

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Leander Independent School District

Leander High School Inclusion and Learning Support Requirements Policy

2021-2022

Special Education Policies

Evaluation Services for Special Education

The placement of a student in special education is driven by assessment. The assessment will produce a Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE) and will assist in determining the presence of a disability and identify any educational need for specialized instruction. All students who are initially referred to Special Education must be assessed and then re-evaluated every three years after placement in special education. While the evaluation team determines the disability, the ARD committee determines placement in Special Education. The evaluation must include information from the following areas:

- 1.) Health - including vision and hearing and motor skills
- 2.) Language Skills
- 3.) Sociological Status
- 4.) Emotional/Behavioral Status
- 5.) Cognitive ability (GIA/IQ) and Adaptive Behavior
- 6.) Academic Performance
- 7.) Assistive Technology Needs

Each specific disability will also have an eligibility report which is unique to that student's disability. The report will also include the legal requirements for the evaluation to apply to that disability. The testing will provide additional information about the student's present levels of performance which the Admission Review Dismissal committee (ARDc) will use to develop the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The report will also include recommended modifications and/or accommodations for general education classes and for special education and/or other settings.

Definition

As required by and in alignment with federal statute, Leander High School provides special education services to students with disabilities. A two-pronged test determines eligibility for special education services: 1) student must have a disability as defined by the Texas Education Agency and 2) the disability must impair the child's ability to learn in the classroom to an extent that specialized instruction is necessary for the child to make progress in the general education curriculum.

Students can qualify for special education services under the following categories:

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| • Autism | • Learning Disabilities |
| • Deaf-Blindness | • Visual Impairment |
| • Auditory Impairment | • Traumatic Brain Injury |
| • Multiple Disabilities | • Speech Impairment |
| • Orthopedic Impairment | • Intellectual Disability |
| • Other Health Impairment | • Emotional Disturbance |

Students are identified as needing special education services in several ways. Federal *Child Find* laws require the school and school officials to actively seek out students who might need special education services. In addition, parents who suspect their child has a disability can refer their child. Once referred, the school psychologist and/or diagnostician evaluates the student to determine if they qualify for services.

Responsibilities

While all adults on campus bear responsibility in identifying students who might need special education services, teachers within the special education department are charged with actively monitoring students' success in their classes. These teachers check on the students' attendance, grades, and progress in the curriculum. They are also responsible for collaborating with general education teachers to ensure students' accommodations are being implemented in the classroom and that the student is receiving any additional supports as outlined in their Individual Education Program (IEP).

Differentiated Support

Through an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting, a group of stakeholders discuss students' individual needs in the classroom. This group, made up of the student's parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, district representative, and evaluation personnel, review the student's progress in curriculum and write an Individualized Education Program. If the student is in the IB program, the IB coordinator is included. This plan is a legally binding contract to which the school must adhere. It outlines the student's current levels of academic performance, academic and functional goals for the student to attain, amount of support time the child is to receive from special education providers, and accommodations that must be provided in the classroom in order for the child to derive a benefit from their education. At all times, the ARD committee is to consider the least restrictive environment for the student; that is, the group should attempt to provide instruction in the general education environment to the fullest extent possible for that student. It is the goal of every ARD committee to place the student, regardless of disability, in classes and programs that enable the student to meet the same educational goals as their non-disabled peers. Students are provided accommodations, and if necessary, additional support from staff that are commensurate with the child's abilities. Some common accommodations include extra time on exams, oral proctoring of exams for students with reading disabilities, and reformatting of exams for students with dyslexia or ADD/ADHD. In addition, teaching strategies that benefit the student are included in the IEP. These might include pairing auditory

material with visuals to aid in retention, the use of mnemonics, and establishing a regular classroom routine, to name a few.

Accommodations for Assessments

Assessments for students with disabilities may be standard, accommodated, or modified, depending on the students' needs. Many students are able to take the same exams as their non-disabled peers, but might need minimal accommodations such as extended time or reading assistance. Some students might need to give their answers orally to accommodate for a disability in written expression. Some need no accommodations at all during testing. Decisions on appropriate accommodations for students are decided upon by the ARD committee and based on the student's ability and needs.

No student is denied participation in the IB program due to Special Education or 504 designation. The IB coordinator is not aware of Special Education or 504 needs until after a student has been admitted into the IB program. There are numerous opportunities for modifications during the students IB exams based on needs of the student. Some modifications do not need IB approval while others will need to go through the IB Inclusion process that will be led by the IB Coordinator.

Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment (ADAA) of 2009 are both federal nondiscrimination laws which require schools and businesses not to discriminate on the basis of disability. The Office for Civil Rights monitors compliance with federal regulations of Sec.504/ADA. If you have information or believe that someone, student or employee, is being discriminated against on the basis of disability, you need to contact Angela Patrick, LISD 504 Coordinator at Angela.Patrick@leanderisd.org. This is an obligation outlined in Board Policy FB Local. The information you give will be investigated and appropriate action taken, if necessary. These laws require LISD to identify and serve students with a disability as identified by Sec. 504/ADA. We are required to provide these students with FAPE (free, appropriate, public education) as well as protection from discrimination because of their disability.

Section 504 and ADA Policies

A disability under Sec. 504/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is defined as an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. This is determined through an evaluation of data from a variety of sources by a committee of knowledgeable people. Some impairments may present a challenge but are not substantially limiting. For purposes of this evaluation, the student is compared to a peer of the same chronological age in the general population. The list of Major Life Activities has been broadened by the 2009 ADA, which intended to broaden the coverage of Sec. 504/ADA. Under Child Find, we have a legal obligation to refer a student who is "suspected" of having a disability for a Sec. 504 evaluation to determine if he/she has a disability and, if so, develop an Individual Accommodation Plan that will give the student an equal opportunity to access his/her education and derive benefit from it. An otherwise qualified student with a disability may not be denied participation in classes, programs, extracurricular activities or advanced classes because of the disability. For the Sec. 504 Evaluation Process, it is crucial to have data from a variety of sources, such as grades, tests scores, teacher anecdotal information, parent/student information, outside provider reports and medical information, if provided, student history of academic performance, and any other information that could help determine if there is substantial limitation. Decisions are determined by a review of all the data, NOT just one piece of data. There is no "educational need" component in Sec. 504 as in sped. Some disabilities are not related to learning. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major

life activities.” (From US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Protecting Students with Disabilities, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html#protected>, accessed April 20, 2017.)

Referral and Identification Process

The district/campus has specific procedures in place for the referral and identification of students with a disability under Sec. 504/ADA. This process involves sending notice to parents, gathering data, and meeting to review all the data. Parents are given the Rights and Procedural Safeguards which outline what is to take place in these meetings and what their rights are if they disagree with the decision of a Sec. 504 Committee. Your Campus Coordinator or the District 504 Coordinator, can provide you with a copy of these Rights and Safeguards for your information. It is a process that provides teachers and staff the opportunity to provide information regarding the student and such information is part of the data used in determining eligibility for 504 services.

Student’s Individual 504 Plan

The school has a 504 coordinator who oversees the program school-wide and handles the admission process for new 504 students. The responsibility for maintaining up-to-date documentation and accommodation information is handled by the assistant principals. The assistant principals oversee the yearly 504 student review as well as the 3-year reevaluation. Teachers accept responsibility for implementing a student’s accommodations when they acknowledge receipt of the accommodations. The 504 coordinator encourages students to take responsibility for their accommodations in preparation for post-secondary education. This is often gradual as students acclimate to high school and ownership of their education. The teachers and 504 coordinator remain vigilant about making sure every student is given an equal opportunity to succeed academically with no barriers due to a student’s disability.

The 504 plan for a student is determined at a meeting with the 504 coordinator, the student’s assistant principal, the student’s counselor, teachers, parents and the student. The IB coordinator is also invited for IB students. Differentiated support for a 504 student will be listed as an accommodation, which follow under the following main categories (with examples):

- Pacing (extended time)
- Environment (preferential seating)
- Presentation of subject matter (individual/small group instruction)
- Materials (special equipment, note-taking assistance)
- Behavior Management (private discussions, behavior contract)
- Assignments (adapted worksheets, varied directions)
- Reinforcement/Follow-through (check for understanding, “chunk” long assignments/projects)

A student’s 504 plan may also include Testing Accommodations – local campus, and/or Testing Accommodations – STAAR/EOC (state testing). Specific accommodations for assessment may include extended time, small group, the ability to dictate answers, or use of a word processor. When a 504 student or their parent requests accommodations for IB assessments, the IB coordinator receives the appropriate medical documentation and school accommodation reports for submission on IBIS. The IB coordinator checks with teachers to ensure the student currently uses their accommodations before presenting the necessary documentation to IB for assessment access.

Accommodations

- Are they reasonable and necessary to provide the student an equal opportunity to access his/her education the same as nondisabled peer? Does a student need it to have equal access? • Insure that the student is not penalized for his/her disability (discrimination.)
- Are above and beyond what is done for nondisabled students, thus, if something is routinely done for all students, then that is not an accommodation.
- Do not guarantee a student will pass tests, make As and Bs, or meet potential. Students should not be denied the opportunity to be challenged by the rigor and standards of courses/classes.
- Teachers are required to consistently implement accommodations.
- All decisions regarding accommodations are made by a committee of knowledgeable people, not just one person (teacher or parent.)
- Are not to be disregarded in any class for any reason. If a teacher or staff member has a concern/question about an accommodation, bring it to the attention of campus 504 coordinator.
- Should be reasonable and necessary

Discipline

Sec. 504 students have rights when it comes to discipline. A Manifestation Determination Review meeting is required prior to any "disciplinary change of placement" that is longer than 10 days. If the misconduct that gives rise to the disciplinary action is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student is subject to the same discipline applicable to nondisabled students; placement may be changed, i.e. LEO, JJAEP; expulsion. When the misconduct is a manifestation of the disability, the student must be returned to the original placement. Consequences may be given to the student at his/her original placement and the student's 504 accommodations given. Even when students' misconduct involves illegal drugs, weapons, or Serious Bodily Injury, there is to be a Manifestation Determination Review Meeting.

Dyslexia

There are district guidelines for referring a student for dyslexia testing. The determination of whether or not a student is dyslexic is made by a Sec. 504 Committee or ARD Committee. The Sec. 504 Committee considers data from a variety of sources, including a recommendation by the Dyslexia Assessment Team, and any outside reports the parent may wish to submit. As is the case with all eligibility determinations, no one piece of data determines this decision. If the Sec. 504 Committee determines that the student is not dyslexic, they may go on to consider if the student has some other impairment that may limit a major life activity that is not due to dyslexia. The district and campus comply with the guidelines of the State Dyslexia Mandate as well as federal Sec. 504/ADA laws.

No student is denied participation in the IB program due to Special Education or 504 designation. The IB coordinator is not aware of Special Education or 504 needs until after a student has been admitted into the IB program.

This policy will be reviewed and updated yearly by a committee of the Special Education Department Chair, the 504 coordinator or representative, and the IB coordinator.

Leander ISD
Shawn Doctor, IB DP Coordinator
Shandalyn Porter, Dean of Instruction
Chris Simpson, Principal
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Approved by:
Chris Simpson, Principal
October 5th, 2021

For further information please visit:

Leander ISD (District Guiding Documents)
<http://www.leanderisd.org/default.aspx?name=sped.main>

Texas Education Agency (State Regulations)
http://framework.esc18.net/Documents/Side_by_Side.pdf

Department of Education (Federal Regulations)
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2008-12-01/pdf/E8-28175.pdf>

Reviewed Annually

Last review: October 5th, 2021