



**The Learning Tree Professional Development Network, LLC**  
Course Syllabus

**Course Title:** Special Education Law: Federal and State Regulations

**Credits:** 3 credits

**Class Type:** Accelerated Fully Online

*Participants taking this course for PDPs are required to complete ONE discussion board post, ONE written response, and a modified (to a lesser degree) final assignment in order to earn a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved certificate.*

*Participants taking this course for CEUs are required to complete ONE discussion board post, ONE written response, and a written reflection on an educator's professional accomplishment and growth resulting from participation in the course.*

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

This course will explore the major legal documents that govern the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities. Participants will be introduced to federal and state special education laws and regulations through the lens of both general and special educators. Particular attention will be given to IDEA, ESSA, Special Education mandates (state & federal), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act eligibility criteria. The topics of eligibility, Response to Intervention (RTI), Curriculum Accommodation Plans, evaluation, due process, parental rights, procedural safeguards, free and appropriate public education (FAPE), special education service models, Least Restrictive Environment, transition planning, placement, current restraint laws, and discipline laws for students with disabilities will be reviewed.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:** None

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Interpret and synthesize the federal and state special education laws and regulations.
2. Implement the essential premise of the major federal and state legal documents that govern the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities in applicable scenarios.
3. Critique the current issues of the laws governing the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities both federally and at the state level.
4. Interpret and synthesize the major legal documents that govern the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities both federally and at the state level.

**TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

Video clips, PowerPoints, readings, graphic organizers, teaching tools, sample lessons, classroom discussion, lecture, etc. will all be implemented to demonstrate concepts.

## **REQUIRED READINGS:**

Children's Law Center of Massachusetts. (February 2013). Special Education in Massachusetts.

Margaret M. Wakelin, *Challenging Disparities in Special Education: Moving Parents from Disempowered Team Members to Ardent Advocates*, 3 Nw. J. L. & Soc. POL'Y. 263 (2008).

Massachusetts General Law. Part I, Title XII, Chapter 71B:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71B>

## **EVALUATION METHODS:**

1. **One Page Response Journals:** Some week participants will be given a required article to read. Participants should write a one page response to each article on particular weeks when journals are assigned. Participants should respond to the article, not summarize it. How does it affect you as an educator? How can you implement this in your own educational setting? Would you want to implement it?
2. **Online Discussions:** Participants are asked to discuss assignments. These discussions can include **meaningful** questions, stories, examples, concerns, ideas, etc. To get full credit for these discussions, a participant must post a response, question, story, etc. at least once during the assigned week.
3. **Final Assignment:** For the final assignment, participants will create a one-hour professional development workshop presentation to be used to train educators on the major legal documents that govern the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities. Participants' workshops should demonstrate an understanding of information gained from course content, materials, and discussion. The final assignment is due at the end of Week Six.

Final Assignment Required Elements:

- Workshop agenda stating workshop goals, topics to be presented, and time segments **(10 points)**
- PowerPoint presentation on the major legal documents that govern the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities to be presented as part of your workshop. The PowerPoint shall be a minimum of 15 slides, not counting the title, closing, and/or reference slides of the presentation. Sources can be cited directly on corresponding slides or on a reference slide at the end of the presentation. **(30 points)**
- Handout to be used for the presentation (e.g., fact sheet, brochure, FAQ, etc.) The handout should be no more than one page of print (i.e. one side or two sides of one piece of paper = one page of print) **(20 points)**
- Creation of one workshop audience activity designed to teach a topic of the workshop **(30 points)**
- Inclusion of course content. Sources can be cited directly on corresponding slides or on a reference slide at the end of the presentation **(10 points)**

## **TESTING AND GRADING:**

- 30% Written assignments (one page response journals)
- 20% Online discussions
- 50% Final Assignment

## **Grading Scale-Graduate:**

A 94-100 (4.0); A- 90-93 (3.7); B+ 87-89 (3.3); B 84-86 (3.0); B- 80-83 (2.7); C+ 77-79 (2.3); C 74-76 (2.0); C- 70-73 (1.7); F 69 or below (0.0)

## **ADA Policy**

If you as a student qualify as a person with a disability as defined in Chapter 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), you are strongly encouraged to register through the accrediting affiliated college or university. As a student, it is your responsibility to present your accommodation letter to your instructor at the beginning of each semester.

## **Academic Integrity Statement**

Students are required to abide by the *Academic Integrity Policy*.

By taking this course, students agree that all required assignments may be subject to submission for "similarity review" to Turnitin.com, a tool intended to not just detect instances of plagiarism, but to prevent it as well. The tool is intended to help students identify passages that are unoriginal, incorrectly cited, or lacking appropriate source information. Submitted assignments may also be archived in the Turnitin.com database for the purpose of checking for possible future instances of plagiarism, additional similarity searches, and other educational purposes at the discretion of the instructor. For more information, please review the Privacy and Security guide at Turnitin.com.

## **Course Credit Guidelines**

For a graduate three credit course, students are expected to receive a minimum of 135 hours of instruction and work outside of the class by the conclusion of the course.

6 Week online course - This course is a 3-credit course, which means that students are expected to do at least 22.5 hours of course-related work each week of the 6-week term. This includes work done completing assigned readings, studying for test and examinations, preparing written assignments, and other course-related tasks.

Class attendance is expected of all students up to and including the last day of scheduled classes in the semester. Students must plan accordingly.

## **TOPICAL TIMELINE**

### **Week One**

- Review Syllabus
- Topics Covered:
  - Overview of major legal documents governing the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities: IDEA, ESSA, Special Education mandates (state & federal), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

### **Required Readings**

Margaret M. Wakelin, *Challenging Disparities in Special Education: Moving Parents from Disempowered Team Members to Ardent Advocates*, 3 NW. J. L. & SOC. POL'Y. 263 (2008).

### **Other Assignments**

One Page Written Response.

### **Week Two**

- Topics Covered:
  - Eligibility and evaluation for IEPs and 504s
  - Response to Intervention (RTI)
  - Curriculum Accommodation Plans
  - Evaluation

### **Required Readings**

Children's Law Center of Massachusetts. (February 2013). *Special Education in Massachusetts*.

### **Other Assignments**

One Page Written Response.

### **Week Three**

- Topics Covered:
  - IEPs
    - Procedural safeguards

- Due process hearings
- o 504s

**Other Assignments**

Discussion Post.

**Week Four**

- Topics Covered:
  - o FAPE
  - o Special education service models & placement
  - o Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

**Other Assignments**

Discussion Post.

**Week Five**

- Topics Covered:
  - o Parental rights
  - o Student discipline

**Required Readings**

Massachusetts General Law. Part I, Title XII, Chapter 71B:  
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71B>

**Other Assignments**

One Page Written Response.

**Week Six**

- Topics Covered:
  - o Transition planning
  - o Restraint laws

**Other Assignments**

Discussion Post.

Final Assignment.

*\* Syllabus is subject to change.*

**TOPICAL OUTLINE**

Instructional Activity	Description of Activity	Time Spent
<p><b><u>Week One</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Syllabus</li> <li>• Topics Covered:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Overview of major legal documents governing the provision of services and discipline of students with disabilities: IDEA, ESSA, Special Education mandates</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, PowerPoint, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>22.5</p>

<p>(state &amp; federal), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p><b>Required Readings</b> Margaret M. Wakelin, <i>Challenging Disparities in Special Education: Moving Parents from Disempowered Team Members to Ardent Advocates</i>, 3 NW. J. L. &amp; SOC. POL'Y. 263 (2008).</p> <p><b>Other Assignments</b> One Page Written Response.</p>		
<p><b>Week Two</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Topics Covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eligibility and evaluation for IEPs and 504s</li> <li>○ Response to Intervention (RTI)</li> <li>○ Curriculum Accommodation Plans</li> <li>○ Evaluation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Required Readings</b> Children's Law Center of Massachusetts. (February 2013). <i>Special Education in Massachusetts</i>.</p> <p><b>Other Assignments</b> One Page Written Response.</p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, PowerPoint, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>22.5</p>
<p><b>Week Three</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Topics Covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ IEPs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Procedural safeguards</li> <li>▪ Due process hearings</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ 504s</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Other Assignments</b> Discussion Post.</p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, PowerPoint, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>22.5</p>
<p><b>Week Four</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Topics Covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ FAPE</li> <li>○ Special education service models &amp; placement</li> <li>○ Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Other Assignments</b> Discussion Post.</p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, PowerPoint, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>22.5</p>
<p><b>Week Five</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Topics Covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parental rights</li> <li>○ Student discipline</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Required Readings</b></p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, PowerPoint, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>22.5</p>

<p>Massachusetts General Law. Part I, Title XII, Chapter 71B: <a href="https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71B">https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71B</a></p> <p><b>Other Assignments</b> One Page Written Response.</p>		
<p><b><u>Week Six</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics Covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Transition planning</li> <li>o Restraint laws</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Other Assignments</b> Discussion Post. Final Assignment.</p>	<p>Posted Lecture Notes, Articles, PowerPoint, and Websites, Discussion Board, Written Response</p>	<p>22.5</p>
		<p>Total 135 hours</p>