

A STUDY OF PARENT ADVISORY
COMMITTEE MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES
WITH DUE PROCESS AND THEIR
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE
EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
PLACEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

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ABSTRACT

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By

Don Raymond Barbacovi

Purpose of the Study

With the increase in influence the parents of handicapped children have in determining their child's educational plan, the time has come to determine the degree to which these parents are involved in planning those programs. The major purpose of this study was to respond to that need by gathering information regarding the operation of that aspect of the Michigan Special Education Code, which pertains to the planning and placement process in special education programs.

In vesting this responsibility to parents the need for a due process model and a formal structure to allow parents' input into the education program has become a necessity. The extent to which parents reported these due process procedures as well as their attitudes regarding that process were investigated.

Procedures

The target population for this study consisted of all members of the Parent Advisory Committees (PAC's) of Michigan's fifty-eight intermediate school districts. These districts were divided into four strata based on the total number of pupils within each intermediate school district. Using a sampling fraction of twenty-five percent, fifteen intermediate school districts were selected at random. From the initial selection, four districts were not able to participate; those districts were replaced at random from the appropriate strata.

The fifteen intermediate districts selected had a total of 168 PAC members. Of the 168 members, 110 responses were received; a response rate of approximately 65 percent.

A questionnaire was developed to meet the needs of the study. In the developmental stages the questionnaire was subjected to an extensive analysis by a panel of experts consisting of State Department personnel, local school district personnel, university personnel and parents of handicapped children.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the appropriateness and clarity of the items, the length, and if the attitude statements were written in such a way that parents could respond from a factual base. The population selected for the pilot study was chosen from those Parent Advisory Committees not

selected in the initial selection procedure. As a result of this pilot some minor changes were made in (1) the manner the questionnaire was presented, (2) the defining of terms and (3) the refining of a few questions.

Much of the information obtained was treated using descriptive statistics; however, the relationship between due process and parent attitudes were subjected to a multiple regression analysis. A regression analysis was also used in determining the relationship between due process and attendance. An alpha level of .01 was selected to determine significance.

Major Findings

1. There were no significant correlations between the mode of communication used to inform parents about the planning process and their attitudes about that process.
2. There were no significant relationships between due process procedures that should occur prior to the planning meeting and parent attendance at that meeting.
3. Generally parents were pleased with the planning process and perceived themselves as being a vital part of that process.
4. Parents reported that 60 percent of the due process items required by regulation took place. However, they reported that only 32 percent of the due process items that could have occurred, but are not mandated, did actually occur.

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DEDICATION

TO JOANIE, JASON, AND NIKKI--Their understanding, support, guidance, and love made it all possible and gave it a meaning that we will always cherish.

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Bringing a doctoral program to fruition requires the help and guidance of so many, as I acknowledge only a few of them, I hope the others will feel the warmth and sincerity of my appreciation for their assistance along the way.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To the parents of handicapped children, the last ten years have come to be known as the "quiet revolution" (Dimond, 1973). This revolution's main goal is a free appropriate public education for all handicapped children and youth. The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped estimates that there are seven million handicapped children of school age, four million of whom do not receive an appropriate education and another million whom are excluded from school entirely (P.L. 94-142 sec. 601). This quiet revolution, to establish equal educational rights for the handicapped, has its origins in the civil rights movement of the Sixties, a liberal court system, and the persistent political pressure exerted by parents of handicapped children on state and national legislators. A free appropriate public education for all handicapped children is still to be accomplished, but with increased public awareness, more state and federal legislation, and the continuance of favorable court rulings, the goal may be attainable.

The high visibility that handicapped children and special education now enjoy is a relatively new phenomenon. Historically, the handicapped population has taken a back seat in most aspects of society, including the use of the court system. However, in 1971, a case of historic importance took place. A suit, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was a suit filed on behalf of all mentally retarded children in Pennsylvania. On October 7, 1971, the parties consented to an agreement which stipulated that all mentally retarded children in Pennsylvania had a RIGHT to a free public education. The agreement further stipulated that all education agencies must adhere to a strict set of procedural due process guidelines which assure parents of handicapped children an active part in the placement of their children in an appropriate education program. On August 1, 1972 in Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia, Judge Joseph C. Waddy carried the "right to education" mandate one step further. He said:

The District of Columbia shall provide to each child of school age a fair and suitable publicly-supported education regardless of the degree of the child's mental, physical, or emotional disability or impairment. Furthermore, defendants shall not exclude any child resident in the District of Columbia from such publicly-supported education on the basis of a claim of insufficient resources. (Mills).

These two decisions catapulted special education into the national spotlight and the high visibility thus gained has stimulated legislative developments on both the state and national levels.

The Federal Role

The beginnings of special education programs in this country occurred in the 1880's and can be traced to the development of state residential schools for the deaf and blind, public day school classes for the deaf, and numerous programs for the "feeble-minded" (Weintraub, 1971). Until recently, the federal role, as it pertains to the handicapped, was limited to providing monetary assistance to state and local education agencies to meet the needs of these specific disability groups.

The initial step was taken in 1954 with the passage of P.L. 83-531, the Cooperative Research Act. It was designed to foster a spirit of cooperation between the federal government and institutions of higher learning. This represented a rudimentary awareness by Congress of the need for categorical aid for special education. In 1958, two bills were passed that helped firm the groundwork for massive federal involvement. These bills became P.L. 85-905, Captioned Films for the Deaf and P.L. 85-926, Training of Professional Personnel. Captioned Films established a loan service aimed at cultural enrichment

and recreation for deaf persons while Professional Personnel focused on the training of university level persons in the area of mental retardation who would in turn train teachers. These laws are perhaps the most significant of the early legislative accomplishments for they firmly established categorical support for the education of the handicapped.

Legislative action remained at a low level until 1963 when P.L. 88-164 was passed. This law, considered an administrative milestone, resulted in the establishment of the Division of Handicapped Children and Youth within the U.S. Office of Education. This division brought together under one unit all the previous acts and units set up to serve handicapped children. It was in 1965, with the passage of P.L. 89-10, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), that the first sizeable commitment by the federal government to support K-12 education throughout the country was undertaken. The funds authorized, in five Titles, were designed to lend assistance to local and state education agencies in providing programs and services to "educationally deprived children." In 1966, P.L. 89-750, also known as the ESEA Amendments of 1966, created a new Title (Title VI) which provided support for local education agencies. More importantly, it established the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped to handle all federal programs designed to

meet the needs of the handicapped, and provided categorical funds for the support of approved programs at the local level.

The 1970's saw a dramatic increase in Congressional attention to the handicapped. Hundreds of bills were introduced that directly affected the handicapped. From January of 1970 to November of 1975, sixty-one bills were passed that directly pertained to the handicapped (Abeson, et al., 1976, p. 84). Two of the bills were of major importance. With P.L. 93-380, the Education Amendments of 1974, Congress authorized massive increases in the grants to states' section of ESEA Title VI-Part B. More importantly, the amendments included assurances of an education in the least restrictive environment and of due process procedures for parents and their children. A year later, on November 29, 1975, President Ford signed into law the Education of All Handicapped Act (P.L. 94-142). This landmark legislation replaces Part B of P.L. 93-380 and commits the federal government to a level of funding for handicapped children that has the same goal as the "quiet revolution"; that is, a free appropriate public education for all handicapped children between the ages of three and twenty-one. More importantly, P.L. 94-142 is permanent legislation with no expiration date and commits the federal government to a level of funding that should allow state and local education agencies to attain the stated goal.

As federal government financial support for the education of the handicapped increased, so, too, has state financial support increased. In 1972, Abeson reported that about 70% of the states had some form of mandatory legislation. In 1975, the Council for Exceptional Children reported that all but two states had adopted some form of mandatory legislation (Abeson, et. al., 1976, p. 87). It is interesting to note that the dramatic increase in mandatory legislation occurred at the same time the right to education cases were being settled in the courts.

With the passage of Public Act 198 of 1971, more commonly referred to as Mandatory Special Education, Michigan joined the parade of states in passing legislation mandating a free public education for handicapped children. The act forced local and intermediate education agencies to provide a full continuum of special education programs and services to all handicapped from birth to twenty-five or until completion of a prescribed program. Public Act 198 entrenched the intermediate school district as the body with administrative responsibility to oversee the operation of special education programs and services. Furthermore, the intermediate district is responsible for the development and evaluation of a comprehensive plan for special education within its boundaries and must maintain a record of every handicapped person up to twenty-five years of age. However, the ultimate responsibility for

the implementation of Public Act 198 rests with the State Board of Education. As such, this body was charged by the legislature to promulgate rules and regulations to fulfill the mandate.

Parent Role in Michigan's Mandatory Legislation

Public Act 198 contains no direct reference to parents of handicapped children. Issues relating to due process or parent involvement in educational decisions affecting their children have been addressed in the Administrative Rules and Regulations developed to implement the Act. These Rules became effective in October of 1973 and contained a number of provisions pertaining to the role of parents. The most crucial provisions of the Rules and Regulations are those that guarantee the right of the parents to be involved in their children's Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting (EPPC), and, if they so desire, to contest the findings and recommendations of that committee. These Parental Rights are delineated in Rules 22, 23 and 24, which may be found in Appendix A. The most crucial portions of these rules follow:

R340.1722 Educational placement.

Rule 22. (b) Request in writing, parents on a case by case basis to participate as members of the committee in developing a recommendation concerning a change in the educational status of

their handicapped offspring. Prior to the educational planning and placement committee meeting, all school records concerning the person suspected of being handicapped shall be made available to the parents upon request.

R340.1723 Notice to parents.

Rule 23. (1) Before effectuation of an educational placement, denial of placement, or a change in educational status of a handicapped person, the superintendent of the intermediate school district or local school district within 10 calendar days from the date of recommendation of the educational planning and placement committee shall notify the parent, personally in conference or by certified mail, concerning the placement or change in educational status....

(f)(iii) If dissatisfied, the parent may request a hearing in writing, on a form provided at the conference, within 7 calendar days of the conference. Change in educational assignment shall not be made during this period.... (Special Education Code).

The Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting has three basic functions: (1) to evaluate all information on a given student and determine if the student can be defined as handicapped according to the rules for eligibility in the Special Education Code (Rules 3-14); (2) to review all educational options, both regular and special, available to the student; and (3) to formulate and record instructional goals and identify the expected outcomes as the result of a special class placement (Michigan Department of Education, Guidelines).

Rule 1, subrule 4 of the Special Education Code defines the Educational Planning and Placement Committee (EPPC) as that "...of an operating district or agency whose members shall include as a minimum, /emphasis added/

a representative of the administrative personnel, instructional personnel, diagnostic personnel, and parents invited to participate /emphasis added/ when their children are involved." (Special Education Code).

In reviewing the above rule, this writer identifies two key words. The first is minimum. The rule addresses itself to those persons who must attend the meeting, but in reality the EPPC "should include all persons necessary to get a complete and accurate view of the child's functioning level...." (Guidelines, Michigan Department of Education). The second key word and the more important one is participate. Herein lies the overall goal of this study--to explore the extent of parent participation as well as the extent of the parents' awareness of their right to be inherently involved in the EPPC process.

Another important aspect of parental rights are those Provisions granted to them in Rules 133, 135 and 136 of the Special Education Code. These rules deal with the development of the Intermediate School District Plan for the delivery of special education programs and services. In essence, these rules state that "...all plans or any modification thereof shall be developed in cooperation with a parent advisory committee..." and that the Intermediate School District Plan shall be signed by "the chairperson of the parent advisory committee signifying the committee has been involved in the development of the

plan." Furthermore, "at any time...the parent advisory committee may file objections to the plan in whole or in part." (Special Education Code, Rules 133, 135 and 136. Complete rules may be found in Appendix B)

Every intermediate school district in the State of Michigan is mandated to have a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). This Parent Advisory Committee should "consist of at least one parent of a handicapped person from each local school district." (Special Education Code, Rule 133). The major function of the PAC is to assist the local and intermediate school districts in developing a yearly plan for the delivery of special education programs and services. As a consequence of these rules, those parents on the Parent Advisory Committee not only have the opportunity to provide vital input in their children's EPPC, but also may influence the plan for the delivery of special education programs and services for all handicapped persons within the intermediate district.

Statement of Problem

With the enactment of Public Act 198, a great deal of attention has been focused on the parent in the EPPC Process. Prior to Mandatory, parents generally had little input in their child's educational program and generally accepted what the local education agency proposed. Many groups, such as the Michigan Association for Retarded

Citizens, the Michigan Association for Children With Learning Disabilities, and interested professionals, feared that some parents may not be able to handle the role given to them under the new law. This concern appears justifiable in that the EPPC places the parent in a position of having a great deal of influence over their child's placement and program as well as the goals of that program.

This concern has manifest itself in a number of programs designed to train parents or parent advocates for more effective participation in the EPPC. Following are a few examples of these training programs.

In June of 1975, the Michigan Department of Education, Special Education Services, held two Parent Advisory Committee Institutes in which the goal was to "cover the referral, diagnosis, planning, placement, and follow-up process required under Mandatory Special Education." (PAC Institute, Petoskey). The Michigan Association of Retarded Citizens has produced a training module designed "to be a guide for persons who assist parents in the Educational Planning and Placement Committee (EPPC) process...." (MARC--EPPC). Gregory Osmun, Director of Special Education, Grand Rapids Public Schools, has developed a program that simulates the EPPC. His program is titled an In-Service Training Program for Parents Who Are Going To Be Involved in Educational Planning and Placement Committee's. In addition to these "pre-packaged" programs, many school

districts have a formal policy to which professional personnel adhere. This policy is usually an attempt to assist the parent in understanding the EPPC process.

To date, there has been no study which assesses how the parents of the handicapped are fulfilling their role pertaining to their "new-found" rights and responsibilities in the development of special education programs. Information is not available as to how effective local and intermediate school districts have been in preparing parents for participation in the EPPC process, nor is there any information available pertaining to how the parents feel about the process.

Statement of Purpose

The major purpose of this study was to gather information regarding the operation of that part of the Michigan Special Education Code which pertains to the planning and Placement process in special education programs. This information will be gathered through a survey of persons serving on Intermediate School District Parent Advisory Committees and included: (1) the gathering of basic demographic data concerning the composition of the PAC, (2) factual data relating to the individual parent experience with the EPPC process, and (3) a study of Parental attitudes regarding the EPPC.

Research Questions

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents who make up the Parent Advisory Committee?
2. What are the characteristics of Parent Advisory Committee members' experiences with procedural due process?
3. What is the relationship between those procedural due process items that should occur prior to the Educational Planning and Placement Committee and the parents' attendance at that meeting?
4. What is the relationship between Parent Advisory Committee members' attitudes toward the EPPC and their experience with procedural due process?
5. What is the relationship between the mode of communication used to inform the parents about the EPPC and the parents' attitudes toward their children's EPPC's?

Delimitation of the Study

As stated in the Introduction, Parent Advisory Committee members are the target population for this study. There are three reasons why this population was chosen. First, in performing their role as members of the PAC, they have had the opportunity to become acquainted with Public Act 198, the Rules and Regulations, and the special education programs within the intermediate school district. Secondly, as parents of the handicapped, they have had contact with the EPPC process, either directly or indirectly via discussions with members of the PAC. Thirdly, they represent a well-defined population which

is readily accessible. For these reasons, Parent Advisory Committee members appear to be the most appropriate parental group to utilize in a study of the EPPC process.

This study was not designed, nor is it intended to be, an evaluation instrument in determining the relationship between intermediate school districts and the PAC. Rather, it is intended to be an information gathering effort directed toward determining how PAC members view the EPPC process as it currently operates in Michigan. The results of this study are not generalizable to all parents of handicapped children. This study is limited to the attitudes and experiences of those parents currently serving on Parent Advisory Committees around the state.

Overview Of the Study

Chapter II of the study focuses on the literature that is related to this study. The major portion of the review centers around parental involvement in their children's educational programs as well as those rights and responsibilities identified by recent court decisions. Finally, a brief review centers around Parent Advisory Committees and their role in the educational process.

Chapter III of the study describes the design and development of the survey. This chapter includes a description of the population, question derivation, the pilot study, and describes the procedure used in obtaining the data.

Chapter IV describes the data and its relationship to the research questions.

Chapter V includes a brief summary of the study, including problems encountered, factors that may have contributed to the findings, and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Included in this chapter will be a brief review of current literature pertaining to the advisory role of parents of handicapped children. This writer could locate no studies that dealt specifically with due process and its effects on parents' attitudes. Consequently, the primary focus of the review will be on the emergence of procedural due process guarantees for handicapped children and their parents. The term parents as used in this review, means the child's parent, legal guardian, advocate, or the child himself when over the age of majority. The section of the review which considers due process will include a segment devoted to the discussion of the intent and meaning of procedural due process as it pertains to the handicapped and the historical development of procedural due process guarantees. The final segment will describe Michigan's due process procedures as they relate to the EPPC as presented in the Administrative Rules and Regulations.

Role of the Advisory Committee

Historically, the role of the parent in education has been limited to attending P.T.A. sessions, helping with class parties, and, in general, fulfilling the needs of the school. For many parents of handicapped children, even these nominal pleasures were denied them, for their children were excluded from the public school system. However, the results of the so-called "right to education" court cases, discussed later in this chapter, and the subsequent passage of mandatory legislation in many states has thrust the parents of handicapped children into a new and influential role. A major part of this new role has been the inclusion of parents in the planning and evaluation aspects of programs and services for their children-- a role labeled advisory.

Today, forty-eight of the fifty states have some type of mandatory legislation (Weintraub, et al., 1976). Of these forty-eight states, at least thirty-eight have state level special education advisory committees (Trudeau, 1973). With the passage of P.L. 94-142, Education of All the Handicapped Act, all states are mandated by January 1, 1978 to establish state level advisory committees. The duties and responsibilities of these state level committees differ, but generally include making recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding programming, financing, and evaluating programs and

services for handicapped children. Parents of handicapped children are often made a part of these committees, along with many other persons involved at the state, regional, and local levels in planning programs and services for handicapped children.

The establishment of state level advisory boards for the handicapped is a relatively new phenomenon. The 1962 Report of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation, highlighted the need for the coordination of the "generic and specialized agencies serving the mentally retarded." (p. 22). By the mid-sixties, many states had established state level planning boards which included parents of handicapped children. In 1967, Maryland advocated the establishment of state and local advisory committees to increase public awareness of the needs of handicapped children and to further public recognition of the lack of necessary programs to meet the needs of handicapped children (Davis, et al., 1967). In 1968, the First Report of the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children recommended that all states establish state and local advisory councils "to help speed the implementation of services to handicapped children..." and furthermore that "these councils focus on planning and evaluating new programs." (Kirk, 1968, p. 46). Although the establishment of state advisory committees was a giant step forward for the parents of handicapped children, the actual

operation of most programs for the handicapped is a function of the local education agency. Consequently, the greatest involvement needs to occur at the local level where parent involvement has been slow in developing and has just recently been looked upon as being a necessary and vital aspect for program planning (National Advisory Committee on the Handicapped, 1974).

In 1973, Trudeau stated that well over half of the states had a legal basis for local planning. This planning is typically conducted by advisory committees whose function is to assist local administrators in developing educational services for handicapped children. Some of the activities conducted by these committees include presenting status reports, clarifying state and local policies, conducting surveys to identify and locate handicapped children and many more specialized activities. In some states, local planning boards specify plans for each disability group, while in other states their role is more general.

In all states but one, these local planning boards or advisory committees are typically composed of parents of handicapped children, special education teachers, local or intermediate directors of special education, and, at times, members of agencies that may be involved with special education students (Trudeau, 1973). These advisory committees appear to have similar functions; these functions pertain to planning and evaluating district-wide special

education programs and services. Furthermore, these advisory groups have no administrative responsibility or authority and have little, if any, enforcement function. Their role is strictly advisory and, as such, many of these committees tend to be token fixtures and serve as "yes men" for local district special education personnel (Gettings, 1973). Michigan appears to be the only state that has mandated an advisory committee for parents only. The legal basis for the Parent Advisory Committee is found in Rules 133, 135 and 136 of the Special Education Code (Appendix B). Every intermediate school district in Michigan must develop a comprehensive plan for the delivery of special education programs and services. Members of the Parent Advisory Committee are involved in all phases of this plan's development. This function allows parents of handicapped children in Michigan an opportunity to exert a greater degree of influence over planning and evaluation than parents in other states.

By the late 1960's, many states that did not mandate some type of planning did have permissive legislation allowing planning committees. For instance, North Dakota has a statute that says, "...the county superintendent may appoint a county board of special education" (Peterson, 1968, p. 5). A trend toward the establishment of strong local planning and advisory bodies may be observed beginning around 1969. This trend is particularly evident in states that have had "right to education" cases brought against

them. Included as a part of the "right to education" litigation was the question of procedural due process and its implications for handicapped students and their parents.

Due Process--Meaning and Intent

There are two types of due process - procedural and substantive. This review does not need to concern itself with substantive due process except to suggest that it should be thought of as a constitutional requirement affecting the rule-making function, "...which prohibits the authorization of illegal or improper procedures in the passage of rules and regulations that authorize illegal or unreasonable activities." (Fischer, 1970, p. 1). Procedural due process can be thought of as the quantity and quality of the judicial process which through its operation assures persons subjected to it that they will not be deprived of "life, liberty, or property" or any other constitutionally guaranteed right "without due process of law" (Schofield, 1975).

Procedural due process is a constitutionally guaranteed right of every citizen. Since students, including handicapped students, are citizens, they are guaranteed this right. Today, procedural due process is thought of not only in terms of "rights" but also in terms of responsibility. The Michigan Department of Education has defined responsibility as referring

...mainly to the individual's obligation to others within his society, because, in order for an individual to preserve his/her rights, each must take

upon himself a sense of responsibility toward the preservation of the rights of others. In other words, while an individual does have rights to pursue his own self-fulfillment, those rights must terminate at that point where they begin to impinge upon the rights of others. (Recommended Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities, 1974, p. 9).

Succinctly phrased, responsibility can be thought of as the freedom to experience consequence of action.

Due process is required when a constitutional right may be involved. Since the courts have mandated that a free appropriate public education is an inherent right, then the denial of, or placement in education programs other than the norm may impinge upon the student's opportunity in later life. Consequently, due process procedures are required in the placement of children in school programs and services which are considered to be a deviation from the norm.

Perhaps the most important and often the most misunderstood feature of due process is the question of its "dueness". In other words, what degree of protection is appropriate under a given set of circumstances. Nolte argues that the more severe the penalty, e.g., exclusion from school, the more likely the courts will require a large measure of due process of law (Nolte, 1975). He goes on to state that the present Supreme Court test of "dueness" may be paraphrased as a fundamental concept of fair play.

In summary, the concept of due process is formed by the continuation of the concepts of methodology and fairness. Methodology can be thought of as the plan or the

design, whereas fairness can be equated with honesty and impartiality. Due process is meant to ensure what the courts call "fundamental fairness." It is embodied in the 5th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution which provide that neither the United States nor any state or local government may deprive a person of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law."

Historical Development of Due Process

Nolte states that the idea of due process, intended to restrict the intrusion of the government into the life of the individual, had its origin in English law dating back to the year 1215 when King John was forced to relinquish some of his power to the citizenry (Nolte, 1974). The purpose of due process was to guarantee essential fairness between the individual and the state. This concept appears in the 5th Amendment to the United States Constitution which says, "No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." As it appears there and as it applies to the states in the 14th Amendment, it seems to imply a loss to the individual of some "inherent rights".

In 1951, the late Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, referring to the constitutional dimension of due process, described its nature as.

Fairness of procedure is 'due process in the primary sense'...'Due process' cannot be imprisoned within the treacherous limits of any formula...Due process

is not a mechanical instrument. It is not a yardstick. It is a process. It is a delicate process of adjustment unescapably involving an exercise of judgement. (Joint Anti-Facist Committee v. McGrath, 1954).

The U.S. Supreme Court's initial application of the "inherent right" concept in education occurred in 1954 in Brown v. Board of Education. The Court said:

In these days it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms. (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954).

More than twenty years later, handicapped children have just won the right to an education, not necessarily an equal or appropriate education.

Conceptually, the Supreme Court's ruling in Brown did not directly affect the concept of procedural due process. However, their ruling did guarantee equal educational opportunity for all. In 1960, the Supreme Court reiterated Justice Frankfurter's sentiments by stating that

due process is an almost elusive concept. Its exact boundaries are undefinable and its context varies according to specific factual contexts... as a generalization, it can be said that due process embodies the differing rules of fair play, which through the years have become associated with differing types of procedures. (Harmah v. Lorche).

In the twenty or so years between the court's holding that "separate but equal facilities for the races are inherently unequal" (Brown, 1954) and the present, represent the enlargement of the concept of equal protection of the law. Now the emphasis is on due process of law.

A keystone in the due process bridge was the Tinker case decided in 1969. It says, in effect, that even the least among us is free to challenge the awesome power of the state, which in the absence of morality, is constrained from limiting individual liberties by a mere desire. The Supreme Court said:

To avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that always accompany an unpopular viewpoint...students carry with them into our public schools the full compliment of constitutional rights which the State may limit only on proof that an overriding public purpose is to be served by giving 'valid reasons' why the State must act as it does. (Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 1969).

Dolce states that in essence what the Supreme Court was saying is "there is one right which is fundamental to all human freedom, the right to due process. To deny due process to anyone is to assume an absolute knowledge of guilt...." (Dolce, 1971, p. 8). Ultimately, in 1972 the Supreme Court handed down a ruling that will affect education for many years to come. The court stated that "...school regulations are not to be measured by the standards which prevail for the criminal law and for

criminal procedure...the courts should interfere only where there is a clear case of constitutional infringement." (Healy v. James, 1972). This ruling gives school administrators a monumental task; that is, to decide what type of due process procedure would or would not be a "constitutional infringement."

For the past twenty years, the courts have dictated educational policy, prescribed educational rules, and, in general, forced educators to live up to those freedoms guaranteed to all citizens in the Constitution. The Supreme Court has attempted to infuse some morality into an educational society which shirks its moral responsibility. It must be remembered that court involvement did not come about simply by reason of a shortage of judicial restraint. "Not too long ago free public education was still regarded as a luxury in which the individual had no established rights." So, basic is the necessity of having some education in today's world "...that the opportunity to be educated easily becomes a fundamental right which should not be denied by arbitrary and capricious action of school authorities." (Maready, 1971, p. 4).

Due Process and the Handicapped

Until the past few years, the constitutionally guaranteed right to an education has eluded the handicapped. With the inception of the "concept of normalization" (Allen, 1969) and with the idea that public education is

for all children, clearly expressed in the "zero-reject" policy (Schofield, 1975), this right has become a reality. Two court decisions have extended the reasoning used in Brown v. Board of Education and applied it to handicapped students and their parents. In both Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Mills v. Board of Education, "the courts confirmed that all children, regardless of handicap, are entitled to a regular public school education or to adequate alternate educational service suited to their needs." (Olfson, 1974, p. 2).

The Pennsylvania case was the first case that represented a class action suit; that is, a suit that included all mentally retarded children in the State of Pennsylvania. The complaint was filed on January 7, 1971 and alleged that certain Pennsylvania statutes were unconstitutional under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. In June of 1971, an order and stipulation focused on the provisions of due process rights of children thought to be mentally retarded. The decree stated specifically that no mentally retarded child could be denied admission to a public school program or have his educational status changed without first being accorded notice and the opportunity for a due process hearing. "Change in educational status" has been defined as "assignment or re-assignment based on the fact that the child is mentally retarded or thought to be mentally

retarded, to one of the following educational assignments: regular education, special education, or to no assignment, or from one type of special education to another."

(Pennsylvania). The full due process procedure, from notification to parents that their children are being considered for a change in educational status to the completion of a formal hearing, were ordered in detail by the June decree. It wasn't until October of 1971 that the court, via a consent agreement, stated:

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania...having undertaken to provide a free public education to all of its children, including its exceptional children, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may not deny any mentally retarded child access to a free public program of education and learning.
(Pennsylvania Consent Agreement, October 1971).

The Pennsylvania case established a solid foundation for two important principles--the right of the mentally retarded child to a free public education and their right to due process of law.

In August of 1972, a second case, Mills v. Board of Education was decided. The suit decreed that all children, regardless of handicap, have a right to a free public education. Parents and guardians of handicapped children in the District of Columbia said their children were excluded for a variety of reasons including labels such as "slightly brain damaged" and "hyperactive behavior." Also an issue was the manner in which the children were denied entrance to, or were excluded from, public education

programs. Basically, the complaint said that plaintiffs were excluded without a formal determination of the basis for their exclusion and without provisions for periodic review of their status. Children merely have been labeled as behavior problems, emotionally disturbed or hyperactive and excluded from school. The complaint went on to point out that

...the procedures by which the plaintiffs are excluded or suspended from public school are arbitrary and do not conform to the due process requirements of the Fifth Amendment. Plaintiffs are excluded and suspended without: (a) notification as to a hearing, the nature of the offense or status, any alternative or interim publicly supported education; (b) opportunity for representation, a hearing by an impartial arbiter, the presentation of witnesses; and (c) opportunity for periodic review of the necessity for continued exclusion or suspension. (Mills, 1972).

United States District of Columbia Court Judge

Joseph Waddy issued a decree that upheld all arguments brought by the plaintiffs. Specifically, he said:

1. that no child eligible for a publicly supported education in the District of Columbia schools shall be excluded from a regular public school assignment..., and (b) a constitutionally adequate prior hearing and periodic review of the child's status, progress, and the adequacy of any educational alternative....
2. the District of Columbia shall provide to each child of school age a free and suitable publicly supported education regardless of the degree of the child's mental, physical or emotional disability or impairment.... (Mills, Judgement and Decree, 1972).

The Mills decree established that all handicapped students had a constitutionally protected right to an education, and further reaffirmed the court's position that procedural due process is a constitutionally guaranteed right of every citizen. With the Pennsylvania and Mills decisions, handicapped children and their parents have been given the same rights and responsibilities as their non-handicapped peers.

Due Process Minimums

In evaluating what the legal minimum procedural due process requirements are, it is evident that the quantity and quality of the procedure is left up to the local or intermediate education agency. However, in dealing with the handicapped child and his parent, there are a number of procedures that must be followed to meet the minimum due process standards in identification, evaluation and educational placement. The following due process minimums represent a synthesis of ideas taken from A Primer on Due Process by Abeson, et al. and Section 615 of P.L. 94-142, Education of All the Handicapped Act, November, 1975.

1. Parents must have the opportunity to examine all educational records. Included in these records are school psychological reports, teacher comments recorded in the student's cumulative folder, health reports, and any other information that may be used to determine the future educational placement of the handicapped student.

2. The local education agency must provide written notification prior to any educational evaluation. If English is not the native or primary language used in the home, then the parents always have the right to an interpreter. Prior to the actual evaluation, the parent should be provided with both written and oral notification of the intent to conduct an evaluation. The notice of intent may contain all or some of the following:
 - (a) reason for evaluation
 - (b) person initiating process
 - (c) evaluation procedures to be used
 - (d) statements indicating right to:
 - (1) obtain copies of tests
 - (2) have test data interpreted
 - (e) contact person within the local education agency that parent can call for assistance
 - (f) separate form requesting parent permission to conduct evaluation
3. The local education agency must supply written notification to the parent prior to a change in education placement. Included in this notice should be:
 - (a) an individual educational plan
 - (b) why the proposed placement is appropriate
 - (c) appropriate alternative placements, if any
 - (d) statement pertaining to availability of records
 - (e) describe in detail the right to a hearing--if the parent objects to the proposed placement
4. The local education agency must provide for a periodic review of the child's placement. This review should be an evaluation of the local education agency's effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of the child. The parent should be invited to attend this meeting and the procedures used in the review should be specified.
5. The local education agency is responsible to establish procedures to protect the rights of children without parent or guardian. This may be accomplished by appointing a child advocate from the local education agency's staff to follow the child through the placement process.

Michigan's Due Process

Michigan's due process procedures do meet the due process minimums set forth earlier in this chapter. In fact, Rule 22(1)(b) states the superintendent of the operating district shall

request in writing, parents on a case by case basis to participate as members of the committee (EPPC) in developing a recommendation concerning a change in the educational planning and placement committee, all school records concerning the person suspected of being handicapped shall be made available to the parents upon request.

Rule 22 also deals with the subject of periodic review of placement and time deadlines concerning evaluation and placement. Rule 23 of the Code pertains to the notification to parents about a change in educational status, educational options available, and the parent's right to request a hearing. Rule 23 also delineates the procedure for requesting a hearing. The bulk of Michigan's due process safeguards occur in Rule 24 which deals with the hearing process. However, the scope of this study is limited to the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting and does not concern itself with the hearing process. Consequently, the Rules and Regulations pertaining to the hearing process will not be discussed. However, Rules 22 and 23 do afford handicapped children and their parents "equal protection" as articulated in the 14th Amendment.

Summary

Only in the last few years has the idea of an "equal educational opportunity" for handicapped children become a part of society's philosophy. The courts, through the Pennsylvania and Mills decisions, mandated a free public education for all handicapped children. As an integral part of this "right to education" mandate the right to due process in evaluation and placement procedures was made a part of the total "equal protection" philosophy. With the advent of the "rights" notion for handicapped children and their parents, came the added notion of responsibility; that is, the idea of being free to experience the consequences of decision making. Finally, the philosophy of due process has come to mean parent involvement in all phases of program planning, evaluation, and placement decisions for the handicapped. Hopefully, with continued attentiveness by educators and parents to the problems of the handicapped, they will no longer be deprived of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law."

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter is divided into five major sections. These are: (1) subject selection procedures, (2) the design and development of the measurement instrument, (3) the pilot study, (4) presentation of the EPPC questionnaire to the Parent Advisory Committees, and (5) the treatment of the data.

Subject Selection

The target population for this study consisted of all members of the Parent Advisory Committees (PAC) of Michigan's fifty-eight intermediate school districts.* These parent groups are mandated by Public Act 198 of 1971 and their composition is defined in Rule 133 of the Special Education Code. The rule states that the committee should "consist of at least one parent of a handicapped person from each constituent school district." This

*Wayne I.S.D. has been excluded from this study for the following reasons: (1) due to its enormous size it is not a typical intermediate, (2) the Wayne PAC is divided into more than one group, and (3) the PAC is currently contemplating legal action against the intermediate.

writer assumes that PAC members, by virtue of their position on that committee, are well informed about special education in general, the problems relating to the delivery of special education services and those parents' rights as delineated in the Special Education Code.

A further assumption is that parents on the PAC tend to be more highly educated and tend to have an intense interest in the problems of special education. Also, because of the relative accessibility of the PAC groups, this particular parent population was selected by this writer as the ideal group to use in obtaining the necessary information for the study.

The fifty-seven intermediate school districts were divided into four strata based on the total number of pupils within each intermediate school district. These four strata are presented on the following page in Table 3.1. The sample population was drawn from the four strata using a stratified random sample selection procedure. A sampling fraction of twenty-five percent was drawn from the first stratum and a sampling fraction of approximately twenty-six percent was drawn from the remaining three strata. Fifteen intermediate school districts were selected using the above procedure; these districts are identified in Table 3.1 by a single asterisk appearing to the left of the district's name. From the initial selection, four intermediate districts were not able to participate; Genesee, Ionia, St. Joseph, and Copper Country. These

TABLE 3.1
Breakdown of ISD by Student Membership (Mi. Dept. of Ed., 1975)

STRATA I			STRATA II			STRATA III			STRATA IV		
ISD	Members		ISD	Members		ISD	Members		ISD	Members	Members
Oakland	230,938		Ingham	62,918	**Gratiot-Isabella		18,962		Macosta-Osceola	10,035	
Macomb	178,650		*Saginaw	56,625	Van Buren		18,367		Wexford-Missaukee	9,893	
*Genesee	123,514		Washtenaw	47,074	**Livingston		18,599		*C.O.O.R.	9,677	
**Kent	98,956		Berrien	43,660	Midland		18,468		*Copper Country	9,549	
			*Kalamazoo Valley	42,015	*Marquette-Alger		17,047		**Lewis Cass	9,440	
			Muskegon	40,015	Eaton		16,539		Clare-Gladwin	9,272	
			Calhoun	35,733	Tuscola		16,316		*Hillsdale	9,117	
			Jackson	33,422	*Allegan		15,694		Dickinson-Iron	8,929	
			*Ottawa	33,266	Lapeer		14,637		Huron	8,770	
			St. Clair	31,304	Montcalm		13,827		Newago	8,522	
			*Bay Arenac	30,926	*St. Joseph		13,659		Iosco	8,345	
			Monroe	30,667	Eastern U.P.		13,536		*Branch	7,903	
			Lenawee	22,095	*Ionia		13,192		Gogebic-Ont.	7,603	
			Traverse Bay Area	21,026	Delta-Schoolcraft		12,327		Barry	6,503	
			Shiawassee	20,689	Clinton		12,036		*Mason	5,966	
					*Alpena-Montmorency		12,023		Menominee	5,620	
					Alcona				Manistee	4,744	
					Cheboygan-Otsego		11,610		Oceana	4,637	
					Presque Isle				Lake	996	
					Charlevoix-Emsmet		11,388				
					Sanilac		10,568				

*selected in the first sample

**selected as replacements for PAC's not able to participate

districts were replaced at random from the appropriate strata. The replacements are identified in Table 3.1 by a double asterisk appearing to the left of the district's name. The final fifteen districts are presented in Table 3.2 and represent the sample selected for this study.

TABLE 3.2

List of Intermediate School Districts Selected

Strata I	Strata II	Strata III	Strata IV
Kent	Saginaw Kalamazoo Valley Ottawa Bay-Arenac	Marquette-Alger Allegan Alpena-Alcona Montmorency Livingston Gratiot-Isabella	C.O.O.R. Lewis Cass Hillsdale Branch Mason

This writer had intended to personally attend all fifteen PAC meetings, present the questionnaire to the parents, and collect it before the meetings were adjourned. However, because of scheduling difficulties and inclement weather, only ten PAC meetings were personally attended. In the remaining five districts, the questionnaires were mailed either to the chairperson of the PAC or to the intermediate director of special education.

Table 3.3 presents each intermediate district, the number of local districts within that intermediate, the number of members on the Parent Advisory Committee and the number of responses from that intermediate district.* The fifteen intermediate districts in Table 3.3 represent a total of 126 local school districts and 168 Parent Advisory Committee members. Of the 168 members, 110 responses were received. This represents a response rate of 65.48 percent. This is considered acceptable (Babbi, 1973). It should be noted that the five PAC meetings which this writer did not attend (denoted by an asterisk) produced a response rate of only 30 percent whereas the other ten PAC's, which were personally attended, had a response rate of 79 percent.

Design and Development of the Measurement Instrument

As previously stated, the purposes of this survey were threefold: (1) to gather basic demographic data pertaining to the composition of the PAC, (2) to gather factual data concerning procedural due process in relationship to the EPPC process, and (3) to study parental attitudes relating to the EPPC process. To accomplish these goals, the questionnaire was divided into three major

*The number of local districts and the PAC membership within each intermediate was obtained from the intermediate director of special education.

TABLE 3.3
PAC Membership and Response Rates

ISD	Locals	PAC Membership	Frequency of Responses	Relative Frequency (per cent)
Allegan	8	10	10	100
Alpena-Alcona	10	12	8	67
Montmorency*				
Bay Arenac*	7	7	2	29
Branch	3	9	6	67
Cass	4	10	8	80
C.O.O.R.	6	12	6	50
Gratiot-Isabella*	8	11	0	0
Hillsdale*	4	9	1	1
Kent	20	20	20	100
Kalamazoo Valley	11	11	9	82
Livingston	5	10	5	50
Marquette-Alger	16	16	14	88
Mason*	4	7	3	43
Ottawa	7	11	6	55
Saginaw	13	13	12	92
	126	168	110	65.5%

*questionnaire mailed to PAC

sections. The first group of questions were designed to ascertain some demographic characteristics of parents on the PAC. To accomplish this objective, six variables of interest were selected: age, ethnic group, education, length of time on PAC, disability of the child, and the number of children the parent had that were currently receiving a special education program or service. These six characteristics were chosen to determine: (1) the stability of the PAC membership, (2) the degree to which each handicap was represented, (3) the degree of minority representation, and (4) the general educational level of PAC members.

The second section concerns itself with parent awareness of, and participation in, a procedural due process scheme. This scheme is designed to insure parents and their children of "equal protection" and "equal educational" opportunity "under the law." The questions in this section are developed in such a manner that parents are asked to recall if certain due process procedures took place during their child's EPPC. There were three possible responses for each question - an example follows:

12. Did you sign a form requesting special education services (referral)?

Yes No "?"

If parents were involved in more than one EPPC meeting, the questions were answered on the basis of the latest EPPC.

This procedure, as developed in the questionnaire, is more comprehensive than that delineated in Michigan's Special Education Code.

The initial development of this section of the questionnaire was accomplished with the assistance of State Department personnel and a selected group of directors of special education. The questions in this section were developed to adhere to the following general principles:

1. general fairness of procedure
2. parent involvement in all aspects of program planning
3. parent permission prior to testing, labeling or placement
4. access to records and copies of pertinent documents
5. school as the accountable agent

Specifically, the questions were constructed in such a manner that they pertain directly to: (1) the Michigan Special Education Code, Rules 22-24, (2) the Pennsylvania and Mills decisions regarding due process and parental rights, and (3) some principles articulated in a recent journal article by Abeson et al. (1975), A Primer on Due Process: Education Decisions for Handicapped Children.

These questions were then presented to a panel of experts consisting of two university persons, two intermediate directors of special education, and one person knowledgeable in survey research. There were eighteen questions presented to this group. As a result of their input, eight of these due process questions were divided into two questions, resulting in a total of twenty-six questions relating to

due process and the EPPC. Generally, all of the questions were shortened and worded in such a manner as to make them more understandable. A final review to check the accuracy of the concepts was done by State Department personnel. There were no changes made as a result of this review.

Section three of the questionnaire presents a series of statements designed to study parent attitudes toward the EPPC process. These attitude statements are presented using a Likert scaling format. An example follows.

SA = strongly agree
 A = agree
 U = undecided
 D = disagree
 SD = strongly disagree

35. The professionals listened to my opinions about my child.

SA A U D SD

The basic ideas, and in some cases the statements themselves, came from parents of handicapped children who had been through the EPPC. Parents used in eliciting ideas for this purpose were not PAC members. An initial list of statements and ideas was obtained by attending various local chapter meetings of the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens (MARC), the Michigan Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (MACLD), as well as numerous interviews with single parents of the handicapped. As a result of these meetings, approximately seventy-five attitude statements were constructed. These statements

were then combined to form fifteen groups representing similar types of statements. Consequently, these fifteen groups of statements were combined into twenty-five attitude statements. These twenty-five attitude statements about the EPPC were presented to the same panel of experts who reacted to the due process items. As a result of their input, the twenty-five attitude statements were incorporated into twenty statements, and in general, the wording was refined to present as succinct a statement as possible. The entire questionnaire was then presented to the same panel of experts to check for clarity and readability. As a result of this, a few minor changes were made. The questionnaire was now ready to be piloted.

The Pilot Study

The population selected for the pilot study was chosen from those Parent Advisory Committees not selected in the initial selection procedure. The two Parent Advisory Committees chosen from those remaining were Ingham Intermediate School District and Eaton Intermediate School District, selected primarily for their proximity and accessibility. These PAC's represent two different strata-- Ingham representing an urban area and Eaton a rural area. The chairperson of each PAC was contacted and his support elicited.

The questionnaire was presented to these two groups in the following manner:

1. An introduction was made relative to the scope and purposes of the study.
2. Question derivation was explained.
3. The PAC role was explained and any questions members had about the study were answered.
4. The actual questionnaire was given to the parents.
5. The questionnaire was discussed with the parents in terms of length, appropriateness, and overall expression.

The basic purposes of the pilot study were to:

1. determine the parents' perceptions of the clarity of each question,
2. determine the parents' perceptions of the appropriateness of each question,
3. determine the parents' overall perceptions of the questionnaire, and
4. determine the parents' perceptions pertaining to the manner in which the questionnaire was presented.

A total of seventeen parents responded from the two Parent Advisory Committees, nine from Ingham Intermediate and eight from Eaton Intermediate. The pilot questionnaire, as presented to these parents, can be found in Appendix C. Starting with question five, the respondents were asked to read each question, answer it, then respond to the inquiries about each question. Two questions were asked about each item. These were: (1) "Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?" and (2) "Do you think the question is appropriate?" An example follows.

Question 16

Did you obtain your child's school records before the EPPC? (16) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly? Do you think the question is appropriate?

YES NO "?"

YES

YES

NO

NO

The responses obtained from the seventeen parents regarding the inquiries about the questions are presented in Table 3.4 which follows.

TABLE 3.4

Responses to Clarity and Appropriateness of Questions

		CLEAR		APPROP.				CLEAR		APPROP.	
		YES	NO	YES	NO			YES	NO	YES	NO
Question		YES	NO	YES	NO	Question	YES	NO	YES	NO	
5		15	2	17	--	29	17	--	17	--	
6		16	1	17	--	30	17	--	17	--	
7		17	--	17	--	31	16	1	17	--	
8		17	--	17	--	32	17	--	17	--	
9		17	--	17	--	33	15	1	15	1	
10		17	--	17	--	34	17	--	16	1	
11		16	1	16	1	35	17	--	17	--	
12		16	1	16	1	36	17	--	16	1	
13		15	2	16	--	37	17	--	17	--	
14		17	--	17	--	38	17	--	17	--	
15		17	--	17	--	39	17	--	17	--	
16		17	--	17	--	40	17	--	17	--	
17		17	--	16	1	41	17	--	17	--	
18		17	--	17	--	42	16	1	17	--	
19		16	--	15	1	43	17	--	17	--	
20		17	--	17	--	44	17	--	17	--	
21		16	1	17	--	45	17	--	17	--	
22		15	--	16	--	46	17	--	17	--	
23		17	--	17	--	47	17	--	17	--	
24		16	1	17	--	48	17	--	17	--	
25		17	--	17	--	49	17	--	17	--	
26		16	1	17	--	50	16	1	17	--	
27		17	--	17	--	51	16	1	17	--	
28		17	--	17	--	52	17	--	17	--	

In thirty-one of the forty-eight cases, there were no negative responses; that is, the parents agreed unanimously that these questions were both clear and appropriate. Of the remaining seventeen questions, eight had one negative response on appropriateness, three had one negative response on both clarity and appropriateness, and two had two negative responses on clarity. Only the questions that had two negative responses on either clarity or appropriateness, questions five and thirteen, were subjected to further analysis.

In reviewing the pilot instrument, it was determined that the negative response to questions five and eleven were from persons on Eaton Intermediate's PAC. This writer went back to that group to re-examine these two questions. In the course of that re-examination, it was determined that in question five, one person did not see the category "severely mentally impaired" and one person assumed the category "autistic" was missing. (In Michigan, there is not a separate category for the autistic, rather it is included within the category "emotionally" impaired.) In both cases, the parents felt that this writer should have explained that question prior to the distribution of the questionnaire because of the many choices presented. In question eleven, the two negative responses were the result of the same phenomenon--neither parent was certain what was meant by the word "referral". Both of these parents suggested some clarification of the term prior to

the distribution of the questionnaire. The suggestions were helpful and were used when the final questionnaire was presented to the sample population.

After the parents had completed the pilot questionnaire, a round table discussion was held concerning their general impressions. They were given a list of questions to respond to and talk about (to discuss and respond to in writing). These questions and the parents' responses are presented in Table 3.5.

TABLE 3.5

Questions and Responses to Round Table Discussion

	YES	NO
1. Is the questionnaire too long?	0	17
2. Could the questionnaire be expanded?	7	10
3. Did you have difficulty recalling if the specific due process items occurred?	1	16
4. Did the attitude statements present an accurate picture of the EPPC?	17	0
5. Were there any questions that you did not want to answer for personal reasons?	0	17
6. Did the introduction give you enough information to help you in your understanding of the purposes of the study?	5	12
7. Did the introduction give you enough information to fill out the questionnaire accurately?	16	1

From perusing the results of the parents' responses about the questionnaire, it was evident that the length was acceptable. However, 40 percent of the parents felt it should not be expanded. Their responses would also seem to indicate that they had little difficulty in recalling if a specific item occurred and the attitude statements did reflect an accurate picture of the EPPC. However, approximately 30 percent of the parents felt the introduction did not give them enough information to understand the purposes of the study. As a result of this feedback, the final questionnaire was not expanded, but the introduction was expanded to facilitate a more complete understanding of the purposes of the study.

In the initial development of the attitude scale, this writer decided to separate the twenty statements into two scales - one scale dealing with the parent's attitude toward the EPPC process itself, and the other pertaining to the parent's attitude toward the professionals involved in the EPPC process. The responses of the seventeen parents were subjected to a process developed by Cronbach (1951). This process, coefficient alpha, is a measure of internal consistency, more specifically it arranges all the possible item combinations for a scale that is not dichotomous. From correlation values obtained, it was evident that the items were dependent on each other; that in fact, the twenty statements were measuring a general

attitude toward the EPPC rather than two separate attitudes. The overall coefficient alpha was .825, which was considered acceptable.

The pilot study confirmed the clarity and appropriateness of the questionnaire. It appeared from the pilot study that the twenty attitude statements were measuring a general attitude toward the EPPC process rather than two distinct attitudes. As a result of the pilot test, no questions were discarded. There were some minor punctuation changes, but the majority of the changes occurred in the manner in which the questionnaire was presented to the Parent Advisory Committee.

Presentation of the Questionnaire

The instrument, Perceptions of the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Process, as presented to the fifteen Parent Advisory Committees can be found in Appendix D. This questionnaire was presented to the parents as a group, they responded to it, and it was collected. In the five PAC's that were not personally attended, the questionnaire was presented in a similar manner by the Intermediate Director of Special Education in three districts, while in the other two the questionnaire was mailed to the chairperson of the PAC who then distributed the questionnaire. As mentioned previously, the response rates for these five PAC's were poor, but the overall response rate of 65.48 percent was acceptable.

The questionnaire was presented to the parents in the following sequence:

1. A general introduction was made relative to this writer's interest in handicapped children and their parents.
2. The basic purposes of the questionnaire were explained.
3. Each section of the questionnaire was explained relative to the purposes.
4. The questionnaire was distributed and the cover letter was read. Any questions about it were answered.
5. The directions preceding each section were read and any questions about them were answered.
6. Questions "5" and "11" were highlighted.
 - a. In question "5" all categories were read.
 - b. In question "11" the meaning of referral was explained.
7. The parents then completed the questionnaire and any questions asked during this time were answered.

Treatment of the Data

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents who make up the Parent Advisory Committee?
2. What are the characteristics of Parent Advisory Committee members' experience with procedural due process?

Both of the above questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. A composite picture is presented identifying the demographic characteristics of PAC members. This composite picture utilizes a median score for age and length of time on the PAC, and the modal response for race, schooling, and the number of children currently receiving

special education services. The due process experiences encompass questions "7" to "32", and is presented using the frequency of yes and no responses as well as the percent of yes responses for each question.

3. What is the relationship between the procedural due process items that should occur prior to the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting and the parents' attendance at that meeting?

Nine due process items have been identified as occurring prior to the EPPC. These items are questions "7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 22". Attendance or non-attendance is represented by question "32". A multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. Multiple regression is a method of analyzing the collective and individual contributions of two or more independent variables to the variation of a dependent variable. In this case, the independent variables are represented by the nine due process items and the dependent variable is represented by item "32", attendance or non-attendance. The basic task is an attempt to explain the variance of a dependent variable. It does this by estimating the contributions to this variance of two or more independent variables (Kerlinger and Pedhauzer, 1973). In this case, this writer will seek to explain the variance in attendance at the EPPC by studying the nine due process items that occurred prior to the EPPC. Due to the small "n" (106), an alpha level of .01 was selected to determine significance. The probability of obtaining

differences is greater when using a small "n" as opposed to a large "n". Consequently, this writer wants to make it more difficult to obtain significance in order to be able to place greater confidence in the results. Also, this study has important ramifications in the field, and, as such, this writer wants to be confident the results obtained from the study are accurate and reflect the actual experiences and attitudes of Parent Advisory Committee members.

4. What is the relationship between Parent Advisory Committee members' attitudes toward the EPPC and their experiences with procedural due process?

Analysis of this question is a multi-step procedure. First, a factor analysis, varimax rotation (Harman, 1967), will be computed on the twenty attitude statements; these are represented by questions "33" and "52". The purpose of this analysis is to determine the number of factors present and the loadings (coefficients) within each factor. Harman states that knowing the level of statistical significance may not be relevant in that the sampling errors are probably underestimated; therefore, a more stringent level of significance should be required (1967). Consequently, an arbitrary coefficient of .30 has been selected to determine which factor loadings will be considered acceptable. The reasons for using this procedure are the same as previously mentioned. These are: (1) to allow a greater degree of confidence to be placed in the results of the analysis, and (2) because of the important ramifications in the field,

results obtained must reflect the actual attitudes of PAC meembers. When selecting the factors that will be accepted, only those factors that account for seventy-five to ninety percent of the variance will be used; any additional factor that accounts for less than five percent of the variance will not be retained.

The subscales obtained using the procedure described above will serve as the dependent variables in a multiple regression analysis.* In this case, the independent variables are those due process items that should have taken place prior to, during, or after the EPPC meeting. These questions are "7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22 to 24, 28 to 31"--a total of sixteen questions. The number of multiple regression analyses performed will be a function of the number of factors obtained from the factor analysis. For instance, if there were two factors, then two regression analyses would be done; one using the sixteen due process items to account for the variance in parent responses to factor one and the other using the same sixteen due process items to account for the variance in parent responses to factor two.

*This writer did not use the factors themselves as dependent variables in the regression analysis, but rather took those questions that made up each factor and formed subscales. These subscales then served as the dependent variable in the regression analysis.

5. What is the relationship between the mode of communication used to inform the parents about the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting and the parents' attitudes toward their children's EPPC?

There are three channels of communication that could be used to inform parents about their child's EPPC. These are: (1) telephone, (2) mail, or (3) in person. Using the subscales identified in question four, a Chi square will be completed on each factor. Remember, these subscales represent the parents' attitudes as determined by the factor analysis, and, as such, each subscale can be thought of as a continuous variable that can be spread over a linear continuum. For purposes of analysis, this continuum will be divided into three equal (or nearly equal) sections. These sections will represent low, middle, and high attitude scores; the higher the score, the more positive the attitude toward that factor. Again, assuming there were two factors, two 3 X 3 Chi squares would be completed. An example of how the Chi square will be presented is as follows.

		Attitude		
		Low	Middle	High
Communication	telephone			
	mail			
	person			

An alpha level of .01 has been selected for acceptance or rejection. In this case, this writer would expect the parents who were notified in person to have a higher attitude score than those parents notified either by mail or phone.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the data. First, the research question is presented followed by an analysis of that question. An attempt is made to clarify possible sources of response bias, findings of particular interest and the general significance of the findings.

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the Parent Advisory Committee members?

There are six demographic characteristics: (1) age, (2) ethnic group, (3) schooling, (4) months on PAC, (5) handicap, and (6) children receiving service.

TABLE 4.1
Age of PAC Members

Age	Frequency	Relative Frequency (percent)
21-29	5	4.7
30-39	42	39.6
40-49	40	37.8
50-59	18	17.0
60 & over	1	.9
TOTAL	106	100%

Table 4.1 presents the ages of PAC members. There were five parents age 21-29, accounting for only 4.7 percent of that total population. However, this is not surprising since parents in this age group probably have fewer school age children than parents in other groups. Over seventy-five percent of the parents were between 30 and 49 years of age, which is to be expected since parents in this age range more typically have children of school age.

Of the one hundred six respondents, there were two blacks, two Spanish speaking and one hundred two white PAC members. This represents a minority population of 3.8 percent, less than the 8.2 percent minority population now receiving a special education program or service throughout the state.*

Table 4.2 presents the continuum of highest grade or level reached in school by the parents studied. It is interesting to note that approximately 98 percent of the parents surveyed have at least a high school degree and that approximately 36 percent have received college degrees. Census data indicates that approximately 60 percent of Michigan's population have received high school degrees, significantly lower than the 98 percent of

*The 8.2 percent figure was obtained from the Michigan Department of Education, Division of Special Education (taken from form SE 4350).

PAC parents who reported obtaining high school degrees. Another interesting statistic is that approximately 75 percent of the parents on the PAC's have received some college, technical, or special training after high school.

TABLE 4.2
Schooling Completed

School	Frequency	Relative Frequency (percent)
finished elementary	1	.9
some high school	1	.9
finished high school	25	23.6
some post high school	41	38.6
received Bachelor's	22	20.8
received Master's	13	12.3
received Doctorate	3	2.8
TOTAL	106	100%

TABLE 4.3
Months Served

Months	Frequency	Relative Frequency (percent)
0 to 5	19	17.9
6 to 11	8	7.5
12 to 17	28	26.4
18 to 23	10	9.4
24 or more	41	38.8
TOTAL	106	100%

Table 4.3 presents the length of time parents have been members of a Parent Advisory Committee. The greatest number of parents have served for twenty-four or more months and approximately 75 percent of the parents have been PAC members for a minimum of twelve months. It is interesting to note that there are fewer parents in the six to eleven and eighteen to twenty-three month categories than any of the other three categories. The distribution of parents within the different categories may represent an attempt to systematically involve new parents in the PAC. The large number of parents who have been members for a minimum of twelve months should lend stability to the PAC.

TABLE 4.4
Type of Handicap

Type of Handicap	Frequency	Relative Frequency (percent)
Educable		
Ment. Imp.	19	17.9
Trainable		
Ment. Imp.	17	16.0
Severely		
Ment. Imp.	4	3.8
Severely		
Mult. Imp.	4	3.8
Learning		
Disabled	20	18.8
Emotionally		
Impaired	15	14.2
Hearing		
Impaired	11	10.4
Visually		
Impaired	4	3.8
Physically		
Impaired	12	11.3
TOTAL	106	100%

Table 4.4 presents the types of handicapped children who are represented on the Parent Advisory Committee. The number of parents of hearing impaired and physically impaired children is somewhat surprising considering the relatively low number of these children receiving special education services when compared to the educable child. It would seem that the hearing impaired and physically impaired parent representation would be similar to the visually impaired, severely mentally impaired or severely multiply impaired. In fact, there are approximately

three times as many parents of hearing impaired and physically impaired children as there are in those three categories. Parents of learning disabled children have the greatest representation, with nearly one-fifth of the parents being accounted for in that category. This may be an attribute of the strong, vocal association that the parents of learning disabled children have, and the general increase in the national attention given to the field of learning disabilities. A finer analysis of the responses leads to the interesting fact that of the seventeen parents of trainable mentally impaired children, twelve were in the 50-59 age bracket. That represents 70 percent of the parents of trainable children and 67 percent of the PAC population in the 50-59 age category. This writer can only speculate as to the reason, but a contributing factor may be the greater prevalence of Down's Syndrome children (Mongolism) in women who give birth after forty years of age.

TABLE 4.5
Children Receiving Service

Number of Children Served	Frequency	Relative Frequency (percent)
Zero	2	1.9
One	89	84.0
Two	11	10.4
Three	3	2.8
Four or more	1	.9
TOTAL	106	100%

Table 4.5 presents the number of Parent Advisory Committee member's children who are currently receiving special education programs or services. It is readily evident that a substantial group of parents, 84 percent, have one child receiving special education services. However, one cannot assume that these parents have only one special education child; a distinction must be made between the number of children receiving special education services and the number of children who may have been classified as special education students but no longer receive special education services.

In presenting a composite picture of the demographic variables, one finds the "typical" parent would probably be white, approximately forty-two years old, have some post high school education, have one child receiving a special education service and have served on the Parent Advisory Committee for approximately twenty months. It is not possible to give a representative picture of the type of handicap the "typical" parent would represent because of the variability in the number of handicaps represented and the small differences in the number of parents representing each handicap.

2. What are the characteristics of Parent Advisory Committee members' experiences with procedural due process?

This question encompasses section two of the questionnaire which contains questions seven to thirty-two. Question nineteen is deleted from the present analysis but will be used as an independent variable in the analysis of research question five. The questions are divided into two parts, one part containing all the due process procedures that are mandated by Michigan's Rules and Regulations; the other part containing the procedures that could take place but are not mandated. This information is presented in two tables which give the due process questions in abbreviated form, the frequency of yes-no responses, and the percent of yes responses for each question. The complete questions are in Appendix D, Parents' Perceptions of the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Process. (See Table 4.6)

Table 4.6 presents those due process procedures that are mandated by Michigan's Rules and Regulations. The parents studied reported that these procedures took place approximately 60 percent of the time. Question eighteen, which asks if parents were informed about the date of the EPPC, was answered yes 87 percent of the time. However, one would probably have expected this question to be answered positively by virtually all respondents. Of the fourteen parents who responded no to this question, thirteen of them did not attend the EPPC; one parent who reported not being notified did attend the EPPC.

TABLE 4.6
Experiences of PAC Members with
Mandated Due Process Procedures

Ques. No.	Question (abbreviated)	Response		% Yes
		Yes	No	
12	Did you sign form requesting services?	71	35	67%
13	Information on referral filled out prior to your signature?	64	42	60%
18	Informed of date, time and place?	92	14	87%
22	Before EPPC, informed one of purposes to determine eligibility?	76	30	72%
23	Informed of right to contest the EPPC decision?	60	46	57%
24	Aware more than one placement should be considered?	47	59	44%
25	Was more than one placement considered?	47	59	44%
26	Aware should develop some educational goals?	63	43	60%
27	Were there educational goals developed?	68	38	64%
28	After EPPC, did you sign form agreeing to placement?	87	19	82%
29	Informed that failure to sign within 7 days signified acceptance?	21	85	20%
30	Did you receive copy of EPPC report?	66	40	62%
MEAN				60%

On question twenty-four, which pertains to parent awareness of discussion of placement alternatives at the EPPC, 44 percent of the parents answered yes, and an identical 44 percent responded affirmatively on question twenty-five that, in fact, this did take place. On question twenty-six, which pertains to parent awareness that some educational goals should be developed, 60 percent answered yes (they were aware) and 64 percent said that there were educational goals developed at the EPPC. Generally, it appears that local education agencies are discussing placement alternatives and developing educational goals during the EPPC. The lower positive response rate for question twenty-four is probably a function of obvious placements. For instance, a severely mentally impaired child would probably have only one program to attend. Consequently, the lower percent of yes responses on question twenty-four may be somewhat misleading.

Questions 23, 28, and 29 represent procedures that should have taken place at the EPPC. The majority of parents, 82 percent, reported that after the EPPC they agreed to placement. This is not to say that only 82 percent agreed to placement but rather that these parents agreed at the EPPC. The parents who did not sign after the EPPC agreeing to placement may still have been given a form to sign, but chose not to sign at that moment. On question twenty-nine, which pertains to parent awareness

that failure to sign the EPPC report within seven days signified acceptance, only 20 percent of the parents answered yes. That means that 80 percent of the parents were not informed of this aspect of Michigan's law and may have believed that withholding their signature meant their children would not be placed in a special education program.

The majority of parents reported that the mandated due process procedures did occur. However, the variability in responses to the items suggests that parents and local education agencies need to be more aware of the mandated procedures.

Table 4.7 presents those due process procedures which are not mandated but should be incorporated into the overall procedure to insure "fairness of procedure." The parents studied reported that these procedures took place approximately 32 percent of the time. The low percentage is not surprising since these procedures are not mandated. Questions 7, 9, 16, 17 and 21 all pertain to events prior to the EPPC. These procedures, if followed by the local education agency, would provide support for the parents in the EPPC process. However, parents reported these procedures as occurring only 22 percent of the time. Only 46 percent of the responses to question thirty-one, which pertains to follow-up, were answered yes. This item is of particular importance when considering an accountability factor; that is, who is

TABLE 4.7
Experiences of PAC Members With
Nonmandated Due Process Procedures

Ques. No.	Question (abbreviated)	Response		% Yes
		Yes	No	
7	Informed someone could attend <u>for</u> you?	18	88	17%
8	Someone attend <u>for</u> you?	1	105	.9%
9	Informed someone could attend <u>with</u> you?	24	82	23%
10	Someone attend <u>with</u> you?	19	87	18%
11	Informed referral needed your signature?	57	49	54%
14	Aware psychological tests may be used?	88	18	83%
15	Informed of right to have all school records?	33	73	31%
16	Did you obtain school records?	12	94	11%
17	Was test information explained prior to EPPC?	38	68	36%
20	Before EPPC, aware of persons or organizations who could assist?	20	85	19%
21	School give you list of persons or organizations?	8	98	7%
31	After EPPC was professional assigned to follow child's progress?	49	57	46%
32	Did you attend EPPC?	80	26	75%
MEAN				32%

responsible to see that the EPPC recommendations are actually carried out. Question seven, which informed parents that someone could attend for them, had 17 percent yes responses. Yet, only one parent, 0.9 percent, had someone actually attend the EPPC for him. It is interesting to note that none of the parents who did not attend the EPPC were informed that someone could attend for them. Questions nine and ten, which pertain to someone attending the EPPC with the parent, present the same response pattern as questions seven and eight. That is, more people answered yes regarding being informed, 23 percent, than those who actually had someone attend with them, 18 percent. Another interesting relationship occurs between questions thirty-two and seventeen--of the twenty-six parents who did not attend the EPPC, twenty-two, 76 percent, did not have test results explained to them prior to the EPPC. (See Table 4.7)

Generally, these due process procedures were not followed by local education agencies and parents were not aware that they could be. However, the inclusion of these procedures into an overall due process scheme would virtually assure "fairness" and make available to parents assistance that could be utilized to help the parent in the EPPC process.

3. What is the relationship between the procedural due process items that occur prior to the EPPC meeting and the parents' attendance at that meeting?

The statistical method of analysis used was multiple regression. The basic task of this method of analysis is an attempt to explain the variance of a dependent variable, in this case attendance or nonattendance at the EPPC. This is accomplished by estimating the contributions to this variance of two or more independent variables, in this case the nine due process items that should have taken place prior to the EPPC.

It is evident from an inspection of the simple r 's in Table 4.8 that only two items, questions eighteen and seventeen, were significant. These two items account for 35 percent of the variance in determining attendance at the EPPC. The remaining five items account for very little of the variance, in fact, after item seventeen, the variance remains fixed. Two items, fourteen and twenty-two, had such small r 's they are not included in the table. Item eighteen, notification of date, time, and place, was the best predictor of attendance; of course, it is readily evident that it should be. If one were to perform an analysis with item eighteen removed, it would appear that the due process items that should have occurred prior to the EPPC are almost unrelated to attendance. In fact, an analysis using the same due process items without item eighteen resulted in item seventeen being the only

TABLE 4.8
Simple and Multiple Correlations of
Due Process Items with Attendance at EPPC

Item (Abbreviated)	Simple r	Multiple r	Variance (r^2)	Significance of r^2
18. Informed of date, time and place?	.55	---	.31	.01
17. Test information explained prior to EPPC?	.33	.59	.35	.01
11. Informed referral needed your signature?	.13	.60	.36	NS
15. Informed of right to have all school records?	.10	.60	.36	NS
9. Informed someone could attend with you?	.05	.60	.36	NS
20. Aware of persons or organi- zations who could assist?	.12	.60	.36	NS
7. Informed someone could attend for you?	.08	.60	.36	NS

significant variable and accounting for only 11 percent of the variance. So, in fact, it would appear that the due process items have little relationship to attendance at the EPPC. (See Table 4.8)

4. What is the relationship between Parent Advisory Committee members' attitude toward the EPPC and their experience with procedural due process?

Prior to describing the statistical analysis of this question, a descriptive summary of the twenty attitude statements is presented. Table 4.9 presents the attitude statements and the frequency of responses and mean score for each statement.

TABLE 4.9
Summation Scale of Attitude Statements

Abbreviated Question	Strongly Agree					Undecided			Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean X	Percent Agreement of (4+5)
	5	4	3	2	1	3	2	1	0					
1. Free to express my opinions. (45)	26	49	3	2	0	3	2	0	4.23	94%				
2. My information as important as other information. (38)	27	42	9	2	0	9	2	0	4.18	86%				
3. I made a contribution during the EPPC. (33)	29	39	8	2	2	8	2	2	4.14	85%				
4. Professionals listened to my opinions. (35)	25	45	6	3	1	6	3	1	4.13	88%				
5. Given a chance to tell my goals for my child. (37)	26	41	8	4	1	8	4	1	4.09	84%				
6. Treated as an equal. (36)	21	42	12	3	2	12	3	2	3.96	79%				
7. Open and honest atmosphere. (39)	17	45	11	6	1	11	6	1	3.89	78%				
8. I felt like part of a team. (41)	15	45	11	6	3	11	6	3	3.79	75%				
9. EPPC valuable process in determining educational program. (50)	22	36	12	3	7	12	3	7	3.79	73%				
10. I had as much influence in the decision as anyone. (43)	18	33	19	6	4	19	6	4	3.69	64%				
11. Professionals seemed well prepared. (44)	14	44	8	11	3	8	11	3	3.69	73%				

Generally, it appears that PAC parents perceive the EPPC as being a valuable and useful process in determining an educational program for their children. The parents also reported that the EPPC process was basically not too complicated and that they did not feel the educational jargon impeded their understanding during the EPPC. Questions forty and forty-six, which both pertain to a decision being made prior to the EPPC, had similar answers; that is, responses on both questions were bi-modal, with most parents either agreeing or disagreeing with the statement, and few actually responding that they were undecided. In essence then, the mean score is somewhat misleading, for approximately 50 percent of the parents did agree that the decision had been made prior to the EPPC.

The parents' attitude toward the professionals can be characterized as positive (items 35 to 37, 39, 41, 44, 45, 48, and 50 to 52). They perceive the professionals as being well prepared for the EPPC and not dominating the conversation at the EPPC. The majority of parents perceive the EPPC as being open and honest, a response that is probably a reflection of the parents' attitude about the professional in the process. Over 80 percent of the parents responding disagreed with question forty-eight, which asks parents if they felt angry after the EPPC. Parents probably answered this question reflecting about the professionals' demeanor during the EPPC.

The large majority of parents felt as though their presence was needed, that they had important information, that they were treated as an equal and that they did make a contribution during the EPPC process. Over 50 percent of the parents agreed with question forty-seven, which asks if the EPPC was businesslike and legalistic. In responding to this question, parents probably were reflecting on their uneasiness with due process procedures. This uneasiness could probably be alleviated if the parents knew what to expect. Some preparation by the parents for the EPPC would probably result in a more positive response to this question.

Generally, the PAC parents are very positive about the EPPC process. They have a positive attitude toward the professionals and expresses favorable attitudes about their role in the EPPC process.

TABLE 4.10
Variance Accounted for by Each Factor

Factor	Percent of Variance	Cumulative Percent
1	67.3	67.3
2	11.6	78.9
3	9.1	88.1
4	7.4	95.5
5	4.5	100.0

The initial step in the analysis of research question four was a factor analysis of the twenty attitude statements, questions 33 to 52. The basic reason for performing a factor analysis was to determine whether the attitude statements were measuring more than one attitude. Five factors were obtained in the analysis. These are presented in Table 4.10.

It is evident that approximately 90 percent of the variance is accounted for in the first three factors. Furthermore, factor one accounted for 67 percent of the variance, a fact that may lead one to believe the attitude statements are univariate; that is, measuring the same phenomenon. Since the first three factors account for approximately 90 percent of the variance, these are the factors used in the regression analysis.

TABLE 4.11
Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix**

Abbreviated Question	Subscale 1	Subscale 2	Subscale 3
33. I made a contribution during the EPPC.	.45*	.13	.02
34. Conversation during EPPC dominated by professionals.	.28	.10	.44*
35. Professionals listened to my opinions.	.14	.74*	-.07
36. Treated as an equal.	.21	.76*	.32*
37. Given a chance to tell my goals for my child.	.22	.53*	.17
38. My information as important as other information.	.18	.13	.11
39. Open and honest atmosphere.	.40*	.75*	-.02
40. Outcome planned in advance.	.62*	.27	.35*
41. I felt like part of a team.	.58*	-.44*	.16
42. I felt my presence was not needed.	.60*	-.02	.35*

*Loadings >.30 selected for inclusion

**Were recorded in same order

Table 4.11 (Continued)

Abbreviated Question	Subscale 1	Subscale 2	Subscale 3
43. I had as much influence in the decision as anyone.	.62*	.20	.07
44. Professionals seemed well prepared.	.14	.66*	.18
45. Free to express my opinions.	.09	-.48*	.06
46. Professionals made decisions prior to the EPPC.	.75*	.21	.31*
47. Businesslike and legalistic.	.00	.00	.07
48. After EPPC, I felt angry.	.41*	.54*	.13
49. EPPC too complicated.	.12	.09	.70*
50. EPPC valuable process in determining	.78*	-.36*	-.20
51. Did not understand educational jargon.	.14	.35*	.40*
52. Generally well pleased with entire process.	.69*	.51*	.26

*Loadings >.30 selected for inclusion

Table 4.11 presents the factor loadings for all attitude statements. Those loadings with a coefficient of greater than .30 were selected for inclusion in each subscale. Subscale one, which contains questions 33, 39 to 43, 46, 48, 50, and 52 appears to be measuring a general attitude of the parent toward the EPPC. The questions which make up this subscale concern themselves with general impressions about the EPPC. The loading in subscale one with the highest coefficient is item fifty (.78) which asked the parents if the EPPC was a valuable process in determining an educational program. This question, along with the others in this subscale, ask the parents to respond generally to the EPPC process. However, there is one item, forty-six, that does not appear to be asking about general impressions. This item asks parents to respond to the statement, "It seemed as if the professionals had made the decision about my child before the EPPC even started." What may have occurred is that in answering item forty-six, parents referred to item forty which asks if it seemed like the outcome of the EPPC was planned in advance. This writer had intended that parents answer item forty from a self-perception viewpoint and item forty-six from their perceptions of the professionals. It appears that this was not the case; in fact, the parents answered both questions from a general, self-reflective position. Further evidence of this is seen in subscale two where the loading for item forty-six is only .21.

Subscale two, which contains questions 35 to 37, 39, 41, 44, 45, 48, and 50 to 52, appears to be measuring the parents' attitudes about the professional in the EPPC process. Of the eleven questions in subscale two, six items (35, 36, 37, 41, 44, and 51) contain direct references to the professional and three items (39, 45, and 48) contain indirect references to professionals. Two items, fifty and fifty-two are also contained in subscale one, and have appreciably higher factor loadings in subscale one (which is measuring the general attitude) than in subscale two. This may be a function of the parents' general attitudes about the EPPC process that is reflected in their attitudes about the professional. However, the eleven items contained in subscale two all have loadings greater than .30 and can be said to be measuring the parents' attitudes about the professionals in the EPPC process.

Subscale three, which contains questions 34, 36, 40, 42, 46, 49, and 51, appears to be measuring how the parents perceive themselves in the EPPC process. Of the seven attitude statements contained in this subscale, four (36, 42, 49, and 51) contain direct references to either "me" or "I", while item 34, although referring to domination of the conversation by the professional, actually was answered by the parents as though the statement referred to the parents' conversation traits during

the EPPC. Two items, forty and forty-six are also contained in subscale one and have appreciably higher factor loadings in subscale one than in subscale three. This may be a function of the parents' perceptions of some preconceived ideas that they hold relative to placement as well as their perceptions of a decision having been made prior to the EPPC. However, the seven attitude statements contained in subscale three all have loadings greater than .30 and can be said to be measuring the parents' self-perceptions in the EPPC process.

The three subscales are:

- Subscale One: General Attitude About the EPPC Process
- Subscale Two: Attitude About Professionals in the EPPC Process
- Subscale Three: Attitude About Self Within the EPPC Process

After the three subscales were identified, they served as the dependent variables in a regression analysis. The independent variables were the due process items that should have occurred prior to, during, or after the EPPC. Consequently, there were three multiple regression analyses performed using due process questions 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22 to 24, 26, and 28 to 31, as the independent variables, and each subscale as the dependent variable. Results are presented in Table 4.12.

TABLE 4.12
Simple and Multiple Correlations of
Due Process Items with the Three Attitude Subscales

Item (Abbreviated)	Simple r Multiple r Variance Sig. of r ² (r ²)		
	FACTOR ONE: GENERAL ATTITUDE		
18. Informed of date, time and place?	.50	---	.25 <.01
17. Test information explained prior to EPPC?	.45	.61	.37 <.01
30. Receive copy of EPPC report?	.43	.64	.41 NS
29. Informed failure to sign?	.13	.65	.42 NS
FACTOR TWO: ATTITUDE ABOUT PROFESSIONAL			
18. Informed of date, time and place?	.51	---	.26 <.01
17. Test information explained prior to EPPC?	.42	.60	.36 <.01
30. Receive copy of EPPC report?	.40	.61	.38 NS
29. Informed failure to sign?	.10	.63	.39 NS
FACTOR THREE: ATTITUDE ABOUT SELF			
18. Informed of date, time and place?	.52	---	.27 <.01
17. Test information explained prior to EPPC?	.49	.64	.41 <.01
30. Receive a copy of EPPC report?	.44	.67	.44 NS
29. Informed failure to sign?	.12	.68	.45 NS

Table 4.12 includes only those questions that had a sample r of .10 or greater. It is evident that four questions, 18, 17, 30, and 29, are the questions (independent variables) that have the highest simple r 's for all three factors. In fact, the rank order for the four questions is the same for all three factors. None of the other questions, for any of the factors, contributed enough to increase the variance (r^2) by more than 1 percent. Consequently, they are not included in Table 4.12. In all three subscales, only two items, numbers eighteen and seventeen, were significant. In all three subscales, item eighteen accounts for approximately 25 percent of the variance. Although the variance accounted for by item eighteen is significant, the question itself is not; for in order for parents to have attitudes about the EPPC, they must attend the EPPC. Consequently, notification becomes a critical factor and its affect on parents' attitudes becomes obvious.

From Table 4.12, it is evident that item seventeen, explanation prior to the EPPC, is also significant. It accounts for an average increase in r^2 of 12 percent. It appears that this item does have some affect on the parents' general attitudes (subscale one), attitudes about the professional (subscale two), and their attitudes about themselves in the EPPC process (subscale three). The significance of this item may be a function of the

personal contact involved in the interpretation of test data rather than a function of the due process continuum itself. No other due process items accounted for a significant increase in the variance.

5. What is the relationship between the mode of communication used to inform the parents about the EPPC and the parents' attitudes of their children's EPPC?

There are three channels of communication that are used to inform parents about the EPPC. These are: (1) phone, (2) mail, or (3) in person.* These channels represent the independent variables. The dependent variables are the three subscales obtained in the factor analyses. These are: (subscale one) general attitude, (subscale two) attitude about professional, and (subscale three) attitude about self. Three 3 X 3 Chi-squares were computed. The three attitude factors were divided into three equal sections representing low, middle, and high scores for each subscale. These sections were obtained by having the lowest and highest total scores for each section serve as the range to be divided into the three equal sections.

*Thirty-one people were notified by phone, twenty-four by mail and twenty-three in person.

TABLE 4.13

Subscale	Chi-Square	df	Sign
1. general attitude	2.66	4	NS
2. attitude about professional	2.09	4	NS
3. attitude about self	10.29	4	NS

It is evident from Table 4.13 that there were no significant results. As measured by the three factors, the channel of communication appears to have little affect on the parents' attitudes about the EPPC.

Summary

The typical Parent Advisory Committee member is white, approximately forty-two years of age, has had some formal education after high school, has one child receiving special education services, and has served on the PAC for approximately twenty months. Generally, parent awareness of what due process procedures should take place is lower than what actually takes place. The due process procedures that are required by Michigan's Rules and Regulations took place approximately 60 percent of the time and about 75 percent of the parents did attend

their child's EPPC meeting. Furthermore, there appears to be little relationship between the due process items that should occur prior to the EPPC and the attendance at the EPPC. Only item seventeen, which asks if test information was explained prior to the EPPC, appears to have had a significant affect on attendance. Generally, the attitudes parents hold about the EPPC have little relationship to due process. After notification (item eighteen) is eliminated, item seventeen again appears to be the critical factor. The significance of item seventeen may be a function of the personal contact between the parent and professional rather than the actual interpretation itself. Finally, there were no significant findings between the channel of communication used to inform parents about the EPPC and their attitudes about the EPPC.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of six parts: (1) a brief review of the study, (2) major findings, (3) discussion, (4) recommendations, (5) implications for future research, and (6) conclusion.

Review of the Study

Recent court litigation, changes in the philosophy of programming in special education, and Michigan's Mandatory Special Education Act (Public Act 198) have all contributed to an expanded role for parents of handicapped children. This new role's main focus has been the active involvement of parents in their children's educational programs. Parents of special education children in Michigan have a unique opportunity to participate in, and have an influence on, the educational programs for their children. This opportunity takes place at the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting (EPPC) which is mandated to: (1) evaluate all information on a given student and determine if the student is eligible to receive special education services, (2) to

review all educational options, and (3) to formulate and record instructional goals. Furthermore, prior to the EPPC, a series of procedural due process safeguards should be followed by the local education agency to assure parents of their rights to be informed of, and involved in, the EPPC process. Consequently, this study's fundamental purpose was to investigate how the EPPC process is currently operating in Michigan.

The target population used for this study was the Parent Advisory Committee members (PAC's) from the fifty-eight intermediate school districts. These committees, mandated by Public Act 198, are composed of parents of handicapped children from within the intermediate school district. A stratified random sample consisting of fifteen intermediate school districts was drawn from the target population. The PAC's selected for participation in the study had a committee membership of 168 parents. Data was collected from 106 parents which represented a response rate of approximately 66 percent. To obtain the necessary information, a questionnaire was developed to: (1) gather some basic demographic data concerning the composition of the PAC, (2) gather factual data pertaining to individual parent experiences with the EPPC process, and (3) study parental attitudes regarding the EPPC.

Descriptive statistics were used in analyzing both the demographic characteristics of PAC members and their experiences with due process. A multiple regression analysis was used to: (1) determine if there was a relationship between any of the due process procedures that should occur prior to the EPPC and attendance at that meeting, and (2) what the relative contributions of these due process items were to attendance. The attitude of the parents concerning the EPPC, which is represented by the twenty attitude statements, was subjected to a factor analysis to determine whether there was more than one attitude that was being measured. A regression analysis was then performed on these attitude factors to determine if there was a relationship between the occurrence of due process and the attitudes the parents held concerning the EPPC. A Chi-Square was used to test the relationship between the mode of communication used to inform parents of the EPPC and their attitudes about the EPPC.

Major Findings

1. Over 75 percent of the parents on the PAC's were between thirty and forty-nine years of age.
2. Approximately 96 percent of the parents were white

3. Ninety-eight percent of the parents reported having high school degrees and 36 percent reported having college degrees.
4. Most of the PAC parents (87 percent) said they were informed of the date, time, and place of the EPPC. Approximately 75 percent of the parents surveyed did attend their child's EPPC and 82 percent said they did sign a form agreeing to the placement of their child in a special education program.
5. Only 20 percent of the parents said they were informed that their failure to sign the EPPC report within seven days signified their acceptance of the recommended placement and only 62 percent said they received copies of the EPPC report.
6. Parents reported that 60 percent of the due process items required by Michigan's Rules and Regulations actually took place; whereas, they reported that 32 percent of the due process items that could have occurred, but are not mandated, occurred.
7. The vast majority of parents, 85 percent, perceived that they made a contribution to the EPPC process, 84 percent said they were given a chance to tell their goals, and 94 percent said that they were generally free to express their opinions during the EPPC.
8. Fifty-nine percent of the parents perceived the professionals as being well-prepared, 74 percent said they listened rather than dominated the EPPC conversation, and 79 percent reported being treated as equals.
9. Regarding the preplanning of the EPPC, parent responses were almost equally split between the extremes, with few parents actually responding "undecided".
10. Ninety-one percent of the parents felt that the educational jargon used during the EPPC was not too complex for them to understand.
11. Seventy-seven percent of the parents felt as if they were needed at the EPPC.

12. Seventy-three percent of the parents reported that the EPPC was valuable and that they were generally pleased with the entire process.
13. There were no significant relationships between the due process procedures that should occur prior to the EPPC and the parents' attendance at that meeting.
14. There were no significant relationships between the due process procedures and the parents' attitudes about the EPPC.
15. There was no significant difference between the mode of communication used to inform parents about the EPPC and their attitudes about the EPPC.

Conclusions

1. Generally, school districts tend to adhere to those portions of due process which are mandated by law.
2. Generally, school districts do not carry out due process procedures which are not mandated by law.
3. Parents have positive attitudes regarding the EPPC process.
4. Parents have positive attitudes regarding their role in the EPPC.
5. Generally, parents have positive attitudes regarding the professionals in the EPPC process.

Discussion

It is important to realize that the parents surveyed in this study are probably not representative of parents of special education children from around the state. Furthermore, it is important to realize that these parents

are probably more articulate, represent a higher socioeconomic status, and in general, become more involved in school affairs than most parents of special education children. These factors were considered of vital importance because they permitted a greater degree of sophistication in the questionnaire and probably resulted in a greater degree of accuracy in the responses to the questionnaire. Thus, the unique aspects about the population should be kept in mind when analyzing the results of this study.

One of the initial assumptions about the PAC groups was that they would be more highly educated than the general special education parent population. This did prove to be true when compared to the general population of Michigan - both of these percentages are relatively high. The sample contained a smaller percentage of minority parents than one would expect when one considers the number of minority children being served. This may be accounted for by the lack of large urban PAC's in the sample. If Macomb, Oakland, Wayne, or other large urban centers had been selected for the study, the minority population would probably have been greater. Generally, most parents remain on the PAC for two years. This lends some stability to the PAC and probably gives new members an opportunity to become assimilated into the group and time to sort out role definitions for themselves

in relation to their duties and responsibilities as PAC members. Generally, one could say that the Parent Advisory Committees are stable bodies, populated with highly educated parents.

The majority of parents, 60 percent, reported that those due process procedures that were mandated did take place. However, one might expect that those procedures would have taken place with much higher frequency. Assuming the procedures did occur with greater frequency, and the parents did not recall the specific event, it should be the local education agency's responsibility to impress upon the parents the vital nature of the EPPC process. For instance, only 20 percent of the parents reported being told that failure to signify their acceptance of the EPPC decision within seven days of the date of receipt of the EPPC report results in automatic placement. This writer would suspect that many more than 20 percent of the parents were informed about this, but did not realize what it meant. It then becomes the local education agency's responsibility to help parents through the process.

Of particular significance was the fact that nearly 90 percent of the parents reported being notified of the EPPC and that 75 percent of the parents actually attended their children's EPPC's. Although there appears to be little relationship between the occurrence of due process

and attendance at the EPPC, it is not to be inferred from this that those due process procedures should not be carried out, for they are an integral part of the entire EPPC process.

Those items that were identified by this writer as being a part of "fairness of procedure" but not mandated took place approximately 32 percent of the time. It is extremely important to realize that some of those items, such as access to educational records and parent consent before testing, will probably be required by rules and regulations put forth by the U.S. Office of Education, which will need to be incorporated into Michigan's procedures. The low percentage of parents who responded positively to these due process items obviously related to the fact that these procedures are not mandated. However, these items become very important when considering that fairness of procedure is probably the key to a just, equitable EPPC process.

Generally, the parents perceived the EPPC as being a valuable process as well as one that was open and honest. They also perceived the professionals in a positive manner; that is, they felt that the professionals were well-prepared, that they listened to what the parents had to say, and that they were treated as equals in the EPPC process. Furthermore, the parents felt that neither the EPPC process nor the educational jargon used was too complex.

Generally, the parents perceived the EPPC as a positive, worthwhile experience. It would appear that the EPPC is a viable, workable tool and that parents do perceive it as being an integral part in the educational development of their children. Probably one of the more significant reasons for this positive attitude is the lack of specificity within the rules and regulations concerning the EPPC itself. As a result of this absence of rules, local education agencies probably individualize the EPPC's to fit the needs of the parent population whom they are serving.

There appears to be little relationship between the occurrence of due process and the parents' attitudes about the EPPC as well as little relationship to the mode of communication used to inform parents and their attitudes about the EPPC. These findings are not surprising. It appears that the EPPC tends to be such a dynamic, self-centered process that whatever takes place or fails to take place prior to the EPPC has little affect on the EPPC itself. In fact, the parents' attitudes about the EPPC are probably directly related to the professionals' attitudes, for it is the professional's responsibility to create an atmosphere free of hostility and tension.

Recommendations

Based upon the information reported in this study, current national trends, and recent court litigation, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. That the State Department of Education should establish a series of due process forms that would meet the requirements of Michigan's Rules and Regulations and the regulations developed by the U.S. Office of Education. These forms should encompass the "fairness of procedures" doctrine and establish a sequential procedure that would involve parents in all steps leading to the EPPC. Furthermore, these forms should be made mandatory, thus providing an accountable measure for both the parents and local education agencies. However, the local education agencies should retain the option to add other forms of their choice, but the information on the mandated forms should not be altered in any manner.
2. That the State Department of Education develop a pamphlet that would explain the role of the state, intermediate, and local education agency as well as parents' rights and responsibilities in the EPPC process. Furthermore, this pamphlet should describe the due process procedures that the local education agency is responsible for carrying out. This pamphlet should be distributed to all local education agencies and given to parents prior to the EPPC.
3. That in-service workshops for directors and supervisors of special education be held around the state prior to any use of state-wide forms described above.
4. That the State Department of Education clarify:
 - (a) the role and function of the various personnel present at the EPPC, and (b) what should occur at the EPPC.
5. That four new rules be added to the existing rules and regulations. These are:
 - aa Parents should be given test information prior to the EPPC with the understanding that if they so desire, the test information would be explained to them by personnel from the local education agency.

- b. Parents should be informed that someone could attend the EPPC for them or with them.
- c. Prior to the EPPC, parents should be provided with a list of persons or organizations within the intermediate school district who could be of assistance to them.
- d. A person from the local education agency should be made responsible for overseeing that the recommendations made during the EPPC are carried out.

Implications for Future Research

Additional research appears to be necessary in the following areas:

- 1. A study is needed to determine the degree of accuracy and agreement between administrators and parents over adherence to due process.
- 2. A study is needed to determine the degree of expertise that special education directors and supervisors have concerning Michigan's due process procedures.
- 3. A study is needed to determine the communication patterns in the EPPC.
- 4. A study similar to this one, but using a more heterogeneous population, is needed to determine if similar results would be attained.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Rules 22-24 of the Special Education Code

R 340.1722. Educational placement.

Rule 22. (1) The superintendent of the operating school district is responsible for making a change in the educational status of a handicapped person except where section 340.298c or 340.613 of the Michigan Compiled Laws are applicable in which case the superintendent of the intermediate district is responsible. Notwithstanding any additional proceedings set forth in the intermediate school district plan for special education programs and services, as defined in part 7, the superintendent, as a minimum, shall:

- (a)** Appoint an educational planning and placement committee.
- (b)** Request, in writing, parents on a case by case basis to participate as members of the committee in developing a recommendation concerning a change in the educational status of their handicapped offspring. Prior to the educational planning and placement committee meeting, all school records concerning the person suspected of being handicapped shall be made available to the parents upon request.
- (c)** Direct the committee to convene and recommend not later than 25 school days after receipt of the referral for possible special education services, regular and special education programs and services, according to the educational, social and physical needs of the individual handicapped persons, based on all diagnostic and other evaluative information requested by the committee or provided by the parent or handicapped persons. The time limits in this rule may be extended by the state board of education upon demonstration of just cause in writing.
- (d)** Direct a review at least annually of the programs and services provided each handicapped person and advise the superintendent of the district of residence and the parents of the handicapped person of the findings of that review.
- (e)** Place immediately, upon written consent of the parents, a handicapped person in an appropriate special education program or service for a period not to exceed 25 school days during which time an evaluation shall be made and an educational planning and placement committee convened to make recommendations, if the person has been enrolled in a special education program in another school district, institutional program, or other appropriate program for handicapped persons, and evidence is presented that demonstrates reasonable cause to believe the person is eligible for a special education program or service. If parental consent is not obtained, an educational planning and placement committee shall be convened and its development of a recommendation shall be expedited, giving the case precedence over all other cases except previous cases also being expedited under this provision.
- (f)** Initiate special education programs and services, as recommended by the educational planning and placement committee or based on the decision of the hearing officer, in not less than 5 or more than 15 school days after the parents have been notified.

(2) Any time limitation in this rule shall be construed and applied so as to do substantial justice and may be varied upon approval of the state board of education for good cause shown.

R 340.1723. Notice to parents.

Rule 23. (1) Before effectuation of an educational placement, denial of placement or a change in educational status of a handicapped person, the superintendent of the intermediate school district or local school district within 10 calendar days from the date of recommendation of the educational planning and placement committee shall notify the parent personally in conference or by certified mail, concerning the placement or change in educational status. Notification shall:

(a) Describe the proposed action, including specification of the statute or rule under which action is proposed and a statement of the reasons therefor, including specification of any tests or reports upon which the action is based.

(b) Advise the parent of all options of education opportunities available to the handicapped person.

(c) Inform the parent of his right to contest the proposed action at a hearing, as described in rule 24, before the superintendent of the intermediate school district or local district.

(d) Inform the parent that, after the intermediate school district or local district hearing and lacking a decision satisfactory to the parent, he may be heard by the state board of education, or its designee, at a time and place specified by the state board of education, or its designee, and reasonably convenient to the parent.

(e) Inform the parent of the availability of organizations, their addresses, and telephone numbers, to assist the parent at the hearing.

(f) Specify the following procedures for requesting a hearing:

(i) If notice is given at a conference with the parent, the parent may indicate satisfaction with the recommendation, and, in writing, may waive the opportunity for a hearing.

(ii) If notice is given by the superintendent by certified mail, the parent desiring a hearing shall complete the form provided at the conference and mail it to the superintendent within 7 calendar days of the date of receipt of notice. Change in education assignment shall not be made during this period.

(iii) If dissatisfied, the parent may request a hearing in writing, on a form provided at the conference, within 7 calendar days of the conference. Change in educational assignment shall not be made during this period.

(2) The appeal procedure may be terminated at any point upon receipt of a written statement from the parent that the concerns have been resolved and that continuation of the appeal procedure serves no further purpose.

(3) Any time limitation in this rule shall be construed and applied so as to do substantial justice and may be varied upon approval of the state board of education for good cause shown.

R 340.1724. Hearing.

Rule 24. (1) A hearing concerning a contested case by a parent of a proposed educational placement or change in the educational status of a handicapped person shall be conducted as follows:

(a) A hearing shall be scheduled not less than 15 or more than 30 calendar days following receipt of the request from a parent. However, upon good cause shown, reasonable extensions of time shall be granted by the state board of education, or its designee, upon request of the parent or school official.

(b) The hearing shall be held in the local district at a place and time mutually convenient for the parent of the handicapped person or his representative and appropriate school officials.

(c) The superintendent of the intermediate school district or the constituent district shall designate the hearing officer. The hearing officer shall not be an employee of the involved local school district, of another local district within the same intermediate school district, or of the intermediate school district of which the involved local district is a part.

(d) The hearing, upon request of the parent, shall be closed to the public.

(e) A stenographic or other transcribed record of the hearing shall be made and 1 copy shall be given to the parent or his representative. Any cost beyond the original transcription cost may be borne by the requesting parties. The record may be discarded after 3 years.

(f) The parent of a handicapped person may be represented at the hearing by any person of his choosing. The parent or his representative shall:

(i) Have access, prior to the hearing, to all records of the intermediate school district or local district concerning the handicapped person.

(ii) Have the right to compel the attendance of, and to question, any witness testifying for the intermediate school district or local district and any official, employee or agent of the intermediate school district or local district who may have evidence upon which the proposed action may be based.

(iii) Have the right to present evidence and expert medical, psychological or educational testimony and other pertinent information.

(g) The decision of the hearing officer shall be based solely upon evidence presented at the hearing. Not later than 20 calendar days after the hearing, the hearing officer shall render a decision determining the educational placement or educational status of the handicapped person. The decision shall be in writing and shall be accompanied by written findings of fact and conclusions of law and shall be sent by certified mail to the parent, his representative, and the school district superintendent.

(2) A temporary change in educational status of the handicapped person may be made for the period prior to the decision of the hearing officer upon written consent of the parent. If consent is not obtained, written request for a temporary change may be made to the state board of education by the superintendent of the intermediate school district or local district. The state board of education shall take action in writing within 10 calendar days of receipt of the request setting forth the reasons therefor and upon notice to the parent. If a request is granted by the state board of education, the hearing as set forth in subrule (1) shall be held within the time limits stated therein.

(3) Any time limitation in this rule shall be construed and applied so as to do substantial justice and may be varied upon approval of the state board of education for good cause shown.

APPENDIX B

Rules 133, 135, and 136 of the Special Education Code

R 340.1833. Cooperative development.

Rule 133. Intermediate school district plans, or any modification thereof, shall be developed in cooperation with local school districts. Further, all plans or any modification thereof shall be developed in cooperation with a parent advisory committee consisting of at least 1 parent of a handicapped person from each local school district. The parent members shall be nominated by their local boards of education and shall serve terms as specified in the intermediate school district plan. The intermediate board of education shall make every attempt to assure that all types of handicaps and disabilities are represented on the parent advisory committee and shall recommend operational procedures for committee review and adoption. All plans will be reviewed in whole or in part at least quarterly each fiscal year with the representatives of each local school district and the parent advisory committee.

R 340.1835. Plan signature.

Rule 135. Each intermediate school district plan or joint plan shall be signed by all of the following:

- (a) The intermediate school district superintendent signifying approval by the intermediate school district board.
- (b) The superintendent of each constituent school district signifying that his school district has been involved in the development of the plan.
- (c) The chairperson of the parent advisory committee signifying the committee has been involved in the development of the plan.

R 340.1836. Objections to plan.

Rule 136. At the time the intermediate school district plan, or modification thereof, is submitted to the department, any constituent school district or the parent advisory committee may file objections to the plan in whole or in part. Copies of the objections to the plan shall be directed to the intermediate board of education, all constituent school districts and the parent advisory committee. Objections filed shall note the specific portions of the plan objected to, contain a specific statement of the reasons for objection and may propose alternative provisions.

APPENDIX C
Pilot Study

Dear PAC member,

The following questionnaire is an attempt to find out how the Educational Planning and Placement Committee (EPPC) process is currently operating in Michigan. The questions are divided into three sections. Section One has questions designed to find out some information about you. Section Two concerns your awareness of "due process". Not all of the questions in this section are mandated by the Rules and Regulations, but rather they are interpretations of what due process procedure could be. Section Three is a series of statements designed to see how you feel about the EPPC.

The results of the survey will be completely anonymous. All results will be scored with NO reference to any particular intermediate school district, rather they will reflect the attitudes and experiences of PAC members from around the State.

This information will be made available to the State Department of Education, and, if warranted, it is hoped that some changes can be made that will benefit parents in meeting the needs of their handicapped children.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Please follow the instructions preceding each section in the questionnaire. Those of you who have attended more than one EPPC are asked to respond on the basis of the last EPPC you attended for your child.

Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Don R. Barbacovi
Doctoral Candidate
Special Education Department
Michigan State University

PERCEPTIONS OF THE
EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND PLACEMENT COMMITTEE PROCESS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION ONE:

Questions one to six are designed to find out some basic information about Parent Advisory Committees. These questions are of a personal nature; you may choose not to answer a particular question. When answering, check only one response.

(1) My age is:

(a) 21-29 (b) 30-39 (c) 40-49 (d) 50-59 (e) 60 or over

(2) Indicate your ethnic group:

(a) Black (b) Spanish speaking (c) White (d) Other

(3) The highest grade or level I have reached in school is:

(a) some elementary or finished elementary (e) received Bachelor's degree
(b) some high school (f) received Master's degree
(c) finished high school (received diploma) (g) received Doctorate
(d) some college, technical, or special
 training after high school

(4) How long have you been a member of the Parent Advisory Committee:

(a) 0 to 5 months (b) 6 to 11 months (c) 12 to 17 months
(d) 18 to 23 months (e) 24 months or more

- (5) What type of handicap does your child have?
(If more than one of your children is handicapped, check the disability of your oldest child.)
- (a) ___ Educable Mentally Impaired
- (b) ___ Trainable Mentally Impaired
- (c) ___ Severely Mentally Impaired
- (d) ___ Severely Multiply Impaired
- (e) ___ Learning Disabled
- (f) ___ Emotionally Impaired
- (g) ___ Hearing Impaired
- (h) ___ Visually Impaired
- (i) ___ Physically or Otherwise Health Impaired
- (j) ___ Speech and Language Impaired
- (6) How many children do you have now receiving a special education program or service?
- (a) ___ One
- (b) ___ Two
- (c) ___ Three
- (d) ___ Four or more
- Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?
- YES NO
- Do you think the question is appropriate?
- YES NO
- Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?
- YES NO
- Do you think the question is appropriate?
- YES NO

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION TWO:

The questions in this section are asking you to recall some specific items about your child's Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting (hereafter referred to as EPPC). Read each statement and react to that statement, circling the appropriate response. If you can not recall what happened, circle the "?".

(7) Prior to the EPPC, were you informed by school personnel that a friend, lawyer, minister, neighbor, etc., could attend the EPPC <u>FOR</u> you?	YES NO "	(7) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	YES NO	Do you think the question is appropriate?	YES NO
(8) Did someone attend the EPPC <u>FOR</u> you?	YES NO "	(8)	YES NO		YES NO
(9) Prior to the EPPC, were you informed by school personnel that a friend, lawyer, minister, neighbor, etc., could attend the EPPC <u>WITH</u> you?	YES NO "	(9)	YES NO		YES NO
(10) Did someone attend the EPPC <u>WITH</u> you?	YES NO "	(10)	YES NO		YES NO

	(11) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	Do you think the question is appropriate?
(11) Prior to the EPPC, were you informed by school personnel that a form requesting special education services (referral) needed your signature? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(12) Did you sign a form requesting special education services (referral)? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(13) Was the information on that form (referral) filled out by school personnel before you signed it? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(14) Prior to the EPPC, were you aware that school personnel may be using psychological tests on your child? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(15) Prior to the EPPC, were you informed by school personnel of your right to have <u>all</u> school records concerning your child available to you? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO

(16) Did you obtain your child's school records before the EPPC?	(16) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	Do you think the question is appropriate?
YES NO "?" YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(17) Was the test information presented at the EPPC explained to you by school personnel prior to the EPPC? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(18) Did school personnel inform you of the date, time, and place of your child's EPPC? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(19) If you answered yes to question "18", how were you informed? (Circle the correct response.) YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(20) Prior to the EPPC, were you aware that the school should give you a list of persons or organizations who could assist you at that meeting? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO



(21) Did the school give you a list of persons or organizations prior to the EPPC?	(21) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	(21) Do you think the question is appropriate?
YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(22) Prior to the EPPC, were you informed by school personnel that one of the purposes of that meeting was to determine if your child was eligible for a special education program or service? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(23) Were you informed by school personnel of your right to contest the decision of the EPPC? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(24) During the EPPC, were you aware that more than one placement alternative should be considered for your child? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(25) Was there more than one placement alternative discussed for your child during the EPPC? YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO

(26) During the EPPC, were you aware that the committee should develop and write down some educational goals for your child?	(26) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	(26) Do you think the question is appropriate?
YES NO "?"	YES NO	YES NO
(27) Did the committee develop and write down some educational goals for your child?	(27) YES NO	YES NO
YES NO "?"		
(28) After the EPPC, did you sign a form (or the EPPC report) agreeing to the placement of your child in a special education program or service?	(28) YES NO	YES NO
(29) Were you informed by school personnel, that your failure to sign the EPPC report within seven days from the meeting, signified your acceptance of the decision?	(29) YES NO	YES NO
YES NO "?"		
(30) Did you receive a copy of the EPPC report?	(30) YES NO	YES NO
YES NO "?"		

(31)	At the conclusion of the EPPC, was a professional from the school assigned to follow your child's progress?	(31)	Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	Do you think the question is appropriate?
	YES NO "?"		YES NO	YES NO
(32)	Did you attend your child's EPPC meeting?	(32)	YES NO	YES NO
	YES NO "?"			

NOTE: If you answered NO to question "32", do not answer the remaining questions. Thank you for your time and assistance.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION THREE:

Remaining are a series of statements to assess your attitudes toward the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting. Read and react to each statement circling the response which most closely expresses your feelings during your child's EPPC. You have a choice of five responses to each statement. They are: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree Please circle only one response.

(33)	During the EPPC, I felt as though I made a contribution in the decision making process.	(33)	Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	Do you think the question is appropriate?
	SA A U D SD		YES NO	YES NO

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

(34) The conversation during the EPPC was dominated by the professionals. SA A U D SD	(34) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly? YES NO	Do you think the question is appropriate? YES NO
(35) The professionals listened to my opinions about my child. SA A U D SD	(35) YES NO	YES NO
(36) During the EPPC, I felt as though the school personnel treated me as an equal. SA A U D SD	(36) YES NO	YES NO
(37) During the EPPC, I was given the chance to tell my goals for my child. SA A U D SD	(37) YES NO	YES NO
(38) I feel the information I gave at the EPPC was as important as the information given by others. SA A U D SD	(38) YES NO	YES NO

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

(49) The EPPC process was too complicated for me to understand.	(49) Is the meaning of the question stated clearly?	Do you think the question is appropriate?
SA A U D SD	YES NO	YES NO
(50) The EPPC was a valuable process in determining my child's educational program.	(50) YES NO	YES NO
SA A U D SD	YES NO	YES NO
(51) I did not understand the educational jargon used by the professionals.	(51) YES NO	YES NO
SA A U D SD	YES NO	YES NO
(52) Generally, I was well pleased with the entire EPPC process.	(52) YES NO	YES NO
SA A U D SD	YES NO	YES NO

You have now completed the questionnaire. Thank you for your time and assistance.

- (1) Do you think the questionnaire is too long?
- (2) Can you identify some important questions that are missing?
- (3) What is your overall impression of the questionnaire?
- (4) What additional changes can you recommend to improve on the quality of the questionnaire?

APPENDIX D

Perceptions of the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Process

Dear PAC member

The following questionnaire is an attempt to find out how the Educational Planning and Placement Committee (E.P.P.C.) process is currently operating in Michigan. The questions are divided into three sections. Section One has questions designed to find out some information about you. Section Two concerns your awareness of "due process". Not all of the questions in this section are mandated by the Rules and Regulations, but rather they are interpretations of what due process procedure could be. Section Three is a series of statements designed to see how you feel about the E.P.P.C.

The results of the survey will be completely anonymous. All results will be scored with NO reference to any particular intermediate school district, rather they will reflect the attitudes and experiences of PAC members from around the State.

This information will be made available to the State Department of Education, and, if warranted, it is hoped that some changes can be made that will benefit parents in meeting the needs of their handicapped children.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Please follow the instructions preceding each section in the questionnaire. Those of you who have attended more than one E.P.P.C. are asked to respond on the basis of the last E.P.P.C. you attended for your child.

Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Don R. Barbacovi

Don R. Barbacovi
Doctoral Candidate
Special Education Department
Michigan State University

PERCEPTIONS OF THE
EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND PLACEMENT COMMITTEE PROCESS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION ONE:

Questions one to six are designed to find out some basic information about Parent Advisory Committees. These questions are of a personal nature; you may choose not to answer a particular question. When answering, check only one response.

(1) My age is:

(a) _____ 21-29

(d) _____ 50-59

(b) _____ 30-39

(e) _____ 60 or over

(c) _____ 40-49

(2) Indicate your ethnic group:

(a) _____ Black

(c) _____ White

(b) _____ Spanish speaking

(d) _____ Other

(3) The highest grade or level I have reached in school is:

(a) _____ some elementary or finished elementary

(b) _____ some high school

(c) _____ finished high school (received diploma)

(d) _____ some college, technical, or special training
after high school

(e) _____ received Bachelor's degree

(f) _____ received Master's degree

(g) _____ received Doctorate

- (a) _____ 0 to 5 months (d) _____ 18 to 23 months
(b) _____ 6 to 11 months (e) _____ 24 months or more
(c) _____ 12 to 17 months

- (5) What type of handicap does your child have? (If more than one of your children is handicapped, check the disability of your oldest child.)

- (a) _____ Educable Mentally Impaired
- (b) _____ Trainable Mentally Impaired
- (c) _____ Severely Mentally Impaired
- (d) _____ Severely Multiply Impaired
- (e) _____ Learning Disabled
- (f) _____ Emotionally Impaired
- (g) _____ Hearing Impaired
- (h) _____ Visually Impaired
- (i) _____ Physically or Otherwise Health Impaired
- (j) _____ Speech and Language Impaired

- (6) How many children do you have now receiving a special education program or service?

- (a) Zero (d) Three
(b) One (e) Four or more
(c) Two

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION TWO:

The questions in this section are asking you to recall some specific items about your child's Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting (hereafter referred to as E.P.P.C.). Read each statement and react to that statement, circling the appropriate response. If you can not recall what happened, circle the "?".

- (7) Prior to the E.P.P.C., were you informed by school personnel that a friend, lawyer, minister, neighbor, etc., could attend the E.P.P.C. FOR you?

YES

NO

"

- (8) Did someone attend the E.P.P.C. FOR you?

YES

NO

"

- (9) Prior to the E.P.P.C., were you informed by school personnel that a friend, lawyer, minister, neighbor, etc., could attend the E.P.P.C. WITH you?

YES

NO

"

- (10) Did someone attend the E.P.P.C. WITH you?

YES

NO

"

- (11) Prior to the E.P.P.C., were you informed by school personnel that a form requesting special education services (referral) needed your signature?

YES

NO

"

- (12) Did you sign a form requesting special education services (referral)?

YES

NO

"

- (13) Was the information on that form (referral) filled out by school personnel before you signed it?

YES

NO

"?"

- (14) Prior to the E.P.P.C., were you aware that school personnel may be using psychological tests on your child?

YES

NO

"?"

- (15) Prior to the E.P.P.C., were you informed by school personnel of your right to have all school records concerning your child available to you?

YES

NO

"?"

- (16) Did you obtain your child's school records before the E.P.P.C.?

YES

NO

"?"

- (17) Was the test information presented at the E.P.P.C. explained to you by school personnel prior to the E.P.P.C.?

YES

NO

"?"

- (18) Did school personnel inform you of the date, time, and place of your child's E.P.P.C.?

YES

NO

"?"

- (19) If you answered yes to question "18", how were you informed?
(Circle the correct response.)

(a) By phone

(b) By mail

(c) In person

- (20) Prior to the E.P.P.C., were you aware that the school should give you a list of persons or organizations who could assist you at that meeting?

YES

NO

"?"

- (21) Did the school give you a list of persons or organizations prior to the E.P.P.C.?

YES

NO

"?"

- (22) Prior to the E.P.P.C., were you informed by school personnel that one of the purposes of that meeting was to determine if your child was eligible for a special education program or service?

YES

NO

"?"

- (23) Were you informed by school personnel of your right to contest the decision of the E.P.P.C.?

YES

NO

"?"

- (24) During the E.P.P.C., were you aware that more than one placement alternative should be considered for your child?

YES

NO

"?"

- (25) Was there more than one placement alternative discussed for your child during the E.P.P.C.?

YES

NO

"?"

- (26) During the E.P.P.C., were you aware that the committee should develop and write down some educational goals for your child?

YES

NO

"?"

- (27) Did the committee develop and write down some educational goals for your child?

YES

NO

"?"

- (28) After the E.P.P.C., did you sign a form (or the E.P.P.C. report) agreeing to the placement of your child in a special education program or service?

YES

NO

"?"

- (29) Were you informed by school personnel, that your failure to sign the E.P.P.C. report within seven days from the meeting, signified your acceptance of the decision?

YES

NO

"?"

- (30) Did you receive a copy of the E.P.P.C. report?

YES

NO

"?"

- (31) At the conclusion of the E.P.P.C., was a professional from the school assigned to follow your child's progress?

YES

NO

"?"

- (32) Did you attend your child's E.P.P.C. meeting?

YES

NO

"?"

Note: If you answered NO to question "32", do not answer the remaining questions. Thank you for your time and assistance.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTION THREE:

Remaining are a series of statements to assess your attitudes toward the Educational Planning and Placement Committee Meeting. Read and react to each statement circling the response which most closely expresses your feelings during your child's E.P.P.C. You have a choice of five responses to each statement. They are: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree. Please circle only one response.

- (33) During the E.P.P.C., I felt as though I made a contribution in the decision making process.

SA

A

U

D

SD

- (34) The conversation during the E.P.P.C. was dominated by the professionals.

SA

A

U

D

SD

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

- (35) The professionals listened to my opinions about my child.

SA A U D SD

- (36) During the E.P.P.C., I felt as though the school personnel treated me as an equal.

SA A U D SD

- (37) During the E.P.P.C., I felt as though the school personnel treated me as an equal.

SA A U D SD

- (38) I feel the information I gave at the E.P.P.C. was as important as the information given by others.

SA A U D SD

- (39) There seemed to be an open and honest atmosphere during the E.P.P.C.

SA A U D SD

- (40) It seemed like the outcome of the E.P.P.C. was planned in advance.

SA A U D SD

- (41) During the E.P.P.C., I felt as though I were part of a team working to help my child.

SA A U D SD

- (42) For some reason, during the E.P.P.C., I often felt my presence was not needed.

SA A U D SD

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

- (43) I had as much influence in the decision about my child as anyone at the E.P.P.C.

SA A U D SD

- (44) The professionals seemed to be well prepared.

SA A U D SD

- (45) During the E.P.P.C., I felt free to express my opinions about my child.

SA A U D SD

- (46) It seemed as if the professionals had made the decision about my child before the E.P.P.C. even started.

SA A U D SD

- (47) The E.P.P.C. meeting was very businesslike and legalistic.

SA A U D SD

- (48) For some reason, I came out of the E.P.P.C. feeling angry.

SA A U D SD

- (49) The E.P.P.C. process was too complicated for me to understand.

SA A U D SD

- (50) The E.P.P.C. was a valuable process in determining my child's educational program.

SA A U D SD

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

(51) I did not understand the educational jargon used by the professionals.

SA A U D SD

(52) Generally, I was well pleased with the entire E.P.P.C. process.

SA A U D SD

You have now completed the questionnaire. Thank you for your time and assistance.

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