**Special Education Laws**

* **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in the areas of accessibility, employment, public services, public accommodations, transportation, and communication.
* **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The federal law that provides the legal authority for early intervention and special educational services for children birth to age 21.
* **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504):** A federal law that protects the civil rights of individuals with disabilities.  This law is closely intertwined with IDEA.  Children with disabilities who are not eligible for special education may qualify for accommodations under Section 504 if they meet the 504 eligibility criteria.

**Common Terms and Acronyms**

* **Disability**: A substantially limiting physical or mental impairment that affects basic life activities such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, caring for oneself, learning, or working.
* **Local Education Agency (LEA):** The public schools operating in accordance with statutes, regulations, and policies of the state department of education (as a charter school, we are our own LEA).
* **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** The placement for children with disabilities that is, to the maximum extent appropriate, where they are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment.
* **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** The IEP is developed by the child’s parents and the professionals who evaluated the child and who are providing the services. It is required by the IDEA for all children eligible for special education.
* **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE**): An individualized educational program that is designed to meet the child’s unique needs and from which the child receives educational benefit.
* **Specialized Instruction (SI):** Specialized instruction tailored to fit the unique learning strengths and needs of students with disabilities.  These services may be provided in a variety of educational settings.
* **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) - formerly known as Response to Intervention RTI:** A general education process that provides support for students experiencing academic and behavioral difficulties.

**13 Eligibility Categories under IDEA**

* Autism
* Deaf Blindness
* Developmental Delay
* Emotional Disturbance
* Hearing Impairment
* Intellectual Disability
* Multiple Disability
* Orthopedic Impairment
* Other Health Impairment
* Speech Language Impairment
* Specific Learning Disability
* Traumatic Brain Injury
* Vision Impairment