

# Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

## What is Section 504?

- » A federal civil rights law that protects the rights of people with disabilities to equal treatment and access to opportunities
- » Applies to all programs and agencies that receive federal funding, including:
  - » *Public schools*
  - » *Private schools and vocational schools that receive funding from the federal government*

## Why is Section 504 important?

- » Protects student access to education.
- » If eligible, a student with a disability may be entitled to a 504 plan that provides them with necessary accommodations and modifications to help them learn better.

**Section 504 Eligibility:** Section 504 protects people who have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include:

- » Learning
- » Hearing
- » Reading
- » Performing math calculations
- » Walking
- » Speaking
- » Writing
- » Caring for oneself
- » Seeing
- » Breathing
- » Working
- » Performing manual tasks

## How does a student become eligible for a Section 504 plan?

- » The parent or guardian must request that the school evaluate their child to determine whether he/she is eligible for a Section 504 plan.
- » The request should be in writing.

## What are common modifications and accommodations under Section 504?

Modifications and accommodations under Section 504 can include:

- » Modifications to the school building to insure accessibility. Examples include:
  - » *A child who needs a wheelchair may need ramps built in the school to allow access to classrooms*
  - » *A child with an impairment that affects her ability to read may need more time on tests*
- » Preferential seating
- » Extra time to complete assignments
- » Shortened assignments
- » Alternative formats for school work
- » Schedule modifications
- » Assistance with health needs

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*Last updated February 2021*