Abstract

**DISSEPTION PROJECT:** INDIANA ADMINISTRATORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES

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A recent focus of educational reform has been the evaluation of teacher performance. In response, individual states created comprehensive teacher evaluation (TE) instruments. Indiana passed Public Law 90 (formerly SEA 001) in 2011 that addressed teacher effectiveness. While it outlined the required components of the new TE instruments, there was no mention of special education in the legislation. To date there has been no TE instrument that addresses the unique responsibilities of special education teachers (SETs).

This study was completed in response to the current need for additional research to inform the field of efforts focused on the evaluation of SETs and the need for TE instruments that are sensitive to SETs unique responsibilities in increasing student outcomes. This exploratory study examined the perceptions of elementary school principals, secondary school principals, and special education directors in Indiana public schools concerning the evaluation of SETs who teach students with mild disabilities in general education classrooms. The study investigated the differences between the respondent groups in their knowledge of PL 90 (SEA 001), their corporation/cooperatives teacher evaluation instrument and professional teaching standards including both the Rules for Educator Preparation and Accountability (REPA) and the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) Knowledge and Skill Professional Standards. Training
requirements in teacher evaluation, the identification and inclusion of the unique skills and responsibilities of SETs and the differentiation of general and special educators in their TE instrument were also addressed in this study. Findings from this study indicated that not all respondents have received training in their TE instrument as mandated in PL 90 (SEA 001). A majority of the respondents believed that (a) SETs should be evaluated using a differentiated/modified TE instrument from that used for GETs and (b) expressed a desire for additional training in the unique responsibilities of SETs. Recommendations for practice and implications for future research are provided.