



## The Role of the Principal in Meeting the Needs of EACH Child in the School

Amy Rhone, Administrator and State Director  
Kris Elmshaeuser, Assistant Director  
*Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education*

1

### Outcomes for today

This session will be a discussion with principals on the role they play as the educational leader in the district in meeting the needs of each and every child within the school building. This session will discuss the requirements around special education for each child to be considered in the least restrictive environment and the supplemental aids and services provided so that students with disabilities can be included with their nondisabled peers in an inclusive environment.

2

- *Every district in Nebraska educates students with disabilities*
- 16% of our student population
  - 29% with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)
  - 20% Speech-Language Impairment
- 75% of our SWD are within a general education classroom for 80% or more of the day
- 274 schools identified for TSI or ATSI in 2019



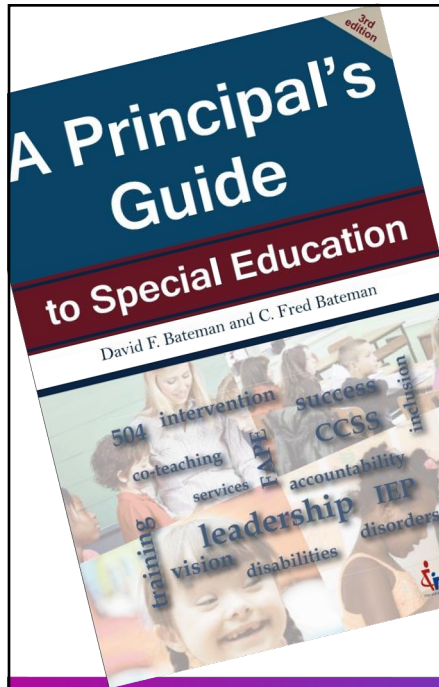
3

## 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.

4



1. The principal is responsible for the education of all students in the school.
2. The principal needs to be familiar with the concept and practice of special education.
3. The principal needs to ensure that staff members know what is necessary for providing special education services.
4. The principal needs to verify that staff members are appropriately implementing services for students with disabilities.
5. The principal should lead efforts for data collection.
6. The principal should ensure that all staff members are aware of the process for identifying students with disabilities.
7. The principal must be prepared to lead meetings related to services for students with disabilities.
8. The principal needs to know all students in the building and be ready to talk about them.
9. The principal needs to know how to prevent discipline problems.

5

## The Principal Is Responsible for the Education of All Students in the School



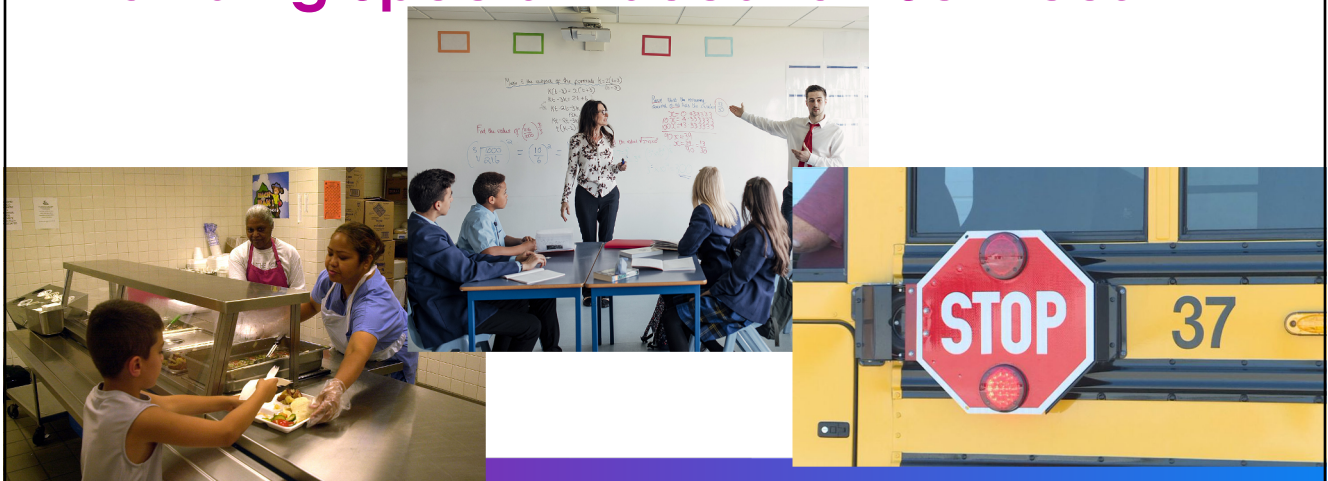
6

## The Principal Needs to Be Familiar With the Concept and Practice of Special Education



7

## The Principal Needs to Ensure That Staff Members Know What Is Necessary for Providing Special Education Services



8



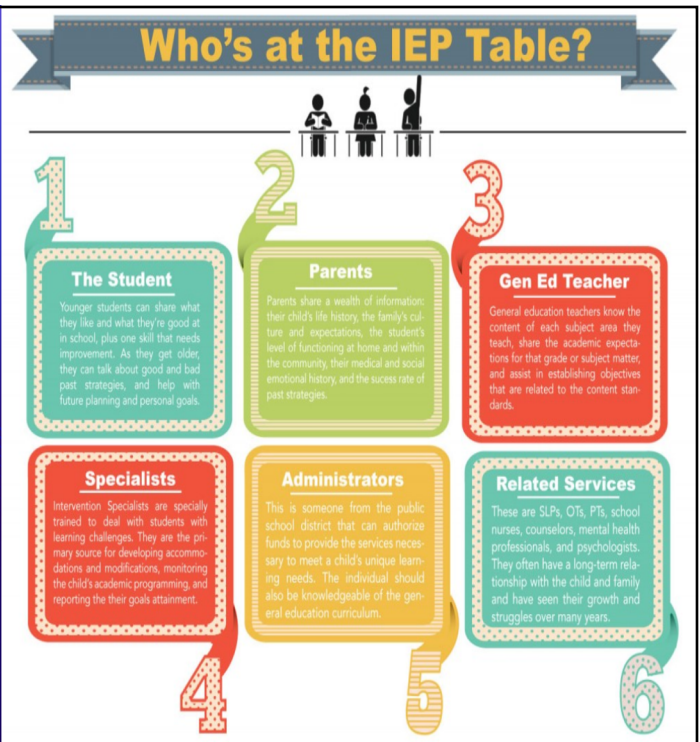


# The Principal Should Ensure That All Staff Members Are Aware of the Process for Identifying Students With Disabilities



11

# The Principal Must Be Prepared to Lead Meetings Related to Services for Students With Disabilities



12

## The Principal Needs to Know All Students in the Building and Be Ready to Talk About Them



13

### People-First Language

*People-first language is intended to offset earlier habits of dehumanizing individuals with disabilities ...*

*Instead of ...*

Differently abled, challenged  
The disabled, handicapped  
Autistic

Confined to a wheelchair  
Slow learner  
Brain-damaged  
Retarded, mental retardation  
Birth defect  
Seeing-eye dog

*Say ...*

Disability  
People with disabilities  
Person with autism, on the autism spectrum  
Uses a wheelchair  
Has a learning disability  
Has a brain injury  
Intellectual disability  
Congenital disability  
Service animal or dog

14

## The Principal Needs to Know How to Prevent Discipline Problems



15

## Challenges Facing Principals



16



## The Principal as Chief Advocate for Special Education



17

## Cultivating an Inclusive Environment

NDE, Office of Special Education

## Journey to Inclusion



18

# Modifications, Accommodations, and Testing



## Assessment

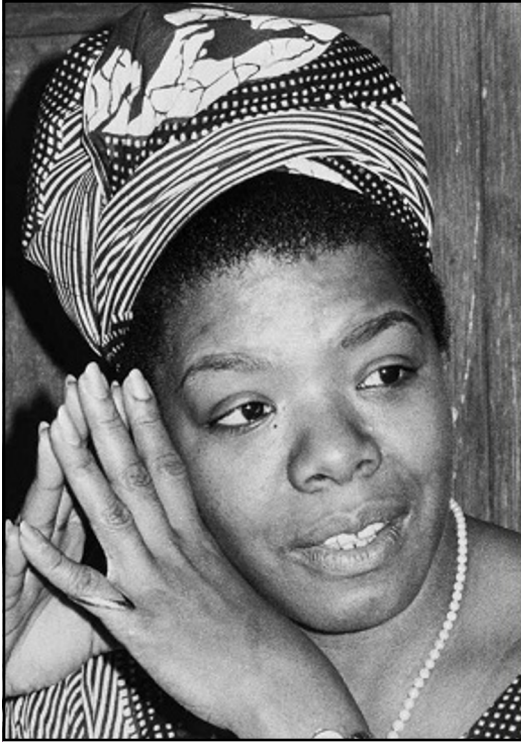
### Accommodations    Modifications

- Tests read aloud to student
- Verbal response acceptable in lieu of written response
- Fewer multiple choice responses
- Multiple-choice response instead of fill-in-the-blank or short answer/essay
- Word banks provided for fill in the blank questions
- Tests are written at lower level of understanding
- Preview tests provided as study guide
- Picture supports are provided
- Use of calculator
- Grading based on pass/fail
- Grading based on work completion

19

People with disabilities inhabit all phases of our lives and our communities. Our job as educators is to create settings and programs that will enable everyone—including those who have disabilities—to be able maximize their chances for rich and happy lives.

20



“Do the best you can  
until you know better.  
Then when you know  
better, do better.”

*-Maya Angelou-*