

AFTER ELIGIBILITY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, THEN WHAT?

If the team determines that the student is eligible for a Section 504 plan, the team then should identify specific accommodations that will support equal access for the student. The plan lists the accommodations that the student requires to have equal access to the learning process or to other programs and activities. The 504 team should review active Section 504 Accommodation Plans at least yearly. The team may add, subtract, or modify the plan. If the student no longer requires the plan the 504 team may terminate it.

IF THE STUDENT DOES NOT QUALIFY, THEN WHAT?

The student is referred back to the Student Assistance Team. The SAT will use the evaluation results and any recommendations to design a SAT plan for the student.

HOW CAN A PARENT REQUEST A REFERRAL FOR A 504 EVALUATION?

A parent can request a 504 evaluation for his or her child by contacting the 504 Coordinator assigned to the child's school. The student may then be referred to the Student Assistance Team or, under certain conditions, referred directly to a 504 evaluation team.

Building _____

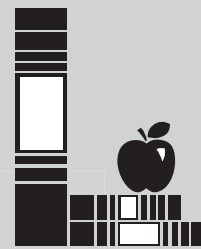
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Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

**A Guide for
Parents and Students**

**Department of Student Services
Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska**

This information serves to inform parents about Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and how it pertains to the Lincoln Public Schools. The information is organized in a question and answer format.

WHAT IS SECTION 504?

The focus of Section 504 is non-discrimination. Its initial purpose was to provide meaningful access to the public schools for students with disabilities. This role is now shared with special education as directed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), through which students with the most severe disabilities are now served.

HOW IS A STUDENT'S ELIGIBILITY DETERMINED?

To qualify for eligibility under Section 504 a student must be disabled. Disabled means the student (1) has a physical or mental impairment which (2) substantially limits (3) one or more major life activities.

1. Mental or physical impairment means any physiological disorder or condition, disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more body systems OR any mental or psychological disorder. The law does not list "approved" disabling conditions because of the difficulty of ensuring the comprehensiveness of any such list.
2. Section 504 does not define the phrase, "substantially limits." The phrase is to be

defined by the school district. However, the general understanding of a substantial limitation would be, "Unable to perform a major life activity that the average person in the general population can perform." The evaluation team will consider the nature and severity of the disability as well as its duration.

3. Major life activities means functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working. Although this list is not exhaustive, it is calculated to include "those basic activities that the average person can perform with little or no difficulty."

Eligibility, then is determined by two factors:

- 1) Is there a physical or mental impairment?
and;
- 2) Does the impairment substantially limit one or more major life activities?

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO DETERMINE IF A STUDENT IS ELIGIBLE FOR A SECTION 504 PLAN?

Each school in Lincoln Public Schools uses the Student Assistance Process to work with students, parents, and staff when a student is found to have chronic academic or behavioral concerns. The Student Assistance Team (SAT) devises improvement plans tailored to the needs of the student in question. The SAT, after appropriate interventions have been exhausted, may request that the student be evaluated for Section 504 eligibility.

A 504 team is assigned to complete the evaluation. The evaluation team needs to include



individuals who are knowledgeable about the needs of the student, who understand and can interpret the data being reviewed, and someone with knowledge of accommodation options available at the school.

Section 504 evaluation meetings are not meant to be as comprehensive as a special education evaluation. The team needs to investigate the specific concerns that prompted the request for evaluation. Information to be considered may include grades, attendance records, discipline records, cumulative file information, medical information, psychological evaluations, observations and standardized testing information.

The evaluation team may request other formal and informal measures to help determine Section 504 eligibility.

Again, the student is eligible for Section 504 accommodations when the team determines the student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.