

**Sanders Unified School District
Procedures for Referral, Evaluation, and
Identification of Students Eligible for Services
Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

1. Section 504 and the Section 504 Coordinator

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (known as Section 504) is federal law affecting programs receiving federal financial assistance. The law is intended to provide equal opportunity for qualified people with disabilities, including students with disabilities who attend the public schools. The Sanders Unified School District is dedicated to complying with the requirements of Section 504, as well as the requirements of federal law in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act, and state law applicable to students found eligible for special education. The Sanders Unified School District has developed procedures for guidance to parents or guardians and staff concerning obligations in this area.

The 504/Title II Coordinator is Patrice Jones, who may be reached by calling the District office at (928)-688-4712. Her email address is patricejones@sandersusd.net.

The District recognizes the responsibility to assure that children with disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education. The District wishes to assist parents, students, and staff in identifying students with suspected disabilities and making an informed decision concerning eligibility and appropriate programming and/or accommodations.

In interpreting evaluation data and in making placement decisions, the District will draw upon a variety of sources, ensuring that information obtained from all sources is documented and carefully considered. All placement decisions will be made by a group of persons including individuals knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options, in conformance with federal requirements.

2. Initial Referral for a Section 504 Evaluation

An initial referral begins the Section 504 process for a student. Any parent, guardian, staff member, or the student him or herself may refer a student with a suspected disability for evaluation under Section 504. Referrals should be made to the Section 504 Coordinator. While it is recommended that referrals be submitted in writing, a parent or guardian may make a verbal referral to this 504/Title II Coordinator, who will then prepare a written referral form for the parent's or guardian's review and approval.

Referrals should include the name of the student, grade, reason for referral and current concerns, suspected disability if known, and should attach any documentation considered relevant by the individual making the referral.

3. Initial 504 Meeting

An initial meeting convenes a Section 504 multi-disciplinary evaluation team to obtain the written consent of the parent/guardian to complete an initial evaluation or reevaluation. The team will gather and review all relevant data that may be used to draw a conclusion as to whether the student has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The team may review results of formal assessments, such as psycho-educational evaluations, but the 504 evaluation does not require formal assessments in all cases if there is sufficient data to provide information for the team to make an eligibility determination. When evaluating students who may be in need of special education or related services, including 504 services, the District is committed to utilizing tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used, administered by trained personnel, and tailored to assess specific areas of educational need.

4. Eligibility Determination Meeting

An eligibility determination meeting is conducted when the multi-disciplinary team applies the student data to the eligibility criteria in order to make a final determination as to whether the student is a student with a qualified disability. The team shall review each student's impairments on a case by case basis, considering both the extent to which the impairment limits a major life activity and its expected duration. A temporary impairment may qualify a student for Section 504 services if it is an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities for an extended period of time.

Present at the eligibility determination meeting should be school representatives or other professionals knowledgeable in the area of the evaluation data and qualified to interpret or facilitate discussion. Also present shall be persons knowledgeable about the individual student as well as persons knowledgeable about possible accommodations and related services available through the District. Parents must be invited to each team meeting with proper notice. Parents must receive notice of their parental rights and procedural safeguards.

When the team determines eligibility, the substantial limitation is determined without consideration of mitigating measures, such as medical equipment, prosthetics, or eyeglasses. In addition, if the impairment is episodic or in remission, the determination is made by considering the time when the impairments are active.

5. Plan Development

If a student is found eligible for services, a Plan will be developed either at the eligibility determination meeting or promptly after the eligibility determination. Plans shall be reviewed at least annually to determine if any changes are needed for the next school year.

6. Distribution of the Plan

All teachers and any other staff who work with the student and may be expected to implement the Plan shall receive a copy of the Plan for that student. For example, bus drivers, lunch aides,

cafeteria staff, school nurses, or others may need to be aware of the Plan and its requirements.

The identification and referral procedure, evaluation, plans for services, and procedural safeguards shall be implemented in compliance with School District Policies IHBA-RA, IHBA-E, and IHB and applicable law.