WYOMING
CITY SCHOOLS

# A 504 or an IEP?

*Key Differences Between Eligibility for a Section 504 Plan and an Individualized Education Program (IEP)*

**Section 504 Plans** and **Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)** are designed to support students with disabilities, but they serve different purposes and have distinct eligibility criteria.

| Feature | IEP | 504 Plan |
|---|---|---|
| **Law** | IDEA | Section 504 |
| **Eligibility Criteria** | One of 13 disability categories under IDEA and needs Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) | Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity |
| **Services Provided** | Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) & related services | Accommodations only (no SDI) |
| **Curriculum Modifications** | Yes, if needed (as evidenced by ETR data) | No, just accommodations |
| **Placement** | Can include special education settings | General education classroom with supports |
| **Evaluation Processes** | Comprehensive evaluation | Less formal evaluation |
| **Review & Reevaluation** | Annually, reevaluated every three (3) years | Annually, reevaluated every three (3) years |
| **Legal Protections** | Due process rights under IDEA | Due process rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) |

## Which One is Right for a Student?

- If a student needs specialized instruction and modifications to access learning → IEP.
- If a student only needs accommodations (e.g., extra time, seating changes, medical supports) → 504 Plan.