

Appendix A
Glossary

Accessibility

In the context of technology, accessibility refers to providing access for all users, including students with disabilities, to digital environments and tools. Designing digital materials and delivery systems to support the use of audio-only screen readers, text browsers, and other adaptive technologies; offering contrasting colors for readability; and providing alternative text tags for graphics are examples of accessibility. The Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education has issued a “significant guidance document” detailing the responsibility of elementary and secondary schools to meet accessibility requirements under both civil rights and special education law.¹

Accommodations

Accommodations, modifications, and other services for students with disabilities are legally protected when included in a highly structured Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a more flexible plan created under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. An IEP is developed and implemented as a requirement of Special Education, and a 504 plan is developed and implemented by the educational institution to address civil rights mandates.²

Blended Learning

“A formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and the modalities along each student’s learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.”³

Child Find

Child find is the legal requirement that schools identify children with disabilities who may be entitled to special education services. This requirement covers children from birth through age 21. This identification process allows schools to evaluate students.⁴

Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

“COPPA imposes certain requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age, and on operators of other websites or online services that have actual knowledge that they are collecting personal information online from a child under 13 years of age.”⁵

Equity Matters: Digital & Online Learning for Students with Disabilities

Competency/Proficiency-Based Learning

In this curricular structure, students progress based on mastery of successive goals. Students are often grouped by age and/or proficiency levels—not by grades—and movement through a course of study is based on evidence-based skills or knowledge learning, not seat time.

Digital Delivery Systems

Content management or learning management utilities that display, provide access to, or otherwise render digital materials for students’ use. Most of these systems require an individual student login via username/password or unique student identification number, and record and display student usage and achievement data.

Digital Learning

Use of digital technology to support learning. The use of this term is context-free, including the type of technology, environment, pedagogy, instructional design, and learner-interaction with the material, technology, or environment. Digital learning includes, but is not limited to, online, blended, or personalized learning. Digital learning would also encompass non-online environments that are simply focused on integrating digital technologies to support learning.

Digital Materials

Electronic textbooks, workbooks, activities, simulations, assessments, and other components of the elementary and secondary school curriculum made available to students via computer, tablet, or mobile devices.

Due Process/Procedural Safeguards

Compliance with the procedural requirements of the IDEA to ensure processes for parents regarding timelines for actions, receiving notice of changes, expressing disagreements with program recommendations, and resolving disputes through mediation or a fair hearing.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

“The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.”⁶

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

A term used to describe the educational rights of students with disabilities. It refers to an educational program designed to provide individualized supports and services needed for students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum that align with state education standards in the public school system. This educational program is provided at no cost to the parents of the student with a disability.⁷

Full-time Online Learning

When students are primarily taking all academic classes in on-line environments. This type of learning generally takes place in virtual schools or what are referred to as fully online schools.

Individual Education Program (IEP)

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), an IEP is a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disabilities (Sections 300.320(a)(2)(i)(A) and (B)).⁸

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

"The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17) established parameters for services provided in an educational setting. Part B of the document indicated that eligibility for services required that the impairment "adversely impacts educational performance."⁹

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Education of students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

Online Learning

Education in which instruction, content, and learning are mediated primarily by network technologies such as the Internet.

Parent Participation

Collaboration with parents in children's individualized educational program development and implementation.¹⁰

Personalized Learning

An approach in which the instructional approach, outcomes, content, activities, pace, tools, and supports are customized for each learner's needs. Personalized learning takes advantage of the real-time progress monitoring capacity of many digital delivery systems to provide timely (e.g., daily, weekly), actionable updates on student learning and/or achievement through a course of study. Many personalized learning settings also follow a competency or proficiency-based instructional design.

Protection in Evaluation for Services

Installment of assessment processes to determine if a student has a disability protected under IDEA and if he/she needs special education services.

Section 504

"Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of persons with handicaps in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Section 504 protects the rights not only of individuals with visible disabilities but also those with disabilities that may not be apparent."¹¹

Supplemental Online Learning

When students are enrolled in an online environment to supplement another primary learning environment. An example would be someone taking a course in Mandarin Chinese or object-oriented programming online rather than in a face-to-face classroom environment because the local school does not offer the course.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

A scientifically-based framework that is focused on supporting the variability of every learner through proactive and iterative design that integrates multiple means of engagement, representation of information, and action and expression of understanding.

Zero Reject

Responsibility of school officials to locate, identify, and provide special education services to all eligible students with disabilities.¹²

Endnotes

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