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# Section 504 Procedures Manual

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## Parent Handbook

Department of Special Services  
Spartanburg District One Schools  
August, 2015

## **Purpose of Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, is designed to eliminate discrimination based on disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This act requires that no qualified student who demonstrates a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (i.e., self-care, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, learning, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, operation of major bodily function, and communicating) shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subject to discrimination in any program or activity offered by Spartanburg District One Schools. An impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it substantially limits a major life activity when active.

The determination of impact to one or more major life activity must be made without regard to any ameliorative effects of mitigating measures (i.e. medication, medical supplies, equipment, low-vision devices, prosthetics, hearing aids and cochlear implants or other implantable hearing devices, mobility devices or oxygen therapy equipment and supplies).

District One Schools shall offer a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability. Services provided to qualified students are not required to produce identical results or level of achievement with nondisabled peers. Services must be designed to offer an equal opportunity to gain the same benefit within the most integrated setting appropriate.

A student who is not disabled, but has a record of, or is regarded as disabled, is protected under Section 504 insofar as an alleged discriminatory action based on that history or perception. The fact that a student has a "record of," or is "regarded as" having an impairment is insufficient by itself to require reasonable accommodations.

## Identification and Evaluation Procedures

District One Schools has a responsibility to identify and evaluate those children who are believed to qualify as disabled under Section 504.

### 1. Referral:

When there is a reason to suspect that a student has a disability and is in need of accommodations within the general education classroom, a referral can be made to the local screening committee for review.

Referrals should be made in writing.

If parents make a referral to a teacher, they should be directed to the principal or designee selected to receive referrals. The date the referral is received must be noted.

### 2. Local Screening Committee:

The local screening committee must convene within ten business days following the receipt of a referral.

For all referrals, the local screening committee must consist of the following members, at a minimum:

- Principal or designee
- School Psychologist
- General education teacher
- Referral source, except if inclusion of the referral source would breach the confidentiality of the student

The parents must be invited to the local screening committee meeting in writing by way of the *Parent Section 504 Student Eligibility Meeting* form. The parents must be notified of the meeting early enough to ensure they have an opportunity to participate; however, the meeting must be held within ten business days of the referral date.

During the local screening committee meeting, the committee should review information from a variety of sources. The information reviewed should pertain to the students' functioning in the school environment, and should include, as available: the referral; educational records such as aptitude and achievement tests, report cards and/or teacher recommendations; oral or written observations; evaluations of adaptive behavior; social and cultural background; medical, psychological, and/or other specialty

reports; and parent information. Following this review, the local screening committee may:

- Determine that an evaluation is not warranted at this time.
- Determine there is a need for an evaluation for special education services under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). In this case, the local screening committee shall proceed in accordance with the Referral, Evaluation, and Eligibility Procedures.
- Determine whether the student qualifies as disabled under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008.

3. Making Initial Qualification Decisions:

If, upon review of the *Multipurpose Referral* form and available information, the local screening committee determines that there is insufficient evidence to suspect that a disability warrants an evaluation for special education under IDEA, but considers qualification as disabled under Section 504, the committee will consider qualification under Section 504.

The local screening committee shall complete a *Section 504 Qualification* form for students being considered as disabled under Section 504. The information listed on this form must document:

- Concerns leading to the referral.
- Identification of the physical or mental impairment(s):
  - “Physical or mental impairment” means any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; cardiovascular; reproductive, digestive, genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disability.
- The major life activity impacted by the impairment(s):
  - “Major life activity” includes but is not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating.
  - A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system,

normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions.

- An impairment that substantially limits one major life activity need not limit other major life activities in order to be considered a disability.
- Description of the impact of the student's impairment on the identified major life activity.
  - An impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it substantially limits a major life activity when active.
  - Individuals being considered for qualification under Section 504 should not be penalized because they manage their own adaptive strategies or receive accommodations (including informal or undocumented ones) that have lessened the deleterious impact of the disability. The determination of impact to one or more major life activities must be made without regard to any ameliorative effects of mitigating measures which include, but are not limited to: medication, medical supplies, equipment, low-vision devices\*, prosthetics, hearing aids and cochlear implants or other implantable hearing devices, mobility devices, oxygen therapy equipment and supplies, assistive technology, reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids or services; or learned behavioral or adaptive neurological modifications.
- Information provided and considered by the committee.
- The committee's determination of qualification.
- A list of the committee members participating in the determination.

A copy of this form, along with the *Local Screening Committee Report* and the *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Procedural Safeguards (SS/SE-92)*, shall be provided to the parent.

\*Note-Low-vision devices do not include ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses. The ameliorative effects of ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses may be considered in determining whether the impairment substantially limits a major life activity. Ordinary eyeglasses are those that are intended to fully correct visual acuity or eliminate refractive error; and low-vision devices are those that magnify, enhance, or otherwise augment a visual image.

## Knowledgeable Committee and 504 Plans

### 1. Knowledgeable Committee Membership:

The 504 plan is a statement of the required accommodations and services that District One Schools will provide to a student. If the student qualifies as disabled under Section 504, a committee of knowledgeable people shall develop a 504 plan. Typically, the knowledgeable committee is comprised of staff members who work directly with, or supervise the student in the educational setting.

The knowledgeable committee must include:

- Principal or designee
- Teacher(s) who are, or will be, working with the student (Whenever possible, the committee should include those persons who will be responsible for implementing the proposed accommodations).

Other committee members, such as the school psychologist, public health nurse, school social worker, or counselor, may be included as appropriate to the needs of the student.

The school is not required to include the parent in the development of the 504 plan, but it is best practice to invite the parent to participate and provide input.

### 2. Plan Development:

The knowledgeable committee reviews the specific needs of the student in the educational setting and completes a *504 Plan* template. Accommodations necessary to provide the student an equal opportunity to access programs and activities and to demonstrate achievement are included in the 504 plan. The reasonable accommodations shall:

- Reflect the unique needs of the student.
- Relate directly to the area of impairment.
- Address only what is necessary to ensure that the student has the opportunity to access programs and activities in the school setting.
- Be specific enough in description to clearly indicate when and where the accommodation(s) will be provided during the school day.

The focus is on **reasonable accommodations**.

The knowledgeable committee shall determine whether the student that qualifies as disabled under Section 504 requires classroom testing accommodations, and whether those accommodations should be provided for any state and district wide assessments. These decisions shall be recorded on the appropriate form. Testing accommodations should be consistent with the classroom instruction accommodations that are already part of the student's 504 plan.

If the knowledgeable committee determines that there is currently no specific educational impact that requires accommodations, this should be noted on the *504 Plan* form (SS/SE-86). This decision should be reviewed if concerns are noted by either the parent or school staff members.

A copy of the 504 plan shall be provided to the parent following its completion. Parental consent is not required prior to the provision of accommodations for a student.

The principal is responsible for adherence to the overall procedures and implementation of a 504 plan.

Each individual working with or supervising the student shall be provided a copy of the 504 plan and will comply with the applicable components.

The plan remains in effect as specified until either a new plan is developed, or the knowledgeable committee determines through reevaluation that the student no longer qualifies as disabled under Section 504.

### 3. Plan Review and Revision:

The principal or designee is responsible for ensuring that 504 plans are reviewed at least annually or more frequently as conditions warrant. The purpose of this review is to determine the appropriateness of the plan and to make any needed modifications. The participants in the annual meeting should be those individuals relevant to the discussion of the student's accommodations. At minimum, the committee must consist of at least one of the student's teachers and a principal or designee. It is best practice to invite the parent(s) to the annual plan review.

504 Plans will be reviewed in the fall of each new school year to determine appropriateness for the new year. Regular classroom teachers must be a part of this revision.

#### 4. Discipline Procedures:

The knowledgeable committee shall convene to assess whether the behavior requiring disciplinary action is related to a qualified student's disability when:

- A decision is made to remove a 504-qualified student from school for more than 10 consecutive school days in a school year.
- The 504-qualified student is subjected to a series of removals during a school year that accumulates to more than 10 school days.

While not required, it is best practice to invite the parent to participate and provide input at the causal hearing. Parents should be notified with sufficient time to allow them the opportunity to attend. The school may use the *Parent Notice of Section 504* form to notify the parent of the meeting. A copy of the *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Parent and Student Rights* shall be included with the meeting notification letter. The knowledgeable committee shall complete a *Section 504 Causality Hearing* form and forward it to the Coordinator of Special Services when there is a recommendation for expulsion or exclusion:

- If a student is qualified under Section 504 and there is a causal relationship between the disability and the behavior resulting in disciplinary action, the committee shall determine whether the student's educational program should be modified.
- If a student is qualified under Section 504 and there is no causal relationship between the disability and the behavior resulting in disciplinary action, the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a nondisabled student, including the cessation of services.
- If a student qualified under Section 504 is receiving disciplinary action based on the illegal use and/or possession of drugs or alcohol, and the individual is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs or alcohol, a committee of knowledgeable persons is not required to convene, reevaluate the student, or determine whether there is a causal relationship between the behavior and the disability.

#### 5. Transfers:

When a student transfers into a school and is qualified as disabled under Section 504, a knowledgeable committee in the receiving school shall review the existing 504 plan to determine the plan's appropriateness to the current educational setting. The knowledgeable committee may decide to implement the plan as received, write a new plan more appropriate to the current educational setting, or reevaluate the student in order to consider if the student no longer qualifies as disabled under Section 504.



## **Records**

Forms documenting the referral, evaluation, qualification, and accommodation plan of a student under Section 504 should be maintained in the student's scholastic record.

If a student transfers to another public school within District One the file is to be forwarded to the new school in accordance with regulations.

The student's parent or guardian may examine their child's educational record upon request.

The principal or designee is responsible for keeping a record of those students for whom a 504 plan has been developed, along with the anticipated review date for each student's 504 plan, and the date of each student's reevaluation. The date of the 504 plan shall be entered in Schools Administration Student Information (SASI) or any subsequent school-based information system, for each qualified student. This information shall be reviewed and updated at the beginning of each school year.

### **District One Schools Operating Procedures for Section 504 Impartial Hearings**

Spartanburg District One Schools or the parent or guardians of a student (or an adult student) with a disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") may request an impartial hearing to resolve any disagreement regarding the identification, evaluation, accommodations and/or modifications, provision of FAPE, or causality determination of the student with a disability. Requests for a hearing that raises issues pursuant to both Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") may, at the discretion of the hearing officer, be heard together through the IDEA hearing procedures provided by federal and state law, regulations, and District One Schools policies.

#### **1. Requesting an Impartial Hearing**

Requests for an impartial hearing shall be made in writing and delivered to the Coordinator of Special Services. The request shall include: the name of the student, the address of the residence of the student (or available contact information in the case of a homeless student), the name of the school the student is attending, a description of the nature of the problem with supporting facts, and a proposed resolution of the problem.

If the request does not include all of the required information it may be returned to the parents within 10 school days of receipt by the coordinator with a request to provide the missing information within five additional school days. The remaining procedures will not proceed until the additional information is received from the parents.

A hearing may only be requested within one year of the date the parents knew or should have known about the alleged actions or facts that forms the basis of the complaint.

Any questions regarding these procedures should be directed to the Coordinator of Special Services.

**IDEA and 504  
Brief Overview of Differences**

<b>IDEA</b>	<b>504</b>
<b>Primary Focus</b>	
Educational benefit	Equal access for students with disabilities
<b>Who is Covered</b>	
Handicapping conditions are defined Adversely affects education performance and requires special education and related services	There are no eligibility categories Those with impairments that substantially limit a major life activity
<b>Purpose of the Plan</b>	
Goals and objectives outlined for the student. (What the <b>student</b> will do)	Reasonable accommodations provided to the eligible student by the <b>teacher(s) or relevant school staff members</b> . (What the teacher or staff member will do)
<b>Consent</b>	
Parent consent required for eligibility, for initial services, change in placement.	Parent consent is not required. Parents are invited to participate.
<b>Regulations</b>	
IDEA-many specifics	OCR-few specifics
<b>Parent Participation</b>	
Procedural rights to participate	Best practice to invite parent participation
<b>Due Process</b>	
Due process rights	Right to an Impartial Hearing
<b>Stay Put</b>	
Last agreed-upon placement	No stay-put provisions
<b>Funding</b>	
All states receiving funding	No funding
<b>Monitoring</b>	
VDOE is required to develop regulations and to monitor the provision of special education. USDOE oversees implementation.	VDOE has no responsibility for-or jurisdiction over-LEA's implementation of 504 Plans. OCR oversees implementation.



**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

**Section 504 is designed to eliminate discrimination against any student with a disability in any program offered by the school division.**

**Who is Covered:**

- ★ Any student who has, has a record of, or is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of life's major activities.

**What is Required:**

- ★ Qualifying students must have an opportunity to access all activities and programs, and cannot be denied participation because of their disability.
- ★ Qualifying students with a disability must be offered a free appropriate public education (FAPE). FAPE is the provision of reasonable accommodations, adaptations, or modifications to the environment or activity that allows the student equal opportunity to participate.
- ★ Accommodations must be designed to offer equal opportunity to gain the same benefit as non-disabled peers, within the most integrated setting appropriate, but are not expected to produce identical results or the same level of achievement.
- ★ Transfers: If a student that is disabled under Section 504 transfers schools, a knowledgeable committee at the receiving school should convene and review the 504 plan to determine if it is appropriate for the current educational environment.

**Qualifying Factors:**

- ★ The Local Screening Committee (LSC) determines initial Section 504 qualification.
- ★ The LSC must identify the presence of a physical or mental impairment and the major life activity limited by the impairment.
- ★ Current illegal use of drugs or alcohol is not an impairment protected under Section 504.

**The Plan:**

- ★ A knowledgeable committee composed minimally of the principal or designee and a teacher of the student develops the 504 Plan for qualified students.
- ★ The parent is invited, but does not have to attend or approve of the plan.
- ★ The 504 Plan should reflect the unique needs of the student and relate directly to the impairment. Only the accommodations necessary for the student to have an equal opportunity to access programs and activities should be included.
- ★ The knowledgeable committee must meet at least once a year to review the 504 Plan.
- ★ The knowledgeable committee determines if the student no longer qualifies as disabled under Section 504.

**Disciplinary Protections:**

- ★ The knowledgeable committee must conduct a causal review following a decision to remove a student from school for more than 10 days in a school year.
- ★ If there is no causality, the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a non-disabled student, including cessation of educational services.
- ★ Causality determination is not required if the student is engaging in the illegal use of drugs or alcohol, and is being disciplined for the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol.

**Procedural Safeguards:**

- ★ Parents and qualified students are entitled to certain procedural safeguards.
- ★ Inquiries may be directed to Due Process and Eligibility (703-317-3000).



**SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973  
PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

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No qualified student with a disability in Spartanburg District One Schools shall, on the basis of that disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity offered by the school division. In respect to actions regarding the identification, evaluation, and/or placement of students with disabilities under Section 504, the following procedural safeguards shall be provided:

- Notice shall be provided to a student's parent(s) or guardian prior to evaluation, reevaluation, and/or significant change in placement.
- Decisions regarding the identification, evaluation, and accommodations and/or modifications for a student qualified under Section 504 shall be made by a committee of individuals who are knowledgeable about the student.
- The parent(s) or guardian shall have the opportunity to examine the student's educational record.
- An evaluation may consist of a review of existing records and/or information from a variety of sources, such as observations, teacher reports, and results of informal and/or formal assessments. If formal assessments are used, they shall be administered in the student's primary language or mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so; validated for the purposes for which they are used; and administered by trained personnel in conformance with the instructions provided by the publisher. Assessments shall be fair and nondiscriminatory and, if requested by the local screening committee or 504 knowledgeable committee, shall be provided at no cost to the parent. Parental consent shall be obtained prior to the initiation of assessments.
- The student shall be re-evaluated prior to reconsideration of qualification as a student with a disability under Section 504.
- For acts of misconduct, when a decision is made to remove a 504-qualified student from school for more than ten consecutive school days or when the 504-qualified student is subjected to a series of removals during a school year that constitute a pattern and accumulates more than ten school days, a knowledgeable committee shall convene to determine whether the student's conduct was caused by the student's disability.
- The student's parent(s) or guardian shall have the opportunity to appeal decisions concerning the student's identification, evaluation, accommodations and/or modifications, or causality determination in a discipline case. The parent(s) or guardian may request an administrative review, mediation, and/or impartial hearing.

Compliance with Section 504 is coordinated by the Coordinator of Special Services.

## Section 504 Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in programs receiving federal financial assistance. The act defines individuals with disabilities as those who have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more life activities, have a record of such impairment or are regarded as having such impairment.

### 2. How does Section 504 apply in schools?

Districts that receive federal funding must insure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 are identified, evaluated and provided access to free and appropriate educational services, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

### 3. How does a student be identified with a 504 designation?

The Pupil Services Team (PST) or Child Study Team (CST) in each district building serves as the assessment team for Section 504 referrals. PSTs/CSTs are comprised of staff in various areas (multi-disciplinary) and chaired by a building administrator, psychologist or other staff member.

### 4. Who can refer a student for consideration of 504 designation?

Referrals may come from professional staff, parents, public agencies (health, welfare, educational), physicians, self-referrals or as a result of diagnostic screenings or evaluations.

### 5. What are the major steps in the 504 process?

- a. When the PST or CST receives a written referral, it sends the parents a copy of the 504 Handbook and Notice of Meeting invitation to discuss the reasons for referral and plans to assess the student.
- b. The parent provides the district with medical or specialist documentation to support the medical condition, the need for a 504 plans and recommendation accommodations.
- c. Team members conduct appropriate evaluations to determine if there is any cause to suspect a disability. Reports from outside sources will not be accepted in place of the district conducting its own assessments. A pre-meeting must be held.

- d. A meeting is held with the parent and PST to discuss findings of pre-meeting and either develop the 504 Plan or explain why the child does not need a plan.
- e. Parents and team members are asked to sign forms. Copies are given to parent.

**6. My child was not considered eligible for a disability by the Committee on Special Education. Would he automatically qualify under 504?**

No. Students who do not qualify as disabled under special education law would not automatically qualify under Section 504-they must meet the requirements in federal legislation for Section 504.

**7. What is an “accommodation plan”?**

A 504 Accommodation Plan specifies the adaptations, modifications, supports, strategies and interventions that will enable a student to have reasonable and appropriate access to instruction or the environment. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, adaptations in communication, organization, management, alternative teaching strategies and precautions for student health or safety. Appropriate services might also include any educational support services and any special education service except enrollment in a special education class.

**8. What does “reasonable and appropriate access” mean?**

Access means that the student will be able to use and participate in the curriculum and benefit from it to satisfactory degree. “Appropriate” does not mean “perfect” access. Accommodations are designed to “level the playing field” and are not intended or provided to give the student an additional benefit or unfair advantage.

**9. In addition to supports that a student may receive, what else does a 504 plan include?**

The 504 accommodation plan describes the evaluations used to determine the existence of a disability, the nature of the disability, the effects of the disability on academic performance, accommodations to be made and a date for review/assessment.

**10. Does the district provide the diagnosis needed for a 504 plan?**

No. The district is not responsible for providing evaluations conducted by independent evaluators (e.g. physicians, specialists, audiologists, psychiatrists) to support or provide a diagnosis. Parents are responsible for providing the district with a physician’s diagnosis for conditions that would qualify for a disability under 504.

**11. What must the medical diagnosis include?**

A physician’s prescription that gives only a diagnosis does not provide adequate

documentation for a 504 plan. In order for the 504 Team to determine if a medical condition meets the federal guidelines for a 504 disability, medical verification must clearly describe how the medical condition and what accommodations need to be provided to address the condition in the academic setting.

**12. How are parents included in their child's 504 process?**

Parents/guardians are an important part of the team and the process. In addition to providing acceptable documentation, parents are involved in developing the accommodation plan. Prior parental approval is needed for initial 504 plans. Written parent approval is not needed for a plan's renewal. Parent attendance is not required at an initial or renewal 504 Plan meeting, but is within the realm of best practices for them to be present.

**13. What paperwork is part of the 504 process?**

After a 504 meeting, parents will receive a Notice of Determination of eligibility and the approved Accommodation Plan. These important documents should be kept and reference for future meetings and as the student moves through school, attends college or gets a job after graduation.

**14. What is done when my child moves from elementary to middle school to high school?**

The district has developed a process for students with 504 plans moving from schools within the district. These 504 transition meetings are conducted in the fall with staff from the student's current building. Parents and students are encouraged to attend to share information, adjust plans for the new building and remove accommodations that the student no longer needs/uses.

**15. We are moving into the district and my child has an active 504 plan from another district. Does that plan automatically transfer over into District One?**

Students having a current 504 plan who transfer into the district from another district or state have access to accommodations specified in that plan until the district's PST/CST conducts a 504 meeting. This "transfer intake" 504 meeting should occur with the parents attending within 30 school days of the student's enrollment. The 504 Team will draft a revised plan for the Coordinator of Special Services.

**16. My child is a District One resident but enrolled in a non-public school. Would 504 apply?**

Students who are placed in a private or parochial school by their parents are not eligible for 504 plans or services provided by the District.



**17. My child is moving to the high school and I expect that they will experience difficulty.**

Can I get a 504 Plan before the transition to a higher grade?

No. A 504 designation and accommodations cannot be given in anticipation of difficulty.

**18. As a parent, what if I disagree with the district's 504 decision about my child?**

Contact the Coordinator of Special Services to review the situation. Under Section 504, parents of students with disabilities are entitled to notice regarding actions affecting the identification, evaluation or educational placement of their children and may request an impartial hearing if they disagree with the determination regarding a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Unlike special education, 504 does not entitle the student to receive an independent evaluation at district expense.

**19. What is needed to continue my child's 504 Plan from year to year?**

- a. Parents must provide current medical documentation each year for consideration of continued eligibility of 504 plans involving a medical diagnosis. If required documentation is not provided, the PST may notify the parents in writing that the 504 plan is discontinued.
- b. School staff is expected to document the student's full and consistent use of accommodations across all or in specified settings in order to continue providing these supports annually.
- c. The documented failure of students to need or consistently use 504 accommodations will result in them being removed from a plan or having the plan discontinued.

**20. My child has a serious medical condition that results in many absences from school.**

**Could she have access to accommodations?**

Typically, "home and hospital instruction" is not provided unless the student is absent for several consecutive days. Students with severe, chronic medical conditions (e.g., cancer requiring ongoing treatment, autoimmune conditions, organ transplant, severe migraine headaches) may experience sporadic, prolonged, variable and unpredictable absences from school due to the symptoms of the illness, the medically indicated treatment, relapses with severe symptoms or scheduled treatments at regional hospitals. Such students may be eligible for 504 plans that may include tutoring for access to the student's core subjects whenever non-attendance is due to the 504 disability.

**21. My child doesn't qualify for 504 or special education plan but benefits from special accommodations. Can any adjustments be made in their classes or on testing?**

As part of best practices and effective instruction, accommodations can be provided to students in the classroom if they do not have a disability designation – e.g. the student can be provided with notes, sit closer to the teacher, be given tests in other forms (explaining instead of writing an answer) to address a special condition or disability. However, accommodations such as extended testing time, having a test administered in an alternate location and repeating directions cannot be provided on high-stakes standardized testing without a formal 504 or special education plan.

**22. My child has a hearing loss and a 504 plan. Would his 504 plan apply to non-academic and extra-curricular activities?**

Section 504 requires the district to offer protected students equal opportunities to participate in non-academic and extra-curricular services and activities.

**23. What are the district's responsibilities for managing the 504 process for all of its students?**

The Coordinator of Special Services is the district's Section 504 Coordinator for Students. Building 504 teams send to the Office of Special Services required documentation for CSE referrals and 504 plans. The Office of Special Services maintains a permanent district file for each student referred and the Coordinator serves as the district's 504 Compliance Officer for active 504 plans. Parents should contact the Coordinator of Special Services for information on the 504 process, for copies of 504 records or with questions/concerns about a specific plan.

**24. How long does it take to get an initial 504 plan?**

The length of time involved depends to a great degree on the completeness of the supporting documentation, the extent of time that the student has had difficulty and the overall impact on the student's ability to access the educational program. Parents can contact the 504 coordinator in their child's building for more information on required documentation. All plans must be initiated or reviewed by September 1 of the current year.

Dr. Trish Beason  
Coordinator of Special Services  
Spartanburg District One Schools  
121 Wheeler Street  
Campobello, SC 29322  
864-472-2846