A SURVEY OF READING SERVICES PROVIDED TO STUDENTS WITH READING DISABILITIES

A Dissertation

by

MARGARET HARDING CHRISTEN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2005

Major Subject: Educational Psychology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee, Richard Parker
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ABSTRACT

A Survey of Reading Services Provided to Students with Reading Disabilities.

(December 2005)

Margaret Harding Christen, B.A., University of Massachusetts – North Dartmouth Campus; M.Ed., University of the Virgin Islands

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Richard I. Parker

This research investigated the extent of special education reading services provided to students with a diagnosed reading disability, and examined potential demographic differences in service delivery. Special education eligibility folders of 512 students from 11 Texas school districts were examined. Trained research teams utilizing a reliable data collection template conducted on-site visits and recorded student folder data during a six-week period.

National statistics report that 37% of fourth grade students do not possess basic reading skills. Half of the students presently receiving special education services are qualified as a student with a learning disability and 80% of these students are reported to be learning disabled in the areas of basic reading or reading comprehension.

Previous research studies have reported that students with a diagnosed disability in reading are not always provided the specialized instruction needed. This study reported on: (a) current practices in Texas for the 512 students whose files were reviewed with respect to special education reading services: (b) what state demographics

may have influenced the provision of services; and (c) to what extent the amount of a student's reading delay influenced the amount of special education services provided.

Results showed that there was minimal provision of special education services for reading disabled students. When the results were analyzed by degree of disability the correlation was weak while the analysis by demographic membership showed a somwhat increased correlation.

DEDICATION

This finally completed work is dedicated to my husband of 27 years and my two sons, Michael and Matthew. They have accepted my being a student during all of these years and at times probably doubted my resolve to stick it out but never doubted that I could achieve this milestone.

Thank you, Fred, Michael and Matthew

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The completion of this dissertation is the culmination of a lot of hard work and many years. This process has been interrupted on many occasions but many people were responsible for encouraging me to stick with it and assisted with the research.

I thank my husband, Fred, and children, Michael and Matthew, who have provided continued support and encouragement throughout the years and have put up with my need to work on this dissertation for what seems like an eternity. I also am eternally grateful for their technical assistance throughout the process.

I would also like to thank Dr. Richard Parker and Dr. Jan Hasbrouck for their support throughout all of these years. You were my first contact at A&M and have stayed with me throughout the years. You opened your home to me on many occasions and have provided guidance and mentoring throughout the years. I am also grateful to you both for providing me the opportunity to conduct this study and for the ensuing countless hours of guidance and editing. I appreciate the patience you demonstrated and your willingness to stick with me and for always pushing me further. I hope we continue to remain professional colleagues.

I would be remiss to not acknowledge and thank my colleagues Kevin O'Neil and Hema Mahadevan. Kevin's efforts identifying districts, contacting districts, helping with all of the travel arrangements and assisting with the data collection as we traveled around Texas were most appreciated. Hema's assistance with the initial data entry and her hours of tutoring to teach me how to navigate through SPSS were essential to my eventual completion.

I would like to thank my colleagues at Katy High School and Katy ISD for their ongoing support and also their assistance in the early stages of my research with the reliability activities for the data collection form. They used their own time to review folders and code data and for that I am most appreciative.

Overall, this milestone was not possible without much encouragement from many supervisors, professors, colleagues, coworkers, family and friends for which I will be eternally grateful. My dissertation is complete and I am now ready to move forward professionally and continue my work with students with disabilities and hope to continue to be able to make a difference for students and their families.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

Learning to read is a critical step in student's academic career and has significant bearing on a student's success in school and beyond (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The ability to read is also highly valued, and most children learn to read fairly well. Statistics released by the United States Department of Education reported in 2001 that 37% of fourth graders failed to learn to read. (Santapau, 2001).

Efforts to remediate these students often center around determining eligibility for Title 1 and Special Education programs (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Dyer & Binkney, 1995; Walmsley & Allington, 1995). The United States Department of Education (2000) reported that approximately nine percent of students ages 6-21 received special education services in the 1998-1999 school year and approximately 4.43 percent of these students qualified as a student with a learning disability.

Statistical data estimates that 80% of all students with a learning disability have a reading disability (Aaron, 1997; Cramer & Ellis, 1996; Denton, Vaughn & Fletcher, 2003, Lerner, 1989; Pearson, 1993). The President's Commission on Special Education in 2002 reported that two out of every five children eligible for special education services were found eligible because of reading difficulties.

This dissertation follows the format of the journal *Exceptional Children.*

Additionally, of the students identified with learning disabilities in the third grade, about 75% were reported to remain disabled in the ninth grade (Lyon, 1995; Lyon, 1996). These disheartening statistics encourage us to increase and improve our services for students with reading disabilities.

Current Reading Practices

In order to improve services for students with reading disabilities, we must first adequately describe what is the state of common practice. Research on instruction provided to students with reading disabilities presents evidence that some programs have been more effective than others (Marston, Deno, Kim, Diment, & Rogers,1995; Spear-Swerling & Sternberg,1996; Torgensen, Wagner, & Rashotte, 1997, Vaughn, Linan-Thompson & Hickman, 2003). Increased instructional time in the area of reading has shown to be an influencing factor (Algozzine & Maheady,1986; Elbaum,Vaughn, Hughes & Moody,1999, Foorman, Francis, Fletcher, Schatschneider & Mehta, 1998, Haynes & Jenkins, 1986, Leinhardt, Zigmond & Cooley,1981; Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Mecklenburg & Graden, 1984). The research reports that increased instructional time beyond what is available in general education classrooms with instructional arrangements that include individual tutoring, small group instruction and instruction provided by a specialist has resulted in increased achievement in the area of reading for struggling readers.

Much of existing research within the field of special education with respect to reading difficulties has centered on investigating the instructional environment to determine if students with a diagnosed reading disability are provided specialized

instruction to remediate their weaknesses (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995; Haynes & Jenkins, 1986; Moody, Vaughn, Hughes, & Fischer, 2000; Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998; Manset & Semmel, 1997; Marston et al., 1995; McIntosh et al., 1993). The conclusions drawn are that students with disabilities are not afforded specialized instruction, especially in reading (Moody et al., 2000; Vaughn et al.; Will, 1986) and that special education students have not always been provided increased instructional time in the area of reading (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Moody et al.) nor have they been provided the individualized instruction specified by IDEA (Espin, Deno & Albayrak-Kaymak, 1998; Vaughn et al.).

This state of affairs helped occasion the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 2004. An important component of this reauthorization of IDEA is its detailed agenda for additional research aimed at improving special education. Areas of research specified include the: (a) design of assessment tools to accurately determine the specific needs of students with reading disabilities, (b) longitudinal studies to determine effective practices in assessment and instruction for students with reading difficulties, and (c) effective practices for preparing teachers to provide services to reading disabled children. This research is aligned with the national agenda of conducting studies to determine effective practices to improve the achievement in reading of students with reading difficulties. The collected data and the results obtained will hopefully assist educators by providing factual information that can be used to improve the achievement levels of reading disabled students.

Individualized Education Plans

Whereas previous research has relied on teacher, school or district report (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Haynes & Jenkins, 1986; Marston et al., 1995; McIntosh et al., 1993; Vaughn et al., 1998), a more defensible source of data would be written documentation. Fortunately, the Admission Review Dismissal (ARD) process in Texas and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) require substantial documentation on type and degree of disability and on services received. For that reason, this study relied only upon data from individual student folders that was obtained by trained data collectors from outside the district.

The data collectors recorded information from a student's (IEP) to determine the extent of services provided and collected assessment information that was used to document the extent of a student's reading disability. Information collected also allowed for an investigation of what state demographics may influence the extent of services was conducted by: (a) analyzing the amount of special education services provided with the degree of a student's reading delay; and (b) matching state demographics of size, type, and wealth with the extent of services provided to determine the influence these variables may have.

Ample research on effective schools and reading programs exists but the literature is slim on services for reading disabled students in special education. Reading is the most frequently studied school process and outcome but there is limited evidence on identifying instructional factors that positively influence the development of reading skills (Adams & Bruck, 1995, Leinhardt et al., 1981, & Moody et al., 2000). Special

educators have a critical need for accurate and useful information regarding factors that influence positively the reading achievements of reading disabled students. This information can be utilized to guide the establishment of effective reading programs for special education reading disabled students.

Purpose

This research seeks first to provide descriptive information on the amount of special education instructional hours in the area of reading services provided to students with reading disabilities in Texas, a state with approximately 1040 independent school districts and slightly over 4 million students. On average 12% of the enrolled students qualify for special education services (Texas Education Agency, 2004) and 50% of them can be considered as a student with a learning disability.

Currently a statewide initiative, The Texas Reading Initative (TRI), aimed at all students reading by third grade is underway. The results of this research can provide information to support the initiative by identifying instructional practices that lead to improved achievement in the area of reading for students receiving special education assistance by reporting on current practices regarding instructional time for a small sample of reading disabled students.

We presume within the profession that students with identified disabilities receive substantially greater services in proportion to the severity of their reading difficulties. This research study will explore current practices for a sample of students with identified reading disabilities in Texas. The relationship between the degree of a student's delay and special education reading services will be investigated.

A summary of special education instructional hours allocated to reading instruction will be compiled in order to examine the relationships between (a) the degree of a student's reading delay and amount of special education services provided, and (b) the relationship between instructional hours and reading for reading and state demographics of size, type, and wealth. The information obtained can assist in identifying varieties of effective reading practices for students with reading difficulties in different school contexts.

Research Questions

The questions posed for this study were:

1. To what extent are students with a reading disability who are enrolled in grades 1-6 in eleven Texas school districts provided special education services in the area of reading?
2. Does the extent of special education services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon state demographics of wealth, size, and type of district?
3. Does the extent of special education services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon the degree of reading delay (determined by the difference between a child's assigned grade level and reading achievement grade equivalent score obtained during a student's assessment for special education services)?

4. Are there differences in the relationship between reading delay scores and instructional hours for different levels of the demographic variables of district size, community type, and district wealth?

Definitions

Reading delay – difference between a child's assigned grade level and reading achievement grade equivalent score

Wealth – defined as tax effort which is the total effective tax rate. This is determined by dividing the total levy amount by the total taxable property value. There are two levels of this variable; <$1.52 and >$1.52 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

Size – based upon number of students enrolled. There are three categories of this variable: Large >25K Medium 5,000 to 24,999 Small < 4,999

Community Type – districts are classified by the Texas Education Agency on a scale ranging from urban to rural. Factors considered are school size, growth rates, student's economic status and proximity to urban areas. Rural districts are not represented in this research because of their designated size of less than 300 students. The four types represented are:

Urban – includes the six largest districts in the state with populations in excess of 650,000 as well school districts located in central cities with populations between 100,000 and 650,000.

Suburban – districts that are either located in or around major urban areas or central cities and have at least 15% of the size of the urban area or central city.

Semi-rural - independent town school districts in counties with populations of 25,000 to 100,000 and non-metro stable which have at least 300 students attendance and have a five year growth rate of at least 20%.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the literature on reading instruction for special education reading disabled students. The review will begin with a brief reporting of research efforts at the national level that have been undertaken recently to address the needs of struggling readers. A comprehensive synthesis of pertinent research studies to date that support the findings at the national level will follow.

The included studies have all investigated reading instruction and its outcomes for students. Most studies are either focused upon special education students or a combination of special education students and other struggling readers and, several studies report on at-risk students in general. The studies include a combination of observational and intervention studies as well as synthesis and meta-analysis research. The chapter concludes with a brief review of the literature regarding special education Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and their purpose because IEPs were the source of data for this study.

Introduction

There is an abundance of research that has been conducted in the area of reading. Since 1966 approximately 100,000 research studies have been published (National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow et al., 1998). This research base includes the results from two large national research projects that were commissioned to investigate the effectiveness of interventions and to identify the necessary components of reading instruction for students who are at-risk of having problems learning to read. In addition

these two large research efforts make recommendations for practice and for further research studies.

The first of these projects was the establishment of the National Research Council. The council was established to: (a) review the diverse research base on reading; (b) translate their findings into advice and guidance for those involved in reading instruction; and (c) convey this advice to the targeted audiences. The council reviewed research on normal reading development and instruction, on risk factors useful in identifying groups and individuals at risk of reading failure, on prevention and intervention and, instructional approaches that ensure optimal reading outcomes.

The publication titled; Reading Difficulties in Young Children (Snow et al.,1998) summarizes the council's findings. They identify three potential stumbling blocks that confound a student's ability to gain adequate reading skills: (a) the first stumbling block is difficulty understanding and using the alphabetic principle; (b) the second obstacle is a failure to transfer the comprehension skills of spoken language to reading; and (c) the final obstacle is the absence of an initial motivation to read or failure to develop an appreciation of the rewards of reading.

Snow et al. (1998) then define the key instructional elements necessary for children to become good readers: (a) students need instruction that helps them to learn letters and sounds; (b) reading comprehension strategies to teach children how to read for meaning; and (c) the instructional organization during reading needs to allow children many opportunities to read from a variety of texts.

The council acknowledged that while their efforts were initially undertaken to understand struggling readers the necessary components and stumbling blocks identified were applicable to all students. Snow, Burns and Griffin remind educators to be mindful of the fact that in spite of our best efforts disabled students will require intensive efforts aimed at intervention and remediation and these needs may exist throughout their school careers.

The National Reading Panel was then convened to assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. This panel took into account the foundational work of The National Reading Council and produced a consensus document based on the best judgments of a diverse group of experts in reading research and reading instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Their results concluded: (a) that teaching children to manipulate phonemes in words was highly effective under a variety of teaching conditions for a variety of learners across a range of age and grade levels; (b) that systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students in grades 1 through 6 and older children who are experiencing difficulty learning to read; (c) that being able to read fluently is one of several critical factors necessary for comprehension; and (d) comprehension instruction should include a combination of instructional techniques.

The panel further examined whether students with specific learning disabilities in reading have distinctive instructional needs and whether they benefit from instructional techniques that are different from those that are optimal for other low-achieving (non-

disabled) students. The conclusion was that the identified components needed for effective instruction for low-achieving students also led to an increase in the skill areas of phonemic awareness and phonics but were inconclusive for fluency and reading comprehension for learning disabled students.

These findings at the national level would appear to support the need for special education services in the area of reading and also the basic premise of this study; that students with a diagnosed reading disability should be provided more extensive instruction and that there should be a correlation between the degree of a student's disability and the amount of instruction provided.

Pertinent Research Reviews

A further review of the literature yielded 16 additional studies that were chosen because of their correlation to the national agenda and special education reading instruction. Eight of the studies took place in a special education setting and will be reviewed first. These eight studies include four observational studies that explore the nature of the reading activities and types of instruction that led to improved achievement levels for learning disabled students (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986; Leinhardt et al., 1984; Moody et al., 2000) and grouping strategies, differentiated instruction and reading comprehension strategies for learning disabled students (Vaughn et al.,1998). An intervention study that compared the results of two programs designed to improve the phonemic awareness abilities of learning disabled students (Torgesen et al. 2001) is also reviewed. Two research syntheses that explore the academic achievement gains in reading for special education students (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 1998; Vaughn, Levy,

Coleman & Bos, 2002) as well as a meta-analysis (Elbaum et al., 1999) are also included because they addressed the issues of instructional time, grouping practices and improved reading achievement results.

Reading Instruction in Special Education Resource Rooms by Mariana C. Haynes & Joseph R. Jenkins, 1986

Haynes and Jenkins (1986) conducted a large-scale field study of reading instruction in special education resource room programs for mildly handicapped students enrolled in grades 4 through 6. The design was to yield descriptive information on reading instruction in resource programs and to examine relationships among classroom processes and student reading achievement. This research sought to answer the questions of how standardized is the reading instruction provided, what is the nature and amount of reading instruction in these programs and what factors are associated with how students are scheduled for special education instruction.

Students enrolled in grades four through six in 28 resource room programs in both urban and suburban settings were observed during reading instruction. A time-sampling system utilizing the Student-level Observation of Beginning Reading (SOBR) was used for the classroom observations. The system was designed to provide detailed descriptions of both reading and nonreading activities.

Their results indicated considerable variability in reading instruction across programs and students that was not strongly linked to student characteristics. They examined the demographic variables of urban and suburban and found a correlation of .38 for direct reading minutes versus scheduled hours in the urban sample in comparison

to a correlation of .97 for the suburban sample. Their results challenged the view that special education programs are congruent with individual student needs. They did conclude that the amount of reading instruction mildly handicapped students receive in a school day seemed more a function of program and school context variables, such as district philosophy of curricula selection, than of student characteristics.

Reading Instruction and its Effects by Gaea Leinhardt, Naomi Zigmond & William W. Cooley, 1981

Reading instruction and its effects were examined in self-contained elementary school classrooms for 105 learning disabled students (Leinhardt et al., 1981). Their research sought answers for the following three questions: (a) What is the nature of reading activities in LD classes; (b) What types of student activities lead to greatest improvement in reading test performance?; and (c) What types of instructional situations generate these student activities?

One hundred and five students enrolled in 11 different classrooms and ranging in age from 6 through 12 were observed. A time-sampling approach was utilized for the observations which were conducted over a 20 week period by nine trained observers using the Student-level Observation of Beginning Reading, SOBR. Each classroom was observed for approximately 30 hours during the 20 week observation period. The students were observed to note what students actually did during reading instruction and the teacher's behavior was observed in the two areas; instructional and affective.

The results indicated considerable variation with regards to the nature and amount of reading activities among students as well as a large variation in growth in

reading ability. Regression analyses yielded results that suggested that even an increase of 1 minute of silent reading time per day produced an increase in posttest performance by 1 point. The researchers concluded that an increase of 5 minutes per day would be equivalent to about 1 month (on a grade equivalent scale) of additional reading achievement.

The researchers also utilized a causal model to explore the effects of the observed variables. They concluded that there is a direct relationship between student behavior during instruction and that teacher behavior is a strong influence on student behavior. Instructional implications were noted and the suggestion was made that restructuring instructional environments would most likely lead to increased reading achievement levels. The researchers were confident that teachers could be informed by this research and grasp a better understanding of ways to restructure their instructional environments to maximize the potential learning ability of all of their students.

Reading Instruction in the Resource Room: Set up for Failure by Sally W. Moody, Sharon Vaughn, Marie T. Hughes & Meryl Fischer, 2000

This study was a follow-up study to an observational study carried out 2 years prior that was titled Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in the Resource Room. The purpose was to reexamine the instructional practices of special education resource room teachers and the reading outcomes for their students. The researchers were interested in how, if at all, these teachers' perceptions and practices regarding reading instruction changed.

Data was collected over a full academic year. Fifty-nine students and 6 teachers formed the study sample. The students' teachers were asked to provide information regarding where the students received their reading instruction. It was reported that 88% of the students received their reading instruction in a special education setting and the remaining students received 1 to 4 hours per week of reading instruction in the general education setting in addition to their instruction in a special education setting.

Teacher interviews were conducted using a protocol with open-ended questions. Teacher were queried to: (a) obtain background information on the teachers; (b) to probe their perceptions about grouping practices during reading instruction; (c) to identify factors they influenced their decisions about reading practices they employed; and (d) their perceptions about effective materials and practices for students with reading problems.

Observations were also carried out four times throughout the school year during the same reading language arts class. An adapted Classroom Climate Scale (CCS) was utilized to record observations. The information was first recorded on Likert-scale items that rated teachers in the following areas: (a) amount of time devoted to whole-group, small-group and individual instruction; (b) the extent of teacher monitoring ongoing student performance; and (c) how frequently positive feedback was provided. There was also a section for recording descriptive data regarding the teacher use of adaptations for students, occurrence of word recognition or reading comprehension activities as well as any evidence of differentiated instruction.

In addition a teacher self-report was completed and teachers were asked to reflect on the components of their lesson on the days observations took place. Student achievement was measured through the use of the Test of Reading Fluency (TORF) and the passage comprehension subtest from the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJR). These were used as pre and post tests.

The results indicated that significant gains in reading comprehension or reading fluency were not evidenced for the students involved in this study. Whole class instruction was the predominant feature of the reading instruction observed although several teachers did utilize small groups and individualized activities. Half of the teachers provided differentiated materials and instruction to match the individual learning levels of their students. While these results were not noticeably different from the previous study there was some evidence that the teachers had altered their teaching practices but overall all of the teachers' perceptions had changed considerably. Most notably was the belief by the teachers that phonics instruction was necessary and valuable for reading instruction.

The researchers overall conclusion was that the current way special education resource rooms are structured they do not provide a learning environment for students to improve upon their reading fluency and comprehension skills. Vaughn et al. do not blame teachers for failing to provide a special education; they blame the process that places these students in situations where they are set up for failure.

Broken Promises: Reading Instruction in the Resource Room by Sharon Vaughn, Sally Moody and Jeanne Schumm. 1998

In this observational study the researchers were interested in the potential influence of reforms on grouping and instruction that learning disabled students received in special education resource room settings. The questions posed were: (a) what grouping structures do teachers use for instruction; (b) how do teachers provide differentiated instruction, materials and curriculum for the students; and (c) what word knowledge and comprehension strategies do these teachers employ.

The participants were 14 elementary special education resource room teachers and 82 students of which 77 were learning disabled and the remaining students fell in the category of high functioning students with mental retardation. The teachers were interviewed in sessions that lasted between 30 and 60 minutes at the beginning and of the school year. A series of open-ended questions designed to elicit information to answer the posed research questions were utilized. Additionally trained observers using an adapted version of the Classroom Climate School observed each of the teachers for 60 to 90 minutes on three separate occasions during the same reading/language arts instructional period. Teachers were also asked to complete a self-report on the days of the classroom observations.

Results indicated that 11 of the 14 teachers used primarily whole group instruction followed by seat work that was completed independently with teacher assistance provided as they circulated amongst the students. Nine of the teachers provided no differentiated instruction. Ten of the 14 teachers reported that they utilized a

whole language approach with some direct instruction. The researchers concluded that most of the students with learning disabilities in the observed resource room settings did not receive an individualized reading program nor were they provided reading instruction that corresponded to their reading level. They concluded that current practices in the observed settings reveal an array of broken promises; the promises being that an individualized reading program will be prescribed and implemented for students with reading disabilities.

Intensive Reading Instruction for Childen with Severe Reading Disabilities: Immediate and Long-term Outcomes from Two Instructional Approaches by Joseph K. Torgesen, Ann W. Alexander, Richard K. Wagner, Carol A. Rashotte, Kytja K. S. Voeller and Tim Conway, 2001

The study was designed to contribute information about the conditions that must be in place to remediate the reading difficulties of children with serious learning disabilities. The research was designed to answer 3 questions: (a) Can either of two carefully designed instructional approaches accelerate reading growth into the average range for severely disabled readers; (b) Are there significant differences in the effectiveness of the two instructional programs; and (c) Are the methods differentially effective for children with different cognitive, linguistic, and demographic characteristics.

Sixty learning disabled children between the ages of 8 and 10 with severe reading disabilities were randomly assigned to two instructional programs. The two programs were the Auditory Discrimination in Depth (ADD) and Embedded Phonics (EP). The

two programs incorporated principles of effective instruction but differed in the depth and extent of instruction in phonemic awareness and phonemic decoding skills. All participants were instructed for a total of 67.5 hours in a one-to-one setting during two daily 50 minute sessions for 8 weeks.

The results showed that the students in both instructional programs produced very large improvements in generalized reading skills that remained stable over a 2-year follow-up period. The students achieved average scores for reading accuracy and comprehension while the students' reading rates continued to show severe impairment. Another significant finding reported was that 40% of the students were found to be no longer in need of special education services after participating in the intervention. The researchers also cited the significance of the fact that two quite different intensive instructional interventions produced essentially the same long-term outcomes.

Does Special Education Raise Academic Achievement for Students with Disabilities by Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain & Steven G. Rivkin, 1998.

This research was based on the unique data of the Harvard/UTD Texas Schools Project. The Texas Schools Microdata Panel, TSMP, contains extensive data for five entire cohorts of Texas students as they age through school. The TSMP: (a) tracks elementary students as they progress through grades; (b) measures student performance each spring; and (c) contains detailed information about school services. The reason for the undertaking was based on the premise that a disproportionate amount of school funding goes to the education of disabled students; one-fifth of total current spending for

slightly more than 10 percent of students yet there is little evidence accumulated about the effectiveness of special education programs in raising achievement.

The researchers reviewed achievement outcomes of special education students who took the standardized Texas tests known as the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, TAAS. Their results showed that typical special education placements, non-mainstreamed settings, during the fourth and fifth years of elementary school accelerated reading growth by .04 standard deviations over the rate the children the children had been achieving in their special education classrooms. They conclude that even though there were positive effects of special education (on achievement) further analysis is required to understand both the generalizibilty of these results to the entire special education population and they caution that the percentage of special education students taking these yearly tests was only 30% so other sources of data need to be explored.

Reading Instruction for Students with LD and EBD: A Synthesis of Observation Studies by Sharon Vaughn, Shari Levy, Maggie Coleman and Candace S. Bos (2002)

A synthesis of observation studies on reading instruction for students with learning disabilities (LD) and emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) was completed by Vaughn et al. in 2002. Sixteen studies from 1975 through 2000 representing 11 independent samples were synthesized. Several key findings were reported by Vaughn et al.: (a) there was substantial time allocated for reading instruction but the time varied based on whether students were in special education or general education or both; (b) special education students were provided more individual and group instruction; (c) the quality of reading instruction was low and excessive time was reported allocated to

waiting and limited time designated for actual reading of text; and (d) large amounts of time was devoted to independent seatwork and worksheets.

Grouping Practices and Reading Outcomes for Students with Disabilities by Batya Elbaum, Sharon Vaughn, Marie Hughes and Sally Watson Moody, 1999.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationships between the reading outcomes of students with disabilities and the grouping practices utilized during their instruction. Vaughn et al. report that the grouping format used for instruction is one of a number of variables that impact the findings of intervention research. Grouping strategies that were investigated included: (a) pairing; (b) small groups; and (c) multiple grouping formats.

The researchers felt it was of great importance to examine the relationship between reading outcomes for students with disabilities and the total time of implementation of the intervention. They cite the fact that much research in special education has criticized many of the intervention studies for not incorporating instructional lessons or treatments of sufficient length, frequency or duration.

A meta-analytic review was conducted. Twenty studies conducted between 1975 and 1995 formed the basis for the review. The basis for inclusion was that each study must have included: (a) students with disabilities who were not ESOL enrolled in grades 1 through 6; and (b) interventions occurred in schools, in English during reading/language arts instruction.

Results did not reveal any significant associations between length of intervention and student reading outcomes. They offered an explanation for this that followed the

premise that in terms of student achievement it is the quality of instruction as opposed to the length of instruction that influences positive outcomes for students. The researchers also make their case that their results did show positive results for students that were linked to grouping practices such as peer tutoring.

Eight additional studies that included a combination of students; identified learning disabled and non-identified learning disabled but considered at-risk for reading failure were reviewed. These studies included three intervention studies that explored the effects of individual tutoring to increase phonemic awareness and phonics skills (Jackson, Paratore, Chard & Garnick, 1999; McGuinness, McGuinness & McGuinness, 1996; Torgesen et al., 1997). Three observational studies are reviewed because of their contributions to our knowledge base about current practices regarding instructional environments for at-risk readers and the nature of the reading instruction in these settings(Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Gelzheiser & Myers, 1991; Ysseldyke et al., 1984). A review by (Pikulski, 1994) of five successful reading programs as determined by experimental intervention studies was also included because it addressed the issues of instructional time and components as well as lesson design.

An Early Intervention Supporting the Literacy Learning of Children Experiencing Substantial Difficulty. By Jane Jackson, Jeanne Paratore, David Chard and Shiela Garnick. 1999.

This study investigated how faithfully teachers implemented a locally developed literacy intervention and their perceptions of its efficacy and investigated the program effects regarding student achievement in reading. The study was implemented in an

urban school district and the study participants were eight teachers and 11 second grade students. All of the students failed to read at grade level at the time of the intervention and six were special education students.

The study began with individual teacher interviews and training in the intervention utilized. During the interviews teachers were asked to describe their literacy instruction they offered to the children chosen for participation. Informal conversations continued throughout the intervention period and the researchers would query teachers on their perception of their implementation of the intervention.

The students chosen for participation were provided instruction for 35 minutes 4 days a week. The instruction included three parts: (a) reading and rereading practice of the weekly book selection; (b) specific instruction in phonological awareness and phonics using story-specific words in a variety of manipulative and writing activities; and (c) practice rereading both familiar and unfamiliar books. Instruction was started the first week of January and continued through the end of May.

A member of the research team observed each teacher a minimum of three times throughout the intervention period and recorded detailed field notes. Teachers kept logs that were collected weekly and end of the year interviews were conducted with each of the teachers. The students' reading progress was assessed weekly initially and then biweekly using the Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF) measure of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills and through the use of running records.

Results of the classroom observations, teacher interviews and weekly logs indicated that the major components were administered as prescribed. Teachers felt that

the students responded favorably but they had concerns regarding their ability to pace the lesson and the time constraints during delivery of instruction.

Results on student achievement were mixed. All of the students improved in the areas of blending and segmenting sounds and most understood the alphabet principle. Only one student attained grade level reading skills at the conclusion of the intervention. The researchers believe the findings from this study provide good reason to be confident that if students are provided cohesive and intensive instruction in beginning reading instruction they will make progress towards becoming independent readers. The answers they still feel are necessary are related to deciphering exactly what activities are likely to provide the most benefit for reading disabled students and determining what is the ideal length of time for an intervention for these students.

Phono-Graphix: A New Method for Remediating Reading Difficulties by Carmen McGuinness, Diane McGuinness and Geoffrey McGuinness, 1996

McGuinness et al. (1996) designed a reading program, Phono-Graphix, that emphasizes phoneme awareness training, sound-to-print orientation, curriculum design sequenced by orthographic complexity, and active parental supervision in homework assignments. The study was undertaken to determine the efficacy of their program. The researchers designed the program based upon the research findings from the previous 20 years on the origins of reading failure.

Eighty-seven children aged 6 years, 2 months to 15 years, 11 months were the study participants. They were referred by teachers, other professionals, and parents and all had reading and/or spelling difficulties. Thirty-five of the students had a diagnosed

reading disability. The researchers utilized a quasi-experimental design with pre-test/post-test comparisons and no control group.

The children were initially administered diagnostic tests to establish reading level, phonological awareness, and knowledge of the code The intervention provided for individual instruction during one hour sessions once a week for 12 weeks. Thirty-one of the students received between 3 and 6 hours of instruction, 55 students received the full 12 hours, and 1 child had 15 hours. A mean of 9.33 hours was reported to represent the number of hours of instruction the participants actually received. All students improved in the three targeted areas and the researchers conclude that their data supports the premise that poor readers can be remediated in 12 one hour sessions over 12 weeks if the reading program and the method of delivery are effective.

Prevention and Remediation of Severe Reading Disabilities: Keeping the End in Mind by Joseph K. Torgesen, Richard K. Wagner and Carol A Rashotte, 1997.

Torgesen et al. (1997) reported results for 180 kindergarten students who were provided 80 minutes of one-on-one supplemental instruction in reading each week during a 2 ½-year intervention period. Students were selected for participation based on their scores on a test of letter-name knowledge and a measure of phonological awareness during the fall of their kindergarten year. Students performing in the bottom 10^{th} percentile on both measures were included. The students were also assessed to determine their verbal intellectual functioning. Students with a verbal intellectual score below 75 were not included.

The students chosen for participation had verbal IQ scores in a range of 78 to 126 and were assigned to one of four reading instructional groups two of which were designed to increase phonemic awareness. One group was assigned to a no-treatment control group and the final group received supplemental instruction that supported the goals of the general education classroom. All of the students received the bulk of their reading instruction in the general education classroom.

Preliminary results indicated that children in one of the groups where intensive phonemic awareness instruction was provided showed the greatest improvement. The researchers conclude that instructional conditions of the right nature and intensity can produce near normal rates of growth in the area of phonemic awareness for students identified of being at-risk for the development of phonologically based reading disabilities. They further comment that the lack of sufficient intensity or duration of instruction or both, is an extremely important issue that can provide a possible explanation for the failure of many students to acquire phonetic reading skills (Torgesen et al., 1997).

School Response to Reading Failure: Instruction for Chapter 1 and Special Education Students in Grades Two, Four, and Eight by Richard L. Allington & Anne McGill-Franzen, 1989

Allington and McGill-Franzen conducted a research study that observed 64 students in eight schools, seven elementary and one middle school, in six districts. The districts were a combination of small urban, suburban and rural. Half of the students were identified special education students and half were eligible for Chapter 1 services.

Allington & McGill-Franzen described the reading instruction offered to participants in both programs. They wanted to identify the opportunity to learn to read and write that was available through these programs to determine if the programs differed in terms of access to quality reading instruction.

Each student was observed for an entire school day and at the end of the day the observers conducted brief interviews with the classroom teachers to discuss the representativeness of the student's day and any other information that needed clarification. A collection instrument, Student Observation Instrument, was used to collect the data. The observers were required to code a number of instructional-setting variables as well as the time allocated and also recorded field notes.

The results reported showed that across the school day the students receiving special education services received fewer minutes of reading instruction and less active teaching time. There was no achievement data collected and therefore their results only described the instruction these students received on the day they were observed. They concluded that special education programs studied did not generally enhance either the quantity or quality of reading/language arts instruction the participants received. Their recommendations included increasing access to instruction in the general education class and improving the quality of that instruction should be the driving force when designing reading instruction for students who fail to learn to read on schedule.

Reading Instruction by Classroom, Remedial, and Resource Room Teachers by Lynn M. Gelzheiser & Joel Myers, 1991

An observational study conducted by Gelzheiser and Myers (1991) reported on the reading instruction provided by classroom, remedial, and resource teachers in six schools utilizing a time sampling procedure. The observations were undertaken to determine: (a) whether remedial and resource teachers provided more proactive instruction than classroom teachers; (b) whether resource and remedial reading teachers engaged individuals more often than classroom teachers; and (c) whether there was congruence in the curriculum used by the three teachers.

The researchers reported on data obtained from year one of a three year study of alternatives to pull-out programs. Forty eight teachers from grades 2 through 5 spread across six elementary schools in urban, suburban and rural settings in New York were observed using a revision of the Student-Level Observation of Beginning Reading developed by Leinhart and Seewald in 1980 that allowed for a structured classroom observation. Pairs of graduate assistants conducted the observations.

The hypothesis investigated was since resource and remedial programs are designed to provide students with greater opportunities to learn and more intensive instruction then teachers would be observed devoting a greater proportion of classroom time to reading instruction and less time to nonreading activities. The results of this study reflected few significant differences in the percentage of time spent on different aspects of instruction by classroom, remedial, and resource teachers. Additionally the

instruction provided in the three settings did not vary across urban, suburban, and rural settings. The authors reported that their findings do not provide support for widespread use of pull-out models of supplemental reading instruction. They found no evidence to support the argument that instruction in special and remedial programs is more intensive, structured, or proactive.

Opportunity to Learn for Regular and Special Education Students During Reading Instruction by James E. Ysseldyke, Martha L. Thurlow, Carol Mecklenburg & Janet Graden, 1984.

This research was conducted to document the nature of the instructional environment during reading lessons and to observe student responses during this instructional time. Direct observations of 17 special and 17 general education students enrolled in grades three and four were the source of data for this study. The special education students were randomly chosen from a list of previously identified special education reading disabled learners. The general education students were then chosen randomly based on matching students of the same sex and class enrollment.

The Code for Instructional Structure and Student Academic Response (CISSAR) observation system was utilized for this study. An interval time sampling technique was employed to record events in six areas: (a) activity (12 codes); (b) task (8 codes); (c) teaching structure (3 codes); (d) teacher location (6 codes); (e) teacher activity (5 codes); and (f) student response (19 codes). Ten trained observers randomly selected from an approved applicant pool completed the observations. The observers recorded data for each target student for two consecutive full days with coding occurring during times of

reading instruction and also any other time of day when reading was the focal activity. Student pairs, special education students and their general education counterparts were observed on the same days.

Few differences were found between special education and general education students' reading instruction. The average amount of time allocated to reading was computed to be 60.8 minutes for special education students and 65.7 minutes per day for the general education students with also no significant differences to the various activities the students` were engaged in. The special education students were allocated considerably more time for individual work, received more individual attention from the teacher, and engaged in some types of active academic responses for greater amounts of time.

Is the Mainstream a More Appropriate Educational Setting for Randy? A Case Study of One Student with Learning Disabilities by Naomi Zigmond & Janice M. Baker, 1994

Zigmond and Baker's (1994) research employed a case study design that was conducted to explore the nature of the reading program experienced in the special education setting during a baseline year, 4th grade, and in a mainstream setting, 5th grade, the following year for one student. The research was carried out as an activity to collect data on the feasibility of eliminating pull-out programs for special education students as the school district moved towards a model of full inclusion. Sources of data included: (a) achievement measures; (b) classroom observation data; (c) student interviews; and (d) school adjustment data retrieved from school records. During the course of the two years five data collectors kept anecdotal records of visits to the school.

The results did indicate some significant differences in the opportunities to learn to read in the two settings but they did not yield any data that supported significant gains in reading instruction in either of the settings. It was noted that in the mainstream setting while the student received less time in reading instruction the time in the mainstream was spent more efficiently. The student's reading progress was virtually the same in both settings.

Preventing Reading Failure: A review of Five Effective Programs by John J. Pikulski, 1994

Pikulski reviews the components of five successful reading programs. Experimental intervention studies had reported student success in each of these programs. He draws some general conclusions that he suggests those planning early intervention programs consider. The conclusions he draws based on the student successes are: (a) programs should ensure that students are receiving coordinated instruction in their classrooms and in their special intervention programs; (b) children who are experiencing reading difficulties should spend more time receiving quality reading instruction than students who are not experiencing difficulties; (c) small group and one-to-one instruction is necessary, (d) first grade is the optimal time for intensive interventions; (e) reading fluency exercises as well as instruction that focuses on phonemic awareness and phonics instruction is imperative; and (f) ongoing and frequent monitoring is necessary.

Reading Research Summary

There is a substantial amount of research that has studied reading disabled students. Much has been learned about how to instruct struggling readers including learning disabled students (Adams, 1990; Allington, 2001; Snow et al., 1998), organize instructional time to benefit these students (Haynes & Jenkins, 1985; Vaughn et al., 2002) and, the optimal time and duration in a student's education to intervene (Elbaum et al., 1999; Jackson et al.,1999; Pikulski, 1994;).The studies have been both observation and intervention studies as well as synthesis and meta-analysis reviews. A prevailing conclusion has been that in special education settings students are not always provided an individual education program (Elbaum et al., 1999; Vaughn et al., 2002).

The individual education program has been described as the hallmark of special education and is developed by a required committee of professionals and parents and is a process that is governed by federal regulations (Drasgow, Yell & Robinson, 2001: Huefner, 2000; Smith, 2000). These regulations guide the process and the content and have many required items regarding the documentation of special education services (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2000).

One of these required items is a reporting of the special education instructional time that is provided in a pull out setting. As a result of the federal guidelines IEPs are defensible sources of data. For that reason this study chose to research instructional time in special education for reading disabled special education students through the use of IEPs. The study was concerned with the correlation between degree of disability and instructional services to support the premise this study was based on; students with

reading disabilities will be provided instruction commiserate with the degree of their disability. .

Individualized Education Plans

A review of the literature on Individualized Education Plans yields few studies that a match the questions this study asked. Most of the studies are focused on compliance issues (Dudley-Marling, 1985; Epsin et al., 1998; Hunt & Farron- Davis, 1992; Smith, 1990; Smith & Simpson, 1989) and other sources are descriptive in nature towards the process (Drasgow et al., 2001; Huefner, 2000; Smith, 2000; Thompson, Thurlow & Whetstone, 2001). The research does support the development of IEPs and reports on improvements to be made that would have a positive impact on the reading achievement levels of learning disabled students (Carnine & Granzen, 2001; Drasgow et al.; Huefner, 2000; Thompson et al.).

Pertinent Research

Individualized Education Programs in Resource and Inclusive Settings: How "Individualized" Are They? By Christine Espin, Stanley Deno and Deniz Albayrak-Kaymak, 1998.

Most special educators will agree that an individual focus is what makes special education special and the IEP is the tool for describing individual programs. Epsin, Deno & Albayrak-Kaymak (1998) conducted research to compare reading IEPs for 108 students in resource and inclusive settings. The question they addressed was whether IEPs for students with mild disabilities in inclusive programs differed in their degree of

individualization from IEPs for students in more traditional special education resource programs.

They examined the IEPs and recorded data that included service minutes, long range goals, short term objectives, and information sources related to assessment that were used to formulate the IEP. They set out to validate the same premise this research proposes; that students with the greatest discrepancy scores would be expected to have a greater number of allocated service minutes in their IEPs than students with lower discrepancy scores.

Their results revealed that a stronger relationship existed between the level of service intensity recommended by the IEP and the amount of time allocated to reading for students in inclusive programs than for students in resource programs. The students who were recommended high levels of service intensity in inclusive programs were getting significantly more allocated reading time. No differences were found in allocated reading time between students at low and medium intensity levels in either resource or inclusive programs. IEPs for students in resource programs had more service minutes, more long range goals, and used more sources of information than IEPs for students in inclusive programs. They concluded that the specialness of special education with an emphasis on individualized programming seemed to decrease in inclusive settings. *Comparison of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of Students with Behavioral Disorders and Learning Disabilities by Stephen W. Smith, 1990.*

The researcher completed a statistical comparison of 120 Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of fourth, fifth and sixth grade male students with behavioral

disorders and learning disabilities assigned to resource and self-contained programs from 11 school districts. He sought answers to two research question: (a) are there IEP differences between students with behavioral disabilities and learning disabilities? and, (b) are there IEP differences between students receiving services in self-contained and resource room programs? Their were four sampling groups: (a) students with behavioral disorders assigned to self-contained classrooms; (b) students with behavioral disorders assigned to resource classrooms; (c) students with learning disabilities assigned to self-contained classrooms; and (d) students with learning disabilities assigned to resource classrooms.

The Program Evaluation for Procedural and Substantive Efficacy (PEPSE) was used to assess the IEPs. The PEPSE is an assessment instrument covering procedural intent and substantive components indicative of quality special education programming (Smith & Sampson, 1989). The lead investigator collected the data during on-site visits and as a means for establishing interrater reliability an independent evaluator randomly assessed 10% of the IEPs at the end of the collection period.

The results indicated that procedural errors occurred in a large number of IEPs and that little evidence was found that the IEPs describe an intensive remediation program for students with disabilities. The researcher had assumed prior to his investigation that students' IEPs would adequately and appropriately describe and plan individualized programs. He explained this in terms of each student's present level of performance would serve as the basis for IEP annual goals and objectives and this basic

link should drive the design of the remediation plans for special education students. This was not the case.

Summary

The purpose of special education is to provide individualized designed instruction to remediate the identified areas of disability. It would be assumed that in order to accomplish this intensive prescriptive instruction would be provided. This research was designed to investigate instructional hours that have been prescribed through student Individual Education Plans, a source of data not extensively explored, in the area of reading. This is an important area to research for several reasons: (a) reading disabled students represent the largest subpopulation of special education students; and (b) previous research indicates that reading disabled students are not achieving and changes to current practices need to be explored.

Research Questions

The questions posed for this study were:

1. To what extent are students with a reading disability who are enrolled in grades 1-6 in eleven Texas school districts provided special education services in the area of reading?

2. Does the extent of special education services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon state demographics of wealth, size, and type of district?

3. Does the extent of special education services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon the degree of reading delay (determined by the difference between a child's assigned grade level and reading achievement grade equivalent score obtained during a student's assessment for special education services)?

4. Are there differences in the relationship between reading delay scores and instructional hours for different levels of the demographic variables of district size, community type, and district wealth?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This research seeks first to describe the amount of special education reading instruction provided to a sampling of special education students with reading disabilities in Texas. There are approximately 240,000 students with diagnosed learning disabilities in the state of Texas (TEA, 2004) and research reports that 80% of students with a learning disability have a reading disability (Aaron, 1997; Cramer & Ellis, 1996; Denton et al., 2003; Lerner, 1989; Pearson, 1993). It is assumed that a student with a reading disability would be provided specialized instruction. Secondly, this research will analyze the relationship between type of disability and the amount of specialized reading instruction received. Thirdly, the study will explore the potential influences of district demographics on the amount of special education services provided in the area of reading.

Sample

District Selection

District selections were made to allow representation from each of the following: (a) rural and urban; (b) a mixture of large, medium and small sized districts; and (c) varied wealth as determined by a district's tax effort. A sample distributed across the state's 20 Education Service Centers (ESC) was desired. TEA data were used to identify the potential districts in each of the service centers. Eleven districts agreed to participate which are described in Table 1.

The district selections were completed by identifying one district from each of 20 different Education Service Center (ESC) districts in the state of Texas. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) website provides information regarding these service center districts.

TABLE 1
Participating Districts

Education Service Center	*District*	*Size*	*Type*	*Wealth (per thousand dollars of assessed value)*
I Edinburg	Edinburg	19K Medium	Urban	>$1.52
II Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi	42K Large	Urban	>$1.52
IV Houston	Houston	207K Large	Urban	<$1.52
V Beaumont	Woodville	1.7K Small	Semi-rural	<$1.52
VI Huntsville	Bellville	2K Small	Semi-rural	<$1.52
VIII Mt Pleasant	Texarkana	5.4K Medium	Suburban	>$1.52
IX Wichita Falls	Burkburnett	3.8K Small	Suburban	<$1.52
XII Waco	Temple	9K Medium	Suburban	>$1.52
XIII Austin	Bastrop	5K Medium	Suburban	>$1.52
XV San Angelo	San Angelo	17K Medium	Urban	<$1.52
XVI Amarillo	Amarillo	30K Large	Urban	<$1.52
XVIII Midland	Big Spring	4.5 K Small	Suburban	<$1.52

Folder Selection

The study sampled 512 special education student eligibility folders from 35 Texas schools in 11 school districts. The folders were of special education students with learning disabilities in the area of reading. Federal regulations that govern special education have specific requirements regarding the information that must be recorded in special education eligibility folders. Based on this knowledge and by further selecting

folders of students with a disability in the area of reading the probability of being able to code all 85 items was maximized.

Instrumentation

Student Folder Review Summary Sheet

A Student Folder Review Summary Sheet (SFRS) (Appendix A) was developed for recording information from the 512 student special education eligibility folders. The lead researcher and two Texas A&M University professors were involved in the development of the SFRS form. The content of the form was based on knowledge of federal regulations that govern the required documentation that must be present in special education eligibility folders.

The SFRS allowed data collectors to record information from the following sources; (a) the students' initial referral paperwork; (b) eligibility and assessment reports for special education services; (c) testing data from students' initial referral and subsequent three year reevaluation reports; and (d) IEPs for the present school year and the three preceding years. Table 2 provides details regarding the various sections of the SFRS as well as the number and types of questions in each section.

TABLE 2
Overview of the Student Folder Review Summary Sheet

Section	*Section Title*	*# of Questions*	*Response Type*
I	Student Information	8	multiple choice
II	Initial Referral	4	multiple choice supply response
III	Interventions	10	multiple choice supply response
IV	Assessment Data	2	supply response
V	IEP Information	15	multiple choice
VI	District/Statewide Assessment Information	3	multiple choice supply response

The SFRS was organized into six sections. The inclusion of items was based on knowledge of the contents of eligibility folders and information available regarding students receiving special education services. Student demographic information was reported in the first section. Information surrounding a student's referral for special education services and prereferral interventions was recorded in the next two sections. The fourth section allowed the data collector to record dates, test names, subtests and student scores; grade and age equivalents, percentiles and standard scores. The fifth section allowed the collector to record information specific to student IEPS in reading for the present school year and the preceding three school years. The information recorded related to the amount of special education time allocated to reading, details

pertaining to a student's present level of performance and the quality and quantity of annual goals and instructional objectives. TAAS scores and any other district administered norm referenced tests were recorded in the final section.

The research utilized information from all sections of the form with the exception of Section III and VI. Information recorded in Section III was not utilized as the final decision on research questions eliminated the need for data. The data was used to help design additional research activities at Texas A&M University. Section VI data was not used because it was too limited in scope and incomplete in for many of the districts.

SFRS Reliability

The SFRS was field tested initially by the researcher and a doctoral student who served as team leader for five of the site visits. The field testing was the final step before establishing interrater reliability for the data collection form. The field testing consisted of applying the form to three special education student eligibility folders. Final adjustments to the form were made based upon this field testing. The adjustments consisted of: (a) a resequencing of items to match more closely the organization of the folders; (b) the elimination of some items due to the unavailability of data to answer these items; and (c) the addition of some items upon discovery of their availability within the eligibility folders.

Once the form was created interrater reliability was established. Six special education eligibility folders, with all identifying information masked, formed the reliability sample. Six special education professionals with extensive experience with special education eligibility folders were asked to independently code two different files

utilizing the SFRS. These six professionals consisted of two veteran special education teachers, one diagnostic teacher, two diagnosticians, and one Ph. D. psychologist. Each eligibility folder was coded by two different professionals for 85 different items and their responses were compared with the researcher responses. The form reliability data analysis is presented in Chapter IV.

Analysis

Data Summary and Analysis

To address the research questions of this study the following analyses were conducted on the collected data:

Question 1 To what extent are students with a diagnosed reading disability who are enrolled in grades 1-6 in eleven Texas school districts provided special education services in the area of reading?

The student's individualized education plans for the current school year provided the answer to question 1. The total number of special education hours per week the students received in reading instruction were recorded. These results were summarized by types of services provided, school district and entire sample. Frequency distributions, medians, modes, percentages, and inter-quartile ranges were computed.

Question 2 Does the extent of services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon state demographics of wealth, size, and type of district?

Data analysis for question 2 focused on the relationship between the hours of special education reading service provided and the district demographics of: (1) wealth;

(2) size; and (3) community type. Mode, median and inter-quartile range scores representing the number of hours of reading services for each group were reported for descriptive purposes only.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to evaluate whether there were differences in the instructional hours among the three demographic categories of district size, community type, and wealth. The Kruskal-Wallis was done because the categories of the variables were both rank and ordinal in nature. Pairwise comparisons were conducted for the statistically significant results with the Mann-Whitney U Test.

Question 3 Does the extent of services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon the degree of reading delay (determined by the difference between a child's assigned grade level and reading achievement grade equivalent score obtained during a student's assessment for special education services)?

Data summary for question 3 reported the degree of reading delay and the amount of instructional time designated for special education reading services. The degree of a student's reading delay was determined by comparing the student's obtained grade equivalent (GE) score in reading on a standardized achievement test and their grade placement at time of testing.

Means were calculated for the reading delay scores. Summary tables display the mean scores and report the corresponding median, and standard deviation scores for the amount of special education instructional hours in reading. These are reported for each

of the 11 districts and for the sample as a whole. This was done for descriptive purposes preliminary to answering the research question.

The strength of the relationship between the degree of a student's reading delay and the amount of reading services was analyzed by utilizing the correlational technique Spearman Rho for the two variables of reading services and amount of reading delay. This was done to determine to what extent a large reading delay score is paired with an increase in reading instructional services. This was done for each district separately and the entire sample. Effect sizes were calculated using the coefficient of determination, r^2, for all statistically significant results to explain the amount of variation.

One-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) were run to test mean differences between a student's mean reading delay (difference between a student's assigned grade level and their grade equivalent reading score) and the amount of special education instructional time in the area of reading. Effect sizes were calculated for all statistically significant results.

Question 4 Are there differences in the relationship between reading delay scores and instructional hours for different levels of the demographic variables of district size, community type, and district wealth?

Summary tables display the mean scores and report the corresponding median, and standard deviation scores for the amount of special education instructional hours in reading. These are reported for each of the 7 categories within the 3 demographic variables. This was done for descriptive purposes preliminary to answering the research question.

The strength of the relationship between the degree of a student's reading delay and the amount of reading services was analyzed by utilizing the correlational technique Spearman Rho for the two variables of reading services and amount of reading delay. The data determine to what extent a large reading delay score is paired with an increase in reading instructional services. This was done for each category within the three demographic variables. Effect sizes were calculated using the coefficient of determination, r^2, for all statistically significant results to explain the amount of variation.

One-way analyses of variances (ANOVA) were run to test mean differences between a student's mean reading delay (difference between a student's assigned grade level and their grade equivalent reading score) and the amount of special education instructional time in the area of reading. These were done for each of the 7 categories with the 3 demographic variables. Effect sizes were calculated for all statistically significant results.

Procedure

Approval of the study was obtained from the university Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research. The study took place in three stages: (a) district selection and instrument preparation, (b) training and data collection, and (c) data coding and analysis. Each of these stages is described in detail.

Stage 1: District Selection and Instrument Development

District Selection Permission was granted from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to visit 20 school districts in Texas during an eight week period for the purpose of

reviewing and collecting data from special education student folders. The district selection process for the twenty school districts began with a review of the 20 Educational Service Center (ESC) districts in Texas. Several districts from each ESC were identified based upon their similarity to the demographics of their ESC as a whole; (a) ethnicity percentages of enrolled students, (b) percentage of economically disadvantaged and special education students and, (c) total number of enrolled students (Appendix B).

One representative district was chosen from each of the 20 ESC districts. Houston was chosen even though its demographics were not a match to these criteria because of its distinction as the largest city with the largest school population. It was chosen to represent large cities. This process provided for a balanced sample that at face value could be considered representative (non-statistically speaking) of the state as a whole.

The twenty selected districts are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
20 Original Districts

Education Service Center	*District*	*Size*	*Type*	*Wealth (per thousand dollars of assessed value)*
I Edinburg	Edinburg	19K Medium	Urban	>$1.52
II Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi	42K Large	Urban	>$1.52
III Victoria	Victoria	15K Medium	Urban	>$1.52
IV Houston	Houston	207K Large	Urban	<$1.52
V Beaumont	Woodville	1.7K Small	Semi-rural	<$1.52
VI Huntsville	Bellville	2K Small	Semi-rural	<$1.52
VII Kilgore	Henderson	3.7 K Small	Suburban	>$1.52
VIII Mt Pleasant	Texarkana	5.4K Medium	Suburban	>$1.52
IX Wichita Falls	Burkburnett	3.8K Small	Suburban	<$1.52
X Richardson	Duncanville	10K Medium	Suburban	>$1.52
XI Fort Worth	Denton	12K Medium	Urban	>$1.52
XII Waco	Temple	9K Medium	Suburban	>$1.52
XIII Austin	Bastrop	5K Medium	Suburban	>$1.52
IX Abilene	Abilene	20K Medium	Urban	<$1.52
XV San Angelo	San Angelo	17K Medium	Urban	<$1.52
XVI Amarillo	Amarillo	30K Large	Urban	<$1.52
XVII Lubbock	Lubbock	30K Large	Urban	>$1.52
XVIII Midland	Big Spring	4.5 K Small	Suburban	<$1.52
XIX El Paso	Ysleta	47K Large	Urban	>$1.52

The Texas Education Agency revised the timeline for the collection of data to a six week window and the district selection list was pared to 15 school districts. Five school districts whose demographics matched that of another service center district were omitted. The five districts eliminated and their similarities to another region are as follows: (a) Region III was similar to Region XIII; (b) Region VIII was similar to VII;

(c) Region X was similar to Region XII; (d) Region XIV was similar to Region XVI; and (e) Region XVII was similar to both Regions XV and XVIII.

The Texas Education Agency agreed to the final fifteen districts and contacted them by letter (see sample letter at Appendix C) and enclosed a brief overview of the study. The purpose of the letter and overview was to explain the study and request the district's collaboration with Texas A&M. The letter further stated that Texas A&M would contact the district to obtain permission. Permission was secured from 11 of the 15 districts. Four districts declined participation - Northside (Region XX), Ysleta (Region XIX), Denton (Region XI), and Henderson (Region VII) - citing the press of time and ongoing projects as their reasons.

Instrument Preparation The lead researcher and two Texas A&M University professors were involved in the development of the SFRS form. The content of the form was based on knowledge of federal regulations that govern the required documentation that must be present in special education eligibility folders. The items on the form were sequentially grouped by specific topics: (a) student information; (b) referral and assessment data; and (c) IEPS. The sequential grouping was based on knowledge of where the information would be recorded in student eligibility folders. These groupings of items also helped to streamline the collection of the data.

The form was field tested by the lead researcher and the research assistant. The field testing consisted of independent coding of two special education eligibility folders. The answers were compared; discrepancies investigated and ambiguous items were

rewritten. A two page direction sheet was then developed to assist in the collection of data (see Appendix D).

Stage 2: Training and Data Collection

Data Collectors The group of data collectors included the researcher, one faculty member, and seven doctoral students from the Educational Psychology Department at Texas A&M University. Three of the doctoral students were from the Special Education program, and four from the School Psychology program. All of the data collectors had public school experience and special education knowledge. Six of the collectors were certified teachers and two were Master's level Licensed Specialists in School Psychology. The faculty member held a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology and taught courses in the Research and Measurement area. One data collector served as a research assistant as well as team leader for five of the site visits. The data collector held a Master's degree in special education was a certified special education teacher and was enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University.

Training of data collectors The researcher, a certified diagnostician and school administrator, conducted the orientation and training for the data collectors on collection methodology. The training consisted of an overview of the research and then a careful review and guided completion of the student folder review summary sheet using an actual special education eligibility folder with all identifying data masked. The data collectors independently coded an additional folder, and responses were compared to the researcher's responses. The training continued until each of the data collectors was able

to complete the form with responses that matched the researcher's responses. The training was conducted during a three hour session and individual sessions were arranged with the data collectors who required additional training.

Site Visits The research assistant contacted the 11 districts that agreed to participate and arrange the dates for the individual visits. The visits took place during a five week period (Table 4). The lead researcher and assistant conducted the first site visit and the remaining visits were split amongst the researcher and the research assistant each acting as team leader. The research assistant acted as team leader for three of the remaining 10 districts.

The study was conducted by visiting the 11 school districts that indicated their willingness to participate. 512 folders were examined for students from 35 schools in the 11 districts. Teams of two or three researchers conducted the site visits with four researchers collecting data from Houston and one researcher collecting data in Woodville during the five week period.

TABLE 4
Schedule of Site Visits Including Number of Schools, Team Members and Number of Folders Examined

District	*# of Schools*	*Team Size*	*Dates*	*# of Folders*
Temple	3	2	November 14-15	47
Bellville	2	2	November 16-17	23
Amarillo	4	3	November 18-19	59
Edinburg	3	3	November 18-19	22
Bastrop	5	4	November 23-24	59
San Angelo	3	3	December 3-4	52
Burkburnett	3	3	December 3-4	35
Corpus Christi	4	3	December 8-9	59
Big Spring	3	3	December 8-9	56
Houston	3	4	December 14-15	65
Woodville	2	1	December 14-15	35

School Data Collection Activities Contact was made by telephone with each district prior to the site visits. The logistics of the site visit were discussed with regard to folder selection and review. The districts were asked to preselect the files to be examined and asked to choose files from several different campuses. The preselection criterion was files of students with a learning disability who were likely to have a reading disability and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in the area of reading and

were enrolled in grades one through six. The district was also asked to provide space where the researchers could examine and record data from the selected folder. Nine of the districts maintained their files at a central office location and Houston and Amarillo maintained their folders at the campus where the students were enrolled.

Prior to coding folders individually at each of the sites the team leader would review several folders with the team to point out any unique practices employed by the district and provided additional information related to the organizational features of the files in that particular district. Throughout the data collection the researchers engaged in conversation regarding their findings related to coding the data that would assist the other data collectors and were also encouraged to ask the team leader for assistance. The researchers then individually recorded data from the remaining special education student eligibility folders.

Stage 3: Data Coding and Analysis

Once the site visits were complete, the data were entered into Excel spreadsheet format. Each of the 85 indicators were coded. The pertinent data needed for the statistical analyses were converted to SPSS data format. The data was then analyzed using the computer software SPSS to obtain the answers necessary to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to provide better understanding of special education reading services provided to a sample of special education students with reading disabilities in Texas and the basis for providing these services. Data for the study were collected from visits to school districts where special education eligibility folders were examined and the results were calculated using the data recorded on the Student Folder Review Summary Sheet (SFRS).

This chapter will first report the results for the reliability of the SFRS. The chapter will then address each of the four research questions individually. The presentation format will be: (a) results for each research question, (b) summary for all of the analyses conducted, and (c) results by district and demographic variables.

Data Collection Form

SFRS Form Reliability

The Student Folder Review Summary Sheet (SFRS) (Appendix A) was the data collection tool used for recording the information from the special education eligibility folders. The SFRS allowed data collectors to record information from the following sources: (a) the students' initial referral paperwork; (b) eligibility and assessment reports for special education services; (c) testing data from students' initial referral and subsequent three year reevaluation reports, and (d) IEPs for the present school year and the three preceding years.

Interrater reliability for the SFRS form was established prior to data collection. This research utilized two methods: (1) percent of agreement, and (2) Cohen's Kappa, chance-corrected percent of agreement (Cohen, 1960; Fleiss, Levin, & Paik, 2003; Suen & Ary, 1989). Six special education eligibility folders, with all identifying information masked, formed the reliability sample for establishing interrater reliability for the data collection form, SFRS.

Six special education professionals with extensive experience with special education eligibility folders were asked to independently code two different files utilizing the SFRS. These six professionals consisted of two veteran special education teachers, one diagnostic teacher, two diagnosticians, and one psychologist. Each eligibility folder was coded by two different professionals for 85 different items and their responses were compared with the researcher's responses. The results for percent of agreement are reported in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Percent of Agreement for the Student Folder Review Summary Sheet Reliability

Folder	*Rater #1*	*Rater #2*	*Rater #1 & #2*
Folder 1	71%	72%	54%
Folder 2	73%	69%	63%
Folder 3	67%	85%	60%
Folder 4	94%	89%	89%
Folder 5	84%	87%	65%
Folder 6	95%	93%	91%
All folders			70%

The percent of agreement measure is the ratio of the number of times raters agree divided by the total number of items. The results indicate a 70% overall agreement for all folders and raters with the researcher. The range of agreement for the six individual folders was from a low of 54% agreement for folder 1 and a high of 91% agreement for folder 6. The results obtained for percent of agreement need to be interpreted with caution because they do not take into account the possibility of agreement by pure chance. For this reason we further calculated chance-corrected percent of agreement.

Cohen's Kappa, chance-corrected percent of agreement, estimates the proportion of agreement among raters after chance agreement has been removed. Values range from -1 to + 1 with zero an indication of chance agreement, with negative values indicating

worse than chance agreement. Values between 0.4 and 0.75 are considered fair to good agreement beyond chance, and values greater than 0.75 represent excellent agreement beyond chance (Fleiss et al., 2003). The Kappa results are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6

Chance-Corrected Percent of Agreement for the Student Folder Review Summary Sheet Reliability

Folder	*Rater #1*	*Rater #2*	*Rater #1 and #2*
Folder 1	57%	61%	60%
Folder 2	64%	60%	62%
Folder 3	52%	76%	64%
Folder 4	92%	85%	88%
Folder 5	79%	57%	68%
Folder 6	94%	91%	93%
All folders			73%

The obtained chance-corrected percent of agreement values can all be considered good agreement because they fall in the range of 0.4 and 0.75. The overall chance corrected percent of agreement for all raters and folders was .73. The lowest obtained value was .60 for folder 1 and the highest was .93 for folder 6. This range of values can possibly be attributed to the varying contents of the six individual files. Some files

contained multiple assessment reports and more detailed data regarding the student and thus increased the level of difficulty for coding the 85 items.

The first district visit was conducted by the lead researcher and assistant. Prior to coding the district data, a sample file from the district's selection was coded independently using the SFRS by each of the two data collectors to ensure that overall interrater agreement was at least 75%. This process was followed for all subsequent district visits. These independent evaluations uniformly produced interrater reliability for all data collectors of over 75%.

Research Question One

1. To what extent are students with a reading disability who are enrolled in grades 1-6 in eleven Texas school districts provided special education services in the area of reading?

The first research question asked for descriptive data regarding the special education reading services provided to learning disabled students. School districts pre-selected folders for examination and were asked to select folders of students with learning disabilities in the area of reading. Five hundred and twelve special education folders of students who were most likely to have a learning disability in the area of reading were examined for this research. A total of 377 files were determined to be of students with a documented learning disability in the area of reading. A student was considered to have a disability in reading if the learning disability was documented in

either basic reading or reading comprehension, or both. This information was found in student comprehensive individual assessments and eligibility reports in the assessment section of the students' folders, and the information was recorded in Section I, Student Information, question 8 on the SFRS form.

Upon determination that the student was reading disabled, then evidence of special education services was sought. The files were examined for the presence of an Individualized Education Plan in reading and/or documented instructional time in reading as evidence of services provided. The data was analyzed to determine percentages of students who were provided services. Additionally, the type of services provided and the location of these services were recorded. These services are considered special education services because they are detailed in ARD paperwork and they are not provided to the students' non-special education peers. Table 7 provides a summary of the students provided services in each of the districts.

TABLE 7
Percentage of Reading Disabled Students Receiving Special Education Reading Services by District

District	*# of folders*	*# of students provided services*	*Percentage*
Amarillo	36	24	67%
Bastrop	48	38	79%
Bellville	12	8	67%
Big Spring	50	32	64%
Burkburnett	30	15	50%
Corpus Christi	34	22	65%
Edinburg	20	19	95%
Houston	56	45	80%
San Angelo	39	32	82%
Temple	29	21	72%
Woodville	23	17	74%
Totals	377	273	72%

The chart summarizes data on the percentage of students with a reading disability who were provided special education services in reading. Two hundred and seventy-three of the files examined contained evidence of special education assistance which is an overall average of 72% of reading disabled students being provided special education services. The overall variability across districts was 45 percentage points with 50%

being the lowest (Burkburnett ISD), and Edinburg, the highest, at 95% or 19 out of the 20 student files contained evidence of special education services.

Table 8 provides a breakdown of the data used to document the instructional reading services provided to the sample as well as type and location of these services.

TABLE 8
Summary of Special Education Reading Services as Documented in Student Files

Documentation	*# of students*	*Percentage*
No services provided -No IEP or documented special or general education instructional time in reading	104	28%
Services provided - IEP without documented special or general education instructional time	39	10%
Services provided – No IEP but documented special education instructional time	10	3%
Services provided - IEP and documented special education instructional time	134	36%
Services provided - IEP and documented special and general education instructional time	70	19%
Services provided - IEP and documented general education instructional time	7	2%
Services provided - IEP and documented instructional time; no location specified	13	3%
Total	377	

This chart summarizes the documentation regarding the services provided to the 377 reading disabled students. Surprisingly, 104 or 28% of the students did not have any documentation of special education reading services provided. Overall, only 264 student files contained an IEP for reading and 39 of these files did not have any specified instructional time. Approximately 224 of the student files contained an IEP with instructional time and 36% of these files indicated special education time only, 19% reported combined special and general education time, 2% general education only, and location of the instructional time was not recorded in 3% of the student files.

The second part of this question examined the extent of special education instructional reading services provided to these students. The extent of services was determined by examining the amount of instructional time in reading as specified on a student's IEP or schedule of services page, and recorded in Section V, question 4 on the SFRS form. The instructional time varied greatly across students and districts. One student may have had 15 minutes weekly, another 45 minutes, and another 3 hours so the instructional time data were entered in a scale of 9 ordered categories that represented ranges of weekly time. The nine categories ranged from 0 minutes to greater than 6 hours. The 9 categories of instructional time were interval type data. A frequency distribution chart for the sample is presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9
Frequency Distribution for Supplemental Reading Instructional Hours per Week for Sample

Instructional Time	*n*	*Percentage*
0 hours	144	38%
< 30 minutes	11	3%
31 to 59 minutes	11	3%
1 hour	22	6%
2.25 to 3 hours	51	14%
3.25 – 4 hours	30	8%
4.25 to 5 hours	20	5%
5.25 to 6 hours	15	4%
> 6 hours	73	19%

This chart represents the data in terms of special education instructional time per week for the entire sample of 377 students. The table shows that 144 students (38%) had no prescribed special education time in the area of reading and that only 37% were provided greater than 3 hours of instructional services despite the fact that they had a mean reading delay of 1.30 GE. A total of 63% of the students were provided instructional services 3 hours or less. Only 19% of the students received over 6 hours of instructional time in reading per week.

Further descriptive analyses were conducted to calculate the mode and median instructional hours documented in student IEPs for the full sample and for the individual districts. These 2 measures, mode and median, were used because the data set was ordinal in nature. The interquartile range (IQR) was also calculated to illustrate the dispersion within the districts and the sample. The mode, median and IQR results by district are presented in Table 10.

TABLE 10
Mode, Median and Interquartile Values for Supplemental Instructional Reading Hours per Week by District and for Sample

District	*Mode*	*Median*	*Values (range between 25^{th} and 75^{th})*
Amarillo n = 36	0	0	0 and 5.25 – 6 hrs
Bastrop n = 48	2.25 – 3 hrs	2.25 – 3 hrs	30 min and 4.25 – 5 hrs
Bellville n =12	31 – 59 min	31 – 59 min	0 and > 6 hrs
Big Spring n = 50	0	3.25 – 4 hrs	0 and 3.25 – 4 hrs
Burkburnett n = 30	0	31 – 59 min	0 and 3.25 – 4 hrs
Corpus Christi n = 34	0	0	0 and > 6 hrs
Edinburg n = 20	2.25 – 3 hrs	2.25 – 3 hrs	2.25–3 hrs and 4.25 – 5 hrs
Houston n = 56	1 hr	0	0 and 3.25 – 4 hrs
San Angelo n = 39	> 6 hrs	2.25 – 3 hrs	0 and > 6 hrs
Temple n = 29	0	1 hr	0 and 4.25 – 5 hrs
Woodville n = 23	0	1 hr	0 and 4.25 – 5 hrs
Totals n = 377	0	2.25 – 3 hrs	0 and 4.25 – 5 hrs

The modal value for the sample was no instructional time in the area of reading. The median was 2.25 – 3 hours. There was minimal variation across individual districts. Six districts had the mode score of 0, 2 districts had 1 hour or less, 2 districts fell in the ranges of 2.25 – 3 hours while only one district has a mode score of greater than 6 hours. There was considerable variation among the median scores with an overall median score of 2.25 – 3 hours. Three districts had a median score of either 0 or 2.25 – 3 hours, 2 districts had a median value of either 31 – 59 minutes or 1 hour and 1 district had a median value of 3.25 – 4 hours.

Interquartile range values were calculated between the 25^{th} and 75^{th} quartiles (containing the middle 50% of scores). The overall IQR values for the sample indicate high dispersion with a lower limit of 0 minutes and an upper limit in the range of 4.25 to 5 hours. The district with the smallest dispersion was Edinburg; 2.25 – 3 hours and 4.25 – 5 hours and three districts; Bellville, Corpus Christi and San Angelo, had the highest possible dispersion with IQR values that represented the lowest and highest values possible; 0 minutes and > 6 hours. Three districts displayed moderate dispersion with the IQR values representing 0 and 3.25 and 4 hours respectively.

It is presumed that students with a diagnosed disability and eligible for special education services are provided additional educational supports to remediate the deficit skills. Overall 72% of these reading disabled students were provided services in reading and instructional time was provided for only 62% of the students. Instructional time ranged from as little as less than 30 minutes for 11 students or 3% of the students to greater than 6 hours for only 73 students or 19%. Overall, only 37% of the students were

provided instructional services greater than 3 hours per week. The median instructional time for the sample was 2.25 to 3 hours. Possible reasons for this lack of service will be discussed in Chapter V.

Research Question Two

2. Does the extent of special education services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon state demographics of wealth, size, and type of district?

This research selected districts to participate based on obtaining a balanced sample and representative of the following demographic features: (a) rural versus urban, (b) large, medium and small sized districts, and (3) wealth factors. An assumption was that larger sized urban and/or suburban districts and/or with a tax effort of >$1.52 might possibly influence the degree of services in a positive way. Question 2 will examine the possible impact of these demographic features on special education instructional time.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) oversees the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) for the state of Texas. The AEIS system pulls together a wide range of information on the performance of students in every school and district each year (TEA, 2004). TEA tracks 11 performance indicators combined by ethnicity, sex, special education, and low income status. These 11 indicators are further aggregated by school and district staff, finances, programs, and demographics. Question 2 explores the relationship between the amount of instructional time prescribed while focusing on the TEA demographic features of: (a) community type; (b) property wealth in terms of tax effort; and (c) district size. While special education services by definition are driven by

student needs, this research did examine demographic variables for their possible influence. Larger urban sized districts are perceived to have greater resources to draw upon than small isolated rural districts and wealthier districts are usually able to provide more services for students.

TEA classifies districts on a scale ranging from major urban to rural for community type. There are 8 categories plus 1 additional one used only for charter schools. Factors such as size, growth rates, student economic status, and proximity to urban areas are used to assign categories. This research further grouped the community factors into three groups; urban, suburban and semi-rural.

Tax effort is defined as the total taxable property value divided by the total number of students and is used as an indicator of a district's ability to raise local funds on a per pupil basis. TEA groups districts into four equal categories, or quartiles, with approximately equal numbers of districts in each. This research categorized wealth into two variables of tax effort; <$1.52 and >$1.52, to create almost equal groups.

For the demographic district size, TEA groups districts into 9 categories based on the number of students. The number of students is determined by the total number of students in membership in the district on the last Friday in October. This research combined categories and used three grouping categories: (a) large - >25,000, (b) medium – 5,000 – 25,000, and (c) small - < 5000. Table 11 displays the breakdown for each demographic variable and the representative districts as well as the corresponding percentages of students provided services.

TABLE 11
Demographic Categories, District Membership and Percent of Students Receiving Services

Demographic	*n*	*District membership*	*% services*
Community Type			
Semi-rural	81	Bastrop, Bellville, Big Spring, Woodville	71%
Suburban	110	Burkburnett, San Angelo, Temple	68%
Large Urban	185	Amarillo, Corpus Christi, Edinburg, Houston	77%
Tax Effort			
< $1.52	246	Amarillo, Burkburnett, Houston, San Angelo, Woodville	71%
> $1.52	130	Bastrop, Bellville, Big Spring, Corpus Christi, Edinburg, Temple	74%
Size			
Large > 25,000	81	Amarillo, Corpus Christi, Houston	71%
Medium 5,000 to 25,000	92	Bastrop, Edinburg, San Angelo, Temple	82%
Small < 5000	46	Bellville, Big Spring, Burkburnett, Woodville	64%

This table provides data regarding the percentages of students provided services. Medium sized districts had the greatest percentage, 82%, of students with documented assistance while small sized districts had the lowest percentage, 64%. The overall range was 18 percentage points.

As a preliminary step to answering question 2, first were calculated the descriptive statistics of median, mode and interquartile ranges for the variable

instructional time for each of the demographic variables. These analyses were done for descriptive purposes prior to answering the research question. The results are summarized in Table 12.

TABLE 12
Mode, Median and Interquartile Values (IQ) for Supplemental Instructional Reading Hours per Week for the Demographic Categories of District Size, Type, and Wealth

	Mode, Median, and Interquartile Values for Instructional Hours per Week		
District	*Mode*	*Median*	*Values (range between 25^{th} and 75^{th})*
District size			
Small	0	2.25 – 3 hrs	0 and 4.25 – 5 hrs
Medium	0	2.25 – 3 hrs	0 and 5.25 – 6 hrs
Large	0	between 31 – 59 min and 1 hr	0 and 4.25 – 5 hrs
District type			
Urban	0	2.25 – 3 hrs	0 and between 4.25 – 5 hrs and 5.25 – 6 hrs
Suburban	2.25 – 3 hrs	between < 30 and 31 and 59 mins	0 and 3.25–4 hrs
Semi-rural	> 6 hrs	2.25 – 3 hrs	0 and > 6 hrs
District wealth			
< $1.52	0	1 hr	0 and 4.25 – 5 hrs
> $1.52	0	2.25 – 3 hrs	0 and 4.25 – 5 hrs

This table lists the descriptive statistics for each of the demographic variables. The greatest variability among the mode scores were found within the demographic category of district type. The mode scores ranged from 0 for the urban districts to greater than 6 hours for the semi-rural districts. The mode score of 0 was found for all of the other subgroups within the categories of district size and wealth. The variability among the median values was minimal across all demographic groups; the range was from 31 - 59 minutes to 2.25 hours – 3 hours for the median values. The variable has an overall range of 0 to > 6 hours.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to evaluate whether there were differences in the instructional hours among the three demographic categories of district size, community type, and wealth. The Kruskal-Wallis was done because the categories of the variables were both rank and ordinal in nature. Pairwise comparisons were conducted for the statistically significant results with the Mann-Whitney U test. The Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney results are listed in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13
Kruskal-Wallis Results for the Three Demographic Categories and Instructional Time

Demographic	*n*	*DFmodel*	*SSmodel*	*MSmodel*	*F*	*P*
District Size	376	2	36.840	18.420	1.87	.156
Community Type	376	2	78.664	39.332	4.04	.018*
Wealth	376	1	4.098	4.98	.41	.521

*Significance p<.05

Table 14
Mann-Whitney U Pairwise Comparisons for the Demographic Categories of Community Type

Pairs	*Mann-Whitney U*	*Significance*	*Effect Size*
Semi-rural/Suburban	3416.00	.004*	.042
Semi-rural/Urban	6732.00	.176	
Suburban/Urban	8816.00	.046**	.013

*significance at <.01 level
**significance at <.05 level

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis showed that there was a difference in instructional time for only the variable of district type; H=8.53, 2 *df*, N=376, p=.018. The Mann-Whitney U pairwise comparisons were analyzed to evaluate the differences among the 3 categories of the variable. The results were that two of the three pairwise comparisons showed differences among the median hours; semi-rural/suburban and

suburban/urban. Effect sizes were calculated for the pairwise comparisons between semi-rural and suburban districts. This relationship accounted for only 4% of the variance for instructional time while the suburban and urban comparison accounted for only 1% variance. These differences are only minimal for the instructional hours among the categories.

Research Question Three

3. Does the extent of special education services provided students who are classified as learning disabled in the area of reading depend upon the degree of reading delay (determined by the difference between a child's assigned grade level and reading achievement grade equivalent score obtained during a student's assessment for special education services)?

The previous two questions focused just on instructional time. Questions 3 and 4 will further analyze instructional time by exploring the relationships between the degree of a student's reading delay and subsequent instructional time provided. The degree of a student's reading delay will be measured in terms of reading delay scores.

Most special education students are determined to be learning disabled based on evidence of a discrepancy (greater than 1 SD) between their intellectual capacity (IQ measure) and academic achievement levels in seven areas (Type 1 eligibility criteria). This study was focused on students with a learning disability in either of two such areas; reading comprehension or basic reading (or both). Presumably, students with greater reading delays would receive a greater amount of special education service, and more intensively delivered.

The extent of a student's discrepancy in the reading areas was determined by calculating a reading delay score. Reading delay scores were calculated by subtracting a student's grade equivalent achievement score in reading from the student's grade placement at the time of the eligibility determination. Grade equivalent scores are an indication of an average or typical performance for a student at that particular grade level. The grade equivalent scores and dates of assessments were recorded in Section IV on the SFRS and the student's grade placement in Section I.

The grade equivalent scores for reading achievement were obtained from a student's performance on one of 4 different reading subtests or in the case of a dual reading diagnosis, a reading composite score. The score used corresponded to the student's area of reading disability and was from either the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJR) or the Weschler Individual Achievement Tests (WIAT).

The WIAT and WJR tests are comprehensive individually administered batteries of tests used for assessing the achievement of children in seven areas that parallel the categories of learning disabilities. The Weschler tests are designed for students who are enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12th grade and aged from 5-0 to 19-11 (Psychological Corporation, 1992a) while the WJ-R can be used at all age levels (Woodcock & Johnson, 1990). The subtests of the WIAT are reported to have significant correlation with the corresponding WJR subtests (Psychological Corporation, 1992b). The reported correlations were: (a) WIAT basic reading and WJR letter identification .79 and, (b) WIAT reading comprehension and WJR passage comprehension .74. Table 15 illustrates the subtests used for this research and identifies score sources.

TABLE 15

Sources for Reading Achievement Scores from the Woodcock Johnson and Weschler Achievement Tests

Test	*LD area*	*Subtest score*
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJR)		
	Basic Reading	Letter Identification score
	Reading Comprehension	Passage Comprehension score
	Basic Reading and Reading Comprehension	Broad Reading score
Weschler Individual Achievement Tests (WIAT)		
	Basic Reading	Basic Reading score
	Reading Comprehension	Reading Comprehension score
	Basic Reading and Reading Comprehension	Reading Composite Score

Reading delay scores were available for 220 students in 10 of the 11 districts. There were no data available for Bellville. The descriptive statistics of mean, median and standard deviations were calculated for the reading delay scores for descriptive purposes prior to answering the research question. These results are presented in Table 16.

TABLE 16
Mean and Standard Deviation Reading Delay Scores by District and for the Sample

District	*n*	*Mean*	*Median*	*SD*
Amarillo	25	1.17	1.00	.55
Bastrop	30	1.37	1.25	.70
Big Spring	17	1.05	.90	.59
Burkburnett	11	1.04	.90	.61
Corpus Christi	23	1.08	1.00	.33
Edinburg	15	1.91	2.10	.75
Houston	33	1.60	1.60	.66
San Angelo	25	1.35	1.20	.67
Temple	23	1.10	1.10	.43
Woodville	18	1.16	1.10	.49
Sample	220	1.30	1.20	.63

Reading delay scores were calculated from the difference between a student's GE score on a reading achievement test and their grade placement at the time of testing. The overall mean reading delay for the sample was 1.3 grade equivalents, overall median score was 1.2 grade equivalents, and the standard deviation was .63. The range of scores was from a low of 1.04 for Burkburnett to a high of 1.91 for Edinburg. The overall spread was .87 grade equivalents across all districts.

Correlation coefficients were calculated to explore the relationship between student reading delay scores and amount of special education services prescribed. A Spearman's Rho correlation was used because the data were ordinal. The correlation examined the relationship between the dependent variable, reading delay scores, and the independent variable amount of prescribed special education services. Spearman Rho was calculated for the sample and the 10 individual districts. Effect sizes were calculated using R^2 for all significant results to explain the amount of variation. The results are presented in Table 17.

TABLE 17
Correlation Coefficients and Effect Sizes for Reading Delay Scores and Amount of Special Education Instructional Time by District and Sample

District	*n*	*Rho*	*p*	R^2
Amarillo	25	.153	.465	
Bastrop	30	.394*	.031	.155
Big Spring	17	.194	.455	
Burkburnett	11	-.232	.493	
Corpus Christi	23	.173	.429	
Edinburg	15	.026	.926	
Houston	33	.218	.222	
San Angelo	25	.213	.306	
Temple	23	-.111	.624	
Woodville	18	.051	.840	
Sample	220	.206**	.002	.042

* significant at the .05 level **significant at the .01 level

The results from the correlational analyses indicate that overall there was only minimal evidence of a relationship between the reading delay scores and the amount of instructional time. Significant positive relationships were found for the sample and one district, Bastrop. The significant positive relationship found between a student's reading delay and the amount of special education instructional time for the sample was (rho [220])=.206, p<.01). The R^2 effect size was calculated leading to the conclusion that reading delay predicts only 4% of the variation in level of special education instructional

time provided. The significant relationship found for Bastrop was (rho [30] = .394, p< .05), accounted for 15% of the variance in instructional time provided.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to look at the influence of reading delay scores (difference between a student's assigned grade level and their grade equivalent reading score) and the amount of special education instructional time in the area of reading. The analyses were done to determine whether there was statistical significance regarding the prediction of reading delay based upon a student's instructional time. A statistically significant result can be interpreted as highly unlikely to occur by chance. The ANOVA results for the sample are provided in Table 18.

TABLE 18
ANOVA Results Predicting Reading Services for Special Education Students

Source	*DF*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*P*	*Eta²*
Between	*8*	*9.519*	*1.190*	*3.194*	*.002**	*.108*
Within	*210*	*78.229*	*.373*			
Total (Adjusted)	*218*	*87.748*				

* p< 0.01.

The results of the one-way analysis of variance yielded statistically significant F(8,210)=3.194, p<.01 results. Effect size was computed using Eta^2. As a result, about 11% of the variance of the reading delay scores can be attributed to the amount of special education services. The potential reasons for the minimal relationship between

degree of reading delay and amount of special education services provided will be discussed in the final chapter.

Research Question Four

4. Are there differences in the relationship between reading delay scores and instructional hours for different levels of the demographic variables of district size, community type, and district wealth?

According to federal and state rules and regulations governing the provision of special education services students are provided assistance based on the individual needs of the students. These needs are identified and detailed in student eligibility reports. This research used the information in student eligibility reports to establish the degree of reading delay and used this delay as an indicator of student needs. The previous question explored the relationship between the reading delay and instructional time for each of the 11 districts and the sample as a whole. This question will explore the relationship among reading delay and instructional time within the demographic categories of district size, district type, and district wealth. These demographic categories were previously described in Question 2.

Reading delay scores and instructional time was available for only 220 students. Descriptive statistics of mean, median and standard deviations were calculated for descriptive purposes prior to answering the research question. These results are presented in Table 19.

TABLE 19
Descriptive Statistics of Mean, Median, and SD for Reading Delay Scores by Demographic Variables

Demographic	*n*	*Mean*	*Median*	*SD*
Community Type				
Urban	96	1.42	1.25	.65
Suburban	59	1.20	1.10	.59
Semi-rural	65	1.23	1.20	.63
Tax Effort				
< $1.52	112	1.32	1.20	.64
> $1.52	108	1.28	1.20	.63
Size				
Large > 25,000	81	1.32	1.20	.59
Medium 5,000 to 25,000	92	1.38	1.20	.69
Small < 5000	46	1.09	1.00	.55
Sample	220	1.30	1.20	.63

This table lists the results for the descriptive statistics for each of the demographic variables. The greatest variability was in the category of size where the reading delay scores ranged from a low of 1.09 for small districts to a high of 1.38 for medium sized districts. The range overall for mean reading delay scores ranged was .33 which indicates minimal variability among the categories.

Correlation coefficients were calculated to explore the relationship between student reading delay scores and amount of special education services prescribed. A Spearman's Rho correlation was used because the data were ordinal. The correlation examined the relationship between the dependent variable, reading delay scores, and the independent variable amount of prescribed special education services. Spearman Rho was calculated for all levels of the 3 demographic groupings. Effect sizes were calculated using R^2 for all significant results to explain the amount of variation. The results are presented in Table 20.

TABLE 20
Correlation Coefficients and Effect Sizes for Reading Delay Scores and Amount of Special Education Instructional Time

Demographic	*n*	*Rho*	*p*	R^2
District size				
Small	46	.840	.581	
Medium	92	.224	.032*	.05
Large	81	.269	.016*	.07
Community type				
Semi-rural	65	.263	.004**	.07
Suburban	58	.157	.164	
Urban	96	.051	.840	
Wealth				
< $1.52	112	.185	.051	
>$1.52	107	.225*	.020*	.05

* significant at the .05 level **significant at the .01 level

Although statistically positive relationships were found within each of the various demographic groupings for the variable instructional time the effect sizes indicated were minimal. Statistically significant correlations for categories of district size; medium and large were; medium sized districts (rho[92] = .224, p<.05) and large sized districts (rho [81] = .269, p,.05). The R^2 effect sizes were calculated for both of the significant positive correlations leading to the conclusion that instructional time predicts only 5% of the variation in level of special education reading time for medium sized districts and 7% for large sized districts.

Statistically significant positive relationships and effect sizes indicated minimal variation for the variable instructional time were also found for the district type category of urban and the two district wealth categories. Effect sizes were; urban districts R^2 = .07, for wealth >$1.52 R^2 = 05, and Wealth <$1.52 R^2 = .03. The effect of the reading delay scores on special education services was small and the variances validate the results only to a small degree; 7% for urban districts, 5% for districts with a tax `effort of >$1.52, and 3% for districts with a tax effort of >$1.52.

One way analyses of variances were conducted to explore the relationship between reading delay and instructional time within the different demographic groupings. ANOVA was chosen for the analysis because the reading delay scores were interval and the instructional hours were ordinal. The dependent variable was the reading delay scores and the independent variable was the instructional time. The results are presented in Table 21.

TABLE 21
Summary Table of Analysis of Variance Results Predicting Reading Delay Scores from Instructional Time for all Levels of the Demographic Variables

Demographic	*n*	*DFmodel*	*SSmodel*	*MSmodel*	*F*	*P*	*Eta²*
Community Type	220						
Semi-rural	65	8	11.969	1.496	3.913	.001**	.359
Suburban	59	7	8.287	1.184	3.208	.007**	.306
Urban	96	8	7.001	.875	3.196	.003**	.227
Tax Effort	220						
< $1.52	112	8	11.152	1.394	4.531	.000*	.260
> $1.52	108	8	14.486	1.811	5.279	.000*	.299
Size	220						
Small < 5000	46	7	10.908	1.558	3.470	.006**	.390
Medium 5,000 to 25,000	93	8	14.475	1.809	5.746	.000*	.354
Large > 25,000		8	3.526	.441	1.802	.091	.167

Significance p<.000
Significance p<.01

The results of the analyses of variances show that the relationship between reading delay and instructional time for the levels of the demographic categories are statistically significant for 6 of the 7 categories. The exception is the large sized districts. Effect sizes were computed and the variability that can be explained for the instructional time ranges

from a high of 39% for the small sized districts and a low of 23% for the urban districts. Possible reasons for these results will be discussed in Chapter V.

Summary

The results of this research reported that 72% of the student files provided evidence of special education assistance but for only 62% was this assistance through the provision of instructional time. The examination of instructional time revealed that only 37% of the files contained evidence of supplemental instruction greater than 3 hours a week and only 19% of the reading disabled students were recorded as receiving more than 6 hours a week. The median instructional time for the 377 files was 2.25 – 3 hours per week.

The relationship between the two variables of reading delay and instructional time was examined. The overall mean reading delay was 1.30 GE. Correlational analyses and effect sizes showed positive relationships. The effect sizes for the sample led to the conclusions that reading delay scores predict only 4% of the variability between the amount of reading delay and instructional time for the sample and 15% for one district; Bastrop. Analysis of variances results showed that about 11% of the variance of instructional time could be explained.

The research further explored the relationship between reading delay scores and instructional time for the demographic categories for comparative purposes with district membership. Spearman rho correlation analyses and the subsequent R^2 effect sizes indicated that the variability or the prediction of instructional time ranged from a high of 34% for small sized districts to a low of 3% for urban districts.

Special education services by definition are to be provided based on the individual needs of the students. The overall results of this research showed a minimal relationship between student needs and instructional time for 377 reading disabled students. The correlation between services and the demographics variables also showed only minimal relationships. Greater variability was found when the results were analyzed by demographic categories rather than district membership. The reasons for these results will be discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

This chapter will discuss the findings regarding services provided in Texas elementary schools to special education students with learning disabilities in reading. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the purpose, design and procedures of the study. The results of interrater reliability for the main data collection instrument, the Student Folder Review Summary Sheet (SFRS), will be discussed and then each of the four research questions will be discussed individually. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research will also be addressed.

The purpose of this research study was to provide descriptive information on special education services in the area of reading provided to students with learning disabilities. The identification of students with learning disabilities has increased by almost 200% since the category was introduced in 1977. It has been estimated that approximately 80% of all students identified as learning disabled have a reading disability.

This study examined special education assessment and eligibility reports as well as the instructional time in reading provided to a sample of Texas school children from 11 school districts enrolled in grades 1 through 6. This research described these services and investigated the relationship between the degree of a student's disability and the amount of services provided. The demographic variables of size, community type, and wealth were also investigated as potential determinants of special education instructional hours. The data source for this research was special education eligibility folders. The 512

folders were examined by trained research teams of two or three who conducted site visits during a five week period.

Instrument Reliability

The primary data collection tool was the Student Folder Review Summary Sheet (SFRS) (Appendix A). This form was created for use with this study and the content was based on knowledge of federal regulations that govern the required documentation that must be present in special education eligibility folders and on common district practices in Texas for documenting services.

This SFRS achieved reasonable-to-high interrater reliability, (.60 to .93 Kappa chance-corrected). Several factors contributed to the good results obtained for interrater reliability: (a) selection of experienced special educators for the reliability sample, (b) training and practice utilizing actual eligibility folders, and (c) the presence of the lead researcher and/or assistant at each of the site visits.

This reliability is similar to that found in other observational studies about special education reading services. Haynes and Jenkins (1986) achieved reliability above .60 and .85 or higher were obtained by Vaughn et al., (1998).

Research Question One

Special education reading disabled students account for approximately 80% of all students classified as learning disabled in Texas. Question 1 asked for a description of special education reading services provided to a sample of these reading disabled students. Descriptive information on percentages of students who were prescribed

special education assistance and the extent of the assistance in terms of instructional hours and individualized education plans was reported.

The results showed that there was minimal provision of special education services in the area of reading for the students whose files were examined. Slightly less than one-third of the students were simply identified as reading disabled and had no documentation of special education reading services through either an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or special education instructional time documented on the schedule of services page. The remaining files contained some documentation of special education instructional time. The overall median reading instructional time was between 2.25 and 3 hours weekly for all of the reading disabled students.

This study relied on one data source; student eligibility folders. However, justification for use of the folders is that special education instruction must by law be documented in the IEP and that by broadening the scope of data collection we might uncover evidence that students are provided individualized instruction in their area of disability. We further reasoned that what were prescribed in the IEP would probably be the maximum services received. We thought it more likely that some services might be prescribed but not delivered. Therefore, the absence of documented, prescribed special education instruction for these students was a surprise.

The findings of this research do not appear to follow the premise of special education; individualized prescribed instruction in the area of disability to enable a student to benefit from instruction. This same conclusion had been previously reported by Haynes & Jenkins (1986), Moody et al. (2000), and Vaughn et al. (1998) and the

design of this research to utilize a different data source; student eligibility folders, was an attempt to gain additional insights into instructional practices for reading disabled students that might show a brighter picture. These previous studies all examined instructional practices in the area of reading for elementary special education reading disabled students. Their data were obtained through classroom observations, teacher interviews and assessment data but did not include eligibility folders. These studies were used for comparison because they included similar students but utilized different data sources.

Collectively, these three studies reported that students were not provided individualized, specialized instruction. Vaughn et al. (1998) referred to special education resource room placements as “broken promises”. Haynes and Jenkins (1986) reported that student characteristics such as achievement level were weakly linked to scheduling and the amount of reading instruction provided.

How to identify and provide services for students with learning disabilities has been debated since 1977 when learning disabilities were first identified by the Federal government and services were mandated (Vaughn et al., 2003). These debates continue and are fueled by current statistics that report identification rates of learning disabled students are up 200% since the inception of the category. The reasons for these burgeoning numbers have been partially blamed on inadequate instruction; a perception that remediation can only be provided by special education, and inadequate funding at local, state and national levels that has resulted in uneven services for students with

similar disabilities. This has resulted in the current state of affairs, high identification rates and interventions that are often unsuccessful.

The current reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 addresses this current state of affairs and proposes adoption of a new "response to intervention" strategy for all students who experience reading difficulties. This proposed change would allow for all students who experience reading difficulties the opportunity for remediation without the burden of qualifying for special education. This process change would also reserve special education services for students who fail to respond to research based, scientifically proven methods of improving reading achievement and truly are reading disabled.

Research Question Two

Question 2 examined the variable of instructional time within different demographic categories. While special education is premised on the provision of individualized instruction that is based on identified educational needs, in practice this is not always the case.

The findings from this research showed that the large urban districts had the highest percentage of students being provided some type of service while the semi-rural type districts provided the greatest amount of time. When district size was analyzed there was minimal variation of time. Medium sized districts had a slightly higher percentage of students provided services when compared with small and large sized districts. In the category of district wealth, the districts with the higher tax effort had a slightly higher percentage of students provided service than those districts with a lower

tax effort, but overall the difference was small. These results are surprising when you consider that the provision of special education services based on students' individual needs is mandated by federal law.

Previous research has indicated that demographics have played a role in the level of special education services provided (Leroy & Kulik, 2001; Mitchell, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). The 18th Annual Report to Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 1996) reported that students with disabilities in urban settings were more likely than students with disabilities in suburban settings to be placed in special education settings. Leroy & Kulik (2001) examined special education placements in the state of Michigan. They found after a review of 69 diverse local districts that poorer and urban type districts provided more services in special education settings.

Mitchell (1997) reported that when resources are available to support a full continuum of services then more children are reported to be served in more restrictive placements. She states that these findings are troublesome because they provide evidence "that non-child specific factors" (pg.7) influence variations in placements rates in both inclusive and segregated settings.

The reported variability of instructional time within the demographic groupings suggests that special education services may be more a function of school district characteristics and financial resources rather than individual needs. School districts are mandated to provide services but are allowed to do so in a variety of ways which has resulted in a variety of service delivery options. Additionally, when PL 94-142 was enacted in 1975 the goal was to fund the additional costs at the 40% level. This goal has

still not been met and as recently as 2004 the funding provided was slightly less than 20% (NEA, 2004).

This funding shortfall has created a burden to school districts and as a result districts are left with finding ways to fund special education services while trying to remain in compliance with federal laws. This has resulted in uneven services and has contributed to the variability of these services which on the surface appear to not be in compliance with the provision of individualized instruction linked to identified needs but rather a function of a district or state's ability to provide these services.

We have learned how to successfully remediate reading difficulties (Torgesen et al., 1997) and what is needed now is an effective standardized delivery model to guarantee access to remediation for all students who are experiencing reading difficulties. What is needed is a shift from the current reliance on special programs (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; McLaughlin, 1995) to a process that allows access to remediation for any student who fails to make adequate progress. This approach could allow all schools to integrate their services initially and provide assistance to any student experiencing reading difficulties and then refer to special education only after a student has been provided extensive remediation. This would leave special education services for those who truly are reading disabled and provide for equalized treatments when students first exhibit difficulties learning to read.

Research Question Three

Question 3 focused on the relationship between the degree of the students' reading delays and the amount of special education instructional time provided. The

expectation at the onset of this study was the greater the degree of disability the greater the amount of support provided. This relationship was examined for the sample as a whole and also by individual districts.

This question provided insight into the degree of a student's disability and the subsequent provision of services. The descriptive statistics for the reading delay scores indicated that most of the students were mildly learning disabled in the area of reading. The mean reading delay score for the sample was just over 1 grade level. Analyses of the relationship between a student's degree of delay and instructional time showed only a minimal correlation between reading delay scores and special education instructional hours for the sample and only a slighter higher correlation for one district; Bastrop.

The federal laws governing special education detail the requirements for eligibility, provide guidelines for assessments to determine eligibility, and also mandate the components of individualized education programs. All states then are required to develop rules and regulations to be in compliance with federal laws. As a result of these requirements and the many sets of rules and regulations it appears that special education practices for reading disabled students have become distanced from the intent of federal law. The minimal provision of special education services found by this research provides evidence of this.

The findings of the research also appear to mirror a trend in special education towards more inclusive classrooms rather than segregated settings. Madeline Will; Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, advocated for inclusive settings in 1986 when she issued her historic initiative; The

Regular Education Initiative. The initiative was aimed at the burgeoning field of special education which in 1986 was beginning to see a significant increase in the number of students identified as reading disabled. Will also expressed concern that the well-intentioned pull-out approach had failed in many instances to meet the needs of the students being identified as disabled so hence her push for inclusive classrooms.

Similar findings to this study were also reported by Ysseldyke et al. in 1990. They reported that increasing numbers of children with mild learning problems were being declared eligible for special education services and that most of these students continued to receive their instruction in their mainstream classrooms without the provision of special education services.

These results may give us cause to look at the many discussions and much published research surrounding the process of identifying students as learning disabled (Aaron, 1997; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young. 2003; Stanovich, 1999). One main area of discussion has centered around the increasing number of students identified as learning disabled and then the absence of individualized instruction in the identified area of disability which has resulted in the question being asked; what's special about special education (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995)? The findings from this research can be considered evidence of this widely discussed practice.

Research Question Four

Question 4 grouped the students into the demographic categories of district size, type, and wealth and then explored the relationship of the degree of the students' reading delay and the subsequent amount of special education instructional time provided. This

was done to determine if demographic membership influenced the provision of special education services. We previously looked at the provision of services by demographic categories without regard for the students' reading delays.

The results of the correlation analyses and the analyses of variances (ANOVAs) showed positive correlations for all of the 7 demographics groupings. Again this is a surprising result as federal law mandates the provision of services based solely on the identified needs of the student and the present findings indicate otherwise.

This is really not any different than the concerns raised by researchers previously. Early in the history of PL 94-142 there were concerns about separate programs for struggling readers (Algozzine & Maheady, 1986; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989, and Haynes & Jenkins, 1986). Allington and McGill-Franzen (1989) wrote that one of the most serious flaws in the current processes for struggling readers is the absence of a direct link between assessment procedures used for identification and subsequent interventions that might be prescribed on the basis of these assessment procedures. Algozzine and Maheady (1986) express their concerns over what appears to be more emphasis on identifying students as learning disabled especially in the area of reading and the subsequent failure to provide individualized instruction. Haynes & Jenkins (1986) has written that we need to stop focusing on the unnecessary labeling of children as a prerequisite to their receiving instructional support.

The findings from this research provide evidence of other influences besides federal regulations on the provision of special education instructional services in the area of reading. What needs to be done now is a careful examination of successful programs

that remediate reading disabilities and to then develop a blueprint for delivery of these services that is not tied to a student being labeled as learning disabled but simply as a struggling reader. This approach may provide for more students to become successful readers because assistance could be provided at the first sign of a student's inability to learn to read and hopefully lead to greater success and more equitable programming than the current special education approach.

Summary

This research first examined how and to what extent whether special education reading disabled students were provided special education assistance in reading and to what extent. It further explored the influences of the degree of the students' reading delay and demographic membership on the provision of services. The overall results showed that only minimal special education instructional time; less than 1 hour weekly was provided to half of the students in the sample. Of the remaining students, only one-fourth was provided instructional time greater than 6 hours weekly in a special education setting. The relationship between the degree of the students' reading delay and services provided was very weak but within demographic variables, the relationship was stronger.

These results reinforce the concerns voiced by many in the field of learning disabilities (Aaron, 1997; Fletcher et al., 1998; Fletcher et al., 2001; & Velluntino, Scanlon, & Lyon, 2000). These concerns center around the current practices of identification that has resulted in a rapid explosion of students, up 200%, labeled as LD since its inception in 1977 (Vaughn et al., 2003) and that a significant number of these

students remain in their general education placements after identification (Vaughn et al., and Ysseldyke et al., 1990) without the provision of special education services.

The category of LD has also become the largest group of students with disabilities and has been the subject of much controversy regarding the identification criteria (McLaughlin & Owings, 1993). Critics write that LD is "a sociological sponge mopping up the spills of general education" (Lyon, 1999) resulting in students being overidentified and/or misidentified (Epps, Ysseldyke, & McCue, 1984 & Reschly, Tilly & Grimes, 1999).

The results of this overidentification and/or misidentification have skewed the practice of special education. The focus appears to have shifted from the basic premise of special education to provide intensive specialized instruction to merely identifying students as learning disabled. Several explanations for this shift have been offered that include a need to satisfy parental concerns by labeling students as learning disabilities, a response to the increasing standards districts and schools are being held accountable to, and the increased options available with regards to state assessment requirements when students are identified as disabled (Ysseldyke et al., 1990 and Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003).

This trend does not appear to be limited to Texas but indicative of a national concern. As a result of these concerns changes are occurring within the field of special education. One significant change is the current proposed approach to remediating reading difficulties that is known as a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach. This approach shifts from the reliance on being declared learning disabled to an instructional model that provides early intensive research based instruction that is research based to

remediate reading difficulties based simply on a student's inability to read and away from the reliance on identification as a student with a learning disability.

Study Limitations

The first limitation of this study was loss of data. Originally, this study targeted 20 school districts to visit, but permission to enter districts was received from the TEA two months after our anticipated start date (mid-September), so that number was reduced to 15. Of the 15 requests, 4 declined to participate. Reduction from 20 to 11 districts constitutes a 45% data loss. In the time frame originally planned for the study, data likely would have been obtained from the full 20 districts, a sample permitting stronger generalization. This small sample disallows generalization to the state of Texas, and should caution against use of these results for policy decisions.

The second limitation was the lack of a proportional sample. This research had originally planned to collect a larger random sample of special education files from each district. The random selection would permit us to make inferences about the special education population as a whole. We would have been able to briefly code a large number of files, and then more fully code those files that proved to be for students with reading disabilities. However, the time available for executing the study prevented the random or stratified sampling from that population, and eliminated generalization to the broader population.

A third limitation was that the collection of assessment data was incomplete. Complete assessment data was available for only 220 students of the 512 special education files examined. This was because the quality of the special education

assessment/eligibility reports varied across and within districts. The reports were incomplete and not standardized which resulted in incomplete summary sheets.

The final limitation was that the data collection procedures were limited to on-site file reviews and follow-up interviews regarding district and school-level reading programs. Time did not allow follow-up interviews for individual students, nor site visits to observe instructional programs. The limited usefulness of information found in special education files was not anticipated by our procedures and time frame.

Implications for Future Research

Reading research needs to continue so that improvement in reading instruction for all struggling readers occurs. Learning to read has been characterized as a major health problem (Moats, 2002) and 80% of all students with a learning disability have a reading disability (Aaron, 1997; Cramer & Ellis, 1996; Denton et al., 2003, Lerner, 1989; Pearson, 1993). As a result of this current state of affairs the federal government through the No Child Left Behind Act education programs has allocated almost a billion dollars and a significant portion of those funds are designated to the goal of all students learning to read by the third grade. The requirements for these funds stipulate that they must be spent on programs and practices that are supported by scientifically validated research.

There is compelling evidence indicating that we already know how to improve reading instruction for many children with special learning needs but this does not mean that we understand the conditions that need to be in place for children with disabilities to become skilled readers (Torgeson, Wagner, and Rashotte, 1997). Future research efforts

should be focused on assisting the educational community as it shifts from the current practice of identifying students as disabled to one that provides intensive early interventions to remediate reading deficiencies at their onset for all students and eliminate the reliance on special programs for some students.

Conclusion

This research study collected data about the reading instructional services provided to special education reading disabled students. The data were collected from one source; special education eligibility folders and utilized a highly reliable data collection tool; the SFRS. The findings reported indicated that the provision of reading services to these students was minimal and that the majority of the students were mildly disabled in the area of reading.

Algozzine and Morsink (1989) write that "conventional wisdom holds that categories used to classify individuals as eligible for special services represent mutually exclusive groups of people and serves as the basis for some type of differentiated treatment." This research was premised on that understanding and on the implied purpose of special education to provide specialized, individualized instruction based on educational needs. The findings did not support this premise.

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APPENDIX A
Folder Review Summary Sheet

Student ID #	
District	
Current School	
Folder Reviewer	

I. Student Information

1. Grade in 98/99:

a. K	b. 1	c. 2	d. 3	e. 4	f. 5	g. 6

2. Ethnicity:

a. Caucasian	b. Hispanic	c. Afr Amer	d. Asian	e. Other	f. N/A (not available)

3. Grade when referred to SPED

a. PK-K	b. 1	c. 2	d. 3	e. 4	f. 5	g. 6	h. N/A (not available)

4. Identified as *dyslexic*?

a. Yes	b. No or N/A (not available)

5. If identified as dyslexic, *when*?

a. PK-K	b. 1	c. 2	d. 3	e. 4	f. 5	g. 6	h. N/A

6. Handicapping Condition at *initial placement*: *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*

a. LD	b. SI	c. OHI	c. N/A

7. *Current* Handicapping Condition: *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*

a. LD	b. SI	c. OHI	c. N/A

LD = Learning Disabled SI = Speech Impaired
OHI = Other Health Impaired N/A = Not available

8. If LD, what area of LD? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*

a. BR	b. RC	c. WE	d. OE	e. LC	f. MC	g. MR	h. N/A

BR : Basic Reading RC: Reading Comprehension WE : Written Expression OE : Oral Expression LC: Listening Comprehension MC: Math Calculations MR: Math Reasoning N/A = Not available

---------- STOP IF LD/Math Calculations and/or Math Reasoning Only -------

II. Initial Referral

1. Date of initial referral :

_____/_____/_____ mon day year	N/A not available

2. Who initiated referral? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*

a. classroom teacher	b. counselor	c. reading specialist	d. parent(s)/ family memb.	e. other	f. N/A

3. Was the student LEP at time of referral?

a. Yes **(mark one)** b. Spanish__ Other__	b. No	c. N/A

4. What were the concerns documented in initial referral? *(mark all that apply)*

a. Reading/dyslexia	b. Reading comprehension	c. Written expression	d. Language skills
e. Attentional difficulties	f. Attendance	g. Behavioral concerns	h. Failing grades
i. Failing TAAS	j. Poor stand. test scores	k. Spelling	l. N/A (not available)
m. Other:			

III. Interventions PRIOR to Referral

1. What classroom INTERVENTIONS had been tried prior to referral? *(mark all that apply)*

a. tutoring 1:1	b. tutoring/group	c. computer instruction	d. ESL program	e. bilingual program
f. summer/vacation school	g. after school/ weekend program	h. home-bound instruction	i. retention	j. alternate reading curriculum/program
k. modified testing	l. additional time for assignments	m. reduced work load	n. audio taped lessons	o. Content Mastery
p. N/A (not available)	q. OTHER:			

2. Were any alternative reading programs or curriculum used as supplemental interventions? *(e.g. Reading Recovery or see list below)*

a. Yes	b. No or N/A

If answer is "Yes" to Question #2; *answer # 3 –7*
If answer is ***"No or N/A" proceed*** *to* ***Section IV.***

3. Provide code for name of program using the following codes:
(mark all that apply) **or N/A RR= Reading Recovery ED= Edmark SR= Scottish Rite N= Neuhaus AP= Alphabetic Phonics SP= Saxon Phonics RM= Reading Mastery CR= Corrective Reading RN= Read Naturally ML=Merrill Linguistic BL= Barnell Loft SL = Slingerland WL= Whole language SFA = Success for All PA= Phonemic/Phonological awareness ADD= Auditory In-Depth Discrimination/Lindamood PR= Project Ride WR =Write to Read O=Other_____**

Code(s):

4. How LONG were intervention(s) implemented?
Wk = week Mnth = month Yr = year

a. 1 Wk	b. 2 Wks	c. 3 Wks	d. 4 Wks	e. 5-7 Wks
f. 8 Wks-3 Mnths	g. 4-8 Mnths.	h. 1 Yr	i. > 1 yr	j. N/A

5. WHEN did the interventions take place? (*mark all that apply)*

a. BS	b. AS	c. AI	d. LA	e. S/V	e. N/A

BS = Before school AS = After school/Weekend AI = Additional to Reg. Lang. Arts LA = During Language Arts - S/V= Summer/Vacation N/A = Not available

6. WHO provided the instruction? *(mark all that apply)*

a. Classroom Teacher	b. Reading Specialist	c. Teaching Assistant	d. Adult Volunteer	e. Parent/ Family member	f. Peer	g. Other	h. N/A

7. How were results REPORTED? *(mark all that apply)*
FR=Formal report IR=Informal report POS= Post Test only PR/PST= Pre-/Post-test scores N/A=Not available

a. FR	b. IR	c. POS	d. PR/PST	e. N/A

8. What were the RESULTS?

a. Improved/Pos	b. No Improvement/Neg	c. Undecided	d. N/A

9. If pre/post test scores available *in months*, what was the reported gains/losses?

a. Some loss to zero months gain	b. 1 to 3 months gain	c. 4 to 6 months gain	d. 7 to 9 months gain	e. 10 to 12 months gain	f. 13+ months gain	g. N/A

10. If pre/post test scores available *in percentiles*, what was the reported gains/losses?

a. Loss 15 or more %ile pts	b. loss 14 to 0 %ile pts	c. gain 1 to 10 %ile pts	d. gain 11 to 15 %ile points	e. gain 16 to 20 %ile pts	f. gain 21+ %ile pts	g. N/A

IV. Initial and Subsequent Assessments for Special Education Services

Intellectual Tests	**Initial Test Date: _____** ***(mark N/A if not available)***				**Reevaluation Test Date: _____** ***(mark N/A if not available)***			
Test/Subtest **Ex. WISC/Performance**	SS	Percentile	GE	AE	SS	Percentile	GE	AE
Use the following codes for tests: WISC = Weschler Individual Intelligence Test KABC = Kauffman Assessment Battery for Children KBIT = Kauffman Brief Intelligence Test TONI = Test of Nonverbal Intelligence SIT = Slosson Intelligence Test SB = Stanford Binet R = Ravens Progressive Matrices DTLA = Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude O = Other								

Achievement Tests	**Initial Test Date: _____** *(mark N/A if not available)*				**Reevaluation Test Date: _____** *(mark N/A if not available)*			
Test/Subtest **WJR/ReadComprehension**	SS	Percentile	GE	AE	SS	Percentile	GE	AE

Use the following codes for tests: WJ = Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Test WRM = Woodcock Reading Mastery
WLPB = Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery WIAT = Weschler Individual Achievement Test
KTEA = Kaufmann Test of Educational Achievement WRAT = Wide Range Achievement Test
PIAT = Peabody Individual Achievement Test
PPVT = Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test GORT= Gray Oral Reading Tests BR= Brigance Test of Basic Skills SD- Standford Diagnostic Reading Test O = Other

V. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for Reading

1. Does the student have a reading IEP for **1998/99?**

a. Yes	b. No

*If the answer is **"NO"** to the above question, **SKIP** to school year **97/98***

Is a particular TYPE of instructional program referenced? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)* **or N/A**
RR= Reading Recovery ED= Edmark SR= Scottish Rite N= Neuhaus AP= Alphabetic Phonics SP= Saxon Phonics RM= Reading Mastery CR= Corrective Reading RN= Read Naturally ML=Merrill Linguistic BL= Barnell Loft SL = Slingerland WL= Whole language SFA = Success for All PA= Phonemic/Phonological awareness ADD= Auditory In-Depth Discrimination/Lindamood PR= Project Ride WR =Write to Read AR= Accelerated Reader O=Other_____

Code(s)

3. WHO is designated to provide the instruction? *(mark all that apply)*

a. Special Ed. Teacher	b. General Ed Teacher	c. Teaching Assistant	d. Read Specialist	e. Adult Volunteer	e. Parent/ Family member	g. Other	h. N/A

*If above response **DOES NOT** include special education teacher**, SKIP** to 97/98*

4. How much instruction is provided per **week** for Reading IEP goals ?

a. 30 min or less	b. 31-59 min	c. 1 hr	d. 1.25-2 hrs	e. 2.25-3 hrs
f. 3.25-4 hrs	g. 4.25-5 hrs	h. 5.25-6 hrs	i. > 6 hrs	j. N/A

5. HOW is the instruction provided (mark all that apply)

a. 1:1	**b. small group**	**c. whole class**	**d. N/A**

6. How is *Present Level of Performance* indicated on ARD forms?

a. Explict/Clr	b. Vague	c. N/A

7. How are the *Annual Goal(s)* stated?

a. Explicit/Clr	b. Vague	c. NA

Explicit/Clr = Explicitly written/Clear Vague= Vaguely Written/Unclear
N/A= Not available

8. How *MANY* annual *READING* goals were written?

a. 1	b. 2	c. 3	d. 4-6	e. 7-10	f. 11-15	g. > 15

9. Were *short term* objectives included for each goal?

a. NO none included	b. YES for some goals	c. YES for all goals

10. Were short term objectives *adequate/sufficiently* complete to address each goal?

a. NO none adequate	b. YES some adequate	c. YES all adequate

11. Were short term objectives *updated*?

a. Yes: Annually	b. Yes: Biannually	c. No update evident

12. Is progress toward goals formally documented with test/assessments?

a. Yes	b. No

13. If formal documentation, what tests/assessments were used? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*
Use the following codes for tests: WJ = Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Test WRM = Woodcock Reading Mastery WLPB = Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery WIAT = Weschler Individual Achievement Test KTEA = Kaufmann Test of Educational Achievement WRAT = Wide Range Achievement Test PIAT = Peabody Individual Achievement Test PPVT = Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test GORT= Gray Oral Reading Tests BR= Brigance Test of Basic Skills SD= Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test CBM= Curriculum-based Measurement
O = Other _____

Code(s):

14. If test scores available *in months*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Some loss to zero months gain	b. 1 to 3 months gain	c. 4 to 6 months gain	d. 7 to 9 months gain	e. 10 to 12 months gain	f. 13+ month s gain	g. N/A

15. If test scores available *in percentiles*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Loss 15 or more %ile pts	b. loss 14 to 0 %ile pts	c. gain 1 to 10 %ile pts	d. gain 11 to 15 %ile points	e. gain 16 to 20 %ile pts	f. gain 21+ %ile pts	g. N/A

School Year 1997/98

1. Did the student have a Reading IEP for **1997/98?**

a. Yes	b. No

*If the answer is **"NO"** to the above question, **SKIP** to school year **96/97***

2. Is a particular TYPE of instructional program referenced? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)* **or N/A**
RR= Reading Recovery ED= Edmark SR= Scottish Rite N= Neuhaus AP= Alphabetic Phonics SP= Saxon Phonics RM= Reading Mastery CR= Corrective Reading RN= Read Naturally ML=Merrill Linguistic BL= Barnell Loft SL = Slingerland WL= Whole language SFA = Success for All PA= Phonemic/Phonological awareness ADD= Auditory In-Depth Discrimination/Lindamood PR= Project Ride WR =Write to Read AR= Accelerated Reader O=Other_____

Code(s):

3. WHO was designated to provide the instruction? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply*

a. Special Ed. Teacher	b. General Ed Teacher	c. Teaching Assistant	d. Read Specialist	e. Adult Volunteer	e. Parent/ Family member	g. Other	h. N/A

If above response **DOES NOT** *include special education teacher***, SKIP** *to School year 95/96*

4. How much instruction was provided per **week** for Reading IEP goals ?

a. 30 min or less	b. 31-59 min	c. 1 hr	d. 1.25-2 hrs	e. 2.25-3 hrs
f. 3.25-4 hrs	g. 4.25-5 hrs	h. 5.25-6 hrs	i. > 6 hrs	j. N/A

5. HOW is the instruction provided (mark all that apply)

a. 1:1	**b. small group**	**c. whole class**	**d. N/A**

6. How is *Present Level of Performance* indicated on ARD forms?

a. Explict/Clr	b. Vague	c. N/A

7. How is the *Annual Goal(s)* stated?

a. Explicit/Clr	b. Vague	c. NA

Explicit/Clr = Explicitly written/Clear Vague= Vaguely Written/Unclear N/A= Not available

8. How *MANY* annual *READING* goals were written?

a. 1	b. 2	c. 3	d. 4-6	e. 7-10	f. 11-15	g. > 15

9. Were *short term* objectives included for each goal?

a. NO none included	b. YES for some goals	c. YES for all goals

10. Were short term objectives *adequate/sufficiently* complete to address each goal?

a. NO none adequate	b. YES some adequate	c. YES all adequate

11. Were short term objectives *updated*?

a. Yes: Annually	b. Yes: Biannually	c. No update evident

12. Is progress toward goals formally documented with test/assessments?

a. Yes	b. No

13. If formal documentation, what tests/assessments were used? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*
Use the following codes for tests: WJ = Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Test WRM = Woodcock Reading Mastery WLPB = Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery WIAT = Weschler Individual Achievement Test KTEA = Kaufmann Test of Educational Achievement WRAT = Wide Range Achievement Test PIAT = Peabody Individual Achievement Test PPVT = Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test GORT= Gray Oral Reading Tests BR= Brigance Test of Basic Skills SD= Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test CBM= Curriculum-based Measurement
O = Other _____

Code(s):

14. If test scores available *in months*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Some loss to zero months gain	b. 1 to 3 months gain	c. 4 to 6 months gain	d. 7 to 9 months gain	e. 10 to 12 months gain	f. 13+ months gain	g. N/A

15. If test scores available *in percentiles*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Loss 15 or more %ile pts	b. loss 14 to 0 %ile pts	c. gain 1 to 10 %ile pts	d. gain 11 to 15 %ile points	e. gain 16 to 20 %ile pts	f. gain 21+ %ile pts	g. N/A

School Year 1996/97

1. Does the student have a Reading IEP for **1996/97?**

a. Yes	**b. No**

If the answer is "NO" **to the above question,** SKIP **to school year** 95/96

2. Is a particular TYPE of instructional program referenced? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)* **or N/A**

RR= Reading Recovery ED= Edmark SR= Scottish Rite N= Neuhaus AP= Alphabetic Phonics SP= Saxon Phonics RM= Reading Mastery CR= Corrective Reading RN= Read Naturally ML=Merrill Linguistic BL= Barnell Loft SL = Slingerland WL= Whole language SFA = Success for All PA= Phonemic/Phonological awareness ADD= Auditory In-Depth Discrimination/Lindamood PR= Project Ride WR =Write to Read AR= Accelerated Reader O=Other_____

Code(s):

3. WHO was designated to provide the instruction? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply*

a. Special Ed. Teacher	b. General Ed Teacher	c. Teaching Assistant	d. Read Specialist	e. Adult Volunteer	e. Parent/ Family member	g. Other	h. N/A

If above response **DOES NOT** *include special education teacher***, SKIP** *to School year 95/96*

4. How much instruction was provided per **week** for Reading IEP goals ?

a. 30 min or less	b. 31-59 min	c. 1 hr	d. 1.25-2 hrs	e. 2.25-3 hrs
f. 3.25-4 hrs	g. 4.25-5 hrs	h. 5.25-6 hrs	i. > 6 hrs	j. N/A

5. HOW is the instruction provided (mark all that apply)

a. 1:1	**b. small group**	**c. whole class**	**d. N/A**

6. How is *Present Level of Performance* indicated on ARD forms?

a. Explict/Clr	b. Vague	c. N/A

7. How is the *Annual Goal(s)* stated?

a. Explicit/Clr	b. Vague	c. NA

Explicit/Clr = Explicitly written/Clear Vague= Vaguely Written/Unclear N/A= Not available

8. How *MANY* annual *READING* goals were written?

a. 1	b. 2	c. 3	d. 4-6	e. 7-10	f. 11-15	g. > 15

9. Were *short term* objectives included for each goal?	a. NO none included	b. YES for some goals	c. YES for all goals

10. Were short term objectives *adequate/sufficiently* complete to address each goal?	a. NO none adequate	b. YES some adequate	c. YES all adequate

11. Were short term objectives *updated*?	a. Yes: Annually	b. Yes: Biannually	c. No update evident

12. Is progress toward goals formally documented with test/assessments?	a. Yes	b. No

13. If formal documentation, what tests/assessments were used? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*
Use the following codes for tests: WJ = Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Test WRM = Woodcock Reading Mastery WLPB = Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery WIAT = Weschler Individual Achievement Test KTEA = Kaufmann Test of Educational Achievement WRAT = Wide Range Achievement Test PIAT = Peabody Individual Achievement Test PPVT = Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test GORT= Gray Oral Reading Tests BR= Brigance Test of Basic Skills SD= Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test CBM= Curriculum-based Measurement
O = Other _____

Code(s):

14. If test scores available *in months*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Some loss to zero months gain	b. 1 to 3 months gain	c. 4 to 6 months gain	d. 7 to 9 months gain	e. 10 to 12 months gain	f. 13+ months gain	g. N/A

15. If test scores available *in percentiles*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Loss 15 or more %ile pts	b. loss 14 to 0 %ile pts	c. gain 1 to 10 %ile pts	d. gain 11 to 15 %ile points	e. gain 16 to 20 %ile pts	f. gain 21+ %ile pts	g. N/A

1. Does the student have a Reading IEP? 95/96	**a. Yes**	**b. No**

If the answer is "NO" **to the above question,** SKIP **to** Section VI.

2. Is a particular TYPE of instructional program referenced? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)* **or N/A**
RR= Reading Recovery ED= Edmark SR= Scottish Rite N= Neuhaus AP= Alphabetic Phonics SP= Saxon Phonics RM= Reading Mastery CR= Corrective Reading RN= Read Naturally ML=Merrill Linguistic BL= Barnell Loft SL = Slingerland WL= Whole language SFA = Success for All PA= Phonemic/Phonological awareness ADD= Auditory In-Depth Discrimination/Lindamood PR= Project Ride WR =Write to Read AR= Accelerated Reader O=Other_____

Code(s):

3. WHO was designated to provide the instruction? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply*

a. Special Ed. Teacher	b. General Ed Teacher	c. Teaching Assistant	d. Read Specialist	e. Adult Volunteer	e. Parent/ Family member	g. Other	h. N/A

If above response **DOES NOT** *include special education teacher***, SKIP** *to School year 95/96*

4. How much instruction was provided per **week** for Reading IEP goals ?

a. 30 min or less	b. 31-59 min	c. 1 hr	d. 1.25-2 hrs	e. 2.25-3 hrs
f. 3.25-4 hrs	g. 4.25-5 hrs	h. 5.25-6 hrs	i. > 6 hrs	j. N/A

5. HOW is the instruction provided (mark all that apply)	**a. 1:1**	**b. small group**	**c. whole class**	**d. N/A**

6. How is *Present Level of Performance* indicated on ARD forms?	a. Explict/Clr	b. Vague	c. N/A
7. How is the *Annual Goal(s)* stated?	a. Explicit/Clr	b. Vague	c. NA

Explicit/Clr = Explicitly written/Clear Vague= Vaguely Written/Unclear N/A= Not available

8. How *MANY* annual *READING* goals were written?	a. 1	b. 2	c. 3	d. 4-6	e. 7-10	f. 11-15	g. > 15

9. Were *short term* objectives included for each goal?	a. NO none included	b. YES for some goals	c. YES for all goals

10. Were short term objectives *adequate/sufficiently* complete to address each goal?	a. NO none adequate	b. YES some adequate	c. YES all adequate

11. Were short term objectives *updated*?	a. Yes: Annually	b. Yes: Biannually	c. No update evident

12. Is progress toward goals formally documented with test/assessments?	a. Yes	b. No

13. If formal documentation, what tests/assessments were used? *(mark <u>all</u> that apply)*
Use the following codes for tests: WJ = Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Test WRM = Woodcock Reading Mastery WLPB = Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery WIAT = Weschler Individual Achievement Test KTEA = Kaufmann Test of Educational Achievement WRAT = Wide Range Achievement Test PIAT = Peabody Individual Achievement Test PPVT = Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test GORT= Gray Oral Reading Tests BR= Brigance Test of Basic Skills SD= Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test CBM= Curriculum-based Measurement
O = Other _____

Code(s):

14. If test scores available *in months*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Some loss to zero months gain	b. 1 to 3 months gain	c. 4 to 6 months gain	d. 7 to 9 months gain	e. 10 to 12 months gain	f. 13+ month s gain	g. N/A

15. If test scores available *in percentiles*, what were the reported gains/losses?

a. Loss 15 or more %ile pts	b. loss 14 to 0 %ile pts	c. gain 1 to 10 %ile pts	d. gain 11 to 15 %ile points	e. gain 16 to 20 %ile pts	f. gain 21+ %ile pts	g. N/A

VI. Student Participation in District/School Wide Assessments

1. Has the student taken the TAAS test?	a. Yes	b. No	c. N/A (not available)

2. Are the student's results reported in the ARD documents?	a. Yes	b. No

TAAS Results:

Grade	**Date**	**TLI Score**	**Language *(mark <u>one</u>)***
3rd grade Reading			English Spanish
4th grade Reading			English Spanish
5th grade Reading			English Spanish
6th Grade Reading			English Spanish

3. Did the student participate in other school-wide norm-referenced assessments**?**	a. Yes	b. No or N/A

--- If above response to Question #3 above is "NO or N/A" STOP HERE ---

4. Results for School-Wide Norm-Referenced Assessments (other than TAAS)

Date/Test/Subtest Ex. 4-98/SAT/Reading Comprehension	Standard Score	Percentile	Grade Equiv.	Age Equiv.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
Use the following codes for referencing tests: OLSAT = Otis Lennon/ Stanford Achievement Tests SAT = Stanford Achievement Tests ITBS = Illinois Tests of Basic Abilities IOWA = Iowa Tests of Academic Achievement CAT = California Achievement Tests O = Other				

APPENDIX B
DISTRICT SELECTIONS BY EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

ESC / ISD	% Black	% Hispanic	% White	% Other	% Econ. Disadv.	% SPED	# of Students
ESC I							
Edinburg	**0**	**95**	**5**	**0**	**80**	**10**	**277K**
Brownsville	0	97	3	0	82	10	40K
Edinburg	0	95	5	0	85	10	19K
Lyford	0	95	5	0	74	9	1.7K
ESC II							
Corpus Christi	**4**	**64**	**31**	**1**	**55**	**12**	**112K**
Beeville	4	68	28	1	63	14	4.3K
Corpus Christi	6	68	26	1	52	13	42K
ESC III							
Victoria	**11**	**39**	**48**	**1**	**48**	**13**	**58K**
Cuero	16	36	48	0	56	15	2K
Edna	13	31	56	0	43	14	1.8K
Victoria	8	48	44	1	47	12	15K
ESC IV							
Houston	**22**	**32**	**41**	**5**	**41**	**10**	**786K**
Houston	35	51	12	3	65	10	207K
Goose Creek	17	34	48	1	45	10	18K
Sheldon	23	23	53	2	48	12	4K
Texas City	18	24	57	1	21	13	6K
ESC V							
Beaumont	**30**	**5**	**63**	**2**	**44**	**13**	**88K**
Beaumont	65	6	27	3	59	13	20K
Woodville	32	2	64	3	59	16	1.7K
ESC VI							
Huntsville	**16**	**14**	**69**	**1**	**39**	**13**	**122K**
Bellville	14	11	75	0	23	10	2K
Buffalo	16	12	72	1	23	8	6.6K
ESC VII							
Kilgore	**22**	**9**	**68**	**1**	**42**	**12**	**156K**
Elysian Fields	22	3	74	1	40	10	1K
Henderson	25	7	67	0	46	13	3.7K
Kilgore	21	6	73	1	40	11	3.7K
Troup	20	5	75	0	48	11	.9K

ESC ISD	% Black	% Hispanic	% White	% Other	% Econ. Disadv.	% SPED	# of Students
ESC VIII							
Mt. Pleasant	**24**	**6**	**69**	**1**	**45**	**14**	**55K**
Hooks	22	1	76	1	51	14	1.1K
Linden-Kildare	27	1	72	0	44	14	1.2K
Mt. Pleasant	19	31	50	1	50	11	4.3K
New Boston	22	1	77	1	31	15	1.5K
ESC IX							
Wichita Falls	**9**	**14**	**76**	**2**	**40**	**15**	**43K**
Burkburnett	9	5	84	2	29	15	3.8K
City View	9	10	75	6	41	12	.8K
Seymour	7	16	76	0	52	18	.8K
Wichita Falls	16	16	65	3	44	17	16K
ESC X							
Richardson	**22**	**23**	**51**	**4**	**41**	**11**	**514K**
Duncanville	32	13	53	3	27	10	10K
Richardson	19	13	59	9	26	11	54K
Dallas	43	43	12	2	73	9	149K
Waxahachie	17	21	62	0	36	11	5K
ESC XI							
Ft. Worth	**12**	**16**	**68**	**3**	**32**	**12**	**357K**
Arlington	16	16	62	7	29	9	52K
Denton	12	15	72	2	31	13	12K
Ft. Worth	34	35	28	3	57	11	74K
ESC XII							
Waco	**23**	**17**	**59**	**2**	**45**	**13**	**130K**
Copperas Cove	24	10	61	5	35	11	8K
La Vega	19	22	59	1	61	15	2.5K
Temple	26	20	52	2	41	11	9K
Waco	41	34	25	1	73	10	16K
ESC XIII							
Austin	**10**	**30**	**57**	**2**	**38**	**12**	**232K**
Austin	18	40	39	3	50	11	75K
Bastrop	10	24	64	1	44	13	5K
Giddings	16	30	54	0	45	11	2K

ESC / ISD	% Black	% Hispanic	% White	% Other	% Econ. Disadv.	% SPED	# of Students
ESC XIV							
Abilene	**6**	**24**	**69**	**1**	**46**	**17**	**51K**
Abilene	10	26	62	2	50	18	20K
Breckenridge	3	19	77	1	40	16	2K
Roby Consol.	3	23	75	0	55	19	3K
ESC XV							
San Angelo	**3**	**44**	**51**	**1**	**49**	**13**	**52K**
Ballinger	3	35	63	0	51	12	1.2K
San Angelo	6	42	51	1	38	14	17K
Winters	3	44	54	0	58	16	.9K
ESC XVI							
Amarillo	**5**	**30**	**63**	**2**	**32**	**13**	**81K**
Amarillo	10	28	60	3	18	12	30K
Canadian	3	24	72	0	37	17	.9K
Childers	8	27	64	1	43	21	1.3K
ESC XVII							
Lubbock	**8**	**45**	**46**	**1**	**53**	**13**	**84K**
Levelland	6	47	47	0	51	12	3.6K
Lubbock	14	39	46	1	52	13	30K
Post	9	42	49	0	61	14	1K
ESC XVIII							
Midland	**5**	**47**	**46**	**1**	**52**	**11**	**84K**
Big Spring	6	46	48	1	50	11	4.5K
Ector County	5	49	45	1	63	11	29K
Midland	10	36	53	1	42	8	23K
Monahans	5	45	49	1	48	11	2.5K
ESC XIX							
El Paso	**3**	**82**	**14**	**1**	**70**	**8**	**150K**
El Paso	5	76	19	1	67	9	64K
Ysleta	3	85	12	1	65	8	47K
ESC XX							
San Antonio	**7**	**62**	**30**	**1**	**60**	**13**	**309K**
Hondo	1	61	38	0	52	11	2K
Northside	7	50	41	2	40	14	57K
San Antonio	11	83	6	0	88	11	61K

APPENDIX C

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
1701 North Congress Avenue ★ Austin, Texas 78701-1494 ★ 512/463-9734 ★ FAX: 512/463-9838

Mike Moses
Commissioner of Education

October 26, 1998

Dr. Joe E Gonzales
Superintendent
San Angelo Independent School District
1621 University Ave
San Angelo, Texas 76904-5164

Dear Dr. Gonzales:

SUBJECT: Study Collaboration with Texas A&M University

The purpose of this letter is to request your district's voluntary participation in a study conducted in collaboration with Texas A&M University regarding students with disabilities and reading. The Texas Education Agency and Texas A&M University hope to collect information specific to the number of students with disabilities who require special education services as a direct result of a reading difficulty. All relevant information will be collected through a review of student eligibility folders and teacher interviews. Normally the Agency would collect reading information using Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) information; however, this study will review data that are only available through a review of the special education eligibility folder. An overview of the study's design is enclosed for your review.

A primary objective of this study will be to collect information in the least disruptive method possible. Information collected will be compiled into a report which will be shared with all participating districts, the Governor's office, both the Senate and House Public Education Committees, the Continuing Advisory Committee for Special Education, Agency personnel, and other appropriate stakeholders.

In approximately one week, you will be contacted by personnel from the Texas A&M University to determine if your district will participate in the study, and if appropriate, to select a district contact person and dates for a on-site visit. Please give serious consideration to your district's participation in this important reading study. Information collected from this study will support the Governor's Reading Initiative and ultimately improve reading instruction to all students.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Dr. Jan E. Hasbrouck at the Texas A&M University at (409) 845-2317.

Sincerely,

Mike Moses
Commissioner of Education

MM:GL:njd

Enclosure

cc: Carol Harrison, Director of Special Education
Robin Gilchrist, Statewide Reading Initiatives

APPENDIX D

General instructions for completing Folder Review Summary Sheet

- Please use pencil throughout.

- Print student's name lightly in top left corner. This will be helpful when we have an opportunity to speak with school personnel. Once we have completed collecting data at a site we will erase the student name before leaving the building.

- Once you are familiar with the information requested on the data summary sheet you may find it easier to start reading a student's folder from page 1 and entering the information in the appropriate places on the form. This may be easier than jumping around through the file especially if the files are not well organized.

- If a student was or is a transfer student it is very likely that you may find three ARDs for one school year; (1) an Annual ARD from the original district, (2) a 30 day placement ARD for the new district, and (3) an Annual ARD for the new district. Please use the current ARD for answering the questions for that school year. Additionally, a student may have a Brief ARD that is an addendum to the Annual ARD; the information from this ARD should be included when coding for this student for that school year.

- Any additional information that may be needed to clarify a response can be written on the form. Also, any information that you are not certain how to code, please provide the details and then we can decide how to code later if necessary.

- If a student is a transfer it will be difficult to code Sections I, II, and possibly parts of III because the referral paperwork is usually not transferred.

Section I

Questions # 1 & 2 can be coded easily from the student's cumulative folder.

Questions # 3 – 5 would most likely be found within the initial referral paperwork and possibly in the cumulative folder.

Question # 6 can be coded by reviewing the initial Comprehensive Individual Assessment (CIA) or the initial placement ARD documents.

Question # 7 can be coded by reviewing current CIA or current ARD.

Question # 8 can be coded from the CIA or Eligibility Report.

Section II

These questions should be easily coded by reading the initial referral to special education paperwork.

Section III

These questions should be easily coded from the referral paperwork reviewed above and the student's cumulative folder.

Section IV

This information will be contained in the student's assessment reports.

Section V

Question # 1 can be answered by reviewing the ARD paperwork for the school year. There may be an ARD that simply lists the course name Reading with an Annual goal of 70% mastery on grade level materials without any specific objectives. This is the case when the student receives instruction from the general education setting and only receives support from the special education. This would be coded as yes for #1.

Question # 2 will probably not be addressed in the IEP but may be referenced in the ARD minutes. This information may also be available from the school staff or the student's cumulative folder.

Question # 3 & 4 should be found on the IEP. The Schedule of Services page should provide detailed information about the type, amount, and who is responsible for the reading instruction. Additionally, if the amount of time designated for reading instruction is blocked with Language Arts, code for the total of these two and make a note of it in the margin.

Question # 5 may be found on the IEP but is more likely documented in the ARD minutes or will be answered by the school staff.

Question # 6 for the school year 98/99 may be answerable from the IEP (new IDEA regulations require this now). For previous years, this information is most likely contained on a page where the student's current levels of performance are addressed or detailed in the ARD minutes.

Question # 7 – 11 should come directly from the IEP.

Question # 12 – 15 may be obtained from the IEP or the ARD minutes for the following school year (remember a student's progress towards IEP goals is addressed at their next Annual ARD; the 98/99 ARD will contain information about progress towards the goals on the 97/98 IEPs). There may also be a separate page where details of a student's progress are reported.

Section VI

Question # 1, 3 & 4 can be coded from the student's cumulative folder.

VITA

MARGARET HARDING CHRISTEN
19619 Cottage Park Circle
Houston, TX 77094
HOME: (281) 579-7321

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy: Educational Psychology 2005
Texas A & M University
College Station, TX

Master of Arts: Special Education 1982
University of the Virgin Islands
St. Croix, U.S.V.I.

Bachelor of Arts: Psychology 1977
University of Massachusetts
North Dartmouth, MA 02747

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

State of Texas
Certification Principalship
Certification Diagnostician
Certification in Generic Special Education

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Certification in Children with Moderate Special Needs 5 - 12

United States Virgin Islands
Permanent Certification in Special Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Student Support Administrator
Katy Independent School District 1999 - Present

Assistant Lecturer
Texas A&M University Fall 2002, Spring
College Station, TX 2005, 2000,1999

Lead Diagnostician/Diagnostician
Katy Independent School District 1995 – 1999
Austin County Education Cooperative

Special Education Teacher 1979 - 1994
Katy Independent School District
Upper Cape Cod Regional Vocational School
Town of Sandwich, MA
Virgin Islands Department of Education

REFERENCES

Joe K. Kelley, Principal, Katy High School
Susan Thompson, Curriculum Principal, Katy High School
Dr. Richard I. Parker, Educational Psychology Dept., Texas A&M University