

# THE SCHOOL BOARD OF COLLIER COUNTY

## Administrative Procedures

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### **2260.01A1 - SECTION 504/ADA PROCEDURES FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SEEKING ASSISTANCE FOR APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE PROVISION FOR MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Introduction**

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations ("Section 504"), and Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the 2008 amendments thereto ("ADAAA"), no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason or his/her disability, be denied access to, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any District program or activity. It is the policy of the School Board not to discriminate against any qualified individual with a disability in admission or access to, participation in, or employment in, its programs or activities. As such, in accordance with the Board's policies and practices, the District will not discriminate against its students, including its post-secondary students with disabilities. It will provide to qualified students with disabilities access to its facilities, programs, and activities, and provide, to the extent possible, reasonable accommodation for such students as requested and needed.

#### **Definitions**

As used in this administrative procedure, "an individual with a disability" shall be understood to mean a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or has a record of, or regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities are functions such as, for example, caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, and so on and as more fully provided for under the ADAAA and Section 504.

With respect to postsecondary education services, a qualified person with a disability means a disabled person who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the postsecondary program or activity and seeks access to the benefits of the postsecondary program or activity.

This procedure does not pertain to District dual-enrollment students who are jointly enrolled in high school and postsecondary course programs. They are governed by District Policy 2260.01.

#### **Compliance Officer**

Dr. L. Van Hylemon, Coordinator of Psychological Services, is the District's Section 504 Compliance Officer(s)/ADA Coordinator(s) ("Compliance Officer"). The Compliance Officer is responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with and fulfill its responsibilities under Section 504 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") for postsecondary students. A copy of the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, including copies of their implementing regulations, may be obtained from the Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer can be reached at:

Address: 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, Florida 34109

Phone: (239) 337-0521

Fax: (239) 377-0526  
E-Mail: hylemol@collierschools.com

The Compliance Officer will oversee the investigation of any complaints of discrimination based on disability, which may be filed pursuant to the District's grievance procedure, and will attempt to resolve the grievances filed by postsecondary students.

## **Student Responsibilities**

### **Request for Accommodations**

It is the obligation of the qualified post-secondary student with a disability to request reasonable accommodation. Enrolled postsecondary students must submit a request-for-accommodations form to the particular postsecondary school in which he/she is enrolled for consideration, prior to the beginning of each semester. Submission of documentation does not guarantee accommodations. Qualified students with a disability must provide recent documentation from a qualified, licensed professional that addresses the specific disability and the requested accommodation. Requests for accommodations must be supported by specific medical documentation. Once a student's request(s) for accommodation have been in-putted for accommodation and program access, it is the student's responsibility to request accommodations each semester that he/she is enrolled.

The Section 504 liaison of the postsecondary school will notify faculty in writing verifying that the student has provided the school with all required accommodation documentation. It is the student's responsibility to notify both the particular faculty member and the liaison at least seventy two hours in advance of any accommodation involving tests or quizzes.

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to provisions of or usage of assistive devices, extended time for taking tests or quizzes, special seating arrangements and so on. (See too, the LWIT and iTech Student Handbooks).

Faculty members are encouraged to notify the school's Student Services Department or the school's Principal and/or 504/ADA liaison should they have any questions or concerns regarding academic accommodations and how to implement them. Academic accommodations are not intended to fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program being taught. Requests for accommodations that would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program, or which would alter the academic standards or contents of a course or program, cannot be granted. Additionally, academic adjustments are not appropriate if they vary, alter, or supplement the very skills which the test is intended to measure.

Students must provide documentation of a disability in order to receive Section 504 services. The documentation must be current and from a professional who has expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of the disability. At a minimum, the documentation should include diagnosis of the disabling condition, its effect upon the students learning and/or academic endeavors, and recommendations for appropriate accommodations for access to programs and benefits.

### **Learning Disabilities**

Documentation for a post-secondary student with a learning disability should include a complete psychoeducational battery of tests. The relevant assessments should include a diagnosis of the disability and recommendations for academic accommodation. The date of the testing must have been within three years of

the request for accommodation if it was completed prior to the student's eighteenth birthday. Testing completed after the student's eighteenth birthday may be considered valid for five years. The testing must have been completed by a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, neuropsychologist, school psychologist, or psychometrist working under a licensed psychologist.

Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are not acceptable forms of primary documentation. IEP's are plans which were structured and agreed to with the particular school at the time they were written. On the other hand, IEP's may be helpful in determining the level of support and types of accommodations which were provided to a student in the past, and they may provide insight regarding successful support.

### **Psychiatric Disabilities**

Documentation must include a diagnosis, a statement as to the effect of the disability upon the student's academic performance or barrier presented by the disability, and the recommendations for accommodation. Documentation must be from a physician or specialist with the ability to assess the conditions. If the documentation is not from a psychiatrist, then the current documentation must include a statement that the original diagnosis was made by a psychiatrist or be accompanied by such documentation. The physician's statement may include current necessary medications and any side effects that should be taken into account.

Please note that Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is considered a psychiatric disorder. Nevertheless, psychoeducational testing may be accepted in lieu of documentation from a physician for ADD/ADHD for the purpose of academic accommodations.

Documents should be current or have been validated, within three years of the request for accommodation for any particular disabling condition. A list of medications and prescriptions do not serve as documentation of a disability. The school cannot and will not derive a diagnosis from medication information.

### **Sensory Disabilities**

Documentation must be from a health care specialist who has authority to diagnose the condition (ie. physician, audiologist, etc.).

Recommendations for accommodation may be provided by a rehabilitative and/or occupational specialist working in the related field. Documentation should be current. However, documentation of a permanent condition may extend back five years.

### **Physical Disabilities**

Documentation of physical disabilities must be from a physician specialist who can document the extent of the disability and ramifications of having such a disability. Documentation should be current or, no less than three years old from the date of the request for accommodation. However, documentation of permanent conditions may extend back five years. In many cases, it may be difficult for a layman to differentiate between a permanent and non-permanent condition, in which case current documentation will be required. For some physical disabilities, it may be determined that there is a perceived disability to such an extent that any reasonable person would judge the student to be disabled; these decisions would be made by the individual school's Student Services Department and would require that they complete a written statement to that effect and place it in the student's file.

## **Insufficient Documentation**

As noted above, Individual Education Plans (IEP's) do not constitute sufficient primary documentation. Letters of Accommodation from other postsecondary schools may be accepted for transient students for the period of one semester, but these letters do not serve as documentation beyond that time period.

Notes written on prescription pads are not sufficient. Statements must be made on letterhead, and the author's contact information and title must be discernible. Statements from the Social Security Administration are also not sufficient documentation. Their determination of disability differs in purpose and scope, and it does not provide information specific to the disability in an academic setting. Therefore, the previously noted documentation will still be required.

## **Updated Documentation**

A student may be asked to update documentation that exceeds five years or if the staff suspects that the documentation may no longer be representative of the student's current functioning or status. A one semester grace period within which to update previously accepted documentation may be granted, at the discretion of the school. If a student wishes accommodations that are not reflected in the current documentation, or the student expresses that the current documentation does not reflect the extent of the disability, the school may request updated documentation to substantiate need.

## **Complaint Resolution**

### **Informal Resolution**

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged first to attempt to independently resolve concerns by initiating a meeting with the faculty member, or staff member with whom there is a concern or disagreement. However, when the matter cannot be resolved independently, individuals with a disability are encouraged to address such instances through the following grievance procedure.

### **Grievance Procedure**

All post-secondary student complaints involving a Section 504/ADA issue should be:

- A. Filed in writing, contain the name, address of the person filing it, and briefly describe the alleged violation of the regulations. In addition, a copy of the original request for accommodation must be included with the complaint.
- B. A complaint should be filed within 90 calendar days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation.
- C. An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall follow the filing of the complaint. The investigation shall be conducted by the Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer, or the District's Executive Director of Exceptional Education and Student Support Services, depending upon the nature of the grievance. A thorough investigation will be held, affording the complainant or specific class of individuals and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the complaint.
- D. Grievances filed against the Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer shall follow this procedure and be addressed to the District's Executive Director of Exceptional Education and Student Support Services,

Karen Stelmacki, (239) 377-0143, [StelmaKa@collierschools.com](mailto:StelmaKa@collierschools.com), and by mail at 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, Florida 34109.

- E. A written determination as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued either by the Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer, or the District's Executive Director of Exceptional Education and Student Support Services, and a copy will be forwarded to the complainant no later than fifteen (15) working days after its filing.
- F. Either party may appeal the findings of the investigation to the District's Executive Director of Exceptional Education and Student Support Services, or Superintendent, depending upon the nature of the grievance, within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the findings, by filing a request for a review of the complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability or failure to provide reasonable accommodation. The appeal should state with reasonable specificity the grounds for the appeal.
- G. The Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer shall maintain the files and record of complaints filed.
- H. Filing the complaint with the District grievance system in no way precluded an individual's right to file a grievance with the Department of Education or Office of Civil Rights.
- I. Retaliation against a person who files a grievance, opposes a procedure/policy, he/she believes to be discriminatory is prohibited.

### **Public Notice**

Notice of the Section 504/ADA prohibition against discrimination based on disability for postsecondary students and the identity of the District's Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer will be posted throughout the District's postsecondary schools and published in the District's postsecondary handbooks and catalogs, and made available on the postsecondary school's websites.

### **Training**

The Compliance Officer will oversee the training of employees in the District so that all employees and postsecondary students understand their rights and responsibilities under Section 504 and the ADA, and are informed of the Board's policies, administrative procedures and practices with respect to fully implementing and complying with the requirements of Section 504/ADA with regard to postsecondary students.