

Summary of interview

Education



Education Observations made regarding the Management of Special Needs Programs & To understand how teachers can better educate those children who have special needs I had to interview one person who was working with these children. I had the opportunity to interview the campus coordinator, Ms. Riffle, at Hoffman Elementary in San Antonio. It is through these observations that I learned about the management process of special needs programs. I also hoped to give educators who are not familiar with educating and managing students with special needs, some basic ideas on special needs education. As the Special Education Campus Coordinator, Ms. Riffle, noted that she had to carry out her roles in a certain way.

As a coordinator, one has to ensure that they have a Master's of Science, Development and cognitive disabilities and a Bachelor's degree in Arts. In addition, it is necessary to have eight years of experience as a teacher teaching special education students. Like most Special Needs Coordinators in campuses, getting one year training as a NISD special Education Coordinator is critical. As a coordinator with such qualification, it is easier to manage special needs students if a coordinator has the skills and the qualifications (Wearmouth, 2013). In addition, parents are more likely to trust experienced professionals with their special needs children (Westwood, 2010). It is not only any special needs children that qualify for the programs, but those who are visually and emotionally impaired. Additionally, those with orthopedic, speech and auditory impairments are also included. Students with traumatic brain injuries and learning and intellectual disabilities are also qualified. To admit these students into the special needs programs in the school, they have to do tests to check their adaptive behavior, cognitive and language skills (Wearmouth, 2008). Earlier tests used in special education schools

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were not suitable when it came to testing students with special needs (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). However, today, it is the work of the General Education Teacher to refer the students to the tests, but a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) carries out the testing. For the school district to get the testing process done, they have to follow the Federal timelines. The Full Individual Evaluation (FIE) or The Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) meetings where the parents of the students, special and general education teachers are present are a requirement. Without these meetings, it would not be possible to admit students without allowing the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARDC) to accept the student's eligibilities and agreeing on what the Individual Education Plan (IEP) says. One most important observation about the management process is that a school has to comply with the TEA requirements by ensuring that the ARD meetings are held within 30 days set by the FIE date. Teachers are not left out in this process because they play critical roles when it comes to facilitating the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and establishing the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP).

Challenges are also a part of the management experience for a Special Education Campus Coordinator. For example, scheduling of meetings is always a problem because there is never enough time for students to go to the meetings. Even though there are 17 support personnel who assist these students, time is always a scarce commodity. Nonetheless, the school ensures time gets saved through record keeping made possible through the use of data binders, STAAR records, IEP websites and special education records.

As a graduate student of education leadership, these are the observations I

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made about coordinators of special education programs. It is my view that most of these coordinators carry out an excellent job when it comes to managing the special education programs. The only recommendation I would make is that the coordinators should have programs that promote the notion that Para-professionals are not the only ones who are there to help students with special needs. If parents have this view in their mind, I believe they are more likely to work hard to interact more with their special needs children.

References

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