



The 504 Bulletin

September, 2008 ~ A publication of the Anchorage School District

Plan Review Requirements Reminder



A quick reminder that **October 17, 2008** is the due date for completion of the review of all Section 504 plans for students in your building. All new and updated 504

plans must be submitted to the Office of Special Education not later than that date. If you are unable to meet the deadline please email or phone Burl Oliver at 742-4272 or oliver_burl@asdk12.org. Thanks for your attention to this matter.



Web Resources for 504 Plans

The onset of the 2008-09 school year has brought an increasing number of requests for information and ideas concerning the 504 program. In addition to training being provided on an ongoing basis within ASD, the following resources are offered as examples of "where to go" for additional information and input for individual 504 plans and the development of appropriate accommodations for students. While this list identifies only a small segment of the resources available, it summarizes a variety of websites, etc. that can assist in the approach to the development of a meaningful 504 plan.

If you also have resources you have used that would benefit other coordinators and staff, please feel free to share those with us and we will include them in future editions of the Bulletin.

1. Idaamerica.us/aboutId/teachers/index.asp
Learning Disabilities Association
1. add.org
Attention Deficit Disorder Association
3. Chadd.org
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
4. nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent
National Institute of Mental Health
5. nmha.org/go/get-info
Mental Health America
6. Ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/edpicks
ED.gov
7. nichy.org/Pages/Home.aspx
National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

Inside this issue:

Visiting Teacher Program	2
§504 Questions	2
Juvenile Arthritis	3
§504 Answers	3

504 Data

While each 504 coordinator has building-level knowledge of their 504 students, the district-wide data can best be stated as incomplete. Efforts at collecting, analyzing and coalescing the data into something useful have been limited in the past. The new online system will allow the ASD to collect more timely and accurate information about each school, the district as a whole and enable staff to obtain more meaningful training and guidance.

Visiting Teacher Program



The Visiting Teacher program was established to assist students who are medically unable to attend regular school classes to maintain their academic standing by providing homebound services for a specific period of time while the student recovers from an illness or injury. A student who needs Visiting Teacher services will often also qualify for Section 504. Prior to the end of the initial 3-week period of approval for Visiting Teacher, a 504 team must be convened at the student's home school to determine if the student qualifies for a 504 plan. If the student does qualify, a plan must be developed that will provide the types of accommodations required to maintain the student's academic opportunities once they return to school.

A student determined eligible for Visiting Teacher services will receive, on the average, 2 hours of instruction each week from a teacher assigned by the student's regular school. The instruction is designed to provide the ongoing information and support a student who needs to stay connected with the regular school environment and aid their transition back to that environment when their condition improves.

Visiting Teachers are typically recruited from the student's home school. This is done for 2 primary reasons: 1) the teacher often has knowledge of the student, and 2) part of the role of the Visiting Teacher is to gather assignments, etc. from the student's teachers and transport the work to the student on a regular basis. This task is much easier and less disruptive if the teacher is on staff at the student's school.

All Visiting Teachers have to be certified. Teachers are compensated for their services according to their personal per diem rate. Mileage to and from the school and the student's home is also covered. Visiting Teachers submit addenda with their hours and mileage at the end of the service period.

All Visiting Teacher services are to be approved by the Compliance Coordinator (Burl Oliver, X4272). As previously noted, only the first 3 weeks of service will be approved initially. Subsequent periods of approval and services are subject to the convening of a 504 team at the student's school to determine possible 504-eligibility and plan development.

A copy of the revised "Request for Visiting Teacher Service" memo is attached to this bulletin. Forms for requesting Visiting Teacher services are also available on the ASD District Connection website. If you have any questions concerning the program please call Burl Oliver at extension 4272 or email him at oliver_burl@asdk12.org.



§504 Questions and Answers

1. Do the Section 504 regulations require that you develop a transition plan for all 504 students exiting the program through graduation, moving, no longer requiring 504 services, etc.?
2. You have received a detailed medical report from Dr. Awesome. The report states that a 504 plan is required for student A because of her medical diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. How soon are you required to have the plan developed and implemented for the student?
3. A student is decertified from special education. However, the IEP team determined that, although the student no longer met the criteria for Special Education eligibility, the student should now be placed on a 504 plan for continuing services due to her learning disabilities.

Juvenile Arthritis

Juvenile Arthritis is a general term for all types of arthritis and related conditions that occur in children. An estimated 300,000 children under age 17 are affected by juvenile arthritis. Arthritis affects girls twice as often as boys. Juvenile arthritis can occur anytime from birth until the age of 16 years. Early diagnosis and compliance with the medical plan gives the child the best opportunity for a positive disease outcome. Some children's symptoms of juvenile arthritis go into remission—and others will be affected to some degree throughout their lifetime.

Juvenile arthritis, like other chronic diseases in childhood, can have an impact on a student's school performance. Because school is a child's occupation, it is very important to address the special needs of children with such chronic illnesses to ensure their best opportunity for success in the school setting. Children with arthritis should attend school. Like other children with chronic illness, accommodations may need to be made to make the school setting accessible for the child with juvenile arthritis. Juvenile arthritis can affect the student's mobility, strength and endurance. Students may come to school with varying degrees of pain and stiffness. The nature of these diseases may cause irregular absences, because arthritis can go from symptom-free periods to flares of swelling and pain very quickly. Students with JA may also feel isolated, inadequate, insecure, pain and fatigue from disease symptoms, anger and depression and embarrassment about having the disease.

Teachers can take steps to help build the student's esteem; listen and observe the students; encourage the student to look at their strengths and not their weaknesses; include the student when planning classroom accommodations; encourage the student decision-making process and responsibility; encourage diversity and individual difference respect in the classroom. Don't "single out" the student as different from their classmates and try to include them in classroom social activities.

If a student is determined to be eligible for a 504 plan due to juvenile arthritis's effects on their learning process, etc. there are numerous accommodations which can help in the classroom. The following are a few examples:

- Develop a plan for medication administration
- Adjust the class schedule for the student, particularly in the morning
- Provide extra time to change classes
- Provide a "buddy" to assist the student in moving from one class to another
- Plan stretch breaks to relieve stiffness
- Provide preferential seating
- Use computers for note taking if needed
- Provide extra time on assignments and tests when writing is necessary
- Provide a second set of textbooks
- Modify "emergency drills"

There are numerous other ideas for accommodations which assist the student in remaining in the regular education setting and overcoming the limitations placed on them by the disease. Teachers can provide a great deal of support.

Further information regarding juvenile arthritis can be found by accessing the following link: www.arthritis.org/ja-school-success.php or by contacting the Arthritis Foundation Pacific Northwest Chapter at 1-800-542-0295.



§504 Questions and Answers

1. No. There is no transition requirement for students with a 504 plan. Of course, prudent planning will ease the movement out of the program for the student, but a specific transition plan is not a requirement.
2. There are several potential answers to this question. First, a physician statement cannot require the school district to implement a 504 plan for a student. It can, however, serve as a referral source for the convening of a 504 team to determine the potential eligibility of the student for 504 services. Secondly, the team should be convened as soon as practical; however, there is no specific time requirement for the process to be started and finished. Third, while the MD report may serve as referral source for the student, such a report should only be a part of the overall evaluation process regarding the student's potential eligibility and used only if the diagnosis is pertinent to the student's disability and impairment. It is paramount the 504 team determine the impact of the disability noted on the student's education by using the medical report and any other sources of relevant information. Only after determining that the student's disability of ADHD has a substantial impact on one or more major life activities can the team move forward on the development of accommodations and a plan for the student.
3. The 504 team should be convened based on the referral of the student by the IEP team. However, the referral is just that, a referral and should not be construed to be a requirement for 504 services. The 504 team will need to independently determine the student's eligibility and need for services prior to the development of a 504 plan.