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MEETING FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS IN MICHIGAN.**

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THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CERTAIN
IDENTIFIED VARIABLES AND PARENTAL
PARTICIPATION DURING THE EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING AND PLACEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS IN MICHIGAN

By

William John Pistono

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CERTAIN IDENTIFIED VARIABLES AND PARENTAL PARTICIPATION DURING THE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND PLACEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING FOR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS IN MICHIGAN

By

William John Pistono

Litigation and legislation at the state and federal level have given parents the right to be involved in their handicapped children's education. The inclusion of parents in the planning of their children's educational programs is necessary, not only because of the legal mandate, but because of the resulting educational benefits derived for those handicapped children. Parents are a valuable source of diagnostic information needed for developing comprehensive educational programs. They are also a critical component necessary for successful program implementation. Parents must support and help implement educational programs for their children to ensure optimal success.

The educational planning and placement committee (EPPC) is the vehicle used in Michigan to determine eligibility for special education services, for recommending appropriate programming and for planning

educational goals for those programs. The Administrative Rules of the Mandatory Special Education Act (P.A. 198) mandate that parents be invited to attend EPPC meetings (Rule 22). Parents should not only be invited, but should be encouraged to be fully participating members of the educational planning and placement committee. In order for administrators to successfully help parents become fully participating members of the EPPC, they must be aware of any factors which might affect the amount of parental participation at EPPCs. Nine variables were selected which may have significant relationships with parental participation. For purposes of this study, parental participation was determined by measuring the frequency and duration of parent responses as well as the parents' perception of their contribution to the decisions made during the EPPC. The latter was obtained by administering a questionnaire to parents at the close of the meeting.

The nine independent variables selected for the study were:

1. Group size
2. The type of procedure used to explain the EPPC's purpose and process to parents. These are:
 - (a) prior explanation either orally or in writing
 - (b) explanation at the EPPC
3. A prior review by parents of their child's

records and other pertinent information

4. A prior explanation to parents of test results
5. The educational level of parents
6. Previous EPPC experience by parents
7. The number of parents attending the EPPC
8. The attitude of professionals attending the EPPC regarding the ability of parents to contribute to the EPPC.
9. The amount of nervous discomfort experienced by the parents during the EPPC.

The procedures used to obtain the data necessary for analyses were actual observations of thirty EPPCs from five local districts within the Ingham Intermediate School District. During these EPPCs, the data were collected by observation, professional and parental questionnaires, and recording the frequency and duration of parental responses.

Hypotheses were written for each of the nine independent variables and parental participation during EPPCs. Each hypothesis was tested for significance using the Chi Square Test for Independence. Where a significant level was found, the Phi Coefficient was used to measure the extent of the relationship.

Major Findings of the Study

The analyses of the data indicate significant relationships between the following variables:

1. There was a positive relationship between the educational level of parents attending EPPCs and the frequency of their responses which was significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient measured the extent of that relationship at .40.
2. The frequency of responses was significantly greater for parents during EPPCs where both parents attend as compared to EPPCs where only one parent attends. The level of significance was .05 and the Phi Coefficient is .40.
3. There is a positive relationship between the attitude of the professionals attending EPPCs regarding the contribution parents can make to the EPPC and the frequency of parental responses during the EPPC which was significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient measured the extent of the relationship at .424.
4. There was a positive relationship between the amount of parental nervous discomfort experienced during EPPCs and the parents' perception of their contribution to the EPPC which was significant at the .01 level. The Phi Coefficient measured the extent of that relationship at .599.

There were no significant relationships for any of the other hypotheses which were tested in this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Due process of law as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution was interpreted in the cases of Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children vs. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972) and Mills vs. Board of Education of Washington D.C. (1972) to mean that parents must be afforded prior notification and opportunity to contest educational decisions by school personnel concerning their handicapped children. Federal action in response to professional and parental pressure has expanded these procedural safeguards established by the courts to include parental participation in the planning of educational programs for handicapped children.

Guidelines from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped concerning State Plan Amendments for 1975 as required by Part B, Education of the Handicapped Act, as amended by 614 of P.L. 94-380 stated "The intent or effect of the evaluation should be the development of his/her strengths and weaknesses. Whenever possible, parents should participate in the development of the educational plan for the child (p. 27)."

This recommendation to include the parents in the development of their handicapped child's educational plan became law with the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) in 1975. Individualized education programming is described in P.L. 94-142 as:

A written statement for each handicapped child developed in any meeting by a representative of the local educational agency or an intermediate educational unit who shall be qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specifically designed instruction to meet the unique needs of handicapped children, the teacher, the parents or guardians of such child and whenever appropriate, such child (Sec. 4(a) Section 602).

In Michigan the mandate to include parents in the planning of their handicapped child's education is specified clearly in the Administrative Rules which were promulgated to fulfill the requirements of the Mandatory Special Education Act (PA 198 of 1971) and approved by the State Board of Education on August 14, 1973. These rules took effect on October 10, 1973.

Rule 340.1722 of the Administrative Rules of PA 198 is explicit concerning procedural safeguards for educational placement of handicapped children in Michigan. The Superintendent of the operating district is responsible for making a change in the educational status of a handicapped person. As a minimum, the Superintendent must appoint an educational planning and placement committee (EPPC). He must request, in writing, the parents 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. Clearly, the intent of Rule 340.1722 is to involve parents as fully participating members in the educational planning and placement committee process.

The Michigan Department of Education gives the following examples of changes in the educational status of a handicapped individual in the Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services in Michigan:

1. Change from one educational level to another, such as preprimary to elementary, elementary to junior high, etc.,
2. From one type of special education program to another,
3. From a regular education program to a special education program and vice versa,
4. Entry into vocational education and work activity center services, and
5. The addition of services such as O.T. and P.T. for a person already placed in a special education program and for which an EPPC has made recommendations which do not include these additional services (p.6)

These guidelines suggest that most changes in the educational program of a handicapped individual are considered a change in status and subject to procedural safeguards. An integral part of the procedural

safeguards for handicapped children in Michigan is the educational planning and placement committee which must include an invitation to parents to participate.

Need

The inclusion of parents in the planning of their handicapped children's educational programs is necessary not only because of the mandated right to participate, but because of the resulting educational benefits derived for handicapped children. Parents are a valuable source of diagnostic information needed for developing comprehensive educational programs for their children. They are also a critical component needed for successful implementation of any educational program developed by professionals. The amount of time spent by children at home with parents in most cases far outweighs the time children have in school with professionals. Parents must support and help implement educational programs for their children to ensure optimal success.

Before parents can be expected to support and assist in the implementation of educational programs for their children, they must be allowed and encouraged to become fully participating members of the team which develops their child's educational program. Unlike the professional members of the committee, most of whom have had three years to become familiar with the process, the parent is usually experiencing a new and unfamiliar

procedure. The educational planning and placement committee is comprised of members who belong to the same profession and all too often assume parents operate at the same level of comprehension of language and procedures as the professionals in the group. Many educators in Michigan believe there are other factors which impede maximum participation by parents in the educational planning and placement (EPPC) process. For example, in nine of the twelve local districts which comprise the Ingham Intermediate School District there are definite attempts to minimize attendance by professionals at educational planning and placement committee meetings in those districts. Since there is no research available on parental participation during educational planning and placement committee meetings, school personnel are assuming that larger groups at EPPCs intimidate parents and stifle their participation.

Professionals are now making assumptions about factors which may affect parental participation during the EPPC process. There is a need to identify and study selected variables which may affect the amount of parental participation during the educational planning and placement committee meetings for handicapped children. If certain variables can be identified and shown to affect parental participation at EPPCs, professionals can make the appropriate adjustments which will increase parental participation. Increased parental participation will

satisfy the legislative mandates of Michigan's Mandatory Special Education Act and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act. More importantly, it will also make the educational planning and placement committee more effective for meeting the needs of handicapped children.

The variables which have been selected for this study after extensive discussion with professionals at both the public school and university level are:

1. Group size (number of participants at the EPPC)
2. The type of procedure used to explain the EPPC's purpose and process. These types are identified as:
 - (a) Prior conference either at home or at school
 - (b) Written explanation (pamphlet or brochure) given to parent prior to meeting
 - (c) Explanation at EPPC
3. A review by parents of pertinent records, reports and information prior to the EPPC.
4. Educational level of parent(s)
5. Previous EPPC experience
6. Attendance by both parents or additional person accompanying parent as opposed to attendance by only one parent.
7. Attitude of professionals toward parental participation during EPPC.

8. An explanation of test results by school personnel prior to the EPPC.
9. The amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to measure the relationship between the above mentioned independent variables and parental participation during the educational planning and placement committee meeting. It is hypothesized that there are relationships between the nine identified independent variables and parental participation during the EPPC.

Parental participation will be measured by studying three dependent variables. These will be:

1. Frequency of parental responses as measured by counting and recording each parental response during the EPPC.
2. Duration of parental responses as measured by timing and recording the length of each parental response made during the EPPC.
3. The parents' perception of their contribution to the decisions made at the EPPC. This dependent variable will be measured by the use of five items on a questionnaire administered at the close of the EPPC.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between group size and parental participation during the educational planning and placement committee meeting?
2. What is the relationship between prior parental review of their child's records and parental participation during EPPC meetings?
3. What is the relationship between parents receiving a prior explanation of their child's test results and their participation during EPPC meetings?
4. What is the relationship between the educational level of parents and their participation during EPPC meetings?
5. What is the relationship between prior EPPC experience by parents and their participation during EPPC meetings?
6. Is there greater participation by parents when they are accompanied by a spouse or another person at the EPPC than when parents attend the EPPC alone?
7. What is the relationship between the procedure used to explain the EPPC to parents and parental participation during the EPPC?
8. What is the relationship between the professionals' attitude regarding the parents' ability to contribute to the EPPC and parental

participation during the EPPC?

9. What is the relationship between the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC and their participation at the EPPC?

Overview of the Study

In Chapter II there is a historical review of the pertinent litigation, legislation and organizational and parental pressure which have been responsible for establishing due process and equal treatment under the law as fundamental rights guaranteed to all handicapped individuals by the Constitution of the United States of America. There is also a review of relevant literature pertaining to the educational planning and placement process for handicapped individuals.

In Chapter III there is a description of the methodology and procedures used to gather the research data for this study. There is an explanation of the sample and how it was selected, a description of the variables selected for the study, the hypotheses to be tested, the design of the study and a description of the statistical models used to analyze the hypotheses.

Chapter IV contains the analysis of the results of the study. Each hypothesis is tested for significance and the results are reported in this chapter.

There is a summary of the study and conclusions drawn from the results of the analysis of the data in Chapter V. There is also a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the study and implications for both future educational practices and research.

In Michigan, the educational planning and placement committee was written into the Administrative Rules of the Mandatory Special Education Act as a procedural safeguard for protecting the rights of handicapped children. Therefore, the educational planning and placement committee must be considered within the context of fundamental rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the events which were responsible for the present emphasis in legislation protecting the educational rights of handicapped individuals in both Michigan and the United States of America.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Citizens of the United States are guaranteed certain rights under the United States Constitution, state constitutions, federal and state laws and state common law. During the last ten years, beginning with Judge Skelly Wright's ban on tracking in Hobsen vs. Hansen (1967), there has been a rapid increase in litigation in an effort to insure the same constitutional rights for individuals classified as handicapped.

This increase in litigation was a reflection of the effort made by professional and parental groups to establish appropriate educational benefits for handicapped individuals who were not being served or who were underserved. These efforts culminated with the passage of mandatory special education in many states including Michigan in 1971 and nationally with the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) in 1975.

Public Act 198 of 1971, the Mandatory Special Education Act of Michigan, establishes the right of handicapped persons, through the age of 25, to equal educational opportunity within Michigan's public schools.

The educational planning and placement committee (EPPC) is an integral part of the procedural safeguards mandated by the Administrative Rules of Public Act 198.

The superintendent of the operating school district is responsible for making a change in the educational status of a handicapped person. As a minimum the superintendent must appoint an educational planning and placement committee.

Rule 340.1701 of the Administrative Code promulgated by the Michigan State Board of Education in 1974, defines the educational planning and placement committee as "a committee of an operating district or agency whose members shall include, as a minimum, a representative of the administrative personnel, instructional personnel, diagnostic personnel, and parents invited to participate when their children are involved (R 340.1701)."

According to the Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services in Michigan written by the Michigan Department of Education, the educational planning and placement committee has the responsibility for:

1. Determining eligibility for a pupil to receive special education programs and/or services.
2. Recommending programs and/or services.
3. Establishing instructional goals and identifying outcomes expected as a result of the special education placement (p. 6).

The EPPC essentially becomes the first formal phase of due process where parents may actually participate in decisions made about their children. Sub rule b of rule 340.1722 of the Administrative Rules of P.A. 198 of Michigan mandates the school district to "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." This rule also states, "Prior to the educational planning and placement committee meeting, all school records concerning the persons suspected of being handicapped shall be made available to the parents upon request." Clearly the parents are to be invited as fully participating members of the EPPC and are to have access to all school records if they desire.

The educational planning and placement committee is really an outgrowth of educational case conference meetings between professionals which have been used for making recommendations for educational placements for handicapped youngsters for many years. Graham in 1949 described the case conference as "one of the most important features of the psychological examination in the Illinois Program for the Mentally Handicapped." He also stated that "this conference provides the psychologist with case history material which is often very important in making the final diagnosis. This is also an important

procedure from the standpoint of making recommendations to the school (p. 75)." Graham stated that the case conference is necessary not only for understanding the child and planning a program, but also as inservice training for teachers where they may learn there is more to the child than what they see in their classrooms.

Graham recommended that the following professionals may attend the case conference:

1. The Superintendent of schools, assistant superintendent, or director of special education
2. The teacher of the child
3. The building principal
4. The special class teacher
5. The special class building principal
6. The school nurse
7. The visiting teacher or school social worker
8. Other special school personnel
9. Professionals from social agencies

The Guidelines for Special Education Programs and Services in Michigan (1974) suggest a partial list of persons who might be included in the educational planning and placement committee meeting. This list includes: "administrators (includes the special education director or his designee); building principal (sending or receiving); special education supervisor; diagnostic personnel (includes school psychologist,

school social worker, teachers of speech and language, teacher consultants, reading teachers, school nurse, mental or public health representatives, or other clinical practitioners); instructional and support staff (includes special education, general and vocational education teacher(s), teacher consultants, occupational and physical therapists, work study coordinator and representatives from community agencies such as vocational rehabilitation)."

The case conference described by Graham in 1949 made recommendations concerning the eligibility and programming of mentally handicapped youngsters in Illinois. Essentially this is the same function the educational planning and placement committee serves in Michigan today. The same types of people are included in the committee with one major exception. In Michigan the parent must be invited to attend.

The reason why parents were rarely invited to participate in case conferences, either in Michigan or other states, is best expressed in an article by Kirp, Kuriloff and Buss (1975) discussing the use of the placement team concept in California with mentally retarded children:

Special educators, while expressing their willingness to meet with a parent or representative at the admissions committee meeting, fear that the presence of an outsider might force bargaining further underground. The committee's handling of children, one program supervisor remarked is "just too impersonal for the average person to understand. . . It would appear cruel." The presence of such an outsider might also pose a

threat to the committee's usual style of operation and more basically to the credibility of its decisions (p. 374).

Not only were parents not invited to attend educational planning conferences concerning their children, they were often not informed of the decisions made about their handicapped children. Abeson, Bolick and Hass (1975) share a letter received by one of the authors in their Primer on Due Process.

Harris, my only son, is ten and is somewhat small for his age but has always been very active, playing with friends in his neighborhood. Last spring I got a note asking me to come to school. The pupil adjustment counselor told me that Harris and another boy, who had once been his friend, had been fighting and that Harris was not to return to school for a week. When he returned to school he was immediately sent home again for no specific length of time, but with the message that he couldn't return again until he "learns to behave." When I again went to school to see his teacher, I learned that Harris had been placed in a class for retarded children since last year. I became very upset because I had never been told of this. I did get a note from someone last year saying that Harris was receiving some special help with his studies, but it said nothing about a class for retarded children (p.5).

Much of the criticism which led to court cases involving classification of handicapped children is expressed in the following paragraphs by Abeson, Bolick and Hass (1975).

It is well known that labeling in and of itself, even when done carefully and with good intent, may produce negative effects on children. There can be no justification for unnecessarily submitting children to such effects. Three of the major problems associated with labeling practices are:

1. Labeled children often become victimized by stigma associated with a label. This may be manifested by isolation from usual school opportunities and taunting and rejection by both children and school personnel.
2. Assigning a label to a child often suggests to those working with him that the child's behavior should conform to the stereotyped behavioral expectations associated with the label and ultimately does so. When a child is labeled and placement is made on the basis of that label, there is often no opportunity to escape from either the label or the placement.
3. Children who are labeled and placed on the basis of that label may often not need special education programs. This is obviously true for children who are incorrectly labeled, but it also applies to children with certain handicaps, often of a physical nature. Just because a child is physically handicapped does not mean that a special education is required (p. 5).

Labeling a child as handicapped has been questioned for many years. Mercer (1975) quoted Alfred Binet's concern about labeling practices and resulting stigmatization: "It will never be to one's credit to have attended a special school . . . (p. 140)."

Hobbs (1975) states, "Categories and labels are powerful instruments for social regulation and control, and they are often employed for obscure, covert, or hurtful purposes: to degrade people, to deny them access to opportunity, to exclude undesireables whose presence in some way offends, disturbs familiar custom, or demands extraordinary effort (p. 11)."

Abeson, Bolick and Hass (1975) recommend in their Primer on Due Process the following procedures to meet

due process requirements regarding identification, evaluation, and educational placement of handicapped children.

- . Timely and written notice must be given prior to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a handicapped child.
- . An opportunity to respond to the substance of such notice must be provided.
- . A hearing must be held, if necessary, in which the child and his parent, guardian, or surrogate and/or their representative, such as legal counsel of their own choosing, will have an opportunity to review and challenge all evidence (including relevant school records), cross examine all witnesses, present evidence, obtain an independent evaluation, and receive a complete and accurate record of the proceedings.
- . The burden of proof as to the recommended action must be borne by the education agency through the presentation of appropriate evidence.
- . The hearing officers will make a decision solely on the evidence presented at the hearing.
- . Opportunity must exist for the parties to appeal the decision of the hearing officer (p. 6).

Because of the pressure placed upon educators through the judicial and legislative system, parents now have the right to examine all of their child's relevant records and must be given notification of decisions made concerning their handicapped child. They also have the right to appeal those decisions through the hearing process and the United States District Court (P.L. 94-142, Sec. 615, 1975).

In Michigan, parents also have the right to participate in the decision making process: the educational

planning and placement committee. The educational planning and placement committee not only fulfills some of the due process requirements of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), but can also meet the mandate that local or intermediate educational agencies will establish or revise an individualized education program annually for each handicapped student in its district.

Section 4 of P.L. 94-142 defines individualized educational program as "a written statement for each handicapped child developed in any meeting by a representative of the local educational agency or an intermediate educational unit who shall be qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specifically designed instruction to meet the unique needs of handicapped children, the teacher, the parents or guardian of such child, and, whenever appropriate, such child, which statement shall include (A) a statement of the present levels of educational performance of such child, (B) a statement of annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives (C) a statement of the specific educational services to be provided to such child, and the extent to which the child will be able to participate in regular educational programs, (D) the projected date for initiation and anticipated duration of such services, and appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis,

whether instructional objectives are being achieved."

These requirements of P.L. 94-142 can be achieved during the educational planning and placement committee meeting with the parent in attendance. They are now legal mandates because of litigation which attempted to ensure appropriate educational opportunity and due process for handicapped individuals in the United States. A review of the litigation concerning the education of handicapped individuals can best place the development and purposes of the educational planning and placement committee in Michigan in proper perspective.

A Review of Relevant Litigation Concerning Fundamental Rights For The Handicapped

The plaintiffs in the court cases concerning education for handicapped individuals have based their arguments on the right to equal protection under the law and the right to due process of law, as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The court actions on behalf of handicapped youths of school age can be divided into two categories:

1. **Right to Education Cases:** These cases concern individuals who are being denied access to public education and are attempting to gain entrance to public school programs.

2. **Classification Cases:** These cases concern students enrolled in special classes for the retarded, but who object to this classification due to the methods of evaluation and placement.

I. Right to Education Cases

The major issue in the right to education cases is the postponement or exclusion of children from public schools based upon their handicapping condition. These cases involve the following classes of children:

1. Those who have never received educational services due to a handicap.
2. Those who have been excluded after attending school for a period of time.
3. Those who have been identified for placement into special programs, but placed on waiting lists without receiving services.

Plaintiffs have argued in the right to education cases that local school districts have violated state laws and regulations which guarantee educational opportunity for all children of school age, thus denying excluded handicapped children equal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

It has also been argued in many of the right to education cases that the plaintiffs (excluded handicapped youngsters) were not provided adequate opportunity to

contest the exclusion decisions, therefore, violating the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

One of the first right to education court cases was Wolf v. Utah in 1969. The plaintiffs, two trainable retarded children represented by their parents, argued they were denied equal educational opportunity because of exclusion from school. The basis of their argument was a provision of the Utah State Constitution that requires education be available to all children.

In the Wolf case, the judge found for the plaintiffs and in language similar to that expressed in Brown v. Board of Education that in his judgement, "education today is probably the most important function of the state and local government. It is a fundamental and inalienable right and must be so if the rights guaranteed to an individual under Utah's Constitution and the U.S. Constitution are to have real meaning." He also stated, "no person could reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he were not given an education."

The two major cases involving the right to an education for handicapped youngsters were the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1970) and Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia (1972).

In P.A.R.C. v. Pa., the plaintiffs argue for a zero reject system of education which would include all children. They base their argument on the precedent setting Brown v. Board of Education 347 U.S. 483 745. ct 686, 98 L. Ed. 873 (1954). The Supreme Court in Brown 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.

The plaintiffs further claimed the denial of educational services violated Pennsylvania state law because the education code stated, "it is the obligation of the Commonwealth to provide a proper program of instruction and training for all its exceptional children."

The schools based the right of exclusion for exceptional children on other paragraphs in the educational code. Certain children could be excluded as "uneducable and untrainable." Others could be denied or postponed educational services until achieving "a mental age of five." For some children, the attainment of a mental age of five was an impossibility. Other children were excluded simply on the basis of being unable to profit from school.

Circuit Judge Adams and District Judges Masterson and Broderick enjoined (preliminary order 10/7/71, final order 5/5/72) school officials in Pennsylvania from

further use of any sections of the school code that postponed or denied any mentally retarded child access to free public education or training. The level of education or training was ordered by the judges to be appropriate to the learning capacities of the child. They were further ordered to provide notice and opportunity for a hearing prior to a change in educational status of any child who is or thought to be mentally retarded. Also included in the order was the re-evaluation of every mentally retarded child not less than every two years, or annually upon the parents' request, and to provide notice and the opportunity for a hearing for such an evaluation. All of these due process provisions are also found in the Administrative Rules of the Michigan Mandatory Special Education Act except that there is a mandate to review every handicapped student's program and services annually rather than the requirement of re-evaluation within a prescribed time limit.

In Mills v. Board of Education, the plaintiffs were predominantly poor and black children who had been denied admission to the District of Columbia schools on the basis of being behavior problems, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, or hyperactive. The plaintiffs argued there had been no formal determination of the basis for this exclusion, nor any provisions for review or appeal of that decision.

A summary judgement was declared in the case granting relief to the plaintiffs. Based on the equal protection and due process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the judge ruled that:

1. The defendants must
 - a. provide the plaintiffs with a publicly supported education according to their needs and
 - b. initiate efforts to locate and assess other children in the same situation, so that appropriate placement can be made.
2. Due process requires a hearing before exclusion or classification into special programs.
3. Within 30 days, the District of Columbia school board is ordered to offer appropriate educational facilities to all known exceptional children according to need (i.e., public school placement, grants for private tuition, etc.).

The Administrative Rules of Michigan's Mandatory Special Education Act not only require the right to appeal exclusion or classification into special programs through the hearing process, but the right to participate in the decision making process for exclusion or classification which is the educational planning and placement committee. The function of the EPPC is also to decide the most appropriate educational placement based upon the needs of the student.

Court cases have been filed in other states with defendants seeking similar results. North Carolina Association for Retarded Children v. State of North

Carolina (1972), C.A.R.C. v. Colorado (1972), Brandt v. Nevada (1972), Kekahuna v. Burns (Hawaii) (1973), F.A.R.C. v. Florida (1973), and K.A.R.C. v. Kentucky State Board of Education (1973) are examples of the many right to education cases that have been filed across the nation.

The case of Reid v. N.Y. Board of Education (1971) has been settled by the Commissioner of Education of New York with results similar to the P.A.R.C. and Mills cases.

Another case, Lebanks v. Spears (1973) is of particular importance because of the inclusion of more than school age individuals. In this case, settled by stipulated agreement not adjudication, the defendant New Orleans School Board and Superintendent agreed to provide compensatory education to those members of the plaintiff class who were over school age as well as those of school age.

The other results of Lebanks were similar to those in Mills and P.A.R.C.. School officials agreed to the evaluation of all children who were suspected of being mentally retarded not presently in school and to provide public education for such children. Also, it was agreed that the right to a hearing before special education placement would be provided as would periodic review of the placement decision.

The Maryland Association for Retarded Children v. Maryland case was originally filed in federal court, but due to an Abstention Order on September 7, 1973, was refiled in state court May 3, 1974, as a class action suit

for all retarded children in the State of Maryland. The results of M.A.R.C. are essentially the same as P.A.R.C., but with particular emphasis on the principle that all children can benefit from some type of program of service and that there is no distinction between education and training. Therefore, all children are entitled to an educational program and none may be excluded on the basis of uneducability.

In Michigan, Harrison v. Novak (1972) was filed on behalf of mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed youngsters who had been excluded from special education programs in Wayne County. The court held this case moot due to the passage of the previously mentioned Public Act 198 which requires mandatory special education programs for all school districts in the State of Michigan.

II. Classification Cases

Classification cases concern students who have been identified and placed into programs for the mentally retarded based upon the results of standardized intelligence tests. These cases have primarily involved members of ethnic or racial minorities.

The legal basis for argument in these cases has been violations of the equal protection and due process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, just as in the right to education cases.

Legal Argument #1: Equal protection under the law. All laws are not inherently equal and involve some disparity in treatment of individuals. Legislation is usually an attempt to provide for or to regulate particular classes of people or property such as draft laws (males) or income tax laws (economic status). Such classification based on persons or property are not violative per se of equal protection. The traditional test applied by the Supreme Court, and therefore binding on all courts, is that any disparity in treatment caused by class classification be reasonable.

The following standards have been traditionally utilized in determining reasonableness of a statutory classification:

1. whether the classification itself is a rational one; i.e., based on acceptable social, economic, historic, or geographic factors.
2. whether the classification bears a reasonable relationship to a proper legislative purpose.
3. whether all persons within the classes established are treated equally.

Under this approach, the presumption of validity is said to be with the statute.

However, a stricter test is applied by the Supreme Court where the classification is based on "suspect criteria" such as race, or if a "fundamental right" such as voting is restricted by the classification. If either a "suspect criteria" or "fundamental right" is involved, the classification must not only meet the

reasonableness or rationality test of constitutionality, but there must be a compelling state interest served by the classification, and served in as narrow a way as possible. The burden of proof to establish the compelling state interest is then on the state or boards of education in the classification cases.

The plaintiffs in the classification cases have argued that the classification of mentally retarded has been discriminatory to members of minority groups because it is based upon results of intelligence tests which unfairly measure minority students and place them into settings which impede the fulfillment of their intellectual capacity.

The basis for their argument is that there are three classes of students. One class, primarily white and middle class, who do possess the skills measured by intelligence tests remain in regular classes where they achieve at a level up to their maximum ability. A second class of students, who do not possess these skills and are actually mentally retarded, are placed in classes where they too achieve at a level up to their maximum ability. However, a third class of students, members of a racial or ethnic minority, who do not possess the skills measured by these tests, but who have the capability of acquiring them, are placed in special classes where they cannot achieve at a level up to their ability.

Therefore, the classification is both "suspect" because it is racially and culturally biased and violative of the fundamental right to equal educational opportunity under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Legal Argument #2: Due Process. Another basis for legal claim regarding placement into programs for the retarded concerns the right of parents to participate in the placement decision based upon the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. In a long list of cases, the Supreme Court has interpreted the due process clause requires that before government can take any adverse action against an individual, it must provide him prior notice of the action and adequate opportunity to contest it.

The case of Wisconsin v. Constantineau (1971) has great bearing upon special room placement and the labels and stigma attached to such placement, even though the case did not pertain specifically to education. A law in Wisconsin allowed town officials to publicly post names of problem drinkers without notices or hearing. This action was contested by Mrs. Constantineau after town officials posted her name. The United States District Court said that Mrs. Constantineau's name could not be publicly posted by town officials labeling her as publicly drunk without first giving her the opportunity

to contest the validity of that statement.

The United States Supreme Court agreed with the lower court's findings and said:

The only issue present here is whether the label or characterization given a person by posting, though a mark of illness to some, is to others such a stigma or badge of disgrace that procedural due process requires notice and an opportunity to be heard. We agree with the district court that Mrs. Constantineau's private interest in her good name is such that those requirements must be met . . .

Plaintiffs in the placement cases argue that there is adequate stigmatization in such placement to warrant a due process hearing. Because these individuals being placed in rooms for the retarded are usually minors, their interests should be represented in the due process hearings by parents or guardians.

In the pre-trial hearing for Stewart v. Phillips (1970), the plaintiffs contended that, if the names of people who are considered problem drinkers cannot be posted without a hearing, the label of mental retardation is sufficiently damaging also to require due process of law. The judge agreed, and the pre-trial decision set the stage for the accepted view of the labeling issue.

Defendant school officials in classification cases have not argued against the requirement of due process before removing a child from the mainstream of education. The due process requirement is being written into mandatory education laws being passed in many states. Both the unwillingness of defendants to argue against due process

in court and mandatory state requirements for due process proceedings make it somewhat a moot issue.

Litigation Concerning Classification

The court cases, while shifting away from the due process issue, have concentrated instead on classification based on the use of standardized intelligence tests. The use of such tests has been challenged on the basis of racial and cultural unfairness to members of minority groups.

In Hobsen v. Hansen (1967), Judge Skelly Wright held that the tracking system in Washington, D.C. was based on culturally biased standardized tests and therefore violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. He found, on Brown v. Board of Education, that the tracking system irrationally separated students on the basis of race and economic background, and therefore violated the students' rights to equal educational opportunity. This decision was upheld on appeal in Smuck v. Hobson (1969).

In Spangler v. Pasadena Board of Education (1970), the court found there was racial imbalance in the composition of the student population in the Pasadena School District which was partially caused by the use of intelligence tests. The defendant school officials admitted without contest that these tests were used inaccurately and unfairly.

An extremely significant classification case was Diana v. State Board of Education (1970). This was a class action suit on the behalf of Mexican-American children in educable mentally retarded school programs in California. The legal basis for their claim was that the standardized tests used for establishing placement were given entirely in English, but given to children whose primary language was other than English. The plaintiffs claim this violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. They felt the placement into these rooms for the retarded produced irreparable injury from inadequate education and the stigma of mental retardation.

Even though the Diana case was settled out of court through agreement, it produced the following significant results:

1. All children whose primary language is other than English shall be tested in both English and the child's primary language.
2. Tests used should not depend on culturally biased verbal questions.
3. Mexican-American and Chinese children already in classes for the retarded must be retested and re-evaluated with tests using only the achievement and non-verbal sections.
4. Before the next school year, every school district must submit to the state a summary of retesting and re-evaluation results, and a plan listing special supplemental individual training, which is to be provided to help each student who has been wrongly placed to return to regular school classes.

5. School psychologists shall work on norming revised IQ tests to reflect Mexican-American culture.
6. Competent school psychologists shall administer individual intelligence tests in the child's primary language or use an interpreter.
7. Any school district which has a disparity between the percentage of Mexican-American students in regular classes and special classes must submit an explanation citing reasons for this disparity.

By 1973, the variance between the percentage of Mexican-Americans in the total school population and the percentage in special education classes had been eliminated in 895 of 1130 school districts in California. The plaintiffs went back into court to force the remaining 235 school districts to follow the agreement:

A new agreement was reached on June 18, 1973 which stated that:

1. Any district with a "significant variance (to be specified)" is required to produce a timetable and plan for elimination of disparities by September of 1976.
2. The percentage of Mexican-Americans in classes for the mentally retarded is not to exceed the percentage in the general school population.
3. A program is to be developed to aid re-entry into regular school programs.
4. The State Department of Education is responsible for conducting investigations of any districts with a significant variance in percentage after September, 1976.

The Diana case also was responsible for legislation in California that established new state-wide eligibility rules for placement of children into programs for the

mentally retarded in public schools. Introduced as the Burgener Bill and later modified to California State Bill 33, the legislation established both the criteria for placement and the requirement of parental permission before such special placement.

The use of standardized tests for placement of members of a minority group was challenged in another extremely important court case in California. In Larry P. v. Riles (1971), seven black children labeled mentally retarded by the San Francisco school district were the plaintiffs arguing against their placement based on culturally biased intelligence tests.

In a preliminary statement, the judge ruled that if the plaintiffs could demonstrate the intelligence tests used were the primary determinant for placement in rooms for the retarded, and that racial imbalance exists in the composition of those classes, then the burden must shift to the defendants to demonstrate the rational connection between the tests and the purpose for which they are used.

On June 20, 1972, the judge found for the plaintiffs and enjoined school officials from further use of the currently used intelligence tests for placement purposes into special rooms.

Another case, Covarrubias v. San Diego Unified School District (1972), involved Mexican-American students placed into special rooms on the basis of results from

standardized intelligence tests. The plaintiffs claimed such placement violated the due process clause because of inadequate opportunity to contest the decision and the resulting classification violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The school board, in an agreement settled out of court, agreed to place students at the option of parents and to provide proper notification of placement meetings and to establish annual re-evaluation procedures for students in educable retarded rooms.

The results of Spangler v. Board of Education (1970) as ordered by the court in California and Guadalupe v. Tempe (1971) settled by stipulated agreement in Arizona, were essentially the same as the results of Diana and Larry P. In Massachusetts, Stewart v. Phillips (1970) became moot due to new state regulations governing special classes.

The Administrative Rules of P.A. 198 of Michigan require that a person may only be identified as handicapped for special education eligibility purposes by an educational planning and placement committee. Therefore, the classification issue is decided in a meeting where the parents have the right by law to participate. Should they contest the decision of the majority of the EPPC members, they are afforded the right to appeal through the hearing process as described in the Administrative Rules of P.A. 198.

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 (R 340, 1723. iii).

Similar Research

The only research the author was able to find which attempted to study the educational planning and placement committee process was done by Barbacovi in 1976. Barbacovi administered a questionnaire regarding parental attitudes about the EPPC process to members of intermediate school districts' Parent Advisory Committees randomly selected across the State of Michigan. His major findings were:

1. There were no significant correlations between the mode of communication used to inform parents about the educational planning and placement committee process and their attitudes toward the process.
2. Generally parents were pleased with the planning process and perceived themselves as being a vital part of that process. Eighty-five percent perceived they had made a contribution to the EPPC process, 84% said they were given a chance to tell their goals, and 94% said they were generally free to express their opinions during the EPPC. Seventy-nine percent reported being treated as equals and 77% felt as if they were

needed at the EPPC.

Barbacovi concluded that:

1. Parents have positive attitudes regarding the EPPC process.
2. Parents have positive attitudes regarding their role at the EPPC.
3. Parents have positive attitudes regarding professionals in the EPPC process.

There are two relevant findings in Barbacovi's research which may have implications for this study of variables which have a relationship with parental participation during the EPPC process. One of the independent variables considered in this study is the procedure used to explain the EPPC process to parents. The three methods considered are (1) a prior conference between a school and the parents; (2) a pamphlet or brochure which explains the EPPC process; and (3) explanation at the EPPC. Whereas Barbacovi's study showed there were no significant correlations between the mode of communication used to explain the EPPC process and parent attitudes, the present study attempts to establish a relationship between the mode of communication used for explanation of the EPPC and parental participation. If no relationship is established between the method used for explanation of the EPPC and parental participation, it could support a conclusion that the procedure used to explain the EPPC to parents has not

been proven to significantly affect two important aspects of the EPPC process: the parents' attitude about the process and their actual participation in that process.

The second finding of Barbacovi's study which has relevance to this research is that parents in the Parent Advisory Committees perceived themselves as vital parts of the EPPC process. By contrast, this author's study attempts to use parental perception of their contribution as a dependent variable which will be measured to establish a relationship between it and the nine selected independent variables. Since Barbacovi established that parents serving on Parent Advisory Committees perceive themselves as contributing to the EPPC process, it may be significant to study whether parents who do not serve on Parent Advisory Committees and who may not have the same degree of interest in special education programming show the same degree of satisfaction with their contribution to the EPPC process.

However, the major interest with this variable (perception of contribution) is to establish a relationship between it and the nine selected independent variables for this research.

Although this researcher could find no other research which pertains specifically to the relationships of certain factors with participation by parents in groups composed essentially of professionals, there have been numerous studies concerning small group interaction.

Bales and Borgetta (1965) studied group size on a factor relating to interaction. Using groups varying from two to seven members, this study sought to systematize a set of hypotheses regarding the relationship between the number of members in a group and members' social interaction. They concluded:

- As group size increases,
- a) interactions involving "tension release" increase,
 - b) "suggestion giving" increases,
 - c) "showing solidarity" increases,
 - d) "showing tension" decreases,
 - e) "showing agreement" decreases,
 - f) and if groups with 2 members are not considered, "giving information" increases while "giving opinion" decreases.
 - g) Evaluative statements are fewer in larger groups.
 - h) Larger groups are more likely to show solidarity.
 - i) The number of persons who participate at low rates increases with larger groups.
 - j) More persons are content to "listen" in larger groups.

In 1951 Bales and Strodtbeck studied the social interaction of a variety of groups using the Bales Interaction Process Analysis. This study of groups ranging from three to ten members produced the following results:

- a) As predicted, as the total number of interactions which an individual initiated increased, he also tended to be the target of more acts, address more acts to particular others, and address more acts to the group as a whole.
- b) There are no effects due to group size.

Davis (1969) concluded after summarizing laboratory experiments regarding groups that:

Regarding group size:

- a) Advantages of larger groups are that a member is more likely to find another with whom interaction is possible, while it may be easier for more reserved members to "hide in the crowd."

- b) Disadvantages of larger groups are that subgroups are more likely to form with goals inconsistent with those of the larger group and increased heterogeneity may make consensus (or agreement) more difficult.

Fox, Lorge, Weltz and Herrold (1953) compared decisions written by large and small groups discussing a "complex human relations problem." Small groups were six to eight members and large groups were twelve to thirteen members. The discussions were appraised using Lorge's Quality Points Score with the following conclusions:

- a) The quality of the decisions reached by the large groups was superior to that of the small groups.
- b) Large groups did not experience any special difficulty in establishing channels of communication.
- c) These findings contradict previous research.

Hare (1952) compared groups of five and twelve boy scouts working on a group discussion problem. He concluded:

- a) The major finding was that consensus resulting from group discussion decreased in the larger groups.
- b) There was more opinion change among members of small groups.
- c) Group leaders had more power to influence group members in small groups.
- d) In large groups, the leader was not less important than other individual members.
- e) Members of large groups were most dissatisfied, probably because there was less opportunity for each member to present his ideas.

A study by Kidd (1958) investigated the effects of several situational variables on the phenomena of social influences. Social influence was defined as "a change in response following the presentation to the subject of

a response standard of apparent social derivation."

Groups of two, four and six members were compared with the following results:

- a) "For the particular situation studied, neither group size nor duration of group participation had significant effects on social influence." (p. 17)
- b) Social influence increased when the source of the response was another group member.
- c) Increasing group size did not facilitate task performance.

Stater (1958) used an open ended questionnaire to relate group size with satisfaction in a study comparing groups composed of two, three, four, five, six or seven members which met for four, forty minute sessions to discuss human relations problems. He concluded:

- a) From the members' point of view, five-man groups were most preferred.
- b) As group size increased, members saw each other as "too aggressive, impulsive, competitive, and inconsiderate, and the group as too hierarchical, centralized, and disorganized." (p. 138)
- c) Based on inferences from observed behaviors, members of the smaller groups were "too tense, passive, tactful, and constrained, to work together in a manner which is altogether satisfying to them." (p. 138)
- d) "Their fear of alienating one another seems to prevent them from expressing their ideas freely." (p. 138)
- e) It was suggested that groups must be of a size which allows members to express positive and negative feelings freely and in which members would risk antagonizing others because of the overall atmosphere of regard for others' feelings.
- f) The group should be "large enough so that the loss of a member could be tolerated, but small enough so that such a loss could not be altogether ignored." (p. 138)

The distribution of participation in small groups was studied by Stephan and Mishler in 1952. Groups of

undergraduates ranging from four to twelve members met four to seventeen times for fifty minutes with the Bales system used for rating their interaction with the following results:

- a) The main finding was that, in groups where roles were initially not differentiated, as group size increased, there was a greater tendency for members to participate either very frequently or seldom. That is, when new members joined a group, previously frequent contributors increased their participation and under-contributors decreased their participation even further.

Thomas and Fink (1963) formulated generalizations about the effects of group size from a critical review of past research. This review attempted to cover all studies of face to face groups (two to twenty members) where behavior was measured by interviews, questionnaires, or observations. The following generalizations were formulated:

- a) Quality of performance and group productivity are often, but not always, positively correlated with group size.
- b) "Tentatively it would appear that smaller groups inhibit expression of disagreements and dissatisfactions more than larger groups and give each individual more opportunity to interact and to exhibit leadership behavior."
- c) As group size increases, group cohesiveness decreases while the possibility of the development of cliques or factions increases.
- d) Conformity to group pressures does not necessarily increase with larger groups.
- e) Members are generally more satisfied in small groups.

While a review of the past research indicates group size relates to a number of factors in the interaction process, it is not possible to formulate an opinion

as to either positive or negative effects of group size upon the effectiveness of group interaction or an individual's performance within the group.

Summary

In Chapter II there has been an attempt to place the educational planning and placement committee process into perspective. The EPPC is an integral part of the procedural safeguards which have been established in Michigan for the protection of the rights of handicapped children.

Past experiences have shown that handicapped individuals have not shared the same rights as non-handicapped persons. They have arbitrarily been denied the right to an education even though all persons were guaranteed educational opportunity by state laws. They could capriciously be given a stigmatic label without notification to parents or opportunity to contest said action.

A crescendo of parental and professional pressure, reflected by the multitude of court cases against these abuses, culminated in special education legislation at both the state and federal levels. Both the Mandatory Special Education Act of Michigan (1971) and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975) nationally mandate procedures which ensure parental participation in educational decisions affecting their handicapped children.

In Michigan, the EPPC represents the procedure where parents may most actively participate in the decisions affecting the education of their handicapped children. Because of this, the EPPC was selected as a formal process where parental participation in special education decisions regarding handicapped children could be studied. It was believed that there are certain factors which may affect that participation by parents during the EPPC. This study has selected nine factors as independent variables which may have an effect upon parental participation during the EPPC process. If there is a relationship between these factors over which professionals have control, then it may be possible to select or modify procedures which can improve the quantity and quality of parental participation in the educational decisions which affect their handicapped children.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

Sample

There was a need to determine if certain factors affect parental participation during the educational planning and placement committee meetings. This study attempted to measure parental participation during EPPCs and to relate it to certain identified variables which could affect the amount of that participation.

There are several problems which impede and complicate a study of this nature. The educational planning and placement committee (EPPC) process is a procedural safeguard to ensure the rights of handicapped children which often involves confidential and delicate information. Due to the nature of the information presented during the EPPC, entry by an outsider for observational purposes can be difficult. Therefore, school districts are needed where acceptance by school personnel and school policy would allow entry into educational planning and placement committee meetings for observation.

Another problem interfering with completion of a study of the EPPC process is the feasibility of physically completing a research project of this nature. This researcher needed not only permission, but had to have the

necessary information regarding scheduling of EPPCs in the various school districts selected plus be in proximity to observe the appropriate quantity for statistical analysis.

A third factor which was considered was maximum discrimination between variables. It would be impossible to determine a relationship between a variable such as group size and parental participation, if there were no variance between the sizes of the EPPCs in the study. A sample was needed which would ensure maximum discrimination between the independent variables selected for this study.

Therefore, a number of school districts were needed which would:

1. Grant permission for entry by an outside observer.
2. Be in proximity which would enable the researcher to attend EPPCs as they were scheduled in the various school districts involved in the study.
3. Inform the researcher of EPPCs as they were scheduled.
4. Provide EPPCs which would ensure maximum discrimination between variables selected for the study.

The Ingham Intermediate School District and its constituent local school districts was considered for selection because of acceptance of such a project by the

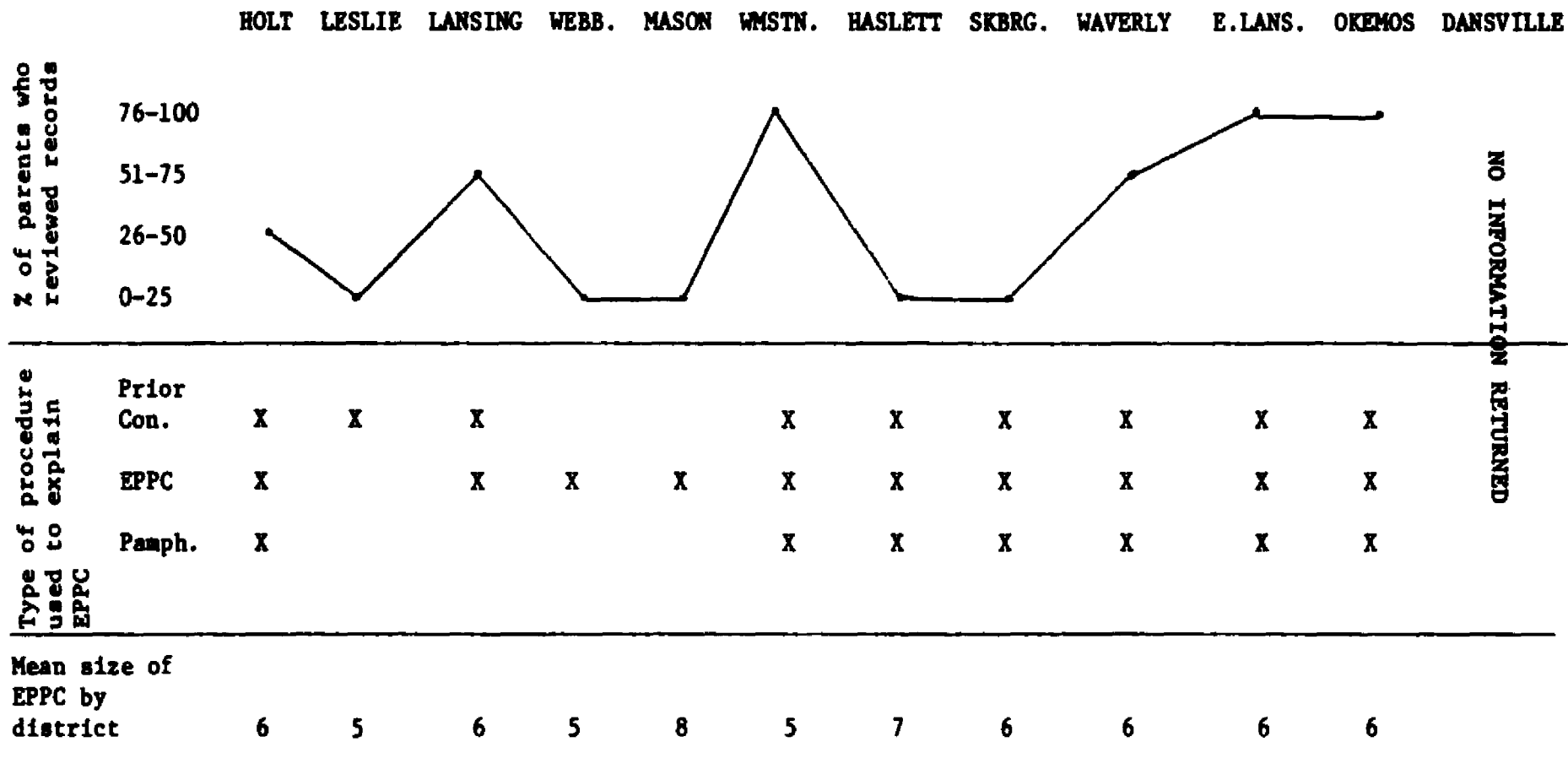
Assistant Superintendent for Special Education in the intermediate school district and the local school district directors of special education. Discussions with these administrators indicated a high interest in having a study of parental participation at EPPCs done in their districts.

A survey was distributed to all local district directors (see Appendix A) in Ingham Intermediate School District for gathering data regarding the following independent variables which the researcher believed could be controlled by sample selection.

1. The types of procedure used to explain the purpose and process of the EPPC to parents. These procedures are: (1) explanation during a prior conference, (2) prior explanation by a pamphlet or brochure, (3) explanation during the EPPC. (See question 3 on the local district questionnaire.)
2. Review of pertinent records by parents prior to the EPPC. (Question 1 on the local district questionnaire.)
3. Group size. Although group size was expected to vary for each EPPC, it was believed that an indication of the size of EPPCs by district would be helpful for selection purposes.
4. An explanation by school personnel to the parents of their child's test results prior to the EPPC.

The data were tabulated and reviewed to assist in the selection of districts which would provide the EPPCs best suited for observation in this study. After reviewing the data, a decision was made by the researcher about which districts to include in this study of parental participation during EPPCs.

The results of the local district questionnaire are reported in Figure 1.



NO INFORMATION RETURNED

Figure 1. Information From Local Directors' Survey

Based on the information obtained from the local district questionnaire the following local districts in the Ingham Intermediate School District were selected as representing the best possible sample which would provide maximum discrimination of variables:

1. Holt - 26-50% of parents reviewed records, all three procedures used for explanation of EPPC and a mean size of 6 professionals in attendance.
2. Lansing - 51-75% of parents reviewed records, explanation given both in prior conference and at the EPPC and a mean size of 6. Also, the largest local district in the ISD which provides center programs for trainable and severely retarded as well as physically handicapped and deaf for the entire intermediate school district.
3. Webberville - 0-25% review records, explanation only at EPPC and a mean size of 5.
4. Mason - 0-25% review records, explanation only at EPPC and a mean size of 8.
5. Waverly - 71-100% review records, all three procedures used to explain EPPC and a mean size of 6. (Waverly replaced original selection of Okemos which was unable to provide EPPCs. All data on independent variables were the same.)

Since there is no way to control which parents or professionals attend the selected EPPCs, discrimination of the following variables was left to chance:

1. Educational level of parent(s).
2. Previous EPPC experience by parent(s).
3. Attendance at the EPPC by more than one parent.
4. The attitude regarding parental participation by the professionals attending the EPPC.
5. The nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC.

Five EPPCs were studied in each of the following districts: Holt, Webberville, Mason and Waverly. Ten EPPCs were studied in Lansing with five from the educable mentally impaired program throughout the system and five from the center program for retarded. The center program services students from the entire intermediate school district even though it is administered by the Lansing Public School District.

The crucial factor determining composition of the actual sample was availability of EPPCs in the five selected school districts. Therefore, slight modifications in the quantity of EPPCs provided by each district were necessary. Table 1 details the quantity of EPPCs provided by each of the selected local school districts.

Table 1.

Quantity of EPPCs From Local School Districts

<u>School District</u>	<u>Number of EPPCs</u>
Holt	6
Mason	4
Webberville	5
Waverly	4
Lansing*	10
Haslett*	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	30

*Lansing provided 5 EPPCs from the district-wide EMI program and 5 from the center program for retarded students which serves the entire intermediate school district.

*One EPPC, for a preschool child, was observed in Haslett because of a shortage in Waverly.

Demographic Data

Educational planning and placement committee meetings differ regarding descriptive factors such as size of the group, length of time and participants. Table 2 depicts descriptive statistics regarding the size and duration of the 30 EPPCs in the sample.

Table 2.

Size and Duration of EPPCs in Sample

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
Size	2	10	5.47	5	5
Duration	19 min.	79 min.	45.87 min.	NA*	NA*

*not applicable

The different types of professionals who attended

the 30 EPPCs in the sample are shown in Table 3. It should be noted that some EPPCs had more than one psychologist or special education supervisor in attendance and others had none. Therefore, the statistic 30 for supervisors in attendance at the 30 EPPCs does not mean there was one in attendance at each EPPC.

Table 3.

Types of Professionals in Attendance

Psychologists	27
Special Education Directors	13
Special Education Supervisors	30
Principals	16
Special Education Teachers	28
Regular Education Teachers	24
School Social Workers	5
Counselors	3
Outside Agency Case Workers	4
Teacher Consultants (Regional Diagnostic Service)	4
Home Trainers	3
Occupational Therapists	1
Reading Consultants	2
Aides	1
Superintendents	<u>1</u>
TOTAL PROFESSIONALS	162

Table 4 describes parental attendance at the 30 EPPCs in the sample. Some EPPCs were attended by only one parent and some were attended by both parents. Some parents brought their children to these meetings. Sometimes they were the student in question at the EPPC and other times they were siblings of the child in question.

Table 4.

Number of Parents and Children Attending EPPCs

EPPCs with 1 parent in attendance	15*
EPPCs with 2 parents in attendance	15 (15 x 2 = 30)
EPPCs with students in attendance	2
EPPCs with child other than student in question in attendance	<u>2</u>
Total parents and children in attendance	49

*One EPPC observed with student adult only in attendance and treated as a single parent.

Procedures

Actual observation of the educational planning and placement committee meetings selected for the sample plus two questionnaires administered at the close of each EPPC were used to gather data for this research project. One questionnaire was administered to professionals regarding their beliefs about the contribution parents can make toward the decisions made during the EPPC (see Appendix C). The other questionnaire was administered to parents at the close of the EPPC which gathered data concerning the variables studied in this research project (see Appendix B). The following is a listing of each independent and dependent variable and the specific procedures used for data collection.

Independent Variables

1. Group size: This was determined by a head count of professionals at the beginning of the EPPC. If a professional entered after the start of the meeting, he or she was added to the list which would provide a total count of professionals who attended any part of the EPPC. Professionals were considered to be all persons in attendance who represented a school system or outside agency. Parents or advocates accompanying them were not counted when computing group size for statistical purposes.
2. A review of the child's records, test results or other pertinent information prior to the EPPC: This was determined by the answer to question number 5 on the parent questionnaire administered at the close of the EPPC. When both parents attended they were instructed to answer yes if either of them had reviewed their child's records or other pertinent information.
3. Whether the parents had received an explanation of their child's test results: This was obtained from question 6 on the parent questionnaire. When both parents attended the EPPC they were instructed to answer yes if either of them had been given an explanation of the test results.
4. The educational level of the parent(s): This

was obtained from question number 2 on the parent questionnaire. When both parents attended the EPPC, they were instructed to fill in the higher educational level of the two.

5. Prior EPPC experience: This was obtained from question number 3 on the parent questionnaire. When both parents attended, they were instructed to answer yes if either of them had attended a previous EPPC.
6. Attendance by more than one parent or accompaniment by an advocate: This was determined by observation during the EPPC.
7. The type of procedure used to explain the EPPC purpose and process: This was obtained from question number 4 on the parent questionnaire. The following three procedures were included in question number 4:
 - _____ A. A conference with a school person, either at home or at school
 - _____ B. Pamphlet or brochure explaining the EPPC
 - _____ C. The explanation today at the EPPC

Parents were instructed to mark the method which was used or if more than one was used, to choose the one which best explained the EPPC to them.
8. Professional attitude regarding parental contribution to the decisions made by the EPPC: A survey was administered to the professional

members of the EPPC at the close of the meeting. (See Appendix C) This survey measured their attitudes toward the contributions parents can make to the decisions made during the EPPC. Professionals were forced to choose between strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree for each of five items. Items were scored in either a positive or negative manner depending on the direction of the items. Strongly agree or strongly disagree were scored as either a positive or negative 2 and agree or disagree were scored a positive or negative 1, depending on the direction of the item. Items 1, 2, 3 and 5 were scored positively for strongly agree or agree and negatively for strongly disagree or disagree, but item 4 was scored negatively for strongly agree and agree and positively for strongly disagree or disagree. A mean score was computed for the professionals in attendance and used to correlate with the dependent variables and used to measure parental participation.

9. The amount of nervous discomfort experienced by the parent(s) during the EPPC: This was obtained from questions 12 through 16 on the parent questionnaire administered at the close of the EPPC meeting (see Appendix B). Parents were

forced to answer in either a positive or negative manner to agreement or disagreement answers to statements regarding nervous discomfort experienced during the EPPC. Scoring was either a +2 or -2 for strong agreement or strong disagreement and a +1 or -1 for agreement or disagreement depending upon the direction of the statement. For example, answering strongly agree to question number twelve earned a score of -2 whereas an answer of strongly agree to question number thirteen earned a score of +2 due to the opposing directions of the statements.

A total score was computed for questions twelve through sixteen on the parent questionnaire and was used for statistical analysis. Scores for nervous discomfort experienced by each parent could range from +10 to -10. Scores on the negative end of the scale indicated more nervous discomfort experienced by parents than those scores from the positive end of the scale.

Dependent Variables

Three dependent variables were studied relating to parental participation during the educational planning and placement committee meetings. These dependent variables were:

1. Frequency of parental response: This was measured by counting and recording each parental response during the EPPC. For purposes of this study the EPPC began when the chairperson explained why the meeting was called. The meeting was considered at a close when the parent(s) signed the EPPC form signifying their agreement to the recommendations of the EPPC. If the parent(s) refused to sign the EPPC form, the meeting was also considered at a close at that time. No counting or timing of responses were considered for frequency and duration scores after the close of the meeting. A frequency ratio of responses per minute was established for analysis purposes by dividing the total number of responses by parent(s) during the meeting by the total number of minutes used for the meeting from official start to finish. For example, if a parent responded 30 times during an EPPC meeting which lasted 60 minutes, then a frequency score was computed to be .5 responses per minute.
2. Duration of parent responses: This was determined by timing each parental response during the EPPC between start and finish (same as official start and finish as explained in frequency explanation). Timing was done with a stop watch. The time for each parental response

was recorded on the EPPC worksheet (see Appendix D). For purposes of this study, only oral responses were counted for either frequency or duration. Head nods of agreement or other non-verbal responses to comments by other members of the committee were not counted or timed. Responses were timed to the closest second and the minimum response score is one second. A duration ratio score for parental responses for the entire meeting was computed by dividing the total number of seconds the parent spoke during the meeting by the total number of seconds used for the meeting. For example, if a parent spoke for a total of 400 seconds during a meeting which lasted 30 minutes or 1800 seconds, then $400/1800 = .222$ or the duration ratio for parental responses was .222.

3. Parental perception of contribution: The third dependent variable was the parents' perception of their contribution to the decisions made during the EPPC. Questions 7 through 11 on the parent questionnaire were used to assess the parents' perception of their contribution to the decisions made at the EPPC. Parents were forced to answer in either a positive or negative manner by the use of agreement or disagreement answers. Scoring was either a +2 or -2 for strong agreement or strong disagreement and a +1 or -1 for

agreement or disagreement depending upon the direction of the statement. For example, an answer of strongly agree on item 7 on the questionnaire was scored a +2, whereas, an answer of strongly agree on item ten yielded a score of -2 due to the opposing direction of the items. A total was computed by summing the scores from the five items dealing with contribution (item #7 through 11) for each parent questionnaire that was completed. Scores could range from +10 to -10 with scores on the positive end of the scale reflecting higher perception of contribution than scores from the negative end of the scale.

Observer Reliability

There were two means of assessing the reliability of the observer regarding measurement of the frequency and duration of parental responses during EPPC meetings. Agreement was needed between different observers concerning the definition and measurement techniques. There also had to be consistency or stability of measurement by the same observer over a period of time.

Agreement Between Observers

Three different observers viewed a 34-minute video tape of a simulated EPPC in order to assess observer reliability. One of these observers was the researcher

doing the study of parental participation during EPPCs. Ten minutes were used prior to the observations for an explanation and discussion of measures to be taken. Observers measured the frequency and duration of parental responses in the same manner which was used by the researcher in the parental participation study during EPPCs.

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance was used to measure the extent of agreement for the three different observers. The EPPC was divided into seven, five minute segments for analysis comparisons to attain reliability of observation techniques for frequency and duration of parental responses observed during the video taped EPPC. The results of the analysis using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance are reported in Table 5.

Table 5.

Reliability Indices for Rater Agreement

Observation	W
Frequency of responses	1.00
Duration of responses	.98

All of the observers recorded the same number of responses producing a score of 1.00 indicating perfect agreement for frequency of responses. Scores from 0 to +1 can be obtained using the coefficient of concordance technique. An agreement score of .98 was obtained for duration of responses for the observers. This score

is extremely high and readily acceptable indicating the measures are appropriate for generalizing ability for definitions and technique.

Consistency of Measurement for the Same Observer

In order to establish consistency of measurement over a period of time for the same observer (the researcher for the study), the same procedure was used for reliability between observers except the same observer measured the frequency and duration of parental responses during the video taped EPPC at two different settings. Kendall's Tau was used for analysis of the seven, five minute segments since it is applicable to just two independent ratings. The results of the analysis are reported in Table 6.

Table 6.

Consistency of Measurement for the Same Observer

Observation	τ
Frequency of Responses	1.00
Duration of Responses	1.00

The analysis using the Kendall Tau indicates a τ coefficient of 1.00 for both frequency and duration of parental responses during the seven, five minute segments of the video taped EPPC. Duration scores had to be ranked to do a Kendall Tau analysis which produced a perfect score of 1.00 even though duration scores were

not identical (see Appendix E). Since τ coefficients range from 0 to +1, these scores indicate perfect agreement between the two different observations by the researcher. This establishes consistency of measurement for the researcher using the same definitions and techniques for measuring frequency and duration of parental responses during EPPCs for the study.

It must be noted that the video taped EPPC did not provide as much frequency and duration of parental responses as the actual EPPCs studied. However, it was more difficult to measure the responses in the video taped EPPC than in the actual EPPCs because the parent was not always on camera. In the actual EPPC observed for the study, the parent was always visible and was the prime focus of the researcher's attention providing what was believed to be accurate and reliable measurements.

Development of Questionnaires

Questionnaires were developed to obtain some of the information necessary for completion of the study. The following kinds of information were obtained from the questionnaire:

1. Basic information about the parents such as educational level (see Items 1-6 in Appendix B).
2. The parents' perception of their contribution to the EPPCs.

3. The amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPCs.
4. The professionals' attitude regarding the contribution parents can make during EPPCs.

These questionnaires were deliberately made concise and simple so parents and professionals could complete them with minimal effort at the close of the EPPC. Experience in past EPPCs has shown that it would be difficult in some cases to ask parents and professionals to complete lengthy questionnaires after sometimes difficult and time consuming EPPC meetings. Since parents with a variety of educational levels attend EPPCs, the simplicity of the parent questionnaire was a priority in its development.

The first six items on the parent questionnaire obtained necessary factual information such as educational level for completion of the study.

Items 7-11 were used to assess the parents' perception of their contribution to the decisions made at the EPPC (see Appendix B). These five items were taken directly from the questionnaire developed by Barbacovi for his study of Parent Advisory Committees in Michigan in 1976. The coefficient alpha which measured internal consistency for Barbacovi's questionnaire was reported as .825 which was considered acceptable.

Items 12-16 on the parent questionnaire were developed by the researcher to measure the amount of nervous

discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC. These items were developed after much discussion with professionals at both the university and public school level.

The five items used to measure professionals' attitudes about parent contribution to the EPPC decisions were adapted from items 7-11 on the parent questionnaire for use with the professional questionnaire (see Appendix C). The items were reworded using the same item content to measure the professionals' attitude rather than the parents' attitude regarding parental contribution. It was decided after discussions with professionals to assess the professionals attending each EPPC regarding their attitude about parental contribution to EPPCs in general based on their previous experience rather than on the specific parent at the EPPC they were attending.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were written for each independent variable selected for this study. Each hypothesis was tested using the three dependent measures: frequency of response, duration of responses and parents' perception of contribution. The hypotheses were written to measure the relationships between the independent variables and parental participation. For purposes of this study parental participation will mean: the frequency of parental response, the duration of parental responses and the parents' perception of their contribution to the EPPC.

1. There is a negative relationship between group size and parental participation during the EPPC.
2. There is a positive relationship between a prior review by parents of pertinent records, reports and information and parental participation during the EPPC.
3. There is a positive relationship between parents receiving a prior explanation of test results and parental participation during the EPPC.
4. There is a positive relationship between the educational level of the parent(s) and parental participation during the EPPC.
5. There is a positive relationship between previous EPPC experience by the parent and parental participation during the EPPC.
6. There is a positive relationship between attendance by both parents (or accompaniment by other than spouse) at the EPPC and parental participation during the EPPC.
7. Parents who have a prior explanation of the EPPC either in conference or by written material have a significantly higher level of parental participation than those parents who receive their explanation during the EPPC.
8. There is a positive relationship between the attitude of professionals attending the EPPC regarding the contribution parents can make to

the EPPC and parental participation during the EPPC.

9. There is a negative relationship between the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC and parental participation during the EPPC. The greater the nervous discomfort, the less participation by parents during the EPPC.

Analysis

In order to determine whether or not to combine the three dependent variables into one measurement for analysis purposes, a Spearman Rho Rank Order Correlation and two Point Biserial Correlations were calculated to see if the three dependent variables were appreciably related.

The rank order correlation of the variables frequency and duration was .46 which is significant at the .01 level. However, since the correlation may be interpreted as accounting for only 21 percent of the variance shared by these measures, they may be considered as not appreciably related. The correlations of frequency and duration with contribution were not statistically significant.

The researcher believes there is no logical way to combine the three dependent variables used to measure parental participation since all three are measuring different acts. The frequency of response that parents

make does not necessarily correspond with the duration of time used by parents for responses during an EPPC. Parents who respond in concise statements or questions may contribute highly to the decisions made at the EPPC without accumulating a large duration score. Parents might also respond for long periods of time without accumulating a high frequency count and still contribute to the meeting. Therefore, the data were analyzed separately for frequency and duration even though both are measures of response during the EPPC used in this study. Also, the scores for parental perception of contribution to the EPPC was analyzed separately since this is subjective psychological data and the data for frequency and duration are objective observed measurements.

The results for each of the dependent variables were ranked separately from highest to lowest and were divided at the median. For example, the frequency ratio scores were ranked from highest to lowest and divided at the median producing two groups. These groups were labeled high and low for analysis purposes. The same procedure was used to produce high and low groups for duration and perception of contribution.

Two groups were also established for each of the independent variables for analysis purposes. The following independent variables have a natural two way split:

1. Prior review of records--yes or no.
2. Prior explanation by school person of test results--yes or no.
3. Previous EPPC experience--yes or no.
4. One parent or two.

The remaining five independent variables were also divided into two groups for each variable. This was accomplished in the following manner:

1. Group size - The median for group size of 5. The 30 EPPCs were divided at the median with those EPPCs that are 5 or less placed in one group and those that are 6 or more in the other group. This produced a 17/13 split for the 30 EPPCs.
2. Educational level - Two groups of 15 each were established by dividing the 30 EPPCs into those parents who had a high school education or less and those parents who had more than a high school education. Item 2 on the parent questionnaire produced this data. Less than high school - 6, high school - 9, more than high school - 12, and finished college - 3.
3. Procedure used to explain the EPPC - Since there were only three parents who indicated that a pamphlet was used as the most effective means of explanation, this procedure was added to the scores for prior conference producing a division

between those who received a prior explanation, either written or oral, and those who received their explanation at the EPPC.

4. Professional attitudes toward parental contribution - The mean scores achieved from each EPPC for the professionals on the professional questionnaire were ranked from highest to lowest to establish two groups divided at the median score. Since there was a tie between two scores of 6.7 for the median score, these two 6.7 scores were not used for analysis purposes, leaving two groups of 14 each labeled high attitudes and low attitudes.
5. Nervous discomfort - Two groups were established for nervous discomfort by dividing the 30 EPPCs at the mean score of 5.2. Those scores above 5.2 were placed in the group labeled low nervous discomfort since high scores from the parent questionnaire indicated low nervous discomfort. Those scores below 5.2 were placed in the group labeled high nervous discomfort. There were 12 scores in the high group and 17 scores in the low group since one parent did not complete this portion of the questionnaire.

Since the data obtained in this study was arranged categorically, it can be defined as enumeration data.

This enumeration data was analyzed by using the Chi Square Test of Independence. A Chi Square Test was done for each hypothesis to determine if the variables are independent of each other. Since the expected frequency for each cell of the 2 by 2 contingency tables used was less than 10, the Yates Correction Factor was used to ensure more conservative results.

Where significant relationships were established for the hypotheses, a Phi Coefficient was used to determine the extent of the relationship.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the problems previously mentioned regarding sample selection, randomization was not viewed as the best alternative for picking districts where EPPCs would be studied. Because of the procedures used for sample selection, generalizations to other school districts in Michigan would be viewed with skepticism and therefore were not done in this study.

However, the Ingham Intermediate School District is close to both the headquarters for the Michigan Department of Education and a major university. It is also recognized for its leadership statewide and is considered by most professionals as being as up to date and as current as any intermediate district in the state. Therefore, it is assumed by the researcher that educational planning and placement committees are working as well in the Ingham

Intermediate School District as anywhere in the state.

Another limitation of this study is that there was no direct way to measure the totality of parental participation. The researcher must therefore assume that the measurement of the quantity of parental responses and the parents' perception of their contributions are valid measures of parental participation.

A confounding variable which may also interfere with the study is the personality of parents involved in the EPPCs where data is collected. Some people have a tendency to be more at ease in group situations and have a willingness to speak more than those who are more introverted. Therefore, the variable of the extroverted versus the introverted personality may be an extraneous variable which confounds the results of this study. The researcher feels there is no way to control this variable, especially in a study where there is no control over actual subjects who participate in the research. The study itself is believed to be of enough value to pursue despite this drawback.

Another factor which could have a confounding effect upon the results of the study was the possibility of distortion caused by the observer at the EPPC. In order to reduce the effects of distractions, the observer did not join the participants at the table and sat in a position where he would be least obtrusive to the group.

An explanation was given to all members of the EPPC that the observer was studying the EPPC process with permission from the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education of the Ingham Intermediate School District. Parents were asked, however, if the observer's presence bothered them and permission to remain was secured from them. At no time did the parents realize their responses were being measured. It is believed that the observer's presence, as a variable, confounded the study minimally.

Summary

The procedures used to complete this study were actual observations of a sample of educational planning and placement committee meetings selected from five local school districts within the Ingham Intermediate School District. The necessary data needed for this research project was obtained by observation, professional and parental questionnaires administered at the close of the EPPC and by recording the frequency and duration of parental responses during the EPPC. This data was statistically analyzed using the Chi Square Test of Independence to determine if there were significant relationships between the identified independent variables and the dependent variables selected to represent parental participation.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Hypotheses were written for each independent variable selected for this study of parental participation during educational planning and placement committee meetings. An analysis was done using the Chi Square Test for Independence for each independent variable with each of the dependent measures. Even though only one hypothesis was written to measure relationships between each independent variable and parental participation, an analysis was made between each of the independent variables and each of the dependent variables (frequency of response, duration of responses, and parental perception of contribution to the EPPC).

Hypothesis 1: There is a negative relationship between group size and parental participation during the EPPC.

The analyses of the data for hypothesis 1 are reported in Table 7.

Table 7.

Analysis of the Relationship Between Group Size
and Parental Participation

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
6 or more	6	7	8	5	6	7
5 or less	9	8	7	10	9	8
χ^2		0 ^a		.542		0

^aZero χ^2 values were obtained when a formula adapted for a calculator was used, and when the Yates correction for continuity value was included in the formula.

The results of the analyses in Table 7 indicate there were no significant relationships, either positive or negative, between group size and the three dependent variables in this study. It should be noted that little difference existed in the sizes of EPPCs which were obtained for the study. Table 8 shows that 20 of the 30 EPPCs observed had between 5 and 7 professionals in attendance.

Table 8.

Number of Participants in EPPCs Observed for the Study

Number of Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of EPPCs by Size		1	4	2	10	4	6	2		1

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between a prior review by parents of pertinent records, reports and information and parental participation during the EPPC.

The results of the analyses of the data for hypothesis 2 are reported in Table 9.

Table 9.

Analysis of the Relationship Between Prior Review of Pertinent Information and Parental Participation

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Yes	11	11	10	12	10	12
No	4	4	5	3	5	3
χ^2	0		.17		.17	

The analyses reported in Table 9 indicate that no significant relationships exist between prior review of pertinent information and the dependent variables in this study. It must be noted, however, that parents in only 8 of the 30 EPPCs studied indicated they had not reviewed their child's records and other pertinent information prior to the EPPC.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between parents receiving a prior explanation of test results and parental participation during the EPPC.

The results of the analysis of the data for hypothesis 3 are reported in Table 10.

Table 10.

**Analysis of the Relationship Between Prior Explanation
of Test Results and Parental Participation**

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Yes	12	12	11	13	12	12
No	3	3	4	2	3	3
χ^2	0		.208		0	

The analyses of the data obtained for hypothesis 3 show no significant relationships, either positive or negative, between a prior explanation of test results and the three dependent variables used to measure parental participation in this study. It must be noted that parents in only 6 of the 30 EPPCs studied indicated they had not received a prior explanation of test results by a school person.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between the educational level of the parent(s) and parental participation during the EPPC.

The results of the analyses of the data obtained for hypothesis 4 are reported in Table 11.

Table 11.

**Analysis of the Relationship Between Educational
Level of Parent and Parental Participation**

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
More than H.S.	4	11	6	9	6	9
Less than H.S.	11	4	9	6	9	6
χ^2	4.8*		.53		.53	
ϕ	.40					

*Significant at the .05 level

The analyses of the data reported in Table 11 indicates that a positive relationship exists between the educational level of the parents who attended EPPCs in this study and the frequency of their responses at those EPPCs which is significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient used to measure the extent of that relationship is .40.

It should also be noted that while the relationships for educational level and the other two dependent variables (duration and contribution) do not reach significant levels, they are in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between previous EPPC experience by parents and parental participation during the EPPC.

The results of the analyses for hypothesis 5 are reported in Table 12.

Table 12.

**Analysis of the Relationship Between Previous
EPPC Experience and Parental Participation**

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Yes	6	6	5	7	6	6
No	9	9	10	8	9	9
χ^2	0		.138		0	

The analyses of the data reported in Table 12 indicate there were no significant relationships, either positive or negative, between previous EPPC experience and any of the dependent variables in this study.

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between attendance by both parents (or accompaniment by other than spouse) at the EPPC and parental participation during the EPPC.

The results of the analyses for hypothesis 6 are reported in Table 13.

Table 13.

**Analysis of the Relationship Between Number of Parents
in Attendance and Parental Participation**

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
2 Parents	4	11	7	8	7	8
1 Parent	11	4	8	7	8	7
χ^2	4.8*		0		0	
ϕ	.40					

*Significant at the .05 level

The analyses of the data reported in Table 13 indicate there is a positive relationship between attendance when two parents attend the EPPC and the frequency of their response which is significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient used to determine the extent of that relationship is .40.

There are no relationships established for attendance by both parents and the other two dependent variables (duration and contribution) in this study.

Hypothesis 7: Parents who have a prior explanation of the EPPC, either in conference or by written material, have a significant higher level of parental participation than those parents who receive their explanation at the EPPC.

The results of the analyses for hypothesis 7 are reported in Table 14.

Table 14.

Analysis of the Relationship Between Prior Explanation of EPPC and Parental Participation

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Yes	5	7	7	5	7	5
No	10	7	7	10	7	10
χ^2	.28		.28		.28	

b There were 29 EPPCs analyzed because of data not being reported. Subsequent analyses may also have less than 30 EPPCs for the same reason.

The analyses of the data reported in Table 14 indicate there are no significant relationships, either positive or negative, between the procedure used to explain the EPPC and the three dependent variables (frequency, duration and contribution) used to measure parental participation. It should be noted that while the relationship between a prior EPPC explanation and frequency of response is slightly positive (.28), the relationships between prior EPPC explanation and duration and contribution are slightly negative (.28).

Hypothesis 8: There is a positive relationship between the attitude of professionals attending the EPPC regarding the contribution parents can make to the EPPC and parental participation during the EPPC.

The results of the analyses for hypothesis 8 are reported in Table 15.

Table 15.

Analysis of the Relationship Between Professional Attitude and Parental Participation

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
High P.A.	4	10	5	9	6	8
Low P.A.	11	3	9	5	9	5
χ^2	5.4*		1.3		.75	
ϕ	.424					

*Significant at the .05 level

The analyses of the data reported in Table 15 indicate there is a positive relationship between a high professional attitude regarding the contribution parents can make during the EPPC and the frequency of parental response which is significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient which was used to measure the extent of that relationship is .424. While the relationships between professional attitude and the other two dependent variables (duration and contribution) are not significant, they are in a positive direction.

In order to determine whether the procedure of dichotomizing the continuous variable of professional attitude may have obscured discriminations at some point along the professional attitude scale, point biserial coefficients of correlations were calculated with frequency, duration and contribution as dichotomized variables and professional attitude as the continuous variable. The obtained coefficients were not significant for the relationships between professional attitude and duration and contribution, but were significant at the .05 level for professional attitude and frequency. This is the same level of significance which was found for professional attitude and frequency using the Chi Square Test for Independence.

Hypothesis 9: There is a negative relationship between the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC and parental participation during the EPPC.

The results of the analyses for hypothesis 9 are reported in Table 16.

Table 16.

Analysis of the Relationship Between Parental Nervous Discomfort and Parental Participation

	Frequency		Duration		Contribution	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Low N.D.	8	9	8	9	4	13
High N.D.	6	6	6	6	11	1
χ^2	.056		.056		10.76**	
ϕ					.599	

**Significant at the .01 level

The analyses of the data indicate there is a negative relationship between the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during EPPCs in this study and their perception of their contribution to the EPPC which is significant at the .01 level. The greater nervous discomfort experienced by the parents in this study, the less they will perceive they have contributed to the EPPC. The Phi Coefficient used to measure the extent of that relationship is .599.

There are no significant relationships between the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents and the other two dependent variables (frequency and duration).

In order to determine whether the procedure of dichotomizing the continuous variable of nervous

discomfort may have obscured discrimination at some point along the nervous discomfort scale, point biserial coefficients of correlation were calculated with frequency, duration and contribution as dichotomized variables and nervous discomfort as the continuous variable. The obtained coefficients were not significant for the relationships between nervous discomfort and frequency and duration, but were significant at the .01 level for nervous discomfort and contribution. This is the same level of significance which was found for nervous discomfort and contribution using the Chi Square Test for Independence.

Post Hoc Analyses of the Relationships Between Nervous Discomfort and Five Selected Variables

The data collected for the purposes of comparing relationships between certain identified independent variables and those dependent variables selected to measure parental participation suggested that it would be of interest to compare some of the independent variables with the variable nervous discomfort. A post hoc analysis was done comparing nervous discomfort with the following independent variables:

1. Group size
2. Number of parents in attendance
3. Educational level of parents
4. Procedure used to explain EPPC to parents
5. Professional attitude regarding parental contribution

The following hypotheses were written and the data analyzed in a similar manner to the data in the original study using the Chi Square Test of Independence:

Hypotheses for Post Hoc Study

1. There is a positive relationship between the number of professionals in attendance and the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by the parents during the EPPC. Parents who attend EPPCs of 6 or more professionals experience more nervous discomfort.

2. There is a negative relationship between the number of parents in attendance and nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC. When both parents are in attendance they experience less nervous discomfort than when only one parent is attending the EPPC.

3. There is a negative relationship between the educational level of the parent and the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC. Parents with higher educational levels experience less nervous discomfort than those with lower educational levels.

4. There is a positive relationship between receiving a prior explanation of the EPPC and the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC. Parents who receive a prior explanation of the EPPC experience less nervous discomfort than those who receive their explanation during the EPPC.

5. There is a negative relationship between the score for professional attitude toward parental contribution attained by professionals during an EPPC and the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during that EPPC. Parents who attend an EPPC where professionals score in the high group experience less nervous discomfort than those who attend EPPCs where professionals score in the low group.

The data was analyzed using the Chi Square Test for Independence and the results are reported in Table 17.

Table 17.

Post Hoc Analysis of the Relationships Between Nervous Discomfort and Five Selected Variables

Hypothesis		Nervous Discomfort		χ^2
		Low	High	
1. Group size:	less than 5 6 or more	10 7	7 5	.14
2. Number of parents:	1 2	6 11	8 4	1.68
3. Educational level:	H.S. or less more than H.S.	6 11	9 3	3.05
4. Procedure used to explain EPPC:	During EPPC Prior to EPPC	11 6	5 6	.36
5. Professional attitude:	Low P.A. High P.A.	5 8	8 5	.60

There were no significant relationships between any of the independent variables selected for analyses in the post hoc study and nervous discomfort. However, it should be noted that the relationships were in the direction

predicted with the exception of hypothesis 4 which had a relationship in the opposite direction predicted.

Summary

Hypotheses were written for each of the nine independent variables and parental participation during EPPCs. For analysis purposes, parental participation was defined as the frequency/duration of parental responses and the parents' perception of their contribution to the EPPC.

Each hypothesis was tested for significance using the Chi Square Test for Independence due to the non parametric nature of the data. Where a significant relationship was found, the Phi Coefficient was used to measure the extent of that relationship. The analyses of the data indicated significant relationships between the following variables:

1. There was a positive relationship between the educational level of parents attending EPPCs and the frequency of their response which is significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient measures the extent of that relationship at .40.
2. The frequency of response was significantly greater for parents during EPPCs where both parents attend as compared to EPPCs where only one parent attends. The level of significance is .05 and the Phi Coefficient is .40.

3. There was a positive relationship between the attitude of the professionals attending EPPCs regarding the contribution parents can make to the EPPC and the frequency of parental response during the EPPC which is significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient measured the relationship at .424.
4. There was a positive relationship between the amount of parental nervous discomfort experienced during EPPCs and the parents' perception of their contribution to the EPPC which is significant at the .01 level. The Phi Coefficient measured the extent of that relationship at .599.

A post hoc study was done to measure the relationships between five selected independent variables and the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during EPPCs. The five independent variables selected for analysis were:

1. Group size
2. Number of parents attending the EPPC
3. Educational level of parents
4. The procedure used to explain the EPPC to parents
5. Professional attitude regarding parent contribution to the EPPC

No significant relationships were established for any of the five independent variables even though four of the five analyses indicated relationships in the predicted direction.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Litigation and legislation at the state and federal level have given parents the right to be involved in their handicapped children's education. The inclusion of parents in the planning of their children's educational programs is necessary, not only because of the legal mandate, but because of the resulting educational benefits derived for those handicapped children. Parents are a valuable source of diagnostic information needed for developing comprehensive educational programs. They are also a critical component necessary for successful program implementation. Parents must support and help implement educational programs for their children to ensure optimal success.

The educational planning and placement committee (EPPC) is the vehicle used in Michigan to determine eligibility for special education services, for recommending appropriate programming and for planning educational goals for those programs. The Administrative Rules of the Mandatory Special Education Act (P.A. 198) mandate that parents be invited to attend EPPC meetings (Rule 22). Parents should not only be invited, but should be

encouraged to be fully participating members of the educational planning and placement committee. In order for administrators to successfully help parents become fully participating members of the EPPC, they must be aware of any factors which might affect the amount of parental participation at EPPCs. Nine variables were selected which may have significant relationships with parental participation. For purposes of this study, parental participation was determined by measuring the frequency and duration of parent responses as well as the parents' perception of their contribution to the decisions made during the EPPC. The latter was obtained by administering a questionnaire to parents at the close of the meeting.

The nine independent variables selected for the study were:

1. Group size
2. The type of procedure used to explain the EPPCs' purpose and process to parents. These are:
 - (a) prior explanation either orally or in writing
 - (b) explanation at the EPPC
3. A prior review by parents of their child's records and other pertinent information
4. A prior explanation to parents of test results
5. The educational level of parents
6. Previous EPPC experience by parents

7. The number of parents attending the EPPC
8. The attitude of professionals attending the EPPC regarding the ability of parents to contribute to the EPPC.
9. The amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during the EPPC.

The procedures used to obtain the data necessary for analyses were actual observations of thirty EPPCs from five local districts within the Ingham Intermediate School District. During these EPPCs, the data were collected by observation, professional and parental questionnaires, and recording the frequency and duration of parental responses.

Hypotheses were written for each of the nine independent variables and parental participation during EPPCs. Each hypothesis was tested for significance using the Chi Square Test for Independence. Where a significant level was found, the Phi Coefficient was used to measure the extent of the relationship.

Conclusions

The analyses of the data indicate significant relationships between the following variables:

1. There was a positive relationship between the educational level of parents attending EPPCs and the frequency of their responses which was significant at the .05 level. The Phi

Coefficient measured the extent of that relationship at .40.

2. The frequency of responses was significantly greater for parents during EPPCs where both parents attend as compared to EPPCs where only one parent attends. The level of significance was .05 and the Phi Coefficient is .40.
3. There is a positive relationship between the attitude of the professionals attending EPPCs regarding the contribution parents can make to the EPPC and the frequency of parental responses during the EPPC which was significant at the .05 level. The Phi Coefficient measured the extent of the relationship at .424.
4. There was a positive relationship between the amount of parental nervous discomfort experienced during EPPCs and the parents' perception of their contribution to the EPPC which was significant at the .01 level. The Phi Coefficient measured the extent of that relationship at .599.

There were no significant relationships for any of the other hypotheses which were tested in this study.

Discussion

Nine factors were selected as independent variables for this study of factors which could have significant relationships with parental participation during

educational planning and placement committee meetings held in the Ingham Intermediate School District. Selection of districts for observation purposes was based on information obtained from a local district questionnaire in an attempt to maximize discrimination between variables. This procedure proved fruitful for studying some of the variables, but not entirely successful for all of the selected variables. The inability to maximize all of the selected variables undoubtedly affected the outcomes for some of the hypotheses written for analyses.

Group size proved to be one of the variables where the lack of discrimination between variables most affected the results. Unfortunately, most EPPCs observed were approximately the same size with 20 of the 30 EPPCs having between five and seven professional participants. Information obtained from the local district questionnaire and discussions with professionals indicates that professional educators believe that group size can affect parental participation. Even though no significant relationships were established for this variable and any of the dependent variables used to measure parental participation, further research should be done where greater discrimination between group sizes can be accomplished. Since many educators are already attempting to limit EPPC size, it would prove beneficial to continue research on this factor.

Both prior review of pertinent information and prior explanation of test results showed no significant relationships with any of the dependent variables. However, there was also not enough discrimination within variables for either of these factors. Parents in only 8 of the thirty observed EPPCs claimed to not have reviewed their child's records while parents in only six of the thirty EPPCs claimed they did not receive a prior explanation of test results. Additional research with control for these factors is necessary if assumptions are to be made regarding relationships between these variables and parental participation.

There was enough variance between the educational levels of the parents in the study for analysis purposes. Parents in 15 EPPCs had educational levels beyond high school completion and parents from the remaining 15 had received a high school diploma or less. There was a positive relationship between having more than a high school education and the frequency of parental responses which was significant at the .05 level. Even though the relationships between educational level and the duration of responses and parental perception of contribution were not significant, they were in a positive direction.

It could be assumed that parents that attain educational levels beyond high school also attain higher levels of verbal achievement and feel more comfortable about participating with professionals who have completed some

type of university program. Unfortunately, not all parents of handicapped children have attained educational levels beyond high school. Many have not finished high school.

There is little an administrator can do about the level of education of the parent who attends an EPPC. They can, however, make the parent aware of the purposes of the EPPC and how it functions. Every effort should be made to explain the purposes and processes of the EPPC to these parents in language they can comprehend. It is also extremely important that the level of educational jargon is kept to a minimum during the EPPC. A concerted effort must be made to help parents understand what is said. Educators have developed language with which many outsiders are unfamiliar. Therefore, it is crucial that parents, especially those with lower levels of education, are given assistance in comprehending the workings of the educational planning and placement committee.

The procedural safeguards which have been established to ensure due process are extremely relevant and important for all parents, but especially so for those parents who, because of less education, may not comprehend the sometimes complicated EPPC process.

When both parents attend the EPPC, there is a significantly higher frequency of parental response during the meeting. One assumption which could be made is that accompaniment by a spouse provides the additional support

necessary for greater participation. It could also be speculated that the higher interest which caused both parents to attend was also responsible for the greater amount of participation. Regardless of casual assumptions, it is obvious that there was a significantly greater amount of participation when both parents attended EPPCs in this study. Further research is needed to determine whether higher interest or the support provided by the spouse is the major factor in the relationship with parental participation. If spousal support is the major factor, then school personnel should actively increase efforts to have both parents attend EPPCs.

Logically, the assumption could be made that parents who received prior explanation of the EPPC process would have a greater comprehension of it and would participate more than those who received their explanation at the EPPC. However, prior explanation of the purpose and process of the EPPC had no significant effects on parental participation based on the analyses of the data collected for this study. The researcher had no control over the quality of the explanation given to parents. In only three instances were pamphlet given to parents prior to the EPPC. Because of this it was necessary to group the variable, prior written explanation, with a prior conference for analyses purposes. A more controlled experiment where the researcher could control both the type and quality of the explanation is needed in order to determine

if relationships exist between the method used for explanation of the EPPC and parental participation.

There was a positive relationship between the attitude of professionals attending the EPPC regarding the contribution parents can make to the EPPC and the frequency of parental responses during the meeting which was significant at the .05 level. There were also positive relationships between professional attitude regarding parent contribution and the duration of responses and the parents' perception of their contribution which did not reach significant levels.

The questionnaire attempted to measure professionals' beliefs about parental contributions based on their professional experience, not the particular EPPC they were attending. If the attitude of the professional participants about parental contribution in general has an effect on parental participation during the EPPC, then attempts should be made to improve those attitudes. Inservice education could be one effective procedure which might improve professionals' attitudes about the contribution parents can make to the EPPC. The assumption might also be made that as parents prove they can contribute to the EPPC, professionals would gradually improve their attitudes about their ability to contribute. Logically then, attempts should be made to improve meaningful parental participation, both with professionals and parents alike.

Since the professional questionnaire was administered at the close of the meeting, it could be argued that the responses to it reflected the performance of the particular parent in that EPPC. That is, the greater the parental contribution, the higher the professional attitude score recorded at the close of the meeting. There is a significant relationship between parental participation and professional attitudes regarding the contribution parents can make. However, it is difficult to determine whether higher professional attitude increases parental participation or if greater parental participation increases professional attitude in a positive direction. A study where the questionnaire is given prior to the EPPC could answer this question.

Parents in the study showed their perception of the contribution they made during the EPPC was significantly higher when the level of nervous discomfort they experienced was lower. Attempts to lower levels of nervous discomfort experienced by parents could be useful for increasing parental participation based on the results of this study.

Professionals can and do attempt to make parents feel at ease during EPPCs. Based on observations made during this study, the personality and sensitivity of the professionals attending the EPPC, especially the chairperson, are key factors in the interaction between parents and professionals. In many of the EPPCs

observed, the chairperson, sometimes the special education director and sometimes the principal, often attempted not only to help make the parent feel at ease, but also acted as an interpreter who attempted to help the parent(s) understand the dialogue of the group.

A post hoc study which compared some of the selected independent variables with nervous discomfort did not establish any significant relationships. Further research with these variables and others which might be selected by professional educators could prove beneficial for reducing the level of nervous discomfort experienced by parents during EPPCs.

Recommendations

The factors which proved significant in this study of parental participation during EPPCs were:

1. The educational level of parents
2. The number of parents attending the EPPC
3. The attitude of the professionals about parental contribution
4. The amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents

Based on these results the following recommendations are made for school personnel:

1. A long range plan should be developed in school districts to change professional attitudes about parental participation during EPPCs. Inservice

education as well as the tone set by personnel in leadership positions could do much to improve professional attitude about parental participation.

2. Attempts to have both parents attend their child's EPPC should be increased and emphasized. If a spouse cannot attend, a friend or relative could be encouraged to join the parent at the EPPC. Parent Advisory Committee members could be utilized to assist and join parents at EPPCs if necessary.
3. Professionals should be made aware of the relationships between both the educational level of parents and nervous discomfort with parental participation. The demeanor of the professionals attending the EPPC can do much for parents during EPPCs. Professionals can both lessen the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents and also assist parents in their comprehension of the meeting.
4. One professional should assume an assisting role to the parent. This person can help the parent feel more comfortable during the EPPC and can assist in their comprehension of the discussion.
5. Attempts should be made by school personnel to draw parents into the discussion. Specific questions about their knowledge of their child

can be used to increase parental participation during the meeting.

The following recommendations are made for further research on parental participation during EPPCs:

1. A study of parental participation as it relates to group size with control of the number of professionals who attend the EPPC.
2. A study of parental participation as it relates to the type of procedure used to explain the EPPC with control over the type and quality of explanation.
3. Research should be conducted on increasing participation of parents with lower educational levels at EPPCs.
4. Further research on the relationship between professional attitude and parental participation utilizing a treatment which attempts to change professional attitude in a positive direction about the contribution parents can make to the EPPC.
5. Additional research on the relationships between nervous discomfort and any variables which might increase the amount of nervous discomfort experienced by parents.

General Impressions

This final section discusses conclusions drawn from the observations of the EPPCs in the sample which were not part of the major emphasis of the study. These conclusions are not based on objective measurements of the data collected for the study. Even though they are purely subjective in nature, they can add value to a discussion of the educational planning and placement committee process.

As the observations were done, it was noted that all of the EPPCs except one had the same basic structure. The majority of the time used for the EPPC was devoted to establishing eligibility for special education services according to the Administrative Rules of Public Act 198. Once eligibility was established, a program was selected for the child's placement. Sometimes there were alternative programs from which selection could be made and sometimes it was obvious the only alternatives were either placement into a particular special education program or remaining in the present program. Once placement was established, some general goals were written in accordance with the Administrative Rules of P.A. 198.

One EPPC, however, differed in its general structure. Once eligibility was established, the chairperson insisted on establishing some goals for the child based on his needs before placement was selected. Placement was then selected on the basis of where these goals could best be

attained from available alternative programs, not because of the handicap established for eligibility.

Placement selection can be more effectively determined based on the child's needs, not the handicap which is determined by the EPPC. Unfortunately, in most of the EPPCs observed, the participants' major effort was directed toward establishing eligibility and then deciding placement in accordance with that eligibility. It is not the researcher's aim to downgrade the importance of establishing proper eligibility, but rather to stress the importance of basing placement selection upon the needs of the child. It is believed this can be best accomplished by establishing goals prior to selection and then recommending the placement where those goals can best be attained.

Ideally, the de-emphasis on eligibility, in fact the complete elimination of labeling a child handicapped, and emphasis upon the child's needs cannot only improve the educational planning and placement process, but can also prove beneficial in removing the stigma attached to special education placement.

The impression was formed during the course of the 30 EPPCs in the sample studied that the professionals in attendance do listen to parents during these meetings. Most appeared genuinely interested in what parents had to offer to the decision-making process. It was obvious that in some EPPCs the professionals would not reach a

decision unless they were certain the parents were in agreement. In effect, in these EPPCs, the parents would have had veto power over decisions made if they chose to use it. It is not known whether the belief in the need for parental support for program success was the prime motivator for this behavior by the professionals or whether it was an unwillingness to face the prospect of a disagreeing parent who might choose to appeal through the hearing process.

The style of the chairperson in some EPPCs appeared to have an effect upon the parents behavior during the meeting. Some chairpersons focused their discussion on the parent. They spoke directly to the parent or paraphrased another professional's remarks for the parents. They would often ask how the parents felt about certain parts of the dialogue of the group. This technique appeared fruitful for helping the parents feel at ease and that they were also contributing members of the group. It also appeared to increase parental participation which was the major emphasis of this study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF LOCAL DISTRICTS

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Local Coordinators
FROM: Bill Pistono, Doctoral Intern
DATE: October 29, 1976

Enclosed you will find a short questionnaire dealing with the EPPC process. I am attempting to gather some information which will help me develop a proposal for my dissertation. I am very much interested in identifying and studying factors which may have an effect upon parental participation at the EPPC. If you would take a minute to fill out and mail this questionnaire back to me, I would be very appreciative.

Thank you.

BP:lfb

Enclosure

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What percentage of parents review reports, records and other pertinent information prior to the EPPC in your district?

0-25 _____ 26-50 _____ 51-75 _____ 76-100 _____

2. Do you feel most parents are interested in reviewing this information prior to the EPPC?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Check the following procedure used in your district to explain the purpose and procedures of the EPPC to parents:

_____ A. Prior conference between school person and parent

_____ B. Explanation at beginning of the EPPC

_____ C. Parent is given pamphlet or brochure explaining the EPPC prior to the meeting.

4. Do you feel the number of people in attendance has an effect on the amount of participation by parents at the EPPC?

Yes _____ No _____

5. Do you feel there is a relationship between the size of the group and the amount of discomfort experienced by parents?

Yes _____ No _____

6. Do large EPPCs tend to intimidate parents?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Please indicate the following regarding the size of EPPCs in your district:

A. Largest you are aware of _____

B. Smallest you are aware of _____

C. Give a mean average for EPPCs in your district _____

8. Is there any attempt made in your district to keep the number of people at EPPCs to a minimum?

Yes _____ No _____

9. Please indicate any factors which you feel could affect the amount of parental participation at an EPPC.
10. When do professionals review the reports, records and other pertinent information regarding the child in question?
- ☐ A. At the EPPC
 - ☐ B. Prior to the EPPC - individually
 - ☐ C. Prior to the EPPC - group meeting
 - ☐ D. Do not review information

BP:1fb
10/29/76

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age _____
2. Educational level: Less than high school _____
 Finished high school _____
 More than high school _____
 Finished college _____
 (B.A. or more) _____
3. Have you ever attended an EPPC before?
 Yes _____ No _____
4. Which of the following methods was used to explain the purpose and procedures of the EPPC to you? (If more than one were used, choose the one which best explained the EPPC to you.)
 _____ A. A conference with a school person either at home or at school
 _____ B. Pamphlet or brochure explaining the EPPC
 _____ C. The explanation today at the EPPC
5. Did you review your child's records, reports and other information before the EPPC?
 Yes _____ No _____
6. Did a school person explain the results of the tests given your child before the EPPC?
 Yes _____ No _____

Please circle the answer which best describes your feelings about each of the following questions:

7. During the EPPC, I felt as though I made a contribution towards the decisions made.
 Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. I was given a chance at the EPPC to tell my goals for my child.
 Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. During the EPPC, I felt as though I were part of a team working to help my child.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. Sometimes during the EPPC I felt as though my presence was not needed.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I had as much influence in the decisions made for my child as anyone at the EPPC.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. During the EPPC, I often felt nervous and uncomfortable.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. During the EPPC, I felt free to express my opinions about my child.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. I felt very much out of place during the EPPC.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. Once the meeting began, I forgot about being nervous and felt at ease.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. I was too nervous to say everything that I wanted to say.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following based on your experience as an educator:

1. Parents can make a contribution during the EPPC equal to that of any of the professionals in attendance.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. The parents' goals for their child are needed for the planning done at the EPPC.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. The parent should be considered a team member of the educational planning and placement committee.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. Parents are not needed for some of the decisions made during the EPPC meeting.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Parents should have as much influence as professionals in the educational decisions made during the EPPC meeting.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX D

Time of Start _____ Time of Finish _____

School District _____

EPPC # _____

Date _____

Number of Participants _____

Types of Participants:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

[illegible]

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

DURATION DATA FOR RELIABILITY ANALYSES

	5 min.	5 min.	5 min.	5 min.	5 min.	5 min.	5 min.
Observer 1 (Researcher)	26.5	0	9	5	2	2	30
Observer 1 (Researcher)	24	0	9.5	5	1.5	2	28.5
Observer 2	24.5	0	9.5	5	1.5	2	28.5
Observer 3	28.5	0	8.5	5	1.5	3	28

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