

Education Law



What is Education Law?

Education law refers to federal, state, and local laws that address the organization and practices of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary public education. Though many cases related to education law are handled on the local level, or within a school, federal education statutes are very important because public schools receive some federal funding. Education law also intersects with constitutional law, civil rights law, and other laws.

The major federal laws related to education law include the [1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#), passed as part of the Great Society and renewed several times since, which emphasizes equal access to education, and the [1965 Higher Education Opportunity Act](#), which provided more federal funding to state colleges and universities. In 1972 these acts were amended to include [Title IX](#), banning sex discrimination in all educational institutions. Other federal education laws include the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974](#) reducing access to records of students over age 18. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, later renamed the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) in 1990, requires that all students with disabilities be provided with free appropriate public education that is individualized for them. The cornerstone of the IDEA Act is the Individualized Education Plan, a document created by the parents, teachers, and school officials of the child with the disability ([Supreme Court](#), [Ed.gov](#)).

Education lawyers represent students, parents, teachers, and school district administrators in cases involving a violation of education rights. Education lawyers may also be involved in collective bargaining, for example, such as for a teachers' union, or work for government agencies responsible for enforcing education laws.

Where Do Education Lawyers Work?

Public Sector

Department of Education [Jobs](#)

Tennessee Department of Education—[Career Opportunities](#)

In-house counsel with a school district—[Shelby County Schools Career Opportunities](#)

General Counsel for a public university—[University of Memphis Legal Counsel](#)

Title IX Director for a public university—[University of Memphis Office of Institutional Equity](#)

Private Sector

Firms with education law, civil rights law, or constitutional law departments

In-house counsel to private schools or universities

Education advocacy groups such as [Stand for Children](#) and [The Arc Midsouth](#)

Education Law Resources



Resume Boosters for Education Law

Join the Public Action Law Society

Join Street Law to gain experience working with students

Work in a school or university to gain experience working with teachers, parents, and administrators

Intern or extern with an education advocacy group or the Department of Education

[Volunteer as an advocate](#) for parents with special needs children if you are interested in special education law

What Classes Should I Take?

Administrative Law

Constitutional Law

Education & Civil Rights

Fair Employment Practices

Professional Associations

American Bar Association

All University of Memphis law students have free membership to the [American Bar Association](#). Their website provides routinely updated information and interest-specific career advice. Join different sections to find out what they offer. Check out the [Education Committee](#) and the [Children's Rights Litigation Committee](#).

Education Law Association

The [Education Law Association](#) provides relevant materials and networking for education law professionals. [Students can join while in school](#).

Education Law Links

["COVID-19: Virtual Classrooms and Institutional Barriers"](#)

In this webinar, law students and graduates discuss the issues faced by students with disabilities in digital classrooms. American Bar Association, August 7, 2020.

["Using Pro Bono Lawyers to Expand Access to Justice in School Discipline Cases"](#)

This article by Acena Beck explains how education lawyers can advocate for students and families in disputes of school discipline. American Bar Association, June 11, 2020.