
The purpose of the article, “‘Our School Doesn’t Offer Inclusion’ and Other Legal Blunders” is to expose the ignorance of school authorities, educators and parents alike when it comes to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and all that it entails; specifically inclusion and the three common misunderstandings. If school authorities, educators, and parents understood the IDEA and school’s legal responsibilities because of it, both special and general education would improve for all students.

The article begins by explaining the history and reforming of laws specifically for students with disabilities. The first to pass was the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975 that guaranteed all students with disabilities would receive a public education. As the years rolled by, the law’s name would change several times before settling on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law set the stage for inclusive schooling. However, the article claims that in an analysis done by the U.S. Department of Education between 1977 and 1990, there was very minimal improvement for students with disabilities. It goes on to uncover the many excuses given by schools and their districts when denying students with disabilities access.

The first excuse given is “Our school doesn’t offer inclusion.” This myth is tested when clarifying the laws first set out in 1975 that favor inclusion of students, for “Special education is not a program or a place…” The only instance where denying a student is acceptable is when the nature of the disability is so severe that there are no satisfactory aids.

The second excuse given is “She is too disabled to be educated in a regular classroom.” The common misconception here is that students’ with disabilities that have skills under that of a student in general education cannot thrive in an inclusive environment. Throughout this portion of the article, several methods are given for a teacher to include a student with a disability in their everyday curriculum. Of course the student with a disability may not perform to the same level as the other students, but that simply means the goals and exams will be different.

The third and final excuse given is “We offer special programs instead of inclusion.” Oftentimes, “special programs” mean grouping together students with the same disability and teaching them the exact same. However, this generalization can be very harmful to students. In special education, each student should have individualized plan for them to reach their highest potential. It’s also a federal law.

The authors advise educators to review the intent and language of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as given several questions for administrators to consider. For instance, asking “Are we providing students with disabilities with the necessary supplemental supports, aids, and services?”

To me, this article demonstrates the importance of becoming well-educated on laws regarding students with disabilities. From top to bottom, parents to administrators, somehow education on this top is extremely important. Not only because it is federal law, but because students with disabilities are just as important, valuable, and teachable as students in general education. Inclusion may not be an easy task, but it is vital.