What Does a Principal Need to Know About Special Education Law?

This chapter discusses the main laws affecting special education. It provides an overview of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and its amendments, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Each of these laws provides guidance for educating students with disabilities, and each is important for principals to understand.

Quick Points

- The main law governing special education is IDEA (2006). It covers identification, placement, and services.
- Students with disabilities are entitled to an appropriate education.
- Students with disabilities are to be educated in the least restrictive environment.
- Not all students with disabilities are eligible for special education services under IDEA; Section 504 plans provide education accommodations and modifications for these students.
- Section 508 governs accessibility of technology and online programs for students with disabilities.
- FERPA governs who can see documents relating to a student.