

Grinnell-Newburg School District
A Parent's Guide to
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

*Fairness means everyone gets what they need,
not everyone gets the same treatment.*

Lawrence Colberg

What is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?

Section 504 requires the provision of appropriate educational services; services that are designed to meet the individual needs of qualified students to the same extent that the needs of students without a disability are met. Essentially Section 504 was designed to "level the playing field," to ensure full participation by individuals with disabilities.

Process for evaluation and identification:

A parent, guardian, or teacher may refer a student for evaluation under Section 504. When students exit special education services, eligibility for a 504 plan should be evaluated. Section 504 is focused on eliminating discrimination with regards to equal access to learning. Specialized instruction to remediate the disability is not provided under Section 504 as it is under Individual Disabilities Education Act.

Once a student is referred, a parent or guardian will be given the Grinnell-Newburg School District's *A Parent's Guide to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, notification of a planned meeting will be provided to parents/guardians, and a 504 team (including teachers, parent/guardian, others as appropriate) will meet in a reasonable period of time after the request.

At the 504 meeting a student's eligibility will be determined and a 504 plan will be developed if a student is 504 eligible. The 504 plan will include reasonable modifications and accommodations needed for the student to have equal access to a free and appropriate education in the regular education classroom.

Who Qualifies?

To qualify under Section 504 a student must:

* Be determined to have a **physical or mental impairment** that **substantially limits one or more major life activities** (major life activities include activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, learning, and behavior.)

* Have a record of having such an impairment OR

* Be regarded as having such impairment.

The impairment does not have to be severe. We must look at the manner and duration of the limitation of a person compared to an average person in the population. There may be multiple impairments, that when combined, materially restrict a major life activity.

Eligibility is determined by:

•Verification from written documentation, medical, psychological, or agency reports

or

•An evaluation in which appropriate information is gathered (such as from student records, observations, anecdotal reports, teacher reports, individual and group tests, aptitude and achievement tests, medical information).

and

•Determination that the disability substantially limits a major life skill.

What if a parent thinks a child is eligible for a 504 plan?

The parent should contact the administrator or guidance counselor of the building the student attends. This contact will begin the 504 process for evaluation and identification.

Grinnell-Newburg School District

Section 504 Parent's Rights

The intent of this information is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

If your child is eligible for Section 504 services, you have the right to:

Have your child take part in and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination based on a disability.

Receive written notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.

Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with other students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

Have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided to students without disabilities.

Have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions made based upon a variety of information sources, and by individuals who know your child, the evaluation data, and the placement options.

If eligible, have your child receive accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

Give your child an equal opportunity to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities offered by the school.

Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, and placement.

Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost if the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.

Receive a response from the school to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.

Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school refuses this request, it shall notify you within a reasonable time, and advise you of the right to a hearing.

Request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. You and your child may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you.

File a local grievance or complaint to the Office of Civil Rights in Chicago, IL. The office is part of the United States Department of Education. The regional office is located:

Office for Civil Rights/Chicago

U.S. Department of Education

Citigroup Center

500 W. Madison Street

Suite 1475

Chicago, IL 60661

Tel.: (312) 730-1560

Fax: (312) 730-1576

TDD: 312-730-1609

or 1-877-521-2172

The person in the Grinnell-Newburg School District who is responsible for Section 504/ADA compliance is: Nancy Beck, Director of Special Programs (641-236-2780)