



Introduction to Federal and State Laws Impacting Students with Disabilities Module Note-Taking Guide

Module Overview

This course is part of a series covering the legal foundations of laws supporting students with disabilities. This module has two parts. The first part of the module focuses on federal laws impacting students with disabilities, and the second part focuses on state laws.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to

- explain the difference between civil rights laws and funding laws;
- identify where the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, fits within the continuum of federal laws;
- identify other federal laws that have direct implications for students with disabilities; and
- understand how state laws may expand federal laws impacting students with disabilities.

Using the Note-Taking Guide

As you engage in the module, **take notes on the key themes and answer the summary questions** at the end of each section. After you complete the module, check your responses against the responses given at the end of this document.

Section 1: A Continuum of Federal Laws

This section explores the spectrum of federal laws impacting students with disabilities.

Notes

Key themes	Notes
Civil rights laws versus funding laws	
Hybrid civil and funding laws	
Where IDEA fits within the continuum	

Summary Questions

Questions	Responses
What is the primary difference between civil rights laws and funding laws?	
Where does IDEA fit within the continuum of federal laws and why?	



Section 2: Other Federal Laws Impacting Students With Disabilities

This section examines several key federal laws beyond IDEA that have significant implications for students with disabilities.

Notes

Key themes	Notes
Fourteenth Amendment	
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	
Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	

Summary Questions

Questions	Responses
Which federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal funding?	
What is the primary purpose of ESSA?	



Questions	Responses
What is the primary purpose of Section 504 and ADA?	

Section 3: Federal Laws and IDEA

This section delves into the relationships between IDEA and other federal laws, exploring how they intersect, complement, and sometimes differ in their protections and requirements for students with disabilities.

Notes

Key themes	Notes
The roots of IDEA	
Section 504, ADA, and IDEA	
Title VI and students with disabilities	
FERPA and IDEA; ESSA and IDEA	



Summary Questions

Questions	Responses
How did the Fourteenth Amendment contribute to the development of IDEA?	
What are two key differences between IDEA and Section 504/ADA in terms of eligibility and protections?	

Section 4: State Laws Relating to Students with Disabilities

This section investigates how states can build on the federal foundation of laws impacting students with disabilities, creating variations and extensions that reflect local priorities and values.

Notes

Key themes	Notes
State variations related to IDEA	
Continuum of state legislation and regulations	



Summary Questions

Questions	Responses
How can states extend or modify federal laws relating to students with disabilities?	
How do state laws relate to the civil rights/funding continuum shared at the federal level?	

Section 5: Types of State Laws

This section reviews examples of state-level laws that affect students with disabilities.

Notes

Key themes	Notes
State civil rights laws	
Gifted education laws	
Dyslexia laws	
Funding laws	



Key themes	Notes
Antibullying laws	
Student records laws	
Implications for students with disabilities	

Summary Question

Question	Response
What are two examples of state laws that may extend beyond federal requirements for students with disabilities?	



Sample Responses

This section presents sample responses to the questions provided after each section. You may use these responses to compare them with your own responses.

Section	Summary questions	Sample responses
Section 1: A Continuum of Federal Laws	What is the primary difference between civil rights laws and funding laws?	Civil rights laws typically provide the right to sue for enforcement but do not include additional funding, whereas funding laws provide additional money for implementation but generally lack the right to sue.
	Where does IDEA fit within the continuum of federal laws and why?	IDEA fits in the middle of the continuum as a hybrid law because it exhibits characteristics of both civil rights laws and funding laws. It provides notable funding to help implement its requirements while also including individual rights and the ability to sue.
Section 2: Other Federal Laws Impacting Students with Disabilities	Which federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal funding?	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
	What is the primary purpose of ESSA?	The primary purpose of ESSA is to provide federal funding to schools to help cover the cost of educating disadvantaged students.
	What is the primary purpose of Section 504 and ADA?	The primary purpose of ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
Section 3: Federal Laws and IDEA	How did the Fourteenth Amendment contribute to the development of IDEA?	The Fourteenth Amendment's due process and equal protection clauses were used in key court cases (PARC and Mills) that established the basic principles later incorporated into IDEA. These included free appropriate public education, individualized education programs (IEPs), and due process hearings.



Section	Summary questions	Sample responses
	What are two key differences between IDEA and Section 504/ADA in terms of eligibility and protections?	IDEA has a narrower definition of disability and requires that a student need special education and related services, whereas Section 504/ADA has a broader definition. IDEA provides more specific protections and services (such as IEPs and transition services) that are not required under Section 504/ADA.
Section 4: State Laws Relating to Students With Disabilities	How can states extend federal laws relating to students with disabilities?	States can add to or extend federal requirements, but they cannot subtract from or reduce the protections provided by federal law. This allows for variation based on each state's particular culture and values.
	How do state laws relate to the civil rights/funding continuum shared at the federal level?	Similar to federal laws, state laws can be categorized on a continuum from pure funding laws to pure civil rights laws, with many falling in between as hybrid laws. However, the categorization at the state level often is less clear-cut than at the federal level.
Section 5: Types of State Laws	What are two examples of state laws that may extend beyond federal requirements for students with disabilities?	Two examples are gifted education laws, which may require identification and interventions for gifted students, and dyslexia laws, which may provide specific requirements for addressing dyslexia beyond what federal law requires.

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