Special Education in Kindergarten

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Standard 5:

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics
- the values of the diverse school community

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the right of every student to a free, quality education
- bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process

Performances

The administrator:

- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
- protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
- demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community

Issue:

As the superintendent of Oaklawn School District, you are often called by parents who voice a variety of concerns. You have just taken a call from a parent who has just attended the Valentine's Day party in her son's kindergarten class. The parent, who is also active in the Parent Teacher Association group, stated that she was very concerned about a situation in her son's class that involved a student served in special education. From the report of the parent, she stated that the teacher had to spend an abundance of time during the party with a Down's syndrome child that had been mainstreamed into the kindergarten class. The parent was a bit irate about the situation and stated that she had reported this concern to the principal, with a request for her son to be moved to another kindergarten class. Her thought was that if the teacher had to spend classroom time with the special education student during a party, then this type of attention was probably going on during regular instructional time. The parent wanted her son to have more "normal" kindergarten experience where the teacher could spend quality time with all her students. The parent had not succeeded with her request when she had met with the principal, so now she was asking for you to fulfill her wish. In closing the conversation with the parent, you informed her that you would investigate the matter and return her phone call as soon as possible. As you hung up the phone, you began to consider the actions you needed to take in order to address the situation.

Assignment:

- What actions should the superintendent take to address this situation?

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Instructor's Notes and Scoring Guide
For

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Notes to the Instructor

Discussion:

The purpose of this vignette is to prompt a discussion of the superintendent's role in promoting the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. How should the superintendent go about addressing the request of a parent that is unhappy with a decision made by the building level principal? How should the superintendent gather information to address the situation? What kind of information/data should the superintendent gather? Who could the superintendent involve in the data gathering and decision making phases? How should the superintendent communicate with the parent? In discussing this vignette, students should identify issues surrounding integrity, fairness, ethics, and the right of every student to a free, quality education.

Additional Standard:

This vignette could also apply to Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. Discussions could involve the benefits that diversity brings to the school community, diversity and its meaning for educational programs, and how responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged.

Scoring Guide:

Score 2

The student responds directly to the assignment by addressing the actions of the superintendent. The responses include three of the following:

- Specifically addresses other stakeholders (such as building level principal, special education director) in an effort to gather needed information/data.
- Actions clearly demonstrate knowledge of special education placement and services.
- Specifically addresses the need to review district policies and procedures designed to ensure student success.
- Actions clearly demonstrate human relations skills of treating people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect.
- Actions clearly demonstrate an intent to bring ethical principles to the decision-making process.

Score 1

Responses include two of the following:

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- Identifies some individuals involved in the gathering of information/data phase.
- Actions suggest some knowledge of special education placement and services.
- Limited understanding of the need to review district policies and procedures.
- Actions demonstrate some understanding of human relation skills.
- Actions demonstrate limited effort to address ethical principles regarding the decision-making process.

Score 0

- Response does not address others involved in the gathering of information/data phase.
- Poor understanding regarding knowledge of special education placement and services.
- No clear understanding of the need to review district policies and procedures.
- No clear understanding of human relation skills.
- No clear demonstration of the need to bring ethical principles to the decision-making process.

Additional Resources:

- Success Link
  Website designed to showcase best practices and programs which have proven to work in the state of Missouri. Site includes over 2,000 lesson plans for educators.
  www.successlink.org
- Wrights Law
  This site, by a special education attorney, provides parents, educators, and attorneys with advocacy information and special education law for children with disabilities. It provides the texts of case laws, statutes, and federal regulations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
  http://wrightslaw.com/
- Idea Practices
  This site is designed to answer questions about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, provide best practices regarding special education and highlight special education case law.
  www.ideapractices.org
- National School Board Association (NSBA)
  This website provides an array of resource information as it relates to policy, research, technology, and school law.
  www.nsba.org
- Education World
  This website supports K-12 school administrators and teachers by providing information on lesson plans, curriculum contents, school administration, special themes, and educational web reviews.
  www.eduction-world.com
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-Division of Special Education
  This website represents the division of special education of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Information includes resources, programs, publications and legislation concerning the area of special education in the state of Missouri.
  www.dese.state.mo.us/divspeced/
- Council of Administrators of Special Education
  Website provides information regarding professional leadership in the area of special education. Links are provided to the CASE newsletter, articles and position papers concerning special

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education issues, and legislative resources.
www.casecec.org

- Council for the Exceptional Child
  Website highlights the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities, and/or the gifted. CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides continual professional development, advocates for newly and historically underserved individuals with exceptionalities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice.
  www.cec.sped.org

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