

What Do All Those Letters Mean? Education Acronyms

What are educational acronyms?

Educational acronyms seem to fly in conversations about education, and these acronyms seem to roll off the tongues of educators with ease. For those who are unfamiliar with these acronyms, however, they are little more than a string of letters. It is important, therefore, for teachers to be familiar with some of the most common educational acronyms.

Educational acronyms are abbreviations for educational phrases, concepts, names, and organizations. They are typically formed by taking the first letter of the word group, such as DOE, which stands for “department of education.” These acronyms are often pronounced by articulating each individual letter (e.g., NCLB is pronounced as “N-C-L-B”), or they may be pronounced phonetically as a word (e.g., jpeg is pronounced as a word, “jay-peg”). Now, let’s talk about some of the most common educational acronyms and what they represent.

What are some examples of common educational acronyms?

There are many kinds of educational acronyms, and they are focused on many areas of education. The following acronyms have been organized by topic to assist in your understanding of these terms.

Instructional/Curricular

- AP – Advanced Placement
- AT – Assistive Technology
- CD – Cognitive Disability
- EC – Early Childhood
- ELL – English Language Learner
- ESE – Educating Students with Exceptionalities
- ESL – English as a Second Language
- ESOL – Educating Students of Other Languages or English for Students of Other Languages
- ESY – Extended School Year
- IEP – Individualized Education Plan
- III or I³ – Immediate Intensive Intervention
- IST – Integrated Services Team
- LD – Learning Disability
- LEP – Limited English Proficient
- LRE – Least Restrictive Environment
- OT – Occupational Therapy
- PE – Physical Education



PT – Physical Therapy
RTI – Response To Intervention
SI/SLI – Speech/Language Impairment
SIP – School Improvement Plan
SLD – Specific Learning Disability
VPK – Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

Behavioral

ADD – Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BIP – Behavior Intervention Plan
EBD – Emotional/Behavioral Disorder
PBS – Positive Behavior Support
ISS – In-School Suspension

Organizational

DOE – Department of Education
NCATE – National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NEA – National Educator’s Association
PTA – Parent Teacher Association
PTO – Parent Teacher Organization
SAC – School Advisory Council or School Advisory Committee
SACS – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Policy/Legislative

AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress
FERPA – Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
FTE – Full-Time Equivalent Student
IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
JTPA – Job Training Partnership Act
NCLB – No Child Left Behind
WFTE – Weighted Full-Time Equivalency