

SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES REGARDING STUDENT DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS UNDER SECTION 504

WHAT IS SECTION 504?

A student who is identified as having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities may require reasonable accommodation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in order to have equal access to the programs and services of the Seattle School District. Section 504 guarantees a free appropriate education to all students regardless of the nature or severity of any disability. If a student is found eligible under this law, an intervention team determines what special accommodations the individual student may require in order to have the same opportunity for education benefit and achievement as a non-disabled student. Various accommodations at the school to which the student is initially assigned will be considered first. If and only if the student cannot be accommodated at the assigned school, assignment to another school will be considered. However, assignment to a particular school will be provided only when there is conclusive documentation that a particular school is necessary for the student to obtain a free appropriate public education.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A STUDENT QUALIFIES FOR A 504 ACCOMMODATION?

The procedure for determining whether your child is entitled to any accommodation based on disability related needs is as follows:

1. **Your child must be identified as having a disability under the requirements of Section 504.**

Federal law defines physical or mental impairment as any physiological disorder or condition affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, including speech organs, cardiovascular, digestive, or any mental or psychological disorder such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and special learning disabilities.

2. **To initiate the evaluation process, complete the student Request for Accommodation form.**

The accommodation request form can be obtained from the General Counsel's Office (Student Disabilities) or from any Enrollment Service Center.

3. The initial review of the request for accommodation shall be made by the school to which the student is assigned.

Once your completed Student Request for Assignment Related Accommodation form has been received, you will be referred to the school-based Student Intervention Team (SIT) at the school to which your child has been assigned. This team will be made up of teachers, counselors, psychologists, nurses, and others. They will make an initial determination of your child's disability/eligibility for accommodation, and determine whether they believe your child can be reasonably accommodated in the school to which he/she is assigned.

All requests for accommodations will be referred for an initial review to the school to which the student has been assigned.

4. Initial determinations that the student cannot be reasonably accommodated at the assigned school will be reviewed centrally.

If the school to which your child is initially assigned makes an initial determination that it cannot reasonably accommodate your child and another school is more appropriate, then that decision will be automatically reviewed centrally. Only the Central Office Student Intervention Team (CIT) can make a priority assignment at another school as a reasonable accommodation to a student disability.

5. Parent/Guardian can also request central CIT review.

If the parent or guardian disagrees with the initial determination made by the assigned school regarding eligibility or a requested accommodation, the parent or guardian may also request review by the central CIT.

To request a central office (CIT) review of a school-based decision, please contact the General Counsel's Office (Student Disabilities), 815 Fourth Avenue North, MS AA-151, Seattle, WA 98109 or call (206) 252-0110.

6. Parent/Guardian can appeal the Central CIT decision to an independent hearing officer.

The written decision of the Central CIT constitutes the final decision of the District. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the final decision of the District, the parent or guardian can appeal the decision to an independent hearing officer.

The appeal must be in writing and should be sent to the General Counsel's Office (Student Disabilities), 815 Fourth Avenue North, MS AA-151, Seattle, WA 98109.