

Notice to Parent Rights Afforded by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, otherwise known in schools as "Section 504" is a federal law prohibiting discrimination against disabled persons who may participate in or benefit from programs receiving federal financial assistance. In the public schools specifically, 504 applies to ensure that eligible disabled students are provided with educational benefits and opportunities equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

Under 504, a student is considered "disabled" if he or she suffers from a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of their major life activities, such as learning, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, working or performing manual tasks. The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students with disabilities. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

You have the right to:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her handicapping conditions.
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education designed to meet your child's needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled student's needs are met.
5. Have your child receive services and be educated in facilities which are comparable to those provided to nonhandicapped students.
6. If your child is eligible for Section 504 he/she has a right to periodic reevaluation to determine if there has been a change in educational needs.
7. Have evaluation, education, and placement decisions made based on a variety of information sources, and by persons who know the student and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.
8. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program not operated by the district) at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district.
9. Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district for which the child is otherwise eligible.
10. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation and placement.
11. Request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. You and your child may take part in the hearing and be represented by counsel. Hearing requests must be made to the Superintendent of Alachua County Public Schools.
12. File a local grievance.

The person in your district responsible for assuring that the district complies with Section 504 is Jennifer Taylor, 1817 E. University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32641, Phone (352) 955-7671 x1610.