



GOLIAD ISD

Section 504

Handbook

**Updated August 2025*

Goliad Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, religion, color, gender, national origin, or disability in providing education or providing access to benefits of educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Overview:

Section 504 is an anti-discrimination law that requires schools to provide disabled students equal access to educational benefits and opportunities as provided to non-disabled students.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is the law that outlines these student protections.

This statute ensures that eligible students receive reasonable accommodations necessary for them to have equal access to school related programs and activities. These accommodations do not guarantee success; they simply provide the opportunity - they level the playing field. Accommodations cannot provide the student with an unfair advantage to non-disabled students.

Eligibility:

An eligible student is a student who:

- (a) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities,
- (b) has a record of having such an impairment, or
- (c) is regarded as having such an impairment.

The campus Section 504 committee determines eligibility. In order to make this determination, the committee must answer the following questions:

1. What is the disability?
2. What major life activity is affected?
3. Although the life activity is affected, is it substantially limited?

When a condition does not substantially limit a major life activity then the student does not qualify. If determined eligible by the 504 committee, the need or development of an accommodation plan will be considered.

Impairments vs Disabilities

Section 504, the ADA, and the Amendments Act are consistent in drawing a distinction between individuals with impairments and those with disabilities.

According to legislation, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The term may also be used to describe an individual who has a record of such an impairment or who is regarded as having such an impairment.

An individual may have an impairment and many people do have impairments such as poor eyesight or medical conditions or disorders. Unless the impairment substantially limits that individual in a major life activity, however, they are not considered to be "disabled" under the legislation.

Physical or Mental Impairment

In order to be eligible for protections under Section 504 and the ADAAA, an individual must have a physical or mental impairment. A physical or mental impairment may impact bodily systems such as brain or nervous system, endocrine systems, skeletal system, etc. An individual who is "at-risk" for failure in school due to lack of progress would not necessarily be eligible for protections under Section 504 because there are many reasons, including socio-cultural reasons.

Major Life Activities

Regulations include a sample list of "major life activities." but also makes it clear that the list is not exclusive. Eligibility should be determined on a case-by-case basis. The list includes *caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.* 42 U.S.C. Section 12102(4)(a)(2)(A).

The regulation also includes "the operation of bodily function," *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.* 42 U.S.C. Section 12102(4)(a)(2)(B).

Mitigating Measures:

Original legislation accepted the use of mitigating measures when determining a disability. If an individual had implemented mitigating measures such as medications or assistive devices, that information could be used in determining whether the individual was substantially limited in one or more major activities.

With the amendments of 2008, the use of mitigating measures was removed in determining whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity, one must consider the condition as it would be without the mitigating measures. The only exception to this rule is the use of eye glasses.

Referral for Section 504:

- A referral by a parent or district professional concerning a child with a disability, who may be considered for protection under Section 504 is made through the campus designee for section 504.
- An evaluation, designed based on the specific condition, may include a review of medical or psychological documentation provided by the family's private provider(s). For conditions, other than dyslexia, there is not a "test" for eligibility. Parents and teachers may complete checklists or observations in order to gather data to support the need for accommodations through 504.
- The 504 committee determines the eligibility for supports and services, then develops the accommodations plan to address the identified concerns.

Campus designee for Section 504 are Campus Counselors:

- Goliad Elementary School, Alison Edwards, aedwards@goliadisd.org
- Goliad Middle School, Marcela Gonzales, mgonzales@goliadisd.org
- Goliad High School, Jody Price, jprice@goliadisd.org

Legal Obligation

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. "No qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which received or benefits from Federal financial assistance." 34 CFR 104.4(a).



GOLIAD ISD

Section 504 Operating Procedures Manual

**Updated August 2025*

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Abbreviations used in this Manual:

GISD – Goliad ISD

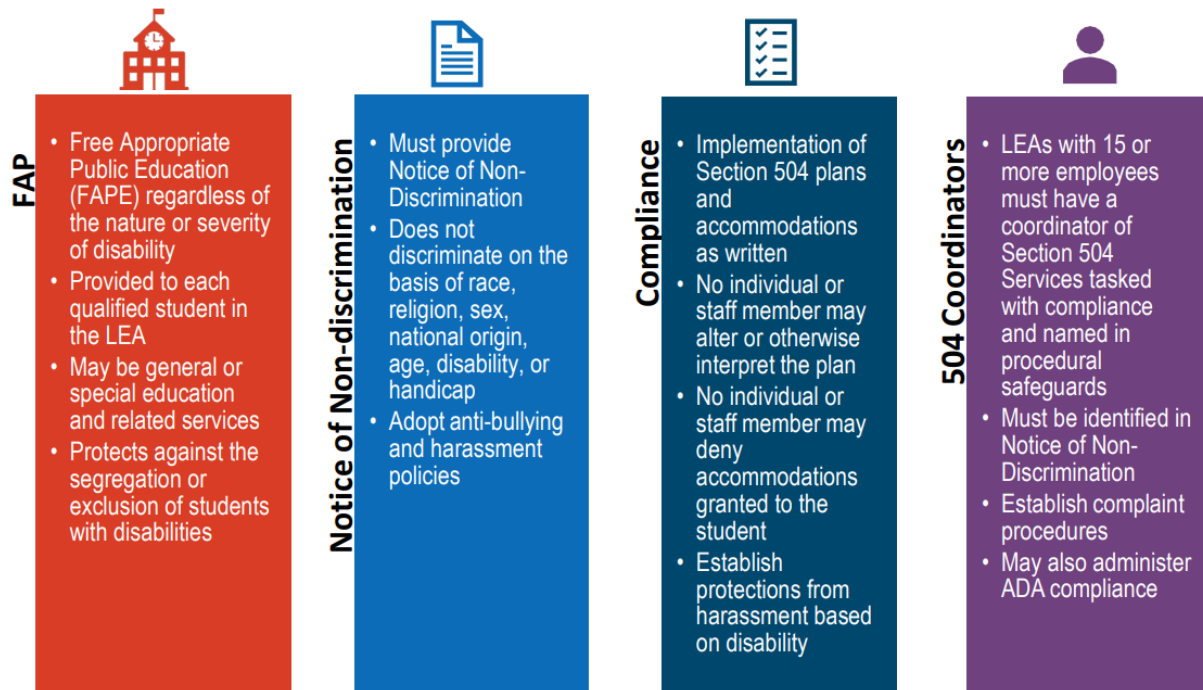
GES – Goliad Elementary School

GMS – Goliad Middle School

GHS – Goliad High School

SSS Team – Student Support Services Team

Local Education Agency (LEA) Responsibilities under Section 504



Special Programs Coordinator

- Coordinate and monitor Goliad ISD's compliance with Section 504 and Title II of the ADA, as well as state civil rights requirements regarding discrimination and harassment based on disability
- Oversee efforts to prevent Section 504 and ADA violations from occurring
- Implement Goliad ISD's discrimination complaint procedures with respect to allegations of Section 504/ADA violations, discrimination based on disability, and disability harassment
- Investigate complaints alleging violations of Section 504/ADA, discrimination based on disability, and disability harassment
- Additional responsibilities as determined by Goliad ISD. (The law does not require that the same person coordinate both Section 504 and ADA compliance.)

Best Practice Tips:

- Routinely take steps to ensure staff members are trained in Section 504 rules and procedures
 - For example, offer ongoing professional development, hold campus Section 504 coordinator meetings, facilitate professional learning communities
- Perform internal self-audits for Section 504 compliance
 - For example, periodic folder reviews

Referral Process

Referrals can be made by families or Goliad ISD staff.

- Examples of circumstances in which referral requests are often made include:
- The student has a chronic medical condition that is not covered by the IDEA.
- The student has one of the disabilities identified in the IDEA, but is not eligible for special education and related services because the student does not need specially designed instruction.
- The student has a “hidden disability,” such as low vision, poor hearing, heart disease, or a chronic illness, such as diabetes.
- Families have received an outside evaluation and are requesting Section 504 protections and/or accommodations

Goliad ISD will follow the following referral process:

- Campus Counselor will provide Parental Safeguards & Consent to Evaluate
- Evaluation Process begins within 4 weeks of referral
 - Parent Input Forms
 - Teacher Input Forms (emailed from and to SSS Team Secretary)
 - Academic Data
 - Attendance Data
 - Discipline Data
- Campus Counselor will schedule meetings:
- Google Invites will include:
 - Parents-paper and Google invites for attendance confirmation
 - Campus Secretaries-to plan for Teacher Coverage
 - Teacher(s)-to prepare for discussion
 - Counselor-to prepare for discussion
 - Administrators-to prepare for discussion
- If student is accepted into Section 504 program, Campus Counselor will notify Campus Teachers, via Frontline Platform

Initial Evaluation

Section 504 regulations require LEAs to individually evaluate students before determining eligibility for protections under Section 504 or the IDEA. Procedures must be established at the LEA level for initial evaluation of students who need or are believed to need special education, Section 504, and/or related services.

If formal, standardized testing is deemed appropriate by the Section 504 committee, it must be provided free of charge to families. TEST materials must be valid for the purpose for which they are being used and administered by trained personnel according to publisher instructions. The

evaluation must be tailored to address areas of educational need. Tests administered to students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills must accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level or the factor that the test is created to measure, rather than impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

Goliad ISD will follow the following referral process:

- Campus Counselors will provide Parental Safeguards & Consent to Evaluate via mail
- Evaluation Process begins within 4 weeks of the Referral
 - Parent Input Forms
 - Teacher Input Forms
 - Academic Data
 - Attendance Data
 - Discipline Data
- Campus Counseors will schedule meeting:
- Google Invites will include:
 - Parents-paper and Google invites for attendance confirmation
 - Campus Secretaries-to plan for Teacher Coverage
 - Teacher(s)-to prepare for discussion
 - Counselor-to prepare for discussion
 - Administrators-to prepare for discussion
- If the 504 Committee accepts student to receive 504 services, campus teachers will receive notices via email from Frontline Platform

Section 504 Meetings

Who must attend the Section 504 Meeting?

Section 504 regulations require members who:

- Can make placement decisions
- Are knowledgeable about the student
- Can interpret the meaning of the evaluation data

Someone who:	 Can Make Placement Decisions	 Is Knowledgeable about the Student	 Can Interpret the Meaning of Evaluation Data
Examples of Appropriate Members	Principal, Vice/Assistant Principal, Counselor, LEA 504 Coordinator, or Campus 504 Coordinator	Student, Parents or Guardians, Teachers, Counselor, Behavior Specialist, Campus 504 Coordinator, or other Related Service Providers	School Nurse, Diagnostician, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, Reading Interventionist, Dyslexia Teacher, Language Proficiency Assessment Committee Representative, Related Service Providers, or Texas Workforce Commission Representative

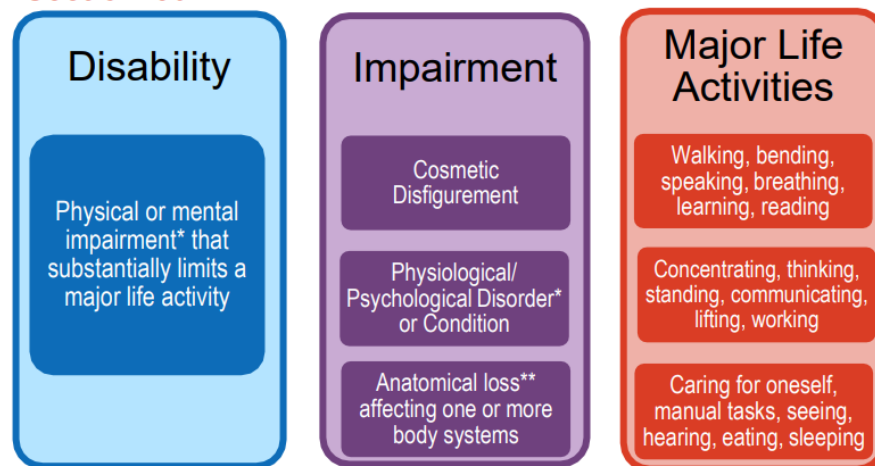
Goliad ISD will invite the following individuals to all 504 meetings:

- Parent
- Student (at the secondary level)
- Teacher(s) of Record
- Campus Counselor
- Campus Administrator
- Dyslexia Designee (if applicable)

During the Meeting

- Committee discussion could include:
 - o Celebration of student's strengths
 - o Student input related to educational experience and challenges
 - o Parent input relevant to the student's impairment and the educational impact
 - o Staff input regarding student performance in academics and behavior
- Review of all evaluation data
- Does the student meet Section 504 eligibility requirements?
 1. The student must be QUALIFIED, which means that they must be of an age in which services are provided to non-disabled students.
 2. The student must have a physical or mental impairment.
 3. The physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities and without consideration of mitigating measures, except glasses.

Eligibility for Section 504



An Initial/Reevaluation Section 504 Meeting

Initial Section 504 meetings can be intimidating to families and students. Care should be taken to conduct a positive, solution focused meeting, protecting the dignity of student and families. Goliad ISD will follow the evaluation process from the Referral section, found in this Manual.

Reevaluation Section 504 meetings are conducted the same way as an Initial Section 504 meeting. Goliad ISD will conduct 3-year Reevaluations and follow the evaluation process from the Referral section, found in this Manual.

Yearly Review Section 504 Meeting

Goliad ISD will conduct Yearly Review Section 504 meetings for all students beginning after the first six weeks of school. Goliad ISD staff and parents may request a periodic review of students served by Section 504 any time throughout the year.

Section 504 committees may need to convene more frequently to adjust the plan when a student is struggling or has experienced any change in impairment status. These processes may be beneficial in providing structures for ongoing progress monitoring that may illuminate students who are struggling and in need of further assistance and intervention or those who are performing well due to effective Section 504 accommodation and services plans.

Manifestation Determination Section 504 Meeting

Disciplinary removals of more than ten consecutive days or ten days in a cumulative pattern are considered long term removals and constitute a change in placement. Section 504 regulations require a reevaluation prior to change in placement. Therefore, changes in placement due to discipline require that the reevaluation include consideration of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability (Disability Rights Enforcement Highlights, Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, see page 10).

Documentation should be recent and comprehensive including parent information and behavioral data. Utilizing all available information, the Section 504 committee must answer the following questions:

1. Was the behavior caused by or directly related to the disability?
2. Was the behavior due to Goliad ISD's failure to implement the 504 plan?

Is the behavior a manifestation of the disability?

- If the answer to either question is **yes**, the behavior is a manifestation of the disability and the student cannot be removed from the current placement. A student whose behavior inhibits their ability to learn, or that of others, may require an evaluation for special education and/or related services. Committees should consider requesting additional evaluations, including a referral for special education along with additional interventions and supports such as data-based individualization, behavior intervention plans, and related services. Parents must be provided with Procedural Safeguards which stipulate that parents have the right to challenge the decision.

- If it is determined, based upon the 504 committee's answers to these questions, that the behavior is **not** a manifestation of the disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the student code of conduct in the same manner as their non-disabled peers. Parents must be provided with Procedural Safeguards and informed of their rights to challenge the decision. The Section 504 plan should be reviewed and updated by the Section 504 committee to prevent future challenges. When implementing disciplinary procedures for behavior that does not trigger consideration of change of placement, LEAs should avoid assigning harsher disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities than those applied to students without disabilities.

Is the behavior a result of alcohol and drugs?

Students with disabilities are subject to the state and Goliad ISD disciplinary procedures regarding alcohol and drugs to the same extent as their non-disabled peers. Due process protections under Title 34, Section 104.36 do not apply in this situation even if the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, and Goliad ISD is not required to conduct a manifestation determination review. Texas Education Code requires the removal from class and placement at a disciplinary alternative education program for certain conduct, including when students sell, give, or deliver controlled substances, marijuana, or alcohol.

The 504 Plan

The purpose of the Section 504 plan is to create an educational blueprint that is unique to each student and provides the student access to a free appropriate public education. An appropriate education is one that is designed to meet the individual needs of the student as adequately as that of their non-disabled peers.

Section 504 Plan Format

While Section 504 regulations do not require a written plan, practical requirements such as documentation of evaluation sources, the impairment and substantial limitations, committee discussion and decisions, and accommodations create the necessity of putting the plan in writing. In addition, should a disagreement take place, the written document may provide clear information regarding the intent of Goliad ISD to provide FAPE.

Goliad ISD will review the following accommodations for students:

Instructional Accommodations

- Adapt Classroom Instruction
- Adapted or Additional Materials
- Alter Assignments or Testing
- Environmental/Accessibility
- Manage Behavior

STAAR/TELPAS Accommodations

- Types of Assessment(s)
 - STAAR Online
- STAAR Accommodations

Any other Section 504 Special Circumstances

***Frontline Platform**

Archive: Where to find previous documentation, accommodations, another other previous information

Archive Manager

Section 504: Where to find the most recent plan/services

504 Plan

Screens Utilized Most:

- 1-Student Information
- 3-District Information
- 8-504 Plan (1)
- 9-504 Plan (2)
- 10-Section 504 Committee Members
- 11-504 Dyslexia/Dysgraphia/Related Disorder
- 12-504 Manifestation Determination
- 13-504 Amendment
- 15-504 Instructional Accommodations
- 16-504 STAAR/TELPAS Assessment