WYOMING
CITY SCHOOLS

Understanding 504 Plans: Access vs. Achievement

A Section 504 Plan is designed to ensure students with disabilities have the same access to learning and school activities as their peers. This handout explains the difference between access and achievement, so families know what to expect from a 504 Plan.

What a 504 Plan Provides: Access

- Accommodations that remove barriers (e.g., extended time, preferential seating, assistive technology).
- Equal opportunity to participate in instruction, activities, and school life.
- A level playing field so that the disability does not unfairly block learning.

What a 504 Plan Does Not Guarantee: Achievement

- It does not ensure specific grades, test scores, or academic success.
- Achievement depends on the student's effort, quality of instruction, and support at school and home.
- Like all students, children with 504 Plans are responsible for their own learning progress.

The Ramp Analogy:

Imagine a school building with stairs at the front. A student who uses a wheelchair cannot enter unless there's a ramp. The ramp ensures access—it gets the student inside the building. But once inside, the ramp does not guarantee success on a test or an 'A' in class. It simply ensures equal opportunity to learn. A 504 Plan works the same way—it provides access, not outcomes.

Parent FAQs:

Here are some common questions families ask about 504 Plans:

Q: Does a 504 Plan mean my child will automatically get better grades?
A: No. The plan ensures access, but grades depend on learning and effort.

Q: How is a 504 Plan different from an IEP?
A: A 504 Plan provides accommodations for access. An IEP (under IDEA) provides specialized instruction and services.

Q: Can a 504 Plan change if my child's needs change?
A: Yes. Plans are reviewed regularly and can be updated anytime based on student needs. Our goal is to ensure your child has equal opportunity to succeed.