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Major Field: Educational Leadership

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Title of Study: EXAMINING SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICE PROVISION TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

Pages in Study:

Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA, 2004) requires state education agencies (SEAs) to ensure that personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained with content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities. However, research data indicate high percentages of hopefuls following the career path to school leadership are not adequately prepared to address special education issues and concerns.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of knowledge school principals have regarding special education law and policy. School leaders are required to address the needs of students with disabilities while meeting the challenges of improving student achievement and consequently school performance scores. School principals should be well informed regarding the delivery of services to students with
disabilities, particularly in relationship to navigating the mandates of school reform legislation.

A quantitative research design using casual-comparative, cor relational, and survey research approaches will be used to study public school principals’ levels of knowledge as related to the structural and contemporary elements embedded in mandated special education laws and procedures. Likewise, survey data on the beliefs and practices of principals related to their daily special education administrative duties will be collected and examined for variations among and between school principals in various settings.

The findings will inform state policymakers and educational leader preparation programs about the preparedness of principals to provide access to specialized instruction and related services for those students in their building who qualify under IDEA. It will also reveal the understanding principals have about providing students with disabilities to participate in the general education curriculum and standardized testing, as specified under federal and state law.