

A Parent's Guide to Section 504 Supports for Students with Disabilities

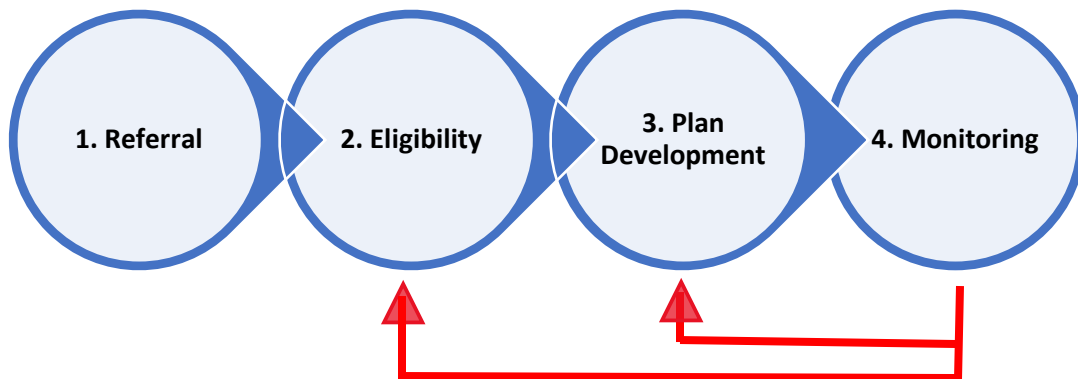
This session will provide parents with actionable information on how the DCPS Section 504 Program promotes equity for students with disabilities and provides a continuum of resources to support students' growth as well as how parents can participate in, and support, the 504 process during virtual learning and when schools reopen.

What is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that requires public schools to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities so that these students can access the school's general education curriculum and learning opportunities.

Because it is an antidiscrimination law, Section 504 is focused on ensuring that students with disabilities are able to access the same DCPS curriculum and learning opportunities available to all students. Unlike special education, Section 504 does not provide specialized instruction or a different curriculum for eligible students. Instead, the Section 504 Program ensures that eligible students with disabilities receive the accommodations and/or related services that they need in order to access the DCPS curriculum and learning opportunities.

The DCPS Section 504 Process



1. Referral: Parents/guardians or other individual who knows the student well are invited to refer their student to the 504 process if they believe that their student has a physical or mental impairment that could make their student eligible for Section 504.

2. Eligibility Determination: At the eligibility meeting, the 504 teams review all available information to determine whether the student meets the Section 504 eligibility criteria.

3. Plan Development: If the student is eligible, the 504 team will develop a 504 plan for the student, describing the personalized accommodations and services that the student needs in order to access the general education curriculum at the school.

4. Monitoring: The 504 team will meet annually to review the student's 504 plan and every three years to review also review the student's eligibility for Section 504.

For more information on this and other Parent University topics, please contact
ParentU@k12.dc.gov.

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Frequently Asked Questions

- **What should I do if I believe my student has a disability and may require a 504 plan?**

Contact your student's school and ask to speak with the 504 coordinator or a school administrator. Describe your concerns about your student's disability and the impact it is having on them within the school setting and ask to hold a 504 eligibility meeting. Bring any medical or other relevant documentation to this meeting.

- **My student has a 504 plan from a different school district or from a local charter or private school. Now that my student attends a DCPS school, will DCPS implement the previous 504 plan?**

No. Different school districts have different facilities, schedules, curricula, and expectations. The accommodations and related services in the previous 504 plan may not be appropriate in the student's new DCPS school. You should contact your student's new school to refer your student to the 504 process. Please provide the school with any supporting information, including the previous 504 plan, so that the 504 team can consider all relevant information in its evaluation.

- **Is Section 504 the same thing as special education or an IEP?**

No. Special education and Section 504 both provide services and supports for students with disabilities, but they do so in different ways and have different eligibility criteria. If you believe your student has a disability, work with their school to determine the appropriate process for your student and their needs.

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