

Wilmington Area School District

Section 504/Ch. 15 Guidelines, Roles, Responsibilities, and Procedures

Guidelines of Section 504 / Ch. 15

Local Education Agencies shall provide each protected handicapped student enrolled in the district, without cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to afford the student equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits from the school programs and extracurricular activities without discrimination, and to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To meet the criteria for services under Chapter 15, a student needs to be identified as a protected handicapped student.

To meet the criteria of a protected handicapped student, a child must be of school age and have a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the student's school program.

For those students who have a handicapping condition that requires accommodations or services to appropriately access their regular education program, an evaluation for an educational service agreement can be requested. Students receiving services under this category are typically children who are not eligible for special education services, yet demonstrate a documented disability that requires special consideration within the educational setting. In order to request a Chapter 15/Section 504 evaluation a parent should contact their child's school counselor, instructional support teacher, school nurse or principal.

Ch. 15 is Pennsylvania's Interpretation of Section 504 of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and can be found at <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter15/chap15toc.html>

In summary, "section 504 and its accompanying regulations protect otherwise qualified handicapped students who have a physical, mental, or health impairments from discrimination because of those impairments. The law and its regulations require public educational agencies to ensure that these students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the ability of the protected handicapped student in question. School districts are required to provide these students with the aids, services, and accommodations that are designed to meet the education needs of the protected handicapped students as adequately as the needs of non-handicapped students are met. These aids, services, and accommodations many include, but are not limited to, special transportation, modified equipment, adjustments in the students roster or the administration of needed medication. For purposes of the chapter, students protected by Section 504 are defined and identified as protected handicapped students."

District 504 Coordinator and Compliance Officer

District School Psychologist

District 504/Ch. 15 Core Members

School Counselors

School Principals

Classroom Teachers

School Nurses

Other necessary School Staff

Roles & Responsibilities of 504/Ch. 15 Coordinator/Compliance Officer and Team Members

School Psychologist – Serves as District 504 Coordinator and Compliance Officer

- Maintains knowledge of section 504/Ch. 15 regulations
- Coordinates district training in efforts to comply with Section 504/Chapter 15 regulations (e.g., trainings, workshops, dissemination of information)
- Ensures publication of Child Find Notice and ensures posting is provided to building principals
- Reviews 504/Ch. 15 evaluation summaries when proposed accommodations may require resources beyond the building-level and determines if appropriate procedures were used
- Receives and reviews a copy of all (initial and yearly renewal) 504/Ch. 15 agreements
- Accepts and reviews 504/Ch. 15 complaints then organizes and conducts investigations in attempts to resolve concerns or complaints identified by parents, teachers, or staff
- Organizes District response to any complaint filed with the Office of Civil Rights

School Counselor – Serves as Building Level 504/Ch. 15 Team Chairperson

- Maintains building level 504 records (e.g., copies of all current and past agreements).
- Maintains a master list of students in the building with 504/Ch. 15 Agreements including: name, grade, major life activity affects, annual review date, and projected reevaluation date
- Compiles data for building-level 504/Ch. 15 Team to review initial eligibility for 504/Ch. 15 Agreements and completes initial paperwork for the Team to review
- Consults with District 504/Ch. 15 Coordinator and building principal through the initial eligibility and renewal process
- Coordinates and schedules for initial and yearly re-evaluation/renewal meetings of students eligible for 504/Ch. 15 Agreements to ensure they are updated by the last day of each school year
- Annually reviews and renews all 540/Ch. 15 Agreements
- Develops and reviews 504/Ch. 15 Agreements prior to finalization and submission to District 504/Ch. 15 Coordinator/Compliance Officer
- Facilitates Team meetings and assists in determining feasibility and appropriateness of recommended 504/Ch. 15 accommodations within the building
- Informs District 504/Ch. 15 Coordinator/Compliance Officer of new parent and teacher referrals
- Informs building Principal and District Coordinator/Compliance Officer of complaints, concerns, and conflicts
- Forwards a copy of each 504/Ch. 15 Agreement to District coordinator and to the student's teacher(s)
- Maintains records that teachers have been provided a copy of 504/Ch. 15 Agreement for eligible students.

School Principal – Serves as Building Level Administrator

- Ensures posting Child Find Notice annually within the building level.
- Coordinates building-level efforts with District 504/Ch. 15 Coordinator for building to comply with 504/Ch. 15 regulations.
- Coordinates building-level efforts with District 504/Ch. 15 Coordinator for staff training.
- Supports School Counselor roles of Chairperson with the development of initial and renewal 504/Ch. 15 Agreements
- May act and serve as Building Chairperson
- Participates in Team meetings and assists in determining feasibility and appropriateness of 504/Ch. 15 accommodations within the building and classroom by informing the Team of any concerns, conflicts, and/or limitations of recommended accommodations.
- Ensures resources (e.g. materials, personnel, and technology) are provided to and can be easily accessed by the eligible student

District Teachers and Staff – Serve as Team Representatives

- Attends 504/Ch. 15 trainings provided by the District
- Refers at-risk students to Principal, School Counselors, and/or 504/Ch. 15 Coordinator
- Serves as 504/Ch. 15 Team member for students they educate
- Provide needed information and/or evaluation data on potentially eligible students to determine eligibility, need, and appropriate accommodations
- Assists in determining feasibility and appropriateness of 504/Ch. 15 Agreement accommodations within the building and classroom by making Principal, School Counselor, and Coordinator aware of concerns, conflicts, and limitations.
- Refers concerned parents to building-level School Counselor and informs School Counselor of the referral.

Procedures – School Generated

1. If made aware of or suspected that, because of a disability, the student may require and would benefit from accommodation under Section 504/Ch. 15 to allow him or her to participate in and/or benefit from school, the teacher or staff member should notify the building School Counselor.
2. The School Counselor will notify the building Principal and District Coordinator
3. The School Counselor will notify the parent of the suspected concern.
4. The School Counselor will arrange and schedule a meeting with appropriate personnel, including the student's parent(s).
5. The initial meeting will be held for the Team, including the student's parent, to determine if an evaluation for Section 504 eligibility is necessary.*
6. If any evaluation to determine eligibility is deemed necessary, a 504 Permission to Evaluate shall be issued to the parent.
7. Once the permission is returned, the School Counselor and building Principal will collaborate with Team members to compile all necessary data and then schedule a meeting with the parent and team to review the data.
8. If the Team determines that a student is eligible, the Team shall develop an appropriate 504/Ch. 15 Services Agreement.
9. Team members will fulfill and execute their roles and responsibilities noted above and in compliance with Ch. 15 issued under the Public School Code as well as District Policy.

*A parent may request that steps 6 through 9 be implemented at any time.

Procedures – Parent Generated

1. If a teacher or other staff member is made aware that a parent suspects that their child, because of a disability, may require and would benefit from accommodation under Section 504/Ch. 15 to allow him or her to participate in and/or benefit from school, the teacher or staff member should notify the building School Counselor.
2. The School Counselor will notify the building Principal and District Coordinator
3. The School Counselor will contact the parent to discuss the suspected concern.
4. The School Counselor will arrange and schedule a meeting with appropriate personnel, including the student's parent(s).
5. The initial meeting will be held for the Team, including the student's parent, to determine if an evaluation for Section 504 eligibility is necessary.
6. If any evaluation to determine eligibility is deemed necessary, a 504 Permission to Evaluate shall be issued to the parent.*
7. Once the permission is returned, the School Counselor and building Principal will collaborate with Team members to compile all necessary data and then schedule a meeting with the parent and team to review the data.
8. If the Team determines that a student is eligible, the Team shall develop an appropriate 504/Ch. 15 Services Agreement.

9. Team members will fulfil and execute their roles and responsibilities noted above and in compliance with Ch. 15 issued under the Public School Code as well as District Policy.

*A parent may request that steps 6 through 9 be implemented at any time.

Procedures – Developing Appropriate Accommodations

When developing a 504/Ch. 15 Service Agreement, the Team should consider the provision of appropriate accommodations, and not modifications, for the eligible student. Below are examples and suggestions to help the Team develop appropriate accommodations.

Accommodation	Modification
Can be granted to any general education student or student with a 504 Agreement	Given to students with an IEP
Helps students learn the same material and meet the same expectations as their peers	Students who are far behind their peers may need changes or modification to the curriculum
For testing, students are required to complete the same test, however, the test may be offered in different formats (e.g., read aloud, larger print, extended time that is not provided to all students)	Modifications in testing often require students to complete less material or complete material that is less complex
Accommodations for “special” classes such as gym, music, or art may include extra time or different formatting	Modifications change the expectations for the student, often requiring less work/participation from the student
Accommodations level the playing field	Modifications change the field you are playing on

Examples of Accommodations

- Extended time, frequent breaks, varying activities
- Preferential seating, room arrangement, reducing/minimizing distractions
- Visual Cues, use of manipulatives, graphic organizers, increased blank space
- Highlighted materials, notes provided by the teacher, calculator, computer, word processor, or large print
- Directions given in small, sequential steps,
- Positive reinforcement, concrete reinforcement, checking for understanding, study guides, before/after school tutoring
- Reading tests verbatim, chunking tests or assignments
- Allow for verbal responses
- Giving weekly progress reports
- Repeating work/review drills
- Teaching study skills/organization skills\

Examples of Modifications

- Presentation of curriculum is modified using a specialized curriculum which is written at a lower level of understanding
- Materials are adapted: texts are simplified by modifying the content areas – Simplified vocabulary, concepts, and principles
- Grading is subject to different standards than general education, such as based on IEP goals or based on pass/fail
- Assignments are changed using lower level readings, worksheets, and simplified vocabulary
- Reduction of homework, reduction of classwork.

Accommodation and Modification: A Brief Overview

Accommodation	Modification
Can be granted to any general education student or student with a 504 Agreement. Diagnosis or educational disability is not required. Has to have condition that adversely affects academics.	Given to students with an IEP who have been identified as having an Educational Disability
Helps students learn the same material and meet the same expectations as their peers.	Students who are far behinds their peers may need changes or modification to the content or <u>curriculum</u> .
For testing, students are required to complete the same test, however, the test may be offered in different formats (e.g., read aloud, larger print, extended time that is not provided to all students).	Modifications in testing often require students to complete less material or complete material that is less complex or below grade-level.
Accommodations for “special” classes such as gym, music, or art may include extra time or different formatting.	Modifications change the expectations for the student, often requiring less work/participation from the student.
Accommodations level the playing field.	Modifications change the field upon which the student is playing.

Examples of Accommodations

- Differentiation of materials/activities to present curriculum, tailor lesson to reach students learning style
- Extended time, frequent breaks, varying activities
- Preferential seating, room arrangement, reducing/minimizing distractions
- Visual Cues, use of manipulatives, graphic organizers, increased blank space
- Highlighted materials, notes provided by the teacher, calculator, computer, or large print
- Directions given in small, sequential steps
- Positive reinforcement, concrete reinforcement, checking for understanding, study guides, tutoring
- Reading tests verbatim, chunking tests or assignments
- Allow for verbal responses
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- Materials are adapted: texts are simplified by modifying the content areas – Simplified vocabulary, concepts, and principles
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