

- obtain copies of education records at a reasonable cost, unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
- request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school system refuses this request for amendment, it will notify you within a reasonable time and advise you of the right to a hearing.

A parent/guardian or emancipated minor may request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, education program, and placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you. Hearing requests must be made to the 504 Coordinator at 410-887-4360. The 504 Coordinator is the Executive Director of Student Support Services.

**Contacts:**

- Your school
- Student Support Services at 410-887-4360
- Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) at 410-887-4159



*“The Baltimore County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, color, physical or mental disability, marital status, political affiliation, creed, religion, or national origin.” This document will be made available upon request in alternate formats for persons with disabilities. Please contact the Office of Student Support Services at 410-887-4360.*

Baltimore County Public Schools  
 Student Support Services  
 February 2004

# SECTION 504

## A Parent Information Guide For Section 504 Of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973



Printed January 2003

# Frequently Asked Questions About 504

## What is Section 504?

Section 504 is a federal law that protects the civil rights of persons with disabilities. The Act prohibits any organization that receives federal funds from discriminating against otherwise qualified individuals because of a disability. School programs and activities are subject to this law.

The procedures for Section 504 are part of the Pupil Services Manual. This information is available at all schools.

## Who is Eligible

A student with a disability should be considered for eligibility under Section 504 if he/she:

- has a physical or mental impairment which *substantially limits* one or more **major life activities**
- has a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

“Major life activities” include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Examples of “impairments” include severe allergies, cerebral palsy, diabetes, and epilepsy.

A diagnosis of a disability does not automatically qualify a student for eligibility under Section 504. Teachers or parents who feel a student may meet the criteria for Section 504 eligibility may request a Student Support Team (SST) meeting.

## What if You Suspect a 504 Disability?

- Contact the school and ask to talk to the SST Chairperson (usually an assistant principal).
- Be ready to assist in documenting a disability.
- Attend the meeting (SST) and/or plan development meetings.
- Be an active partner in the process with the school.

## What is a 504 Plan?

Students who meet the eligibility guidelines will have a 504 Plan developed for use in school. The Plan specifies the nature of the impairment, the major life activity affected by the impairment, accommodations necessary to provide access based on the student’s needs, and the person(s) responsible for implementing the accommodations.

Parents are encouraged to participate in development of the plan. A case manager will be assigned to notify teachers about the accommodations and monitor implementation.

- Accommodations should be specific to the individual student and should not include accommodations typically provided to general education students.
- Accommodations should be specific to the individual student’s physical or mental impairment in terms of the substantial limitation to the major life activity.

Accommodations must be documented in writing.

## What are the Due Process Rights? Summary of Parent/Student Rights in Identification, Evaluation, and Placement (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students with 504 disabilities.

You have the right to:

- have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disability.
- receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
- have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions made based upon a variety of information sources, and by persons who know the student, the evaluation data, and placement options.
- have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with non-disabled students. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
- have your child receive services comparable to those provided non-disabled students.
- have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities offered.