

# *Cameras in Self-Contained Classrooms: Legal, Professional and Student Implications*

Ashlee Ivie

Southern Utah University

## *Abstract*

This paper examines the use of cameras in self-contained special education classrooms. It begins with an examination of the legal framework used when administrators are contemplating the implementation of video surveillance within the classroom. It gives a brief summary of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Individuals with Disabilities Act, No Child Left Behind Act, and The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution and how they connect to the use of classroom cameras. This paper also explores several important court cases surrounding video footage within classes, as well as, the pros and cons of using audio-visual equipment to monitor individual classrooms. A field study conducted in Wasatch School District provides anecdotal information regarding video surveillance and outlines the advantages and disadvantages from the viewpoint of a behavior specialist, school psychologist, principal, and special education coordinator. The paper concludes with an analysis of the relevance of classroom cameras to professional goals as outlined by the Educational Leader Policy Standards.

## *Legal Foundation*

Several laws should be regarded when making the decision to utilize cameras in self-contained classrooms. School districts should carefully study legal documents regarding student and parent rights prior to installing cameras in special education classrooms. The four federal laws that schools should consider include the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, No Child Left Behind and the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, often referred to as FERPA, is a federal law that protects the privacy of the educational records of students attending schools that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education. It ensures students-of-age (18) and their parents have the right to inspect and copy personal educational records, challenge the accuracy of the records through a hearing, and determine what confidential information is released. Schools must receive written parental permission to release any information from a student's record to unauthorized parties (Essex, 2008).

Under FERPA, schools are allowed to disclose records without consent under certain conditions or to certain parties. School officials with legitimate educational interest, specified officials for evaluation or auditing, officials in health or safety emergencies or state and local authorities within a juvenile justice system can all have access to a student's educational record without parental consent (U.S. Dept. of Ed). Parents must receive a notice of their FERPA rights, which outlines the procedures for inspecting and reviewing educational records, requesting records be

amended, and the criteria for determining who is a school official and what is a legitimate educational interest (Essex, 2008).

Administrators should carefully consider the rights outlined in FERPA prior to making the decision to place cameras in the classroom. Administration will have to ensure each individual student's right to privacy is intact, while balancing the parent's right to review educational records. If video recordings are considered educational records, parents have a right to view them. Parents may want to view video recordings of their child, but it then violates another student's right to privacy. Policies will need to be put in place to ensure that every student's rights are protected. Teachers will be required to keep the videos confidential and access will need to be limited to school officials that have a legitimate educational interest.

### **Individuals with Disabilities Act**

Another important law to be familiar with when contemplating cameras in special education classrooms is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law was initially enacted in 1990 and was later reauthorized in 2004 under the new name, Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA) (Essex, 2008).

IDEIA functions as a protection for students with disabilities. IDEIA guarantees students in special education a free and appropriate public education, right to due process, and the right for a student to receive education in the least restrictive environment (Essex, 2008). IDEIA also provides parents and students with procedural safeguards, such as confidentiality, prior written notice, parental consent for evaluations, and right to due process. Much like FERPA, IDEIA also affords parents the right to review special education records and that these records will be protected. Special educators are legally required to keep all records in a locked cabinet with a records access authorization list posted. Those authorized to view records have an educational purpose to do so ( U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

When considering the placement of cameras in the classroom, teachers and administrators have the responsibility to protect the rights of all students. Recordings must be kept confidential. Under the guidelines IDEIA, Parents are guaranteed prior written notice, thus they have to be notified in writing that cameras are in their child's classroom. Special Educators and Administrators must enforce that the video recordings be for educational use only, or cameras could infringe on a student's right to a free, appropriate public education and constitute a FERPA violation. Having cameras in the classroom may help teachers and school districts implement key aspect of IDEIA. Analyzing footage from cameras may assist teachers in evaluating if students are truly receiving a free, and more specifically and appropriate education, as well as, if they are in the least restrictive environment.

### **No Child Left Behind ACT**

The No Child Left Behind ACT of 2001 (NCLB) is also a law involved in decision to place cameras in the classroom. One focus of NCLB is to ensure all students have access to high quality education. This is measured by annual testing and specific qualifications for teachers. NCLB requires schools to hire highly-qualified teachers and provide support to improve their pedagogy and ultimately their student performance (No Child Left Behind Act 2001).

Cameras may act as a support to NCLB by providing useful information for teacher improvement. Having cameras in the classroom may provide a tool for teachers to analyze their teaching and classroom management. Educators can use video self-evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction and implement strategies to increase student engagement and participation. Teachers can also use video as a way to collect data on student behavior, find patterns regarding behavioral triggers and use this information to create or improve individual student behavior plans. Special Educators can also use recordings to train para educators in appropriate instructional and behavior management strategies. Finally, cameras could provide administrators with a more accurate view of the daily instruction that happens within the classroom. Principals can reinforce best educational practices and also coach teachers on areas for improvement. It can also give special education coordinators direction on what professional development his/her staff would benefit from.

### **The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution**

The fourth amendment of the Constitution of the United States provides administrators and teachers with important constitutional rights to consider when using cameras in individual classrooms. The fourth amendment states:

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.” (FindLaw 2014)

Teachers may feel that cameras in their classrooms is a violation of their fourth amendment rights because the footage may be considered an “unreasonable search.” District school boards would benefit from making a policy regarding video surveillance. This policy should include the requirement to notify parents, students, and teachers that cameras will be used in the classroom. It should also outline who will have access to the video and under what circumstances, as well as define the purposes for the video footage. Teachers and other individuals recorded by school video security have the general right to view the content, so long as it does not violate the rights of someone else. The policy should also include the storage and retention of the surveillance. These steps will help school districts ensure the rights of all parties involved are protected.

### ***Important Court Cases***

The placement of cameras in special education self-contained classes is a fairly recent issue and has made its biggest splash in the courtrooms within the last several years. Several court cases have been initiated in different states, however, no rulings have been made at the federal level. There are many court cases that provide information regarding the use of cameras in classrooms; however, for the purpose of this paper only three will be discussed. In several of the cases, footage from classroom cameras were used as evidence of child abuse. These cases can be an excellent resource to school districts. They provide examples of issues that have already arisen about the use of cameras in the classroom and can help administrators identify the pros and cons of classroom surveillance.

## **Senate Bill 1380**

The creation of Senate Bill 1380 (SB1380) began from a petition that was started on change.org in 2013 by Maranda Collins Marvin of Houston, Texas. The petition advocated for the use of cameras in special education classrooms across the state of Texas. Marvin focused on the vulnerability of students with disabilities, especially those who are nonverbal. She cited several news reports about abuse within special education classrooms, in addition to individual parent experiences regarding adverse punishments their children had been exposed to. Marvin gave examples of disciplinary actions that had been reported by parents, such as: “bruises on their child’s body - found out that their child's hair was ripped out and then the child was closed in a filing cabinet - made to eat hot sauce covered crayons - had water sprayed into their face at point blank range - slapped, pushed, & beaten - made to sit in a closet/store room for extended periods of time without food or water.” (Marvin 2013). The petitions main objective is to protect children with disabilities from these horrendous acts.

Over a thousand people signed Marvin’s petition. Two representatives from the Texas Senate helped draft a bill called SB 1380 and fought to enact it as law. SB 1380 required each school district in Texas to install cameras in their special education classes, including those in charter schools (Patrick, 2014).

The bill outlined policies for footage retention, prior written notice given to parents before installation, and camera placement, coverage and equipment funding. Cameras were to cover all areas of the classroom except for the bathroom and any other area where students changed their clothing. If parents wrote a letter and submitted it to the district denying video consent within 30 days of the prior written notice, the school was prohibited to place a camera in that classroom. The video footage was to be retained for at least 6 months. School districts were granted permission to accept gifts, donations and grants to fund this project. If no funding was given through these means, districts had the responsibility to purchase the video surveillance equipment (Patrick, 2014).

SB 1380 was passed by the Texas State Senate, but did not pass the Texas House of Representatives. The main argument against the enactment of SB 1380 was the financial burden placed on school districts to pay the cost of installing and maintaining cameras. Each camera was estimated to cost a minimum of seven hundred dollars. Critics believed that if the state was going to mandate the use of cameras, the state should also assume the financial responsibility (Rambin, 2014).

### **Phipps et al v. Clark County School District**

One court case that demonstrates the importance cameras can play in the classroom is John Phipps v. Clark County School District. The Phipps family expressed they believed their child was being abused at school. Their son had returned from school with bruises and rug burns on his body. The principal investigated the alleged abuse and reported that the student was causing the bruises and rug burns. Another parent came forward with suspicions of abuse taking place in the classroom and reported it to the Clark County School District. Clark County School District placed hidden cameras inside the classroom without notifying the teacher or staff. The video footage verified the parents’ allegations. Phipps’ son was abused by the substitute teacher and a para professional. The substitute teacher and para professional are no longer employed by the District (Phipps v Clark County School District, 2013).

The surveillance footage proved useful evidence of child abuse taking place within the special education classroom. If Clark County School District had not used cameras, the abuse may have taken much longer to prove and the student's safety would have continued to be in jeopardy. Administrators can use this tool to maintain a safe school environment. This case demonstrates that video can protect students and teachers from abuse and abuse allegations.

### **Plock v. Board of Education of Freeport School District**

Plock v. Board of Education of Freeport School District discusses the placement of cameras in special education classrooms and if it is a violation of the fourth amendment. The plaintiffs, two special education teachers employed by Freeport School District, were accused of abuse. The teachers taught "EXCEL" and "Life Skills" classes. The school district moved to install audio and visual recording equipment in these classrooms. When asked where the cameras were installed, administration asserted, "Where the most vulnerable children, both physically and emotionally challenged, were assigned." (Plock v Board of Education of Freeport School District , 2007). The plaintiffs willingly agreed to the placement of cameras for visual monitoring, but objected to the audio monitoring. They filed suit stating that audio monitoring was an unreasonable search and an invasion of privacy. They also claimed that audio recordings was against the Illinois Eavesdropping Act (Plock v Board of Education of Freeport School District , 2007).

The court had to determine if the fourth amendment was applicable to a classroom setting or if a classroom was considered a public environment. In O'Connor v Ortega, the Supreme Court ruled that, "some government offices may be so open to fellow employees or the public that no expectation of privacy is reasonable." Using this precedent, It was decided that an

"entire classroom in a public school building is not reserved for the teacher's exclusive, private use. Rather, classrooms are open to students, other faculty, administrators, substitute teachers, custodians, and on occasion parents...The classroom in public school is not private property of any teacher. A classroom is a public space in which government employees communicate with members of the public." (Plock v. Board of Education of Freeport School District, 758)

The court ruled that the Board of Education of Freeport School District was not infringing upon the fourth amendment rights of the plaintiffs by installing cameras.

The court determined that the school board was not in violation of the Fourth Amendment, so therefore, the claim regarding the Illinois Eavesdropping Act was dropped. All pending motions were arguable and thus the case was terminated (Plock v Board of Education of Freeport School District , 2007).

The results of this case may help administrators with the decision of placing cameras in classrooms. It established that classrooms are considered public offices do not violate teachers' privacy. The camera footage ended up providing the school district with evidence of abuse, which also validated the school board's decision to monitor the classroom through video and audio surveillance (Plock v Board of Education of Freeport School District , 2007).

## *Theory to Practice*

There are many positive and negative outcomes to consider when placing cameras in special education classrooms. Districts and school administrators should weigh the pros and cons associated with video surveillance prior to making a policy or implementing its use.

### **Pros**

Cameras can serve a variety of purposes that positively affect teachers, students, administrators and the school as a whole. They can help improve instructional practice, provide information for behavior management, increase student and teacher safety and be a way to keep important records.

**Teacher and Student Safety.** Many of the court cases mentioned above mention the vulnerability of abuse student with disabilities face. Self-contained classrooms are filled with individuals with complex needs, behaviors, and disabilities. Special Education teachers must follow procedures outlined by their state regarding discipline. The state of Utah uses a manual called the Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions (LRBI). LRBI provides a pyramid of interventions, starting with the least restrictive to the most restrictive. It instructs educators to always start with the least restrictive practices. These practices are defined as a positive behavior support system. This system includes establishing classroom expectations, explicitly teaching positive behavior, reinforcing positive behavior, and correcting behavioral errors. It also outlines the use of more restrictive practices such as, seclusionary time out and physical restraint and the appropriate circumstances in which to use them (Utah State Office of Education, 2014).

If teachers are not following the procedures set forth in the LRBI, they may be harming a student. A teacher may be using unapproved physical restraints or utilizing them as an initial intervention in replace of positive behavior supports. Accusations of abuse are evident in the court cases mentioned above. Camera footage can provide administrators with the unbiased information regarding instruction practices taking place inside classrooms. Footage can provide evidence of abuse, either from other students or teachers.

It also may positively affect how teachers interact with students and prevent abuse, poor instructional pedagogy, or failure to adhere to the students Individualized Education Plan. According to an interview with Dr. Ben Springer, a school psychologist and district special education coordinator for Wasatch School District, video surveillance “increases visibility and accountability for educators” (Springer, 2014). He goes on to state, “lack of supervision breeds pathology,” meaning that “when practices go unsupervised, things go awry.” (Springer, 2014). When teachers know they are being filmed, they may be more likely to utilize best educational practices. Teacher are accountable for everything that goes on in their classroom, especially when a video can be reviewed by the district.

It can also be a protection to teachers from student abuse or abuse allegations. Students can exhibit aggressive behavior toward their fellow students or their teachers. Cameras can record these incidents and provide an accurate sequence of events, which can be analyzed by school psychologist, the special educator, and administration. This can help the school team come up with ways to protect staff and students.

**Behavior Management.** Cameras can be used in the classroom to help create and implement behavior plans for students with disabilities, as well as monitor behavior in general. Video footage can be used to identify the antecedent, function and consequences of student behavior. This information is essential in creating an effective and comprehensive behavior plan. Special educators often use a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) to create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). This plan requires the observer to record what happens before the behavior, identify the problem behavior, and the consequences the teacher or staff administers in response. These components are examined to find the function of the behavior. Some reasons or functions behind a student behavior may be to get attention, to get a tangible object, to fulfill a sensory need, or to escape a task. With this information, a school team can introduce a positive replacement behavior to the student that serves the same function as the problem behavior. This information is all recorded into the BIP.

Sometimes it is difficult for the observer to record all the antecedent, behaviors and consequences in real time. Videos make it easy for the observer to review the material over and over, thus making the observation more accurate. Also, students and teachers sometimes act differently when someone is observing them, or a student may be having an “out of ordinary” day. Cameras allow the school team to collect several data points, on several different days with no change to the student’s natural educational environment.

CareLog is a selective archiving tool to assist special educators and districts with conducting Functional Behavior Assessments. After a careful study of the requirements of FBAs, CareLog created a system that utilizes classroom cameras. Teachers often have the burden of taking data on problem behaviors in their classrooms. Live data collection is tedious and difficult, especially when a teacher is trying to collect data while teaching. Training a para educator can also be a challenge. It takes time and often para educators lack the extensive knowledge on data collection procedures that are found in special education teacher programs (Hayes, Gardere, Abowd, & Truong, 2008).

CareLog capitalizes on “Automated capture and access technologies...allow[ing] for constant recording of information of live events, such as audio and video, for successful review at a later time.” (Hayes, Gardere, Abowd, & Truong, 2008) Cameras allow teachers to review classroom instruction and identify antecedents, behaviors and consequences.

**Teacher Development and Training.** Cameras can be a powerful tool in teacher development and training. Cameras allow educators to record lessons, behavior interventions, and interactions between staff and students. Teachers can examine their practice and find ways to improve. Many teacher educator programs utilize video. Andrew Muffler, Behavior Specialist for Wasatch District recounts,

“I used [cameras] during my student teaching. We used it to study the effectiveness of my teaching. I was able to go back and watch how I did. I could take notes and see where I needed to be more prepared with content, or where I needed to use a different type of teaching method to disseminate information to the students. We also used it to keep data for the students to be able to do things like timing how long they stay in their seat, or how

many times they blurted out some phrase. It was very beneficial to me as the teacher to improve my teaching and to keep better data so that I didn't have to do it while I was teaching.” (Muffler, 2014).

Cameras give educators the opportunity to review their instruction several times and analyze pedagogy. Using this information they can make important changes to improve student achievement.

It can also provide special educators with a more concrete way of training their para educators. Teachers can show para educators student behavior triggers, task engagement, and specific teaching strategies through sharing video footage with them. It provides para educators with real life examples. It can also help special educators identify areas their staff needs more support with and help them plan trainings in these areas.

Administrators can use videos to drive professional development decisions and support new teachers. Administrators have many responsibilities and often have a limited amount of time to observe and coach teachers. Sometimes different teachers are teaching at the same time. A principal cannot be in two places at once. Cameras can help with these logistical difficulties. The principal can review recorded lessons, take notes and schedule times to provide instructional coaching for individual teachers or teacher groups. This would be especially helpful for new teachers. New educators can review, analyze and improve their teaching at the beginning of their careers. They can ask for resources and supports to help them in the areas they identified in the video as weak. Administrators can give feedback to new educators and use this information to link them with mentors who have the best strengths to help them.

**School-Wide Improvement.** The use of classroom cameras can improve teacher, student, and staff safety, thus impacting the overall safety of the school. It may help create an environment of care and security school-wide because students, parents, teachers and administrators know that they will have a record of classroom happenings.

**Record.** Special education teachers are required to keep meticulous records. They keep records related to the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), goals, behavior and parent contact. Video is just one more way educators can keep records of events that happen in the classroom.

### **Cons**

In addition to the pros of classroom camera use, there are also several disadvantages. It can induce teacher and student stress and may cause them to feel their privacy has been taken away. The cost of the equipment and time constraints teachers and administrators face can also be a challenge.

**Stress.** Teachers and students may experience more stress if they feel that they are being constantly filmed. They may feel that what they do or say is continually under scrutiny. Students with anxiety may experience more stress knowing they are being filmed. Teachers may interpret the placement of cameras as a lack of trust from their administrators or parents.

**Privacy.** As mentioned in the Plock v. Board of Education of Freeport District, teachers may feel that cameras in the classroom are a violation of their privacy. They may feel that they have an expectation of privacy (Plock v Board of Education of Freeport School District , 2007). Obviously the court ruling dictates otherwise; however, administrators should be sensitive to this concern. Teachers should be notified that cameras will be placed in their classrooms and the purpose they will serve.

**Cost of Equipment.** Often time the burden of purchasing video surveillance equipment falls on the shoulders of individual school districts. Installing high quality cameras can be very costly. Spending money on video equipment may take funds away from other areas that benefit student achievement, which can be an extremely difficult decision for district to make.

Bill Gates would like to take the financial pressure off of school districts and require the country to spend five billion dollars on camera equipment. He believes that cameras in the classroom could greatly benefit education. He acknowledges that five billion dollars is a large sum, but states "...to put it in perspective...it's less than 2% of what we spend on teachers' salaries and benefits" (Kamentez, 2014). If the bill passes, it could be a game changer for school districts. If the bill does not pass, districts will have to accrue the cost of video equipment through district funds, donations or grants.

**Time Constraints.** Monitoring equipment and view video may take a substantial amount of time from educators and administrators. Teachers and administrators already have so much to do, cameras may become more a burden than a help.

### *Field Activity*

#### **Current Use of Cameras at Wasatch High School**

Wasatch High School is located in Heber City, Utah. It has roughly 1,800 students and is the only high school in the district. The high school has forty-three surveillance cameras in use, 4 of which are located in rooms where classes are taught. The classroom cameras are in the gyms where physical education is taught and in the band room. There are no cameras in self-contained classrooms. The cameras primarily positioned to film the hallways, commons, and parking lots (Kelley, 2014).

The cameras were installed in the high school in 2001-2002 school year. The school board made this decision after studying other schools that used cameras (Kelley, 2014). The board made a district video surveillance policy. The policy outlines the procedures for the "access, use, disclosure, retention, security, and disposal of video security surveillance records ( Wasatch School District , 2014)." The policy states that purpose of video surveillance is to protect students, staff and the public and investigate criminal activity and vandalism. Tapes or records of footage will be stored in a secure environment under key and lock. Also the superintendent and the school administrators will be granted access to the video recordings- both real time and archived. The video will be retained for a fourteen day period .If a criminal investigation is underway, law enforcement may also be granted access to video and the video

will be available for at least one year. Anyone that is filmed may be granted limited access to the video under the discretion of the building administrator ( Wasatch School District , 2014).

### **Pros and Cons in Our School**

In an interview with Shawn Kelley, principal of Wasatch High School, he articulated several advantages and disadvantages to video surveillance in self-contained classrooms. The main benefit to classroom cameras mentioned by Mr. Kelley was the protection they offer to teachers and students. It can corroborate suspicions of student abuse and also protect teachers from false allegations. The major disadvantage is the cost of the equipment. Mr. Kelley also mentioned that cameras were most beneficial in areas of low supervision. The classroom is a highly supervised area and therefore in theory would not have as high of a need of video surveillance (Kelley, 2014).

Dr. Ben Springer, special education coordinator for Wasatch District listed different pros and cons than Mr. Kelley. He thought cameras would be most useful as instructional tools, with the purpose of collecting data on student behavior and developing effective staff training. He was less interested in the use of cameras as a classroom surveillance device. With his school psychologist background, Dr. Springer sees classroom cameras as an invaluable observation tool. He cites a situation that happened on a special education bus in the district. A male student attacked a female student. It was all on tape. He was able to review the footage, identify the student's triggers, create a behavior plan and train bus aids on proper behavior management procedures (Springer, 2014).

He lists the major con to classroom cameras is the lack of public understanding. He says that the public has limited understanding of what goes on in a self-contained classroom. Student with severe disabilities may exhibit extreme behavior where physical restraint is appropriate. He also states that he does not like the idea of cameras being a "chronic eyeball", mostly because he wants to respect student privacy. Students may have compromising behavior filmed. Dr. Springer gives the example of "a student struggling with self-stimulatory behavior and starts masturbating in class. Now that is on video." He feels that when you are working with students with cognitive, emotional and social impairments you have to be extremely careful with video content. When talking about continual classroom video, Dr. Springer asserts "we do not live in a data secure enough world where I would feel comfortable with that." Classroom cameras can provide important student data, but also can present complexities that administrators must face (Springer, 2014).

### ***Relevance to Professional Goals***

The implementation of video recording in self-contained classrooms can support many professional goals. The Educational Leadership Policy Standards outlined by ISLLC focus provide guidelines for administrators to create and meet important professional goals. When making the decision to put cameras in classrooms, districts should review the standards outlined by ISLLC.

### **Standard One**

ISLLC standard one is “An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.” (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014) The evidence of this standard centers around creating and evaluating student goals. Cameras can help special education teachers “Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning.” (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014) The data collected from video footage can help educators create plans for learning and behavior, thus creating an environment of continual improvement. Video can also help teachers monitor progress and adapt plans and instruction to better support students.

### **Standard Two**

Standard two’s focus is creating a school culture that promotes “the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.” (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014) One of the ways administrators can do this is by supervising instruction. Cameras provide an additional way for administrators to evaluate the instruction students are receiving. Technology, such as cameras, can be a way to assess student progress and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs.

### **Standard Three**

One of the most important aspects of standard three is to “promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff” (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014). Cameras can prevent abuse or unprofessional behavior from happening in classrooms. Teachers are less likely to practice inappropriate or unprofessional behavior if they know they are being recorded. Video can also verify alleged abuse or aggression by teachers or students. Administrators can use this information to take the appropriate steps to put an end to these actions.

### **Standard Four**

Many of the standards above mention the importance of collecting data to measure student achievement. Standard four encourages educational leaders to “collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment” (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014). As mentioned earlier sections, evaluating recordings can help teachers and staff know what environmental changes need to happen to improve student achievement and behavior. Teachers can examine the antecedents to the problem behavior and see what environmental factors are involved. They can make changes to seating, stimuli, staff, or reinforcement.

### **Standard Six**

The final standard emphasizes the importance for an educational leader to “promote the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context” (The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014). A major piece to accomplishing this goal is supporting students and families. Principals should be an advocate and encourage parent and student participation in the educational process. Cameras may help make parents feel at ease, knowing that their child is safe. It is also way for administrators to demonstrate that they hold their teachers accountable.

## *Conclusion*

When making the decision to use cameras within the classrooms, administrators should carefully study important laws and court cases, weigh the pros and cons, and align their decision to professional goals. Court cases have established that classroom cameras are not a violation of the fourth amendment of the Constitution and that teachers do not have a right to privacy because classrooms are considered public offices. Districts can use cameras to help collect data on instruction, student behavior and also thwart student abuse. Audio-visual equipment is expensive and can be a heavy financial burden to districts and may cause teacher and student stress. Cameras can also become a valuable tool to meet student and professional goals when used ethically and effectively. All of these aspects should be taken into consideration when making the decision to install cameras with in self-contained special education classrooms.

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