Currently, the practice of special education service delivery is undergoing a transformation. This is due to the transition initiated by the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education toward a framework of “results driven accountability” for the determination of program effectiveness (USDoE, 2011). Since the inception of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act more than forty years ago, students with disabilities have been provided increasingly more access to the educational setting and curriculum. However, academic results and outcomes for those same students have not improved and the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities continues to widen when measured on national and state wide assessments. This is due to the focus on procedural adherence and compliance to IDEA and state regulations in lieu of an
emphasis on student outcomes and accountability measures (Mearman, 2012). Many of those procedural requirements are prescribed in the document that outlines the special education programs and services to be delivered to the student, the Individual Education Program, known as the IEP. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the relationship between the IEP document and student achievement outcomes. Although previous investigations have shown that there is little connection between the content of the IEP and a teacher's instruction, this research examines whether an increase in procedural compliance to state standards in the IEP document positively influences student performance on statewide assessments (LaSalle, Roach, & McGrath, 2013; Lynch & Beare, 1990). The results of this study determined there is little impact, if any, between student outcome data and conformity to compliance standards based on IDEA rules and regulations. These results have implications for multidisciplinary team focus when preparing IEPs.