REQUEST TO CONTINUE SPECIAL EDUCATION

A COMPOSITE OF LAWS

We are a diverse set of stakeholders in the California special education process. Though we disagree on many issues, we join in this urgent request that CDE reconsider and reverse its decision to discontinue issuing the annual special education Composite of Laws. This volume, which is a key element in our libraries, has been published for many years. It incorporates both longstanding law and recent amendments. While we recognize and appreciate the substantial amount of work required to compile and distribute this user-friendly document, for CDE to abandon this vital task greatly increases the burden on stakeholders throughout the state to figure out what legal rules apply.

Discontinuing the Composite will make it far more difficult to access information in "real time" during Individualized Education Program meetings, resolution sessions, mediations and due process hearings. Relegating stakeholders to a web-based system that is not visually scannable, and is not indexed the way the paper composite is, substantially raises the risk that important legal rules will be ignored and violated, with costs to both students and school districts. Posting code sections on CDE's website is not sufficient. It denies access to information to the many California families which continually or intermittently lack access to the Internet. The web search function works fine when the searcher has exact language or section numbers; even for "sophisticated" participants, when they know or believe a provision exists but do not recall such details, it is often slower and less effective than the paper composite. Web-only access does not work well for teachers, parents, administrators, advocates or judges attempting to understand cohesively how California law treats specific topics—either narrow ones (e.g., assessment for students in nonpublic schools) or broad ones (e.g., determining eligibility for special education services). It does not work for parties who find themselves temporarily without Internet access at times when laws need to be looked up, for instance, during due process hearings. It does not work for anyone who needs to access past laws, for instance, to determine whether a provision was in effect when it was allegedly violated. Ensuring ready access to laws governing special education services in California is a critical responsibility of CDE and one that we urge it to continue fulfilling.

Name	Role in special education	Yrs in field	Contact info (e-mail or other)

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