

Perceptions of Supportive Leadership Behaviors of School Site Administrators for Secondary Special Education Teachers

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School administrators fall short of supporting special education teachers due to a lack of knowledge of and experience in special education. The purpose of this study was to identify and compare leadership behaviors perceived as supportive by special education teachers and school site administrators. Data collection involved a survey instrument with 52 leadership behaviors from four domains: emotional, instructional, instrumental, and technical. The survey was sent via email to 200 participants who were previously identified as either special education teachers or school site administrators from secondary schools, grades 6-12, and 95 surveys were completed and used for data analysis.

The results indicated that the leadership behaviors perceived to be most supportive were found to be from the emotional domain. Teachers placed the highest value on having their decisions supported in front of other teachers and parents. Administrators perceived having interest in what teachers do in their classrooms as most valuable to their special education teachers. The mean scores from both groups were compared, and significant differences were found in three domains: emotional, instructional, and technical. There was a significant difference between the groups for 22 of the leadership behaviors.

The findings revealed that there is a difference in the perceptions of special education teachers and school administrators. Accordingly, school districts should develop and practice the leadership behaviors identified as most valuable in this study. Administrators can use these results to guide how they provide support to their teachers and should focus on providing the type of support that is perceived as most valuable based on what was reported by special education teachers.

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