

Section 504

Section 504 is a section in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. To qualify for protection under Section 504, a student must have a documented disability that substantially limits his/her learning or other major life activity (e.g., walking, talking, breathing, concentrating, thinking) has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment. Under Section 504, we are able to provide accommodations that "level the playing field" for a student with disabilities. These services are typically different from special education services. We can offer accommodations in the way we present material to a student or in the way a student is asked to respond, but if the student requires specially designed instruction, then the student would need to be evaluated for special education services. Examples of accommodations are: having a lengthy assignment presented in smaller segments (e.g., instead of giving all 20 problems to the student at once, present the student with five problems; when those are complete, present the student with five more, until all are complete), giving additional time to complete a test, allowing a student with a visual impairment to copy from notes on his/her desk rather than from the board, or redirecting a student to task who has an attention deficit disorder. The accommodations that are put in place must be directly related to the disability. Under Section 504, there are no modifications or changes to the curriculum or standards being taught, nor do we provide pull-out service to a special education resource room.

There is a referral and eligibility process for Section 504. A diagnosis from a physician does not automatically qualify a student for Section 504 services. Depending on the documentation available, additional testing to confirm the disability and its impact on learning may be needed. If the student is eligible, a 504 Plan is developed. The 504 Plan will specify the accommodations this student needs. 504 Plans are updated annually.

For further information, please contact Donna Lloyd, Director of Educational Services at 256-782-5683 or by e-mail at dlloyd@jacksonville.k12.fl.us.