level of Knowledge	<i>N</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	%
Poor	3	24	4
Fair	42	14	56
Good	28	28	37
Excellent	1	33	1

As shown in Table 10, there was a difference between principals' perception of their level of knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions and their knowledge level scores except for the knowledge levels indicated as good and excellent. Twenty-eight participants reported their knowledge level was good with a median knowledge level score of 28. One respondent noted his or her knowledge level of IDEA '97 discipline provisions was excellent with a knowledge score of 33 out of a possible score of 35. The 42 participants who indicated their knowledge level was fair had a median score of 14. Principals reporting their knowledge level as poor had a median score of 24.

One principal from the population indicated his or her knowledge level was excellent with a median score of 33. The remaining population of principals either indicated their knowledge level as poor, fair, or good with the highest median score of 28. A satisfactory knowledge-level median score would be 30 correct responses out of a possible 35. Based on the above data, principals in the upper East Tennessee region need additional training in all five areas of IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

#### *Research Question #5*

Is there a difference between middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine the relationship between middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Information pertaining to research question #5 is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

*Middle and High School Principals' Knowledge Level of IDEA '97 Discipline Provisions*

Level of Assignment	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Maximum Correct	Minimum Correct
Middle School	51	21.05	8.71	34	7
High School	23	22.43	7.95	33	8

As shown in Table 11, there was not a significant difference between middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Middle school principals had a mean score of 21.05 and high school principals had a mean score of 22.43. High school principals scored slightly higher than middle school principals did. Based on the above data, principals did not have a proficient score concerning discipline of students served in special education programs. Additional training opportunities regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions are needed for both middle and high school principals.

*Research Question #6*

Is there a relationship between a principal's years of service at his or her current school and knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine the relationship between a principal's years of service at his or her current school and a principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Information relating to research question #6 is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

*Principals' Years of Experience and Knowledge Level of IDEA '97 Discipline Provisions*

Years of Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Maximum Correct	Minimum Correct
0 – 5	38	24.13	6.92	33	9
6 – 10	18	16.55	8.89	34	7
11 – 20	20	20.44	8.85	33	8

Table 12 represents the analysis of data concerning principals' years of experience and knowledge level scores regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions. As presented in the data, there was a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge scores regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience scored the lowest out of the three groups. Principals with 0 to 5 years of experience scored higher than principals with 6 to 10 years of experience as well as principals with 11 to 20 years of experience. As indicated by the data, all three groups of principals need additional training opportunities to ensure compliance under IDEA '97.

*Research Question #7*

Is there a relationship between the percentage of special education students served in each principal's school and a principal's knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?

The total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the percentage of special education students enrolled in each principal's school and principals' knowledge score of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Information relating to research question #7 is presented in Table 13.

Table 13

*Percentage of Special Education Students Enrolled and Principals' Knowledge of IDEA '97 Discipline Provisions*

% of Special Education Students Enrolled	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Maximum Correct	Minimum Correct
5 – 15	63	21.93	8.51	34	7
15 – 20	10	18.00	7.81	30	8
21 – 30	1	28.00	--	28	28

Table 13 represents the percentage of special education student enrollment and principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Also included is the maximum and minimum number of correct responses to the survey/testing instrument for each area. Principals with 5% to 15% of special education student enrollment scored higher than those with 15% to 20% enrollment. The highest score obtained was in the 21% to 30% range of special education student enrollment with only one principal reporting with a mean score of 28. Based on the above analysis, there was a relationship between the percentage of special education students enrolled in principals' schools and principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Principals in all three categories need additional training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions. A knowledgeable score is considered a score of 30 correct responses out of a possible 35.

*Research Question #8*

Is there a difference in knowledge scores among principals whose highest degree is a bachelor, masters, or doctoral degree?

Total score mean and standard deviation were also used to determine if there was a difference between principals' knowledge scores of IDEA '97 discipline provisions and educational levels. Table 14 pertains to information regarding research question #8.

Table 14

*Educational Level Compared to Principals' Knowledge of IDEA '97 Discipline Provisions*

Educational Level	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Masters	66	20.59	8.47
Doctorate	8	28.87	2.99

As shown in Table 14, principals with a master's degree scored lower on the knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument than did principals with a doctorate degree. Based on the above analysis, there was a difference between principals' knowledge score of IDEA '97 discipline provisions and educational levels. Principals with master's and doctoral degrees need additional training regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA '97. There were no principals who indicated they had a bachelor's degree.

*Research Question #9*

Is there a difference between knowledge scores of principals who have attended formal training regarding the discipline of special education students under IDEA '97 and those who have not?

The median knowledge level score and percentages were used to determine if there was a difference between knowledge of principals who had attended formal training regarding

discipline under IDEA and those who had not. Table 15 pertains to information regarding research question #9.

Table 15

*Knowledge Score of Principals' Who Have Attended Formal Training Regarding the IDEA '97 Discipline Provisions and Those Who Have Not*

Level of Knowledge	<i>N</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	% of Participants
Attended Formal Training	53	26	72
Did Not Attend Formal Training	21	27	28

As shown in Table 15, principals who had attended a formal training regarding the discipline of students served in special education under IDEA '97 obtained a median knowledge level score of 26. Principals who indicated they had not attended a formal training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions obtained a knowledge level score of 27. Based on the above analysis, there is no difference between knowledge level scores of principals who had attended a formal training of IDEA '97 discipline provisions and those who had not. Based on the median scores for both groups, additional training opportunities are needed for all principals to ensure compliance under IDEA '97.

Research questions #10 through #14 pertain to principals' knowledge of the five individual areas of IDEA '97 discipline provisions and the principal's years of experience at his or her current school. The five areas of provisions include: (a) manifestation determinations, (b) functional behavior assessments, (c) behavior intervention plans, (d) interim alternative educational settings, and (e) general procedural safeguards. The knowledge section of the survey/testing instrument consisted of 35 questions with 7 questions pertaining to each of the five areas. Tables 16 through 20 contain the data analyzed to determine if there is a relationship

between principals' knowledge of specific discipline provisions and principals' years of experience. Total score mean and standard deviation were used to report the findings.

*Research Question #10*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of manifestation determinations?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the principals' years of experience at their current school and principals' knowledge of manifestation determinations. Table 16 pertains to information regarding research question #10.

Table 16

*Knowledge of Manifestation Determinations and Principals' Years of Experience*

Years of Experience	# of Questions	N	M	SD
0 – 5	7	38	5.39	1.66
6 – 10	7	18	3.66	2.14
11 – 20	7	18	4.05	2.23

As shown in Table 16, principals with 0 to 5 years of experience correctly answered approximately five questions out of a possible seven in the specific discipline provision of manifestation determinations. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience answered approximately four questions correctly as well as did principals with 11 to 20 years of service. The population of principals with 0 to 5 years of experience was substantially higher than the other groups; this could be a factor in determining the relationship between knowledge of IDEA

'97 discipline provisions and years of experience. Principals in all three categories of years of experience need additional training opportunities in the specific discipline provision of manifestation determinations.

*Research Question #11*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between principals' number of years of experience at their current school and principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments. Table 17 pertains to information regarding research question #11.

Table 17

*Knowledge of Functional Behavior Assessments and Principals' Years of Experience*

Years of Experience	# of Questions	N	M	SD
0 – 5	7	38	4.50	1.82
6 – 10	7	18	3.16	2.47
11 – 20	7	18	3.66	1.97

Table 17 indicates that principals with 0 to 5 years of experience correctly answered approximately four to five questions out of a possible seven in the specific discipline provision of functional behavior assessments. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience answered approximately three questions correctly and principals with 11 to 20 years of experience answered approximately four questions correctly. Again, the population of principals with 0 to 5

years of service was substantially higher than the other two groups; this could be a factor in determining the relationship between knowledge of the specific discipline provision of functional behavior assessments and years of experience. As indicated in the analysis of research question #11, principals from all three groups need additional training opportunities regarding the specific discipline provision of functional behavior assessments.

*Research Question #12*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between principals' number of years of experience at their current school and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans. Table 18 pertains to information regarding research question #12.

Table 18

*Knowledge of Behavior Intervention Plans and Principals' Years of Experience*

Years of Experience	# of Questions	N	M	SD
0 – 5	7	38	4.36	1.63
6 – 10	7	18	2.77	1.83
11 – 20	7	18	3.61	2.09

As shown in Table 18, principals with 0 to 5 years of experience correctly answered approximately four questions out of a possible seven in the specific discipline provision of behavior intervention plans. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience answered approximately

three questions correctly and principals with 11 to 20 years of experience answered approximately four questions correctly. Again, the population of principals with 0 to 5 years of service was substantially higher than the other two groups; this could be a factor in determining the relationship between knowledge of the specific discipline provision of behavior intervention plans and years of experience. Based on the above analysis, there was a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and knowledge of functional behavior assessments. All three groups of principals need additional training opportunities in the specific discipline provision of behavior intervention plans.

*Research Question #13*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of interim alternative educational settings?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the principals' number of years of experience at their current school and principals' knowledge of interim alternative educational settings. Table 19 pertains to information regarding research question #13.

Table 19

*Knowledge of Interim Alternative Educational Settings and Principals' Years of Experience*

Years of Experience	# of Questions	N	M	SD
0 – 5	7	38	5.21	1.45
6 – 10	7	18	3.68	2.09
11 – 20	7	18	4.46	2.02

According to the data analyzed in Table 19, principals with 0 to 5 years of experience correctly answered approximately five questions out of a possible seven in the specific discipline provision of interim alternative educational settings. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience answered approximately four questions correctly as well as did principals with 11 to 20 years of experience. As stated in the above analysis regarding the specific discipline provisions, the population of principals with 0 to 5 years of experience was substantially higher than the other two groups; this could be a determinant in the relationship between principals' knowledge of the specific discipline provision of interim alternative educational setting and years of experience. Based on the above analysis, there was a relationship between principals' number of years of experience and knowledge of interim alternative educational settings. All three groups of principals need additional training regarding the specific discipline provision of interim alternative educational settings.

#### *Research Question #14*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship a between a principal's number of years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards. Table 20 pertains to information regarding research question #14.

Table 20

*Knowledge of General Procedural Safeguards and Principals' Years of Experience*

Years of Experience	# of Questions	N	M	SD
0 – 5	7	38	4.84	1.55
6 – 10	7	18	3.55	1.97
11 – 20	7	18	4.44	1.91

As shown in Table 20, principals with 0 to 5 years of experience correctly answered approximately five questions out of a possible seven in the specific discipline provision of general procedural safeguards. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience answered approximately four questions correctly as well as did principals with 11 to 20 years of experience. Again, the population of principals having 0 to 5 years of experience was considerably higher than the other two groups. Based on the above analysis, there was a relationship between principals' years of experience at their current schools and knowledge of general procedural safeguards. All three groups of principals need additional training in the specific discipline provision of general procedural safeguards.

CHAPTER 5  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Summary of the Study*

The primary goal of this study was to determine school principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 and to determine what additional training opportunities might be needed to ensure that school systems in the upper East Tennessee region are in compliance under IDEA. The population consisted of middle and high school principals employed in 17 school systems in upper East Tennessee.

The instrument used in the study consisted of two sections. The first section consisted of 12 items designed to elicit demographic information from participants. The second section contained 35 knowledge-based questions regarding the five specific provisions found in IDEA '97 discipline amendments.

The survey/testing instrument was administered to 74 principals out of a possible 100. The instrument was administered at scheduled principals' meetings in school systems in upper East Tennessee.

Data from the survey/testing instrument were analyzed using the SAS System for Elementary Statistical Analysis version 8.0 and were presented in Chapter 4. Frequency count of correct responses on the testing instrument, mean knowledge score, standard deviation from the mean, and median score were used to analyze and report the data.

*Summary of the Findings*

Fourteen research questions were addressed. The following section addresses the findings obtained from the data analysis that was related to the research questions.

### *Research Question #1*

Are school principals in the upper East Tennessee region knowledgeable of IDEA '97 discipline provisions when disciplining students eligible for special education under IDEA?

Out of a possible 100, 74 middle and high school principals completed the testing instrument regarding their knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. A return rate of 74% was obtained. The majority (53%) was middle school principals and the remaining (21%) were high school principals.

The total score mean of 22 correct responses out of a total 35 resulted in a total knowledge score of 60% for principals in the upper East Tennessee region. A knowledgeable score as indicated by special education professionals would consist of 90%; therefore, principals from upper East Tennessee need additional training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

### *Research Question #2*

Which, if any, specific provisions of IDEA '97 discipline amendments are least understood for school principals in the upper East Tennessee region?

The knowledge level section of the survey/testing instrument consisted of 35 knowledge-based questions regarding the five specific provisions found in IDEA '97 discipline amendments. The specific provisions consisted of manifestation determinations, functional behavior assessments, behavior intervention plans, interim alternative educational settings, and general procedural safeguards. Out of the total 35 questions, 7 questions pertained to each of the five specific provisions.

Total knowledge score median and percentages were used to determine knowledge levels of principals in each of the five provisions. The areas in which principals were most knowledgeable included manifestation determinations, interim alternative educational settings, and general procedural safeguards with a median score of five out of a possible seven correct responses. Specific provisions in which principals were less knowledgeable included functional

behavior assessments with a median score of 4.5 and behavior intervention plans with a median score of 4. Principals from the upper East Tennessee region need additional training in all five areas of discipline provisions found in IDEA '97.

### *Research Question #3*

What additional training opportunities do principals in the upper East Tennessee region perceive they need to effectively implement IDEA '97 discipline amendments?

Question # 11 of the demographic section of the survey/testing instrument was used to determine principals' perception of training needs regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA '97. The question stated, "In what areas of IDEA '97 discipline provisions do you feel you need additional training?" Participants were given six options for additional training opportunities and were instructed to check all the items that applied to their particular situations. The six options included the five specific provisions found in IDEA '97 and one additional option indicating no additional training was needed.

The highest area designated by principals as needing further training was in the area of general procedural safeguards with 52 participants (70%) responding to the specific provision whereas 48 principals (64%) indicated the need for additional training in the area of functional behavior assessments and 46 principals (62%) specified the need for training in the areas of interim alternative educational settings as well as behavior intervention planning. Only four principals (5%) reported no additional training was needed. The majority of principals from the upper East Tennessee region indicated the need for additional training in all five areas of specific discipline provisions of IDEA '97.

### *Research Question #4*

Is there a difference between principals' perceptions of their level of knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA '97?

Total score median, frequency count, and percentages from demographic question #5 of the survey/testing instrument were used to answer research question #4. Demographic question #5 asked principals to define their knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions by indicating knowledge as poor, fair, good, or excellent. One principal indicated his or her knowledge level of IDEA '97 was excellent with a median score of 33. Twenty-eight principals (37%) indicated their knowledge level of IDEA '97 was good with a median score of 28 out of a possible 35 correct responses. Forty-two principals (56%) indicated their knowledge level as fair with a median score of 14. Three principals (4%) indicated their knowledge level was poor with a median score of 24. Based on the responses of the principals' perception of their level of knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions, principals from upper East Tennessee need additional training in all five areas of the specific provisions.

#### *Research Question #5*

Is there a difference between middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine a possible relationship between middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Fifty-one middle school principals had a mean score of 21.05 and the high school principals had a mean score of 22.43. There was a relationship between middle and high school principals' knowledge. Based on the mean scores of both groups, middle and high school principals need additional training regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA '97.

#### *Research Question #6*

Is there a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and knowledge score of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. Principals with 0 to 5 years of experience had a mean score of 24.13; principals with 6 to 10 years of experience had a mean score of 16.55; principals with 11 to 20 years of service had a mean score of 20.44. There was a difference between years of experience and knowledge scores between principals with 0 to 5 years of experience and principals with 6 to 10 years of experience. There was also a difference between principals with 6-10 years of experience and those with 11-20 years of experience. Based on the analysis of knowledge level scores, principals from the upper East Tennessee region need additional training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

#### *Research Question #7*

Is there a relationship between the percentage of special education students served in principals' schools and principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions?

The total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between the percentage of special education students enrolled in each principal's school and principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. One principal indicated 21% to 30% of special education students were enrolled in his or her school and scored the highest out of the three groups with a mean score of 28. Principals serving 5% to 15% of special education students had a mean score 21.93; those with a special education enrollment of 15% to 20% had a mean score of 18. There was a difference between the percentage of special education student enrollment in principals' schools and principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions but the difference generated from only one principal out of a possible 74. Based on the data, principals from the upper East Tennessee region need additional training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions regardless of the percentage of special education enrollment.

### *Research Question #8*

Is there a difference in knowledge scores among principals whose highest degree is a bachelor's, masters, or doctoral degree?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a difference in knowledge scores regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA '97 among principals whose highest degree was a bachelor's masters, or doctoral degree. The majority of the population (66%) consisted of principals with a master's degree with a mean score of 20.59. Only eight participants indicated a doctoral degree with a mean score of 28.87. Based on the data analyzed, there was a difference between knowledge scores among principals who had a doctoral degree and those who had a master's degree. There were no principals who indicated they had a bachelor's degree. Based on the data, principals with a master's degree as well as principals with a doctorate degree need additional training when disciplining students eligible for special education services under IDEA '97.

### *Research Question #9*

Is there a difference between knowledge scores of principals who have attended a formal training regarding the discipline of special education students under IDEA '97 and those who have not?

The median knowledge score was used to determine if there was a difference between principals who indicated they had attended a formal training regarding discipline under IDEA '97 and those who had not attended a formal training. A knowledge score median of 27 was obtained by principals who had attended a formal training of IDEA '97. Principals who indicated they had not attended a formal training of discipline under IDEA '97 obtained a median score of 26. Based on the data, principals from upper East Tennessee need additional training regarding discipline of special education students.

The remaining five research questions pertained to the relationship between principals' years of experience and knowledge levels in each of the five specific provisions found in IDEA '97. Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if a relationship existed between a principal's year of experience at his or her current school and knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

#### *Research Question #10*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of manifestation determinations?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between a principal's number of years of experience at his or her current school and knowledge of manifestation determinations. Principals with 0 to 5 years of experience had a mean score of 5.39; principals with 6 to 10 years of experience had a mean score of 3.66; and principals with 11 to 20 years of experience had a mean score of 4.05. Principals with 0 to 5 years of experience had the highest mean score of the three groups. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience had the lowest mean score. Based on the analysis, there was a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge of manifestation determinations. Principals with 6 to 10 years of service need to be targeted for additional training opportunities regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

#### *Research Question #11*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between a principal's number of years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments. The total mean knowledge score for

principals with 0 to 5 years of experience was 4.5 or the highest mean score for the discipline provision of functional behavior assessments. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience had a mean score of 3.1 or the lowest out of the three groups and those with 11 to 20 years of experience scored in the middle range with a mean score of 3.6. There was a relationship between principals' knowledge of functional behavior assessments and principals' years of experience at his or her current school. All three groups of principals should be targeted. Principals with 6 to 10 years of service should be targeted for additional training opportunities regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

#### *Research Question #12*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between a principal's number of years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans. Principals with 0-5 years of experience had the highest score of 4.36. Principals with 0 to 5 years of experience had the highest knowledge score with a mean score 4.36. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience had the lowest mean score of 2.77 and those with 11 to 20 years of experience had a mean score of 3.61. Based on the analysis of the data, there was a difference between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge of behavior intervention plans. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience should be targeted for additional training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

#### *Research Question #13*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of interim alternative educational settings?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship a between principal's years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge of interim alternative educational settings. According to the data analyzed for this research question, there was a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and knowledge of interim alternative educational settings. Principals with 0 to 5 years of experience obtained a mean knowledge score of 5.21. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience acquired a mean knowledge score of 3.68 and those with 11 to 20 years of experience obtained a mean knowledge score 4.46. Again, principals with 6 to 10 years of experience should be targeted for additional training opportunities regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions

#### *Research Question #14*

Is there a relationship between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards?

Total score mean and standard deviation were used to determine if there was a relationship between a principal's years of experience at his or her current school and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards. Principals with 0-5 years of experience had the highest score of the population with a mean score of 4.85. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience had the lowest mean knowledge score of 3.55 and principals with 11 to 20 years of experience had a mean knowledge score of 4.44. There was a difference between the number of years of experience and principals' knowledge of general procedural safeguards. Principals with 6 to 10 years of experience should be targeted for additional training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions.

### *Conclusions*

Based on the analysis of the findings from this study, there appeared to be a need for training for school principals regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA '97. The following conclusions emerged as a result of this study:

Conclusion 1: Principals participating in the study in the upper East Tennessee region are not knowledgeable of IDEA '97 discipline provisions. A total knowledge score from the survey/testing instrument resulted in a 60% knowledge-level score out of a possible 100%. A knowledge-level score determined by special education professionals would consist of principals correctly answering 30 questions out of a possible 35 questions on the knowledge section of the instrument.

Conclusion 2: Principals participating in the study in the upper East Tennessee region need additional training regarding specific discipline provisions of IDEA '97. Areas least understood by school administrators included general procedural safeguards, functional behavior assessments, and behavior intervention plans.

Conclusion 3: Principals participating in the study with 6 to 10 years of service were the least knowledgeable group of principals with a consistent lack of knowledge in all five areas of discipline provisions.

Conclusion 4: The majority of principals (56%) participating in the study from the upper East Tennessee region perceived their knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions as poor. Additional training opportunities regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions are needed for all principals from this region.

Conclusion 5: Principals participating in the study in the upper East Tennessee region perceived they need additional training in all five areas of discipline provisions of IDEA '97.

Conclusion 6: Among those participating in the study, middle and high school principals' knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions were similar to one another.

Conclusion 7: Principals participating in the study with 15% to 20% of special education student enrollment were less knowledgeable than principals with 5% to 15% and 21% to 30% enrollment.

Conclusion 8: Principals participating in the study with a doctorate degree were more knowledgeable of IDEA '97 discipline provisions than those with a master's degree were.

Conclusion 9: Of the principals participating in the study, 28% had not attended a formal training regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA '97.

Conclusion 10: Principals participating in the study who indicated they had attended a formal training regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions had a lower knowledge score than principals who indicated they had not attended a formal training.

#### *Recommendations for the Improvement of Practice*

The following recommendations are made based on the analyses conducted of the survey/testing instrument regarding IDEA '97 discipline amendments.

1. Area universities should incorporate IDEA '97 discipline amendments in principals' preparation programs.
2. Area universities should offer a class specifically addressing discipline of students served in special education programs.
3. In lieu of university classes, area universities could put together teams of professionals knowledgeable of IDEA '97 who could provide intensive training for principals, assistant principals, and teachers.
4. Area universities should employ the survey/testing instrument in principals' preparation programs to determine what types of courses could be offered to future educational leaders.

5. Special education directors in Northeast Tennessee could combine resources and provide a regional training opportunity for school administrators regarding IDEA '97 discipline amendments.
6. Local school systems should provide training regarding effective discipline techniques to regular education teachers as well as special education teachers pertaining to IDEA '97 discipline amendments.
7. Local school systems should make use of the Tennessee Department of Education Division of Special Education management consultants regarding various training opportunities for administrators and teachers.
8. Training opportunities for school principals in the upper East Tennessee region should focus on how principals apply the discipline provisions to real-life situations.
9. School systems in Northeast Tennessee should provide training for principals regarding IDEA '97 discipline provisions throughout the school year.
10. Principals who fall in the 6 to 10 years of experience range especially need to be targeted for training.
11. Principals in Northeast Tennessee need to take the initiative to be better prepared for disciplining students eligible for special education programs by reading current literature in the field, conducting research, and networking with other administrators regarding IDEA '97 discipline amendments.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Because of the number of students served in special education programs in public schools and the propensity of society to seek litigation to solve educational dilemmas, it is imperative that school administrators obtain training regarding appropriate discipline of special education students. Additionally, Congress is in the process of reauthorizing the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act and there have been various proposed changes to the discipline provisions. The following recommendations are made for further research:

1. This study could be replicated in other portions of the state.
2. Future studies might include qualitative research in which the researcher could interview those special education directors with school administrators who exemplify a thorough understanding of IDEA '97 discipline amendments resulting in a strong school system that effectively educates students with disabilities.
3. Future studies might involve giving the same testing instrument as used in this study to general and special educators to make comparisons about knowledge levels of discipline of students served in special education programs.
4. The instrument should be used in an experimental study to assess personnel's knowledge before and after specific instruction on the subject.
5. The instrument should be administered to school personnel who are designated by the school principal to attend IEP meetings and make decisions concerning the discipline of students served in special education programs.
6. A study should be conducted regarding the knowledge of IDEA '97 discipline provisions among principals who have participated in due process proceedings regarding the discipline of a special education student.
7. Dependent upon the upcoming reauthorization of IDEA, the test instrument might have to be revised to reflect the current law.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Document

*EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY*

**Institutional Review Board**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ginger R. Woods

TITLE OF PROJECT: School Principals' Knowledge of Discipline Provisions of The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act in the Upper East Tennessee Region.

This Informed Consent will explain the research project in which I am seeking your voluntary participation. It is important that you read the material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer. You may contact me, my dissertation director, or the ETSU Institutional Review Board, at the number provided below if you have questions.

THE PURPOSE: I intend to survey high school and middle school principals regarding their knowledge of discipline provisions of The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act and determine what additional training opportunities may be needed to ensure school systems are complying with IDEA and students with disabilities are receiving a free appropriate public education in which they are entitled.

DURATION: The survey instrument should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

PROCEDURES: The instrument used in this study contains multiple-choice and yes/no questions. The questions are written to measure general knowledge, comprehension, and application of the discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. Please do not write your name on the survey. When you finish, please give the completed instrument to the researcher or researcher designee. The researcher or designee will collect the original consent forms before administering the survey instrument.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: No risks or discomforts should be associated with this research, nor is there any direct benefit or compensation to volunteer participants. Any potential benefit to the participant would arise from that individual's reflection upon the items contained on the survey instrument and his or her personal reaction to those items.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION: There are some potential benefits, which may accrue to school systems regarding training in the areas identified by the survey results.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Subject's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:** If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Ginger R. Woods at XXX-xxx-xxxx or Dr. Nancy Dishner XXX-xxx-xxxx. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6134 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in the researcher's personal work office in a locked cabinet for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the East Tennessee State University/V.A. Medical Center Institutional Review Board, the Food and Drug Administration, and the ETSU Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis will have access to the study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

**COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT:** East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any injury, which may happen as a result of your being in this study. They will not pay for any other medical treatment. Claims against ETSU or any of its agents or employees may be submitted to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be settled to the extent allowable as provided under TCA Section 9-8-307. For more information about claims call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board of ETSU at 423/439-6055.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** The nature demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to me. Your study records will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

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SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER/ DATE

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SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR /DATE

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SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (If applicable)/DATE

APPENDIX B  
Letter of Permission

November 18, 2003

Ginger Woods  
Washington County Department of Education  
405 West College Street  
Jonesborough, TN 37569

I am writing in response to our phone conversation regarding the use of the testing instrument I developed for my own study. You have my permission to use the testing instrument in your study. Good luck with your dissertation.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Jeri Nave Lyons

APPENDIX C

Director's Letter

September 3, 2004

Dear Director of Schools,

I am a doctoral candidate at East Tennessee State University with a major in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. I am conducting a study regarding principals' knowledge of discipline provisions of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. The purpose of this study is to assess principals' knowledge of the discipline provisions and to determine what additional training is needed to ensure principals in the Upper East Tennessee region are in compliance with the federal statute.

I would respectfully request your permission to survey the high school and middle school principals in your system. Your permission, cooperation, and support are very important to this study and are greatly appreciated. A copy of the survey instrument is attached for your information. I would greatly appreciate you completing the information at the bottom of this form and either returning it back to me through email or by faxing it to me at 753-1149.

Thank you for your time and response to this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (423) 753-1100 or by email at [woodsg@wcde.org](mailto:woodsg@wcde.org). The results of this study will be available to you upon your request.

Sincerely,

Ginger Woods  
Special Education Supervisor  
Washington County Schools

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Yes, I am providing my permission for you to survey the principals in my school system

No, I prefer my school system to be excluded from this survey

I would like to receive a copy of the executive summary of this research project

Yes     No

## APPENDIX D

### Administrator's Cover Letter

Dear Administrator,

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in a research project that I am conducting as part of my doctoral work at East Tennessee State University. For my dissertation, I will be surveying principals in the Upper East Tennessee region regarding their knowledge of discipline provisions of The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA '97). My study will be of a quantitative nature and will involve the use of a survey instrument designed to test principals' knowledge levels of discipline provisions of IDEA '97.

I am currently a Special Education Supervisor and work closely with principals in my system. Therefore, I realize that your time is valuable and that you already have far many things to do. However, I am convinced that the survey instrument will provide data to determine training needs in the area of special education discipline for school systems in the East Tennessee region.

The survey instrument will be administered at a principals' meeting in your school system. Please understand that by responding to the survey you are in agreement to participate in the project. Participation is voluntary and there will be no consequences for non-participation. Your responses to the survey instrument will be completely confidential. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at XXX-xxx-xxxx or XXX-xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

Ginger R. Woods

APPENDIX E

Survey Instrument

**Survey of Knowledge about the Discipline Provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

**Amendments of 1997**

Please complete the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Unless otherwise specified, the questions pertain to students who are served in special education programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA '97).

The following acronyms may be used throughout the survey:

IEP = Individual Education Plan

IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**1. What school system are you currently employed?**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Bristol City      | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Hamblen County  | <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Newport City      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Carter County     | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Hancock County  | <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Rogersville City  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Coker County      | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Hawkins County  | <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Sullivan County   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Elizabethton City | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Johnson City   | <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Unicoi County     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Greene County     | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Johnson County | <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Washington County |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Greenville City   | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Kingsport City |  |

**2. What is your current assignment as principal?**

- 1. high school principal
- 2. middle school principal

**3. How long have you served as principal in your current school?**    \_\_\_\_ (years)    \_\_\_\_ (months)

**4. Approximately how many students are enrolled in your school?**    \_\_\_\_

**5. How would you define your knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA '97?**

- 1. poor
- 2. fair
- 3. good
- 4. excellent

**6. My training for serving students with disabilities has been through: (check all that apply)**

- 1. I have had no training.
- 2. special education certification
- 3. general education classes but not certified
- 4. in-service training/staff development
- 5. individual initiatives through reading and research
- 6. other: please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Approximately how many special education students are served in your school?**    \_\_\_\_\_

**8. To what extent are special education students integrated into the regular education program? (check one)**

- 1. None are integrated
- 2. Only a few special education students are integrated
- 3. Some special education students are integrated
- 4. Most special education students are integrated
- 5. All special education students are integrated

**9. What special education programs are available at your school? (check all that apply)**

- 1. There are no special education programs available at my school.
- 2. comprehensive development program (CDC)
- 3. resource program
- 4. multi-handicapped program
- 5. behavior management program
- 6. full integration into the regular program (inclusion)
- 7. other: please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Have you attended a formal training regarding the discipline of students served in special education under IDEA '97?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**11. What areas of the IDEA '97 discipline provisions do you feel you need additional training? (check all that apply)**

- 1. No additional training is needed.
- 2. manifestation determination
- 3. interim alternative educational settings
- 4. functional behavior assessment
- 5. behavior intervention plan
- 6. general procedural safeguards

**12. The highest degree you have earned is:**

- 1. Bachelor of Science Degree
- 2. Masters Degree
- 3. Doctorate Degree

**The following 35 questions pertain to your knowledge of the Discipline Provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. Please complete the questions to the best of your knowledge.**

**1. Which of the following best defines a manifestation determination review?**

- 1. a review to determine whether a student must have a behavior intervention plan
- 2. a review to determine whether a change of educational placement is necessary
- 3. a review to determine whether there is a relationship between a student's disability and his/her misbehavior
- 4. a review to determine whether a student maybe expelled for misbehavior

**2. A functional behavior assessment is used to:**

- 1. determine when a student needs a change of educational placement
- 2. determine when a student may be suspended.
- 3. determine when a student must have a manifestation determination review
- 4. determine when and why a student misbehaves

- 3. Which of the following best defines a behavior intervention plan?**
- 1. series of consequences for a student who misbehaves frequently in school
  - 2. a behavior change program that includes multiple strategies to change a student's negative behaviors to ones that are positive
  - 3. a series of rewards to give a student for acting appropriately
  - 4. a behavior program with strict rules to control behavior
- 4. IDEA '97 mandates that a functional behavior assessment must include:**
- 1. parental information
  - 2. classroom observations
  - 3. behavior rating scales
  - 4. IDEA does not define the necessary components of a functional behavior assessment
- 5. A manifestation determination must be conducted:**
- 1. anytime a student served in special education is suspended
  - 2. when a student served in special education is suspended over ten days in a school year
  - 3. anytime a student served in special education has a functional behavior assessment
  - 4. when a student served in special education needs a new behavior intervention plan
- 6. Which of the following may be included in a behavior intervention plan?**
- 1. social skills instruction
  - 2. consequences for negative behaviors
  - 3. setting, event, and antecedent interventions
  - 4. any of the above
- 7. Who determines a student's interim alternative educational setting?**
- 1. the student's parents
  - 2. the student's IEP team
  - 3. the special education director
  - 4. the student's teachers
- 8. Which of the following must be reviewed during a manifestation determination?**
- 1. the student's IEP
  - 2. the student's placement
  - 3. the student's current evaluations
  - 4. all of the above
- 9. A student who is currently being evaluated for special education services:**
- 1. may not be suspended
  - 2. does not have disciplinary protection under the IDEA
  - 3. has disciplinary protections under the IDEA
  - 4. may be suspended only after the completion of a functional behavior assessment
- 10. According to IDEA '97 the intent of conducting a functional behavior assessment is to:**
- 1. make a special education eligibility determination
  - 2. choose an educational placement
  - 3. develop a behavior intervention plan
  - 4. determine when a student may be suspended
- 11. According to IDEA '97 when must a behavior intervention plan be developed for a student?**
- 1. any time a student is suspended
  - 2. when a student has a zero tolerance offense
  - 3. when a student fails a grade
  - 4. all of the above

**12. A principal has the unilateral authority to:**

- 1. expel a student for 180 days without services for a zero tolerance offense
- 2. choose the interim alternative setting
- 3. suspend a student up to 10 school days
- 4. make a manifestation determination

**13. The focus of a behavior intervention plan should be:**

- 1. punishment
- 2. control
- 3. proactive
- 4. rewards

**14. If an offending behavior is found not to be a manifestation of the student's disability:**

- 1. the student's IEP must be revised
- 2. the student may not be suspended
- 3. the student must stay in his/her current education placement
- 4. the student may be disciplined like any other student served in general education programs

**15. Which of the following is required before a student is placed in an interim alternative educational setting?**

- 1. a due process hearing
- 2. an IEP Team meeting
- 3. completion of new evaluation data
- 4. the student must commit a zero tolerance offense

**16. In considering "ABC" data for a functional behavior assessment, "ABC" means:**

- 1. action, behavior, cumulation
- 2. acting badly counts
- 3. antecedent, behavior, consequence
- 4. none of the above

**17. If a school system has no knowledge that a student may have a disability:**

- 1. the student may receive the same disciplinary actions as any other student
- 2. the student may be suspended only after a manifestation determination review
- 3. the student must have a behavior intervention plan before receiving any disciplinary action
- 4. the student must receive a full evaluation for special education services

**18. The procedure in which the relationship between a behavior and the student's disability is determined is called:**

- 1. functional behavior assessment
- 2. IEP team meeting
- 3. manifestation determination review
- 4. due process hearing

**19. According to IDEA '97 a functional behavior assessment must be conducted in all of the following instances except:**

- 1. when a student is suspended five school days
- 2. when a student commits a zero tolerance offense
- 3. when a student is suspended for 10 consecutive days
- 4. when a student has a series of short-term suspensions that accumulate to 10 school days

**20. Which of the following is not immediately allowed when a student is found in possession of a controlled substance:**

- 1. call to law enforcement authorities
- 2. place the student in an interim alternative setting for 45 days
- 3. call an IEP Team meeting
- 4. expel the student for 180 school days

**21. A student must have access to the general curriculum and all services listed in the IEP:**

- 1. during any suspension
- 2. when ordered by a hearing officer
- 3. in an interim alternative education setting
- 4. none of the above

**22. Which of the following is not included in a functional behavior assessment?**

- 1. observation data
- 2. information from the IEP
- 3. information from other students
- 4. parental information

**23. IDEA '97 requires which of the following for a zero tolerance offense:**

- 1. automatic expulsion for 180 school days
- 2. a manifestation determination review
- 3. a full psychological evaluation
- 4. suspension for 45 days

**24. The IEP team is responsible for which of the following:**

- 1. making a three-day suspension
- 2. referring to a juvenile judge
- 3. determining educational placement during a long-term suspension
- 4. none of the above

**25. If a student is suspended over 10 days, then on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of suspension:**

- 1. no action is necessary
- 2. educational services must be provided
- 3. the student has a new eligibility category
- 4. an IEP team meeting must be held

**26. If school personnel do not follow a behavior intervention plan and a student has a serious behavioral offense:**

- 1. the school may demand a change of placement
- 2. the behavior may be found to be a manifestation of the disability
- 3. an interim alternative education setting is necessary
- 4. new evaluation data is necessary

**27. According to "best practice" which of the following is not appropriate for a behavior intervention plan:**

- 1. social skills instruction, rewards for meeting behavior goals, and loss of privileges for misbehavior
- 2. social skills instruction, rewards for meeting behavior goals, and suspension up to 10 days for misbehaviors.
- 3. rewards for meeting behavior goals, counseling, and loss of privileges for misbehaviors
- 4. loss of privilege, suspensions for misbehaviors, and no proactive intervention

**The following questions contain scenarios regarding the discipline of students served in special education. Please use your knowledge of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 to answer the questions.**

**28.** A student has had a functional behavior assessment and has a behavior intervention plan to include multiple strategies such as social skills training and counseling. The student is eligible under the category of learning disabled. The student has been making passing grades in the general curriculum with resource for English. The student pulls a five-inch knife on two other students and threatens to kill them. **Which of the following would not be true?**

- 1. a manifestation determination review must be held
- 2. the student may be removed to an interim alternative education setting for 45 calendar days
- 3. the student may be removed from school for 180 days without educational services
- 4. the student's functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan must be reviewed

**29.** Based on the information given in #28, would you consider the behavior a manifestation of the student's disability?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**30.** Amy is an eighth-grade student who was sexually abused as a child. She is eligible for special education services under the category of emotionally disturbed. She has received special education services for several years. She has been placed in a self-contained behavior modification classroom due to aggressive behaviors. Her behavior intervention plan includes strategies such as: social skills instruction, role-playing, counseling, and cognitive behavioral interventions.

Amy brings a gun to school, which is found by her teacher. At the manifestation determination review, the behavior is found to be a manifestation of her disability. School personnel want to move Amy to a more restrictive alternative setting for 45 days. The setting will provide Amy with all services in her IEP, as well as ones to further address her violent tendencies. Amy's parents say she can remain in her current school because her behavior was a manifestation of her disability.

According to IDEA '97, may the school demand an interim placement that is more restrictive even though the behavior is a manifestation of her disability:

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**31.** Carol is a student served in special education. She has problems socially and is diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome. Carol has a behavior intervention plan. She has been doing well in school, but one day becomes angry with her teacher and kicks her. The teacher falls and sprains her ankle. The principal suspends Carol for five school days. She had been suspended for two days previously in the school year. Is this suspension allowed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**32.** Steve is a fourth-grade student served in special education. He has a history of behavior problems. School personnel have conducted a functional behavior assessment and have developed a behavior intervention plan. He has been doing well in school for several months. However, during the last month he has been exhibiting new problem behaviors. He has been suspended nine school days this year. Steve misbehaves again, which warrants another three-day suspension. The principal says that another IEP Team meeting does not need to be held because the school has done all they need to do by having a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan. The principal wants to proceed with the three-day suspension and not have another IEP Team meeting to review and/or revise the behavior intervention plan.

Is the principal taking the correct action?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

- 33.** Julie is a student served in special education with a history of behavior problems. She had a functional behavior assessment two years ago and school personnel have been following the same behavior intervention plan for one year. She has been having more serious behavior problems lately. In an IEP Team meeting, her special education teacher says a new functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan are needed.

Is the special education teacher correct in making this suggestion?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

- 34.** Susie is an eighth-grade student who has only marginally passed from grade to grade. She has no history of behavior problems at school, but the teachers who have had Susie are familiar with her academic difficulties. Because Susie is a sweet, likeable student, teachers have modified her grades and assignments over the years, which have allowed her to pass. Susie's mother always attends parent/teacher conferences and asks the teachers for suggestions to help Susie. The teachers offer suggestions and discuss modifications. Susie's mother and her seventh-grade teacher discussed having Susie evaluated for a learning disability, but a formal referral to special education was never made. Susie's seventh and eighth-grade teachers have discussed her problems among themselves and with the principal. They feel she has "some problems in processing information." A group of eighth-grade girls are caught selling prescription drugs (which are considered a controlled substance). Susie is one of the girls caught in possession of the drugs.

Does Susie have disciplinary protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 as a child suspected of having a disability?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

- 35.** Kathy is a high school student with a learning disability in written expression. She has been served in special education programs for several years. She currently has general education classes with inclusion services in English. Kathy is on track to graduate with a regular diploma. One day a teacher finds Kathy with a bag of cocaine on school grounds. Law enforcement authorities are called and Kathy has been suspended five days when an IEP Team meeting is held.

During the meeting the team agrees this zero tolerance offense is not a manifestation of Kathy's disability. The team decides Kathy will attend a mental health program for 45 days, which will include a focus on substance abuse problems, along with general and special education classes. After the 45 days, Kathy will return to her home school where she will attend the classes listed on her IEP. She will also continue to have counseling services.

Will Kathy be in an appropriate interim alternative educational setting?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

## APPENDIX F

### Survey Instrument With Corresponding Answers

#### Survey of Knowledge about the Discipline Provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

##### Amendments of 1997

Please complete the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Unless otherwise specified, the questions pertain to students who are served in special education programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA '97).

The following acronyms may be used throughout the survey:

IEP = Individual Education Plan

IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**The following 35 questions pertain to your knowledge of the Discipline Provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. Please complete the questions to the best of your knowledge.**

**1. Which of the following best defines a manifestation determination review?**

- 1. a review to determine whether a student must have a behavior intervention plan
- 2. a review to determine whether a change of educational placement is necessary
- 3. a review to determine whether there is a relationship between a student's disability and his/her misbehavior
- 4. a review to determine whether a student maybe expelled for misbehavior

**2. A functional behavior assessment is used to:**

- 1. determine when a student needs a change of educational placement
- 2. determine when a student may be suspended.
- 3. determine when a student must have a manifestation determination review
- 4. determine when and why a student misbehaves

**3. Which of the following best defines a behavior intervention plan?**

- 1. series of consequences for a student who misbehaves frequently in school
- 2. a behavior change program that includes multiple strategies to change a student's negative behaviors to ones that are positive
- 3. a series of rewards to give a student for acting appropriately
- 4. a behavior program with strict rules to control behavior

**4. IDEA '97 mandates that a functional behavior assessment must include:**

- 1. parental information
- 2. classroom observations
- 3. behavior rating scales
- 4. IDEA does not define the necessary components of a functional behavior assessment

**5. A manifestation determination must be conducted:**

- 1. anytime a student served in special education is suspended
- 2. when a student served in special education is suspended over ten days in a school year
- 3. anytime a student served in special education has a functional behavior assessment
- 4. when a student served in special education needs a new behavior intervention plan

**6. Which of the following may be included in a behavior intervention plan?**

- 1. social skills instruction
- 2. consequences for negative behaviors
- 3. setting, event, and antecedent interventions
- 4. any of the above

**7. Who determines a student's interim alternative educational setting?**

- 1. the student's parents
- 2. the student's IEP team
- 3. the special education director
- 4. the student's teachers

**8. Which of the following must be reviewed during a manifestation determination?**

- 1. the student's IEP
- 2. the student's placement
- 3. the student's current evaluations
- 4. all of the above

**9. A student who is currently being evaluated for special education services:**

- 1. may not be suspended
- 2. does not have disciplinary protection under the IDEA
- 3. has disciplinary protections under the IDEA
- 4. may be suspended only after the completion of a functional behavior assessment

**10. According to IDEA '97 the intent of conducting a functional behavior assessment is to:**

- 1. make a special education eligibility determination
- 2. choose an educational placement
- 3. develop a behavior intervention plan
- 4. determine when a student may be suspended

**11. According to IDEA '97 when must a behavior intervention plan be developed for a student?**

- 1. any time a student is suspended
- 2. when a student has a zero tolerance offense
- 3. when a student fails a grade
- 4. all of the above

**12. A principal has the unilateral authority to:**

- 1. expel a student for 180 days without services for a zero tolerance offense
- 2. choose the interim alternative setting
- 3. suspend a student up to 10 school days
- 4. make a manifestation determination

**13. The focus of a behavior intervention plan should be:**

- 1. punishment
- 2. control
- 3. proactive
- 4. rewards

**14. If an offending behavior is found not to be a manifestation of the student's disability:**

- 1. the student's IEP must be revised
- 2. the student may not be suspended
- 3. the student must stay in his/her current education placement
- 4. the student may be disciplined like any other student served in general education programs

**15. Which of the following is required before a student is placed in an interim alternative educational setting?**

- 1. a due process hearing
- 2. an IEP Team meeting
- 3. completion of new evaluation data
- 4. the student must commit a zero tolerance offense

**16. In considering “ABC” data for a functional behavior assessment, “ABC” means:**

- 1. action, behavior, cumulation
- 2. acting badly counts
- 3. antecedent, behavior, consequence
- 4. none of the above

**17. If a school system has no knowledge that a student may have a disability:**

- 1. the student may receive the same disciplinary actions as any other student
- 2. the student may be suspended only after a manifestation determination review
- 3. the student must have a behavior intervention plan before receiving any disciplinary action
- 4. the student must receive a full evaluation for special education services

**18. The procedure in which the relationship between a behavior and the student’s disability is determined is called:**

- 1. functional behavior assessment
- 2. IEP team meeting
- 3. manifestation determination review
- 4. due process hearing

**19. According to IDEA '97 a functional behavior assessment must be conducted in all of the following instances except:**

- 1. when a student is suspended five school days
- 2. when a student commits a zero tolerance offense
- 3. when a student is suspended for 10 consecutive days
- 4. when a student has a series of short-term suspensions that accumulate to 10 school days

**20. Which of the following is not immediately allowed when a student is found in possession of a controlled substance:**

- 1. call to law enforcement authorities
- 2. place the student in an interim alternative setting for 45 days
- 3. call an IEP Team meeting
- 4. expel the student for 180 school days

**21. A student must have access to the general curriculum and all services listed in the IEP:**

- 1. during any suspension
- 2. when ordered by a hearing officer
- 3. in an interim alternative education setting
- 4. none of the above

**22. Which of the following is not included in a functional behavior assessment?**

- 1. observation data
- 2. information from the IEP
- 3. information from other students
- 4. parental information

**23. IDEA '97 requires which of the following for a zero tolerance offense:**

- 1. automatic expulsion for 180 school days
- 2. a manifestation determination review
- 3. a full psychological evaluation
- 4. suspension for 45 days

**24. The IEP team is responsible for which of the following:**

- 1. making a three-day suspension
- 2. referring to a juvenile judge
- 3. determining educational placement during a long-term suspension
- 4. none of the above

**25. If a student is suspended over 10 days, then on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of suspension:**

- 1. no action is necessary
- 2. educational services must be provided
- 3. the student has a new eligibility category
- 4. an IEP team meeting must be held

**26. If school personnel do not follow a behavior intervention plan and a student has a serious behavioral offense:**

- 1. the school may demand a change of placement
- 2. the behavior may be found to be a manifestation of the disability
- 3. an interim alternative education setting is necessary
- 4. new evaluation data is necessary

**27. According to "best practice" which of the following is not appropriate for a behavior intervention plan:**

- 1. social skills instruction, rewards for meeting behavior goals, and loss of privileges for misbehavior
- 2. social skills instruction, rewards for meeting behavior goals, and suspension up to 10 days for misbehaviors.
- 3. rewards for meeting behavior goals, counseling, and loss of privileges for misbehaviors
- 4. loss of privilege, suspensions for misbehaviors, and no proactive intervention

**The following questions contain scenarios regarding the discipline of students served in special education. Please use your knowledge of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 to answer the questions.**

**28. A student has had a functional behavior assessment and has a behavior intervention plan to include multiple strategies such as social skills training and counseling. The student is eligible under the category of learning disabled. The student has been making passing grades in the general curriculum with resource for English. The student pulls a five-inch knife on two other students and threatens to kill them. Which of the following would not be true?**

- 1. a manifestation determination review must be held
- 2. the student may be removed to an interim alternative education setting for 45 calendar days
- 3. the student may be removed from school for 180 days without educational services
- 4. the student's functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan must be reviewed

**29. Based on the information given in #28, would you consider the behavior a manifestation of the student's disability?**

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

30. Amy is an eighth-grade student who was sexually abused as a child. She is eligible for special education services under the category of emotionally disturbed. She has received special education services for several years. She has been placed in a self-contained behavior modification classroom due to aggressive behaviors. Her behavior intervention plan includes strategies such as: social skills instruction, role-playing, counseling, and cognitive behavioral interventions.

Amy brings a gun to school, which is found by her teacher. At the manifestation determination review, the behavior is found to be a manifestation of her disability. School personnel want to move Amy to a more restrictive alternative setting for 45 days. The setting will provide Amy with all services in her IEP, as well as ones to further address her violent tendencies. Amy's parents say she can remain in her current school because her behavior was a manifestation of her disability.

According to IDEA '97, may the school demand an interim placement that is more restrictive even though the behavior is a manifestation of her disability:

1. Yes  
 2. No

31. Carol is a student served in special education. She has problems socially and is diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome. Carol has a behavior intervention plan. She has been doing well in school, but one day becomes angry with her teacher and kicks her. The teacher falls and sprains her ankle. The principal suspends Carol for five school days. She had been suspended for two days previously in the school year. Is this suspension allowed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997?

1. Yes  
 2. No

32. Steve is a fourth-grade student served in special education. He has a history of behavior problems. School personnel have conducted a functional behavior assessment and have developed a behavior intervention plan. He has been doing well in school for several months. However, during the last month he has been exhibiting new problem behaviors. He has been suspended nine school days this year. Steve misbehaves again, which warrants another three-day suspension. The principal says that another IEP Team meeting does not need to be held because the school has done all they need to do by having a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan. The principal wants to proceed with the three-day suspension and not have another IEP Team meeting to review and/or revise the behavior intervention plan.

Is the principal taking the correct action?

1. Yes  
 2. No

33. Julie is a student served in special education with a history of behavior problems. She had a functional behavior assessment two years ago and school personnel have been following the same behavior intervention plan for one year. She has been having more serious behavior problems lately. In an IEP Team meeting, her special education teacher says a new functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan are needed.

Is the special education teacher correct in making this suggestion?

1. Yes  
 2. No

34. Susie is an eighth-grade student who has only marginally passed from grade to grade. She has no history of behavior problems at school, but the teachers who have had Susie are familiar with her academic difficulties. Because Susie is a sweet, likeable student, teachers have modified her grades and assignments over the years, which have allowed her to pass. Susie's mother always attends parent/teacher conferences and asks the teachers for suggestions to help Susie. The teachers offer suggestions and discuss modifications. Susie's mother and her

seventh-grade teacher discussed having Susie evaluated for a learning disability, but a formal referral to special education was never made. Susie's seventh and eighth-grade teachers have discussed her problems among themselves and with the principal. They feel she has "some problems in processing information." A group of eighth-grade girls are caught selling prescription drugs (which are considered a controlled substance). Susie is one of the girls caught in possession of the drugs.

Does Susie have disciplinary protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 as a child suspected of having a disability?

1. Yes  
 2. No

35. Kathy is a high school student with a learning disability in written expression. She has been served in special education programs for several years. She currently has general education classes with inclusion services in English. Kathy is on track to graduate with a regular diploma. One day a teacher finds Kathy with a bag of cocaine on school grounds. Law enforcement authorities are called and Kathy has been suspended five days when an IEP Team meeting is held.

During the meeting the team agrees this zero tolerance offense is not a manifestation of Kathy's disability. The team decides Kathy will attend a mental health program for 45 days, which will include a focus on substance abuse problems, along with general and special education classes. After the 45 days, Kathy will return to her home school where she will attend the classes listed on her IEP. She will also continue to have counseling services.

Will Kathy be in an appropriate interim alternative educational setting?

1. Yes  
 2. No

VITA  
GINGER R. WOODS

Personal Data:                   Date of Birth: January 6, 1965  
                                      Place of Birth: Kingsport, Tennessee  
                                      Marital Status: Single

Education:                       Public Schools, Sullivan County, Tennessee;

                                      East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee  
  Special Education, B.S.;;  
  1987

                                      East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee  
  Educational Leadership, M.S.;;  
  1998

                                      East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;;  
  Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.;;  
  2004

Professional  
Experience:                       Washington County Schools, Tennessee;  
  Special Education Teacher, Jonesborough, TN;  
  1991-1995

                                      Washington County Schools, Tennessee;  
  Special Education Supervisor, Jonesborough, TN;  
  1995-Present