What is a Section 504 Plan?

504 plan refers to section 504 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which states that any organization, including a school, that receives federal money cannot discriminate against people with disabilities. At schools, this can mean that students with identified learning disabilities, for example, may get extra time to take tests or finish homework, sit near the front of the classroom, or use textbooks in formats they can understand, such as audiobooks. The expectations for Section 504 accommodations is to ensure that a student has equitable access to school curriculum and assignments as well as equitable access to school sponsored activities.

Differences Between Section 504 Accommodation Plan and an Individualized Education Plan?

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
• Section 504 provides students with an "adjustment in a general education classroom. • Section 504 Plan Accommodations can be written for a student physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity but the physical impairment may not be affecting the student's academic achievement. • Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is a provision of support to ensure equitable access. We are committed to meeting the individual needs of student with disabilities as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met.	• IDEA provides student with an Individualized Education Plan that has measurable goals. • An IEP is written for a student with a physical or mental disability that adversely affects a student's educational performance • Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is a provision of support to ensure improvement. Identifies students are provided with special education classes and related services. The goal is to have the student making progress in the general education curriculum. •

How are students identified as being eligible for Section 504 Accommodations?

- A Section 504 Team(team of teacher, specialist, school staff, student, and parent/guardian) look at data (examples of data are: medical diagnosis or recommendations, student work samples, student attendance, student behavior records) to determine if a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits the students ability to perform a major life activity compared to the opportunities of same age, non disabled peers. If the impairment does substantially limit the students ability/opportunity to school curriculum, assignments and activities, the Section 504 Team will determine appropriate accommodations.

What are the appropriate accommodations for a Section 504 Plan?

- An Accommodation should be an effective strategy provided as an alternative means to support a student's disability so that the student has the same opportunities as non disabled peers to learn or engage in school activities.
- An accommodation should be specific to the classes/activities affected by the disability.
- An accommodation should not change the rigor or affect the grading of assignments for engagement of the general population of students.
- An accommodation should be focused on what a student requires for equitable access in a specific class(es) when the student is facing a barrier or trigger related to their physical or mental impairment.
- An accommodation may be a strategy to try to prevent the symptoms/triggers from occurring.
- The Section 54 team must ask hoe the accommodation they are considering provides a student with more equitable access.