

MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTICE OF PARENT/STUDENT RIGHTS UNDER SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (commonly referred to as "Section 504") is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

The term "disability" with respect to an individual means: (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment. "Major life activities" include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working. 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.

Many students will be eligible for educational services under both Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but entitlement to services under the IDEA or other statutes is not required to receive services under Section 504.

The following is a description of the rights and options granted by federal law to students with disabilities under Section 504. 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:

1. To be informed of your rights under Section 504;
2. To have your child take part in and receive benefits from the Manchester School Districts education programs without discrimination or harrassment based on his/her disability;
3. For your child to have equal opportunities to participate in academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities in your school without discrimination based on his/her disability;
4. To be notified with respect to the Section 504 identification, evaluation, and educational placement of your child;
5. To have an evaluation, educational recommendation, and placement decision developed by a team of persons who are knowledgeable of your child, the assessment data, and any placement options;
6. If your child is eligible for services under Section 504, your child is entitled to receive a free appropriate public education. In addition, this may include the right to receive reasonable accommodations and services to participate in school and school-related activities;
7. For your child to be educated with peers who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate;
8. To have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided to non-disabled students;
9. To review all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation, and educational placement;
10. To obtain copies of your child's educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records;
11. To request changes in the educational program of your child;
12. To an impartial hearing if you disagree with the school district's decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation or educational placement. The costs for this hearing are borne by the local school district. You and the student have the right to take part in the hearing and to have an attorney represent you at your expense;
13. To file a court action if you are dissatisfied with the impartial hearing officer's decision or to request attorney's fees related to securing your child's rights under Section 504;
14. To file a local grievance with the designated Section 504 Coordinator to resolve complaints of discrimination other than those involving the identification, evaluation or placement of your child;
15. To file a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The Section 504 Coordinator for this district is:

Assistant Superintendent for
Pupil Personnel Services or
Coordinator of School Health
Manchester Board of Education
45 North School Street
Manchester, CT 06042
Telephone: (860) 647-3448

For additional assistance regarding your rights under Section 504, you may contact:

Boston Regional Office
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
33 Arch Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02110-1491
Telephone: (617) 289-0111

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
550 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100
Telephone: (800) 421-3481

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06145
Telephone: (860) 807-2030