

504 Plans and Individualized Education Programs



in Poudre School District



Information for the PSD community including students, families, educational staff, medical providers, and mental health providers

The Law

Section 504	Section 504 is a federal civil rights law that ensures students with a physical or mental impairment or health condition have equal access to education and educational opportunities.
IDEA	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that gives eligible children with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and ensures they receive specially designed instruction.

504 Plans and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

	504 Plans	IEPs
Referral	A referral is initiated when a family member (including the student), educational staff member, medical provider, or other person suspects a student may have a disability.	
Consent	The student's parent/guardian must provide consent for an evaluation to be conducted.	
Evaluation	The 504 team conducts an evaluation by gathering data which may include, but is not limited to: academics, behavior, attendance, educational staff feedback, family feedback, and outside medical provider information.	The IEP team will conduct an evaluation including assessments in areas such as early concepts, academic skills, cognitive functioning, speech-language skills, physical development, social-emotional functioning, and others based on the suspected disability.
Eligibility	<p>504 eligibility is determined by answering the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the student have a physical or mental impairment or a health condition? 2. Does the student's physical or mental impairment, identified above, substantially limit the student in major life activities? 3. Does the student require Section 504 services or accommodations to ensure that the student's needs are met to the same extent as the needs of other students? 	<p>Special Education eligibility is determined by answering the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the student meet the criteria in one or more of the thirteen disability categories identified by the Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA)? 2. Does the student's disability cause a barrier to access, participation, or engagement in general education? 3. Does the student require specially designed instruction?
Plan	If the 504 team answers yes to the 3 eligibility questions above, the student is eligible for Section 504 protections and a 504 plan will be developed.	If the IEP team answers yes to the 3 eligibility questions above, the student is eligible for special education services and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed.
Review	Section 504 Plans and IEPs are reviewed annually or more frequently, if necessary.	
Re-Evaluation	Section 504 eligibility is re-evaluated with a major change of placement, including when a student enters the district and when a student moves school levels. They can be re-evaluated more frequently, if necessary.	A re-evaluation occurs at least once every three years. The student is re-evaluated (with parental consent) and eligibility for special education services is determined at this meeting.

Roles

	504 Plans	IEPs
Family	Provide information, participate in meetings and conversations, provide documentation when available.	
School Team	<p>Student – participates as appropriate to share their strengths and needs</p> <p>504 Team Lead or Coordinator – facilitates 504 process and meetings</p> <p>Educational staff knowledgeable about the student – support student, provide information, implement necessary accommodations</p>	<p>Student – participates as appropriate to share their strengths and needs</p> <p>Special Education Teachers – share expertise about specially designed instruction</p> <p>Special Service Providers – share information about related services (ex. speech)</p> <p>General Education Teachers – share information about the general curriculum, student progress, and peer relationships</p> <p>Testing Expert – interprets/explains test results</p>
Outside Providers (by parent invitation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents may invite others including an advocate, a private therapist, or anyone else who can speak to the student’s strengths, challenges, and needs. • Parents may also invite someone to take notes during the meeting. • Providers may make recommendations about supports for team consideration. 	


504 Plan Common Misconceptions

True	False
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A student can receive many types of support with or without a Section 504 plan. ✓ Students may present differently at school than they do at home or in a doctor’s office. ✓ A student having difficulty with something does not mean they have a disability. ✓ 504 plans are written based on current data and the current setting, not for future settings or “just in case”. ✓ When an outside professional creates a list of necessary 504 accommodations, modifications, and/or related services, the 504 Team will consider them. ✓ Schools care and want to provide support for all students. ✓ A 504 plan can be used as evidence of a need for support in post-secondary educational or vocational settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ A medical diagnosis of a disability automatically qualifies a student for a 504 plan and a private evaluation can be used in place of a district evaluation to determine 504 eligibility. ✗ A Section 504 plan ensures a student will get a certain grade on an assignment or assessment. ✗ A Section 504 plan automatically allows a student to miss school. ✗ A Section 504 plan provides the same support as an Individualized Education Program (IEP). ✗ When an outside professional creates a list of 504 accommodations, modifications, and/or related services, the school is required to provide them. ✗ When a student no longer needs an IEP, they automatically get a 504 plan.

IEP Common Misconceptions

True	False
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A 504 plan provides a student with accommodations, while an IEP provides accommodations and specially designed instruction. ✓ Educational impact of a disability and the need for an IEP does not mean academic failure. It can mean barriers to access, participation or engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ A medical diagnosis of a disability automatically qualifies a student for an IEP. ✗ A private evaluation can be used in place of a school district evaluation to determine if a student qualifies for special education services.

Questions, Concerns or More Information

Section 504	Special Education
1. Contact the student’s educational team or PSD 504 Compliance Specialist at 970-657-5321	1. Contact the Integrated Services Parent & Community Liaison at 970-490-3225
Section 504 Webpage 	Integrated Services Webpage 