

Rockdale County Public Schools

Section 504 Training August 14, 2023

Lalita Waites
MTSS and 504 Coordinator

Norms

Remember I am RCPS (Respectful,
Collaborative, Professional, and Student focused)

Keep the training focused on Section 504

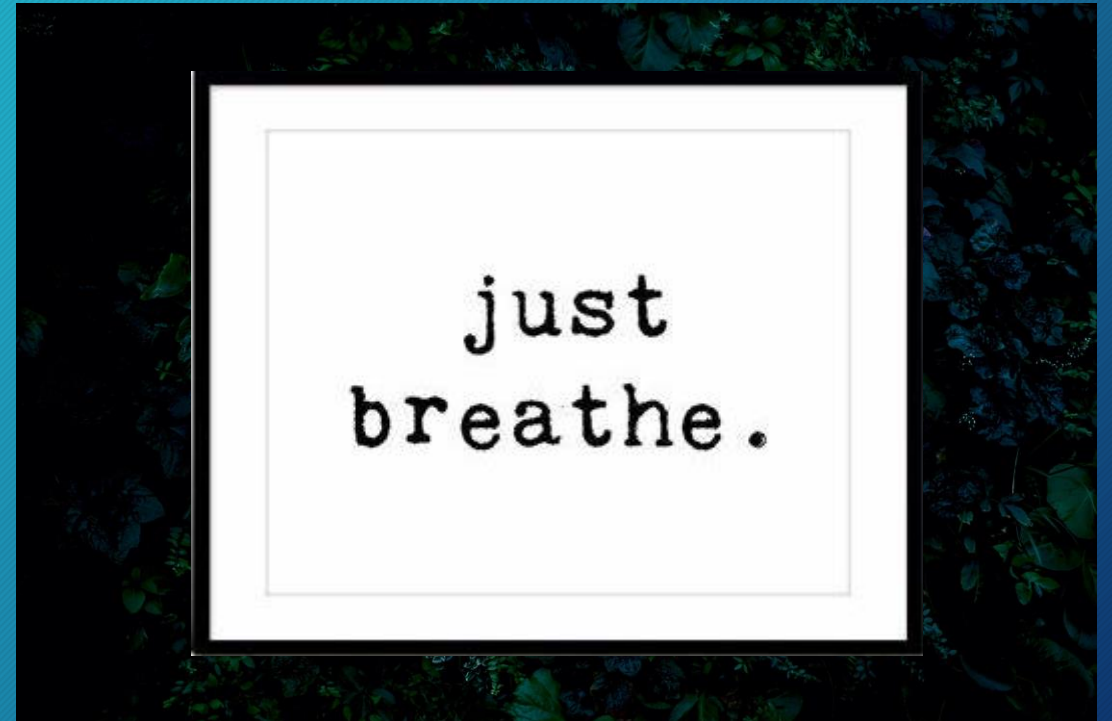
Be present during the entire training (avoid multi-tasking)

Be respectful of others

Use the chat for Parking Lot questions

Take a deep breath...

- Keys to making this work:
 - Flexibility, flexibility, flexibility
 - Patience, patience, patience
 - Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration
 - Time management skills



Consider....

- This is not a time to question existing 504 plans or eligibility
- We need to think outside the box
- We need to work collaboratively
- We need to have students' best interests at heart
- We need to consider **STRONGLY** that mental illness issues have increased

Today's Agenda

- What is Section 504?
- Identification, Eligibility, Placement
- The Accommodation Plan
- Compliance
- Discipline
- Avoiding Trouble Spots
- Infinite Campus



What is Section 504?

- Section 504 is a civil rights law
- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability
- It is enforced by the Office of Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Education
- 504 is part of regular education
- Requires that reasonable accommodations allow the student to participate in educational programs and activities *to the same extent as his or her non-disabled peers*
- Not designed to enhance a student's performance

IDEA vs. Section 504 Eligibility

Section 504 Eligibility and Support

- a) Student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially
limits one or more major life activities
- b) Because of that impairment, the student needs an accommodation
- c) Individualized support is delivered via a 504 accommodation plan
- d) There are no goals and progress is not measured

Section 504 and ADA Definition

A person with a disability is defined as an individual who:

1. Has a physical and mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2. Has a record of such an impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment

Section 504 and ADA

- Remember that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) prohibit the same thing with respect to public school students.



Section 504 Meetings

- Types of meetings:
 - Eligibility meeting
 - Annual/periodic review
 - Reevaluation
 - Manifestation determination
- Meetings must consist of people knowledgeable about the student

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Section 504

Identification

Identification

- Parent, teacher, other
- Documentation presented
- Changes in grades, behavior, etc.
- Attendance

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Evaluation

The Section 504 Team

- Is composed of persons knowledgeable about the student
- Is multi-disciplinary
- Must consider a variety of documentation and decides if more information is needed
- Makes a determination if the student meets the eligibility qualifications
- Determines the accommodations

But My Doctor Said....

- Cannot suffice for an evaluation alone
- Does not automatically qualify a child for a 504

Examples of Physical Impairments

- Epilepsy
- Diabetes
- Allergies
- Asthma
- Heart disease
- Tourette's syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy
- Visual impairment
- Broken limbs
- Cancer
- AIDS and HIV
- Hemophilia



Examples of Mental Impairments

- ADD/ADHD
- Depression/Anxiety
- Schizophrenia
- Eating disorders
- Conduct disorders
- Past drug/alcohol addiction
- Social maladjustment



Are there any impairments which automatically mean that a student has a disability under Section 504?

No. An impairment in and of itself is not a disability. The impairment must substantially limit one or more major life activities in order to be considered a disability under Section 504.

Mitigating Measures

A student may be eligible under Section 504 even if the student's disability or condition is controlled or mitigated, whether by medication, technology, etc.



Major Life Activities

- Self-care
- Manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Sitting
- Standing
- Reaching
- Thinking
- Concentrating
- Interacting with others
- Learning
- Working
-and more



Substantial Limitation

- Nature and severity of impairment
- Duration or expected duration of impairment

1. Negligibly/None

2. Mild (faintly evident, performs similarly to peers)

3. Moderate (average or somewhat limiting, performs below peers, inconsistent, some behavior problems)

4. Substantial (large degree, significant, consequential, performs far below peers, frequent behavior problems)

Placement

- Once the student is determined eligible for receiving Section 504 services, “placement” is determined; i.e., a decision must be made regarding the type of services the student needs.
- “Placement” encompasses the plan, accommodations, related services, etc.

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The Accommodation Plan

The Accommodation Plan

- Outlines the necessary accommodations that provide equal access to education
- Teachers will receive a copy of the plan
- Teachers must sign that they received the plan
- The plan must be followed at all times - report to the 504 chair if there is a question

Accommodations

- An accommodation is any technique that alters the academic setting or environment in some way but does not change the content of required work.
- A modification is any technique that alters the work required in such a way that it differs in substance from the work required of other students in the same class.

GADOE Accommodations Manual: Modifications vs. Accommodations

- Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations. **They provide access.**
- Modifications or alterations refer to practices **that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations.** Modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Consistent use of modifications could adversely affect students throughout their educational career. Examples of modifications include:
 - requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems),
 - reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items,
 - revising assignments or assessments to make them easier (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only has to pick from two options instead of four), or
 - giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests.
- An accommodation might shorten an assignment, for example, but the student must still master the standards. The standards would not be reduced.

Types of Accommodations

- Lesson presentation
- Assignments
- Test taking
- Behaviors
- Integrated support services
- Nursing/health considerations
- Transportation
- Parent notification
- Related services (OT, PT)

Setting Accommodations

- Preferential seating
- Make separate "space" for different types of tasks
- Possible adapting of non-academic times such as lunch, recess, and physical education
- Change student seating
- Utilize a study carrel
- Alter location or personal or classroom supplies for easier access or to minimize distraction
- Provide sensory breaks
- Provide a written or picture schedule



Organizational Accommodations

- Model and reinforce organizational systems (i.e. color-coding)
- Write out homework assignments, check student's recording of assignments
- Tailor homework assignments toward student strengths
- Set time expectations for assignments
- Provide clues such as clock faces indicating beginning and ending times
- Teach study/organizational skills
- Schedule before or after school tutoring/homework assistance



Presentation Accommodations

- Tape lessons so the student can listen to them again; allow students to tape lessons
- Use computer-aided instruction and other audiovisual equipment
- Highlight main ideas and supporting details in the book
- Provide copied material for extra practice (i.e. outlines, study guides)
- Prioritize drill and practice activities for relevance
- Vary the method of lesson presentation using multi-sensory techniques:
 - a) lecture plus overhead/board demonstration support
 - b) small groups required to produce a written product
 - c) large groups required to demonstrate a process
 - d) computer-assisted instruction
 - e) peer tutors or cross-age tutors
 - f) demonstrations, simulations
 - g) experiments
 - h) games



Presentation Accommodations

- Ask student to repeat/paraphrase context to check understanding
- Arrange for a mentor to work with student in his or her interest area or area of greatest strength
- Provide peer tutoring
- Simplify and repeat instructions about in-class and homework assignments
- Vary instructional pace
- Reinforce the use of compensatory strategies, i.e. pencil grip, mnemonic devices, “spell check”
- Vary kind of instructional materials used
- Assess whether student has the necessary prerequisite skills. Determine whether materials are appropriate to the student's current functioning levels
- Reinforce study skill strategies (survey, read, recite, review)
- Introduce definition of new terms/vocabulary and review to check for understanding
- Be aware of student's preferred learning style and provide matching instruction materials
- Pre-teach and/or re-teach important concepts
- Prepare advanced organizers/study guides for new material

Assignment Accommodations

- Use written directions to supplement oral directions
- Reduce paper and pencil tasks/use technology
- Allow for assignments to be word processed
- Break assignments into a series of smaller assignments (chunk)
- Use highlighted texts



Asthma

Possible Accommodations and Services:

- Adapt activity level for recess, physical education, etc.
- Allow for clinic visits
- Train for proper dispensing of medications; monitor and/or distribute medications; monitor for side effects
- Remove allergens (e.g. hair spray, lotions, perfumes, paint, latex)
- Accommodate medical absence by providing makeup work, etc.
- Provide access to water, inhaler etc.
- Adapt curriculum expectations when needed (i.e. science class, physical education, etc.)
- Develop health care and emergency plans
- Have peers available to carry materials to and from classes (e.g. lunch tray, books)
- Provide rest periods

ADHD

Inattentive symptoms of ADHD:

- Makes careless mistakes in school work, overlooks details
- Is easily distracted or sidetracked
- Has difficulty following instructions
- Doesn't seem to be listening when spoken to directly
- Has trouble organizing tasks and possessions
- Often fails to finish work in school or chores in the classroom
- Often avoids or resists tasks that require sustained mental effort, including doing homework
- Often loses homework assignments, books, jackets, backpacks, sports equipment



ADHD

Possible Accommodations and Services:

- Seat the student away from distractions and in close proximity to the teacher
- State classroom rules, post in an obvious location and enforce consistently
- Use simple, concise instructions with concrete steps
- Provide a peer tutor/helper
- Train for proper dispensing of medications; monitor and/or distribute medications
- Monitor for frustration
- Schedule subjects which require greater concentration early in the day

ADHD

- Have child work alone or in a study carrel during high stress times
- Highlight required or important information/directions
- Provide a checklist for student, parents, and/or teacher to record assignments of completed tasks
- Use a timer to assist student to focus on given task or number of problems in time allotted. Stress that problems need to be correctly done
- Have student restate or write directions/instructions
- Give student opportunity to stand/move while working
- Provide additional supervision to and from school
- Adapt student's work area to help screen out distracting stimuli
- Avoid withholding physical activity as a negative reinforcer

Depression/Bipolar Disorder

Possible Accommodations and Services:

- Break down assignments into manageable parts with clear and simple directions, given one at a time.
- Plan advanced preparation for transitions.
- Identify a staff member with whom the student can visit when in need.
- Monitor clarity of understanding and alertness.
- Provide extra time on tests, class work, and homework if needed.
- Have strategies in place for unpredictable mood swings.
- Provide appropriate staff with training on disorder.
- Create awareness by staff of potential victimization from other students.
- Implement a crisis intervention plan for extreme cases where student gets out of control and may do something impulsive or dangerous.
- Provide positive praise and redirection.
- Report any suicidal comments to counselor/psychologist immediately.
- Consider hospital homebound for times when the student's mood disorder makes it impossible for the student to attend school for an extended period.



Anxiety Disorder

- Anxious children perform best in a calm, supportive, but organized classroom. Because change and uncertainty can be unsettling, a structured classroom, calmly disciplined will let children feel safe and know what to expect.
- **Seating within classroom**
Anxious children often struggle with the unlikely fear that they will get in trouble, seating away from more rambunctious classmates will be less distracting, and may help them focus on their work rather than feeling responsible for the class.
- **Class participation**
Fears of getting the answer wrong, saying something embarrassing, or simply having other kids look at them may be concerns for an anxious child. Determine the child's comfort with either closed ended questions (requiring a yes or no) or with opinion questions, start with whichever is easiest. Use a signal to let the child know that his turn is coming. Provide opportunities for the child to share knowledge on topics in which he or she is most confident.
- **Class presentations**
Children with extreme social anxiety may have difficulty with oral reports. Consider having the child present to the teacher alone, or have the child audiotape or videotape the presentation at home.
- **Answering questions at the board**
For children with social anxiety, the combination of getting the answer wrong, and being visible to the whole class may be so overwhelming that they may opt to avoid school altogether. Consider having the child exempt from going up to the board until they are ready to handle that challenge, or, begin to approach that situation by eliminating the risk of being wrong, by simply asking the child to write the date on the board.



Testing Accommodations

- Accommodations are changes in the administration of an assessment in terms of how the student takes or responds to the assessment. Broad categories of accommodations include setting, scheduling, presentation, and response.
- Accommodations do not change the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the meaning of the resulting scores.
- Accommodations are designed to provide equity, not advantage, and serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities. When used appropriately, they reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations.

GADOE Standard Testing Accommodations

- Setting
 - Small group
 - Preferred seating
 - Individual study carrel
 - Individual administration
- Presentation
 - Large print
 - Oral reading of test questions*
 - Clarify directions
- Response
 - Points to answers
 - Braille writer
 - Adapted writing tools
 - Scribe
- Scheduling
 - Frequent monitored breaks
 - Extended time Time + 1/2
 - Extending sessions over multiple days

GADOE Testing Accommodations

- Importantly, accommodations provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities. Research consistently indicates there should always be a direct link between classroom instructional accommodations and assessment accommodations.
- Georgia policy mandates that any accommodation provided to a student must be the same for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and state assessments. Accommodations must be specified in the student's IEP or IAP/504 Plan. No accommodations should be considered for the first time during a state assessment.
- Simply because a student needs an accommodation does not mean he/she will know how to use it. Students need training and practice in using accommodations. Informed decision making regarding accommodations is critical in ensuring successful and meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the assessment process.

GADOE Testing Accommodations

- 504 teams should always consider the purpose of the assessment and **consult Georgia's *Student Assessment Handbook***, published annually by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), to determine if an accommodation is allowed for the assessment under consideration.
- **Accommodations must be considered and discussed individually for each state assessment mandated for the student's grade level and may not be broadly assigned across all assessments.** Only accommodations needed by the student, due to the disability, to access the assessment should be considered.

GADOE Testing Accommodations

- **Guidance for Use of Conditional Accommodations 15: Oral Reading of ELA passages.**
- The use of this conditional accommodation for the English Language Arts Georgia Milestones, *regardless of grade level*, must be restricted to only those students with IEPs who meet **ALL** eligibility criteria out-lined below:
 - 1. The student has a specific documented disability that severely limits or prevents his or her ability to decode text at any level of difficulty, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., **the student is a non-reader, not simply reading below grade level**); **and**
 - 2. The student has access to printed materials only through a reader or electronic format during routine instruction; **and**
 - 3. There are clear and specific goals within the student's IEP addressing the deficits which necessitate the need for this conditional accommodation.

Accommodations

- Be sure that the accommodations are succinct and realistic
- Accommodations should be included that are required on a systemic and consistently implemented basis

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Discipline

504 and Discipline

- Students have the right to a manifestation determination if they are suspended more than 10 days or have a pattern of exclusion
- Reevaluation due to a significant change in placement
- Does not apply if student is currently using drugs

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Avoiding Trouble Spots

Avoiding Trouble Spots: 504 Violations

504 Violations:

- Accommodation refusal
- Discussing medical information without permission
- Failure to consider a link between disability and discipline
- Failure to provide related aids and services in the plan

Avoiding Trouble Spots

- Accommodations are generalized or too specific
- Unable to show accommodations were implemented
- Attendance, discipline are part of triggers
- Consideration for behavioral issues
- Avoid using the term “modified”

Complaint and Impartial Hearing Process

1. Attempt to resolve at the school level
2. District Section 504 Coordinator attempts to resolve
3. Impartial hearing

The parent can file an OCR complaint at any time

Be Mindful

- Meeting attendance and commentary
- Email content
- Alert the Section 504 School Chair or principal if there are questions or concerns

What's the Big Deal?




- Protect students' rights
- Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education (OCR) - noncompliance may result in loss of all federal funds, administrative appeals and/or courts
- You will have to turn over all documents, create timelines, be interviewed by OCR, etc.

Infinite Campus: Identifying Students

Section 504

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* S5  Homeroom  DMS Fine Arts  No AUA

 Gender: M Team: 8 OSCAR