



# The Role of Special Education Administration in the Education of Students with Special Needs

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper delves into the crucial role played by special education administration in the education of students with special needs. This conceptual analysis offers insights into the intersection of special education and administration. It examines the core functions within special education, the unique requirements of students with special needs, and the distinctive nature of special education administration. Additionally, the paper underscores the essential responsibilities, job dynamics, and requisite qualities of a special education administrator. Central to this discussion is the recognition that special education administrators require robust support to effectively fulfill their duties. The paper emphasizes the significance of providing practical training and professional assistance to enable these administrators to execute their roles with efficiency.*

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## INTRODUCTION

At the foundation of any organized endeavor lies the concept of 'Administration,' encompassing the coordination and guidance of individuals towards a predetermined objective. A succinct definition of administration portrays it as the outcome of collaborative effort—when two individuals collaborate to move a stone that neither could budge alone, the seeds of administration are sown.

Administration is an indispensable element within any purpose-driven entity. Whether it be a place of worship, a military force, an educational institution, a business entity, or a social association, administration is an integral facet. In each instance, administration entails a hierarchical arrangement of individuals, coupled with tools, resources—both human and material—all orchestrated to pursue the overarching goal of the establishment.

Picture the Imam within a mosque, the Field Marshal in command of an army, the Vice Chancellor of a university, or the Managing Director steering an industrial or business enterprise. Each of them presides over a pyramid of subordinates, each assigned specific functions and responsibilities essential for fulfilling the

mission of the organization. This intricate process involves a sequence of planning, organization, direction, coordination, and oversight, all encapsulated within the essence of administration.

In the realm of special education, administration takes on a specific role. It encompasses the assurance of a free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities within the least restrictive environment. Special education administration entails the supervision and management of special education and related services. This involves the diligent implementation of federal, state, and local laws, policies, and procedures that delineate the framework governing services for students with disabilities (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003)."

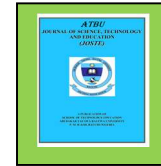
A program that prepares individuals to plan, supervise, and manage programs for exceptional students and their parents. Includes instruction in special education theory and practice, special education program development, evaluation and assessment in special education, state and federal law and regulations, managing individual education plans, problems of low- and high- disability students, mainstreaming, special education curricula, staff management, parent

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education, communications and community relations, budgeting, and professional standards and ethics.

The special education concentration within the educational policy, planning and leadership areas, supports the mission of the school of education providing initial preparation and continuing education for those who wish to serve in leadership positions in the field of special education (Lindy, 2015). Special education administration play an important role in the education of students with special needs. They are responsible for overseeing programme and services for students with special need. They also ensure adherence to federal, state and local special education regulations to helping teachers provide the unique service which special education students need.

**Function of Special Education Administration**

Special education administrators are people that works in a school system or individual school and leads the special education team the team often includes administrator, special education teachers, and instructional assistants. The special education administration is to provide support for the teachers, students and parents that are in special education programs:

The administration team monitors all the current special education programs, policies, and funding, teachers who work in the classroom often need special education administration to help them determine educational goals and sit in on meetings with the students and their families. Once the students' goals are written, the administrator will help the teacher to provide instruction. For those goals.

The administration team also helps the teacher to comply with all the special education laws. In most schools, teachers are given yearly performance evaluation from the administrator.

The Students are also provided help from the special education administration ne administrator will review the students' progress and determine if goals need to be changed. He or she will also make sure that each special education students is in the right class room placement, which should be the students least

restrictive environment, students will be reevaluated each year and administrator will help to write an individualized educational plan (IEP). Chacko, T. (1983)

The special education administration will support parents who are going through the process of placing their child in a special education class room. The parents will need to know their parental right under the law and resources to help their child. The administrator will become the mediator during meetings between the teacher and parents. They will also provide at home activities for the families.

It is important that the special education administration monitors current programs and helps to develop future program. These program are often tested as pilot programs, and the administrator will keep data to determine the success of each new program. It is part of the administrator's job to know all the policies put in place by the school system. She/he will also help to create new policies that will support the special education team and the students Chacko, T. (1983).

The administrator of special education will Keep track of all the money that comes in from different sources. This money will be budgeted across the school system for special education programs. The administrator will help to gain more money for special education by writing grants and letters for additional funds.

The special education administration team will also reach out to the community for help with educational resources.

**Concept of Students with Special Needs**

Special needs children include all children who, for whatever reasons, are failing to benefit from school (UNESCO Report, 1994). Ozoji and Mugu cited by Unegbu (2006) define special people as "those with significant sensory deficits or unusual high intellectual that are not properly addressed in the regular programme". They further opine that a highly intelligent child is a child with outstanding achievement and ability who is not well catered for in the regular classroom. Similarly, Kami (2008) is of the opinion that people with special needs are those generally

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referred to as exceptional persons and they comprise children, youths and adults with one form of disability or learning difficulty or the other. In the same vein, Akuogibo and Dada cited in Nwachukwu (2006) see the special needs child as one who: Deviates from the ordinary child such that he/she requires special attention, special services and other areas that could make life more meaningful and worth living ... those who require special education service in order to benefit from the regular school curriculum. They are those who learning difficulties or disabilities compel to require additional help in order to achieve their full educational potentials within the curriculum (p. 278). In other words, special needs children are those children who cannot benefit maximally from the regular classroom teaching/learning Catering for Children with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom: Challenges and the Way Forward Fuandai, C. M 146 experiences on account of physical, mental, emotional and other sundry disabilities, which may or may not be easily identified. Therefore, special needs children are special children who need to be given special attention in the classroom

Special education has been defined in various ways by scholars. For instance, Mba (1991) opined that special education is an ideal general education in which individual differences are considered and provided for. Adima, Ladipo and Aboji (1981), in Oladejo (2001) defined special education as an aspect of education that treats people as individuals and makes allowances for the use of special equipment and methods of teaching according to individual needs. Special education has also been described as classroom or private instructions involving unconventional techniques, materials, exercises, facilities and subject matter designed for children and adults who have physical deformities, behavioural disorders or learning disabilities Ajuwon, (2011)

The Federal Government of Nigeria, gives a comprehensive definition, when it defines special education as the education of children and adults, who have learning difficulties because of different kinds of disabilities-blindness, partial sightedness, deafness, hardness of hearing,

mental retardation, social maladjustment and limb deformity or malformation, due to circumstances of birth, inheritance, social position, mental and physical health patterns, or accident in later life.(National Policy on Education, 2004:34)

According to Ajuwon, P. M. (2011),, citing the Unites States Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education is that type of education with specially designed instructions to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities. These definitions are relevant to the present discourse, even though, special education is not meant for the disabled only. This is because the present paper is focusing on the education of students with disabilities, who might be disadvantaged in the regular educational programmes.

#### **Nature of Special Education Administration**

According to Lawal-Solarin, (2012) Special education administrations hold executive position with broads demanding duties. They:

1. Determine educational standards and goals for special education programs
2. Ensure that those programs comply with federal, State and local laws
3. Set policies and procedures for special education teachers and staff who are implementing those programs
4. Motivate teachers and staff
5. Provide parents with regular report on their Childs progress
6. Review and evaluate all programs. Pilot programs long term programs, future programs
7. Write grants prepare budgets
8. Respond to legislative question and concerns
9. Mediate disputes between parents and schools
10. Attend community meetings when critical special education issues are discussed.

#### **Special Education Administration Jobs**

Special education administration jobs vary. State and individual school systems define



the specific role and responsibilities for the three special education administration jobs.

The term administrators is interpreted by UNESCO (2009) to be widely, however, because school systems nationwide use different titles for special education administrators. Typical titles are director, supervisor, special education principal and coordinator each administration job has unique responsibilities, but there can be an overlap in these responsibilities, depending on school district needs and resources. Many school district do not employ personnel in all three administration jobs. The larger the district, the more likely all three job title are utilized.

#### Director

According to UNESCO (2009) the director or special education job can be a unique position in a school, or it may be, integrated into the responsibilities of a principal or assistant principal.

A Small school district may incorporate special education administration into another school administrator role. Large school district typically employ a director of special education who has responsibility only for special educational issue.

The job responsibilities of the director of special education including ensuring the School district is in compliance with special regulation, setting standards and goals for special education, developing policies and procedures for implementing special education services, developing and monitoring budgets, supervising and reviewing programs and mediating disputes.

#### Assistant Director

According to UNESCO (2009) the assistant director of special education s job is defined differently by school systems. In general the assistant director supports the director in meeting special education regulations and acts as the director in his/her absence. The assistant director is involved in recruiting, interviewing and hiring new special education personnel. He can be responsible for the supervision of staff and staff evaluations. He also monitors, collects and maintains documentation require by the state, such as diagnostic evaluation, evaluation report,

Individualized educational plan (IEPS), parents contact report and complaints. In addition he may coordinate and supervise the implementation of the extended school year program and the comprehensive System or personnel development training for special education staff. Keep records of all student receiving special/services.

#### Coordinator

According to Eskay, (2001) there are three typical ways a special education coordinator job is configured. If School district does not employ a director of special education the corona may work as he director and be responsible for the special education programs. If another administrator is the designated director, the coordinators Job is support the administrator in meeting compliance with special education regulations. When a School district hires all three administration position, the role of the coordinator generally includes working with the diagnostic team to ensure timely evaluation and eligibility decisions, monitoring special education teachers to ensure individualized educational plan (IEP) implementation mediating with families to resolve questions and forestall disputes, and working with special education personnel to collect and analyze student data and required report.

#### Qualities of Special Education Administrator

Administrator as a class whether junior or senior occupy a most strategies position in any organization Eskay, (2001). The qualities are:

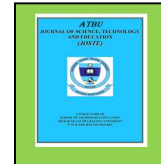
- a. **Expert:** an Administrator should be an expert in the field of special education.
- b. **Fore Sight:** A good administrator should have foresight it is not expected that an administrator should be a prophet or a seer. He should however, be able to forecast based on his knowledge and experience the probable consequences of measures proposed for policy. He should in addition be able to think of likely developments that may arise over the next year or two. From his knowledge and accumulated experience he should have the skill to

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deduce likely developments given a set of factors and circumstances. It is this aptitude that will enable him to advise accurately and effectively on the formulation of policy.

### **Ability to Delegate**

Another essential quality necessary in an administrator is the ability to delegate works to his subordinates. It is a mark of poor administration for a top administrator to seek to handle by himself all the essential assignment in the department. In the process a bottle neck which will cause endless delays and he will ruin his own health Eskay, M. (2001). Furthermore, he will leave his assistants with little to do, thus depriving them of the opportunities to learn and gain experience on the job.

A top man who cannot get the best out of his subordinates and give them an opportunity to exercise their initiative is not fit to head an organization. Indeed in the attempt to handle every task by himself, his effort will become counterproductive. This is because he will be so slowed down with work that there will be no time left for him to go round and see for himself the progress of the organization Eskay, M. (2001).

### **Sympathy and Consideration**

A good administrator should have sympathy and consideration, both for his subordinates and for members of the public. There should be in him some milk of human kindness. It is not being suggested that he should be soft and spineless, or that he should condone sloth, slackness, inefficiency, and dishonesty. An administrator can be firm and strict, yet sympathetic and considerate Arora, Ramesh K. (Ed) (1994).

A good administrator inspires his subordinates to give their best for the progress and development of their organization.

### **Tact**

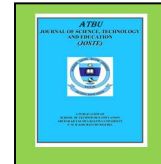
A good administrator must develop and cultivate a sense of tact. He must be tactful in dealing with his political bosses the President or Governor, Commissioner, Zonal Education Officer

as the case may be. An administrator must be efficient and brilliant. When dealing with political bosses and members of the public, a top administrator should avoid being arrogant and greedy. This is equally important in minuting, in submissions in the file, in correspondences and in discussion Hammond, and Ingalls, (2003).

It is a sign of immaturity for an administrator to wish to display his wealth of experience or knowledge or the superiority of his education, and show up his political boss in a poor light. A sense of modesty and a habit of courtesy, both in style or writing and in address, are indispensable assets for a top administrator who wishes to carry along with him both his boss and his colleagues in the fulfilment of the programme and goal of the department. It is tactless for an administrator to engage in open confrontation with his political boss. Even when the administrator knows that he is in the right, he should device a subtle way to correct his boss, so that the boss does not feel that he is being challenged deliberately.

### **CONCLUSION**

It should be acknowledged that special education administrators need support in order to do their jobs more effectively. Administrators in special education play an important role in the education of special needs students. They are responsible for overseeing programs and services for students with learning, physical, behavioral or linguistic disorders. They are also the key personnel in retaining teachers. The role of administration in retention and support for special educators is particularly crucial given a history of exclusion and isolation from general education that many special educators have experienced. Administrators must be familiar with available resources to support the diverse needs of student, families and staff. And must know how to access additional support in order to ensure appropriate education for a support for teachers. For example, leaders can make sure English as a Second Language and bilingual programs are effectively supported (Dipiola, Walther Thomas, 2003).



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the findings the researcher presented the following recommendations:

1. Administrators need practical training to help them do their Jobs more effectively from the start. They need ongoing Professional Development keep them on top of innovations in education. Administrators also need continuous support from other school leaders, school staff and the community.
2. Expert in the field should be employed. Administrators that should provide the necessary facilities/equipment for both teachers and special needs students, so that it will ease and facilitate teaching and learning.
3. Special Needs Individual should also be given a chance to head administration positions if possible.

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