ST. MICHAEL - ALBERTVILLE SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE IS OUR TRADITION

What to expect when requesting a Section 504 evaluation

What is Section 504?
Section 504 is a Federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Section 504 protects students with disabilities against discrimination by promoting equal access. Section 504 does not require that school districts provide a greater opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in academic, nonacademic, or extracurricular activities, but districts must take steps to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to educational benefits and opportunities.

Criteria
There are two criteria for Section 504 Eligibility:
1. Documented physical or mental impairment - including medical/health, academic, social/emotional.
2. The impairment must substantially limit a major life function of the student.

There are two forms of paperwork that are helpful to proceed with an evaluation.
1. Referral form
2. Documentation of a diagnosis from a medical provider or outside therapist, or a copy of an outside assessment.

Referral Review and Evaluation Planning:
The Section 504 Intake Coordinator will collect the paperwork above, as well as existing information in the student educational record related to grades, attendance, behaviors, standardized testing, progress from grade to grade, etc, and schedule a meeting to review the referral information with parent/guardian, student, and relevant school personnel including the student's school counselor. At the meeting, the team will determine if an evaluation is necessary and what, if any, additional information is needed. An evaluation plan is developed and sent home for signed consent.

Evaluation and Eligibility Determination:
Once parent/guardian signed consent is received by the school, the evaluator(s) will collect data according to the evaluation plan. When all data is collected, your student's 504 evaluation team will meet and review the data and determine eligibility. If a substantial limitation is identified, your student is eligible under Section 504 and additional supports or program changes that are reasonable will be identified and a Section 504 Plan may be developed. If a substantial limitation is not found, supports will be offered to your student that are accessible for all students (Tiered intervention supports). Parents/Guardians will be invited in for a meeting for all initial evaluations to review the data and identify next steps.

Standardized testing:
If your student qualifies for a Section 504 plan and data shows a need for extended time on assessments or another related testing accommodation, St. Michael-Albertville High School can apply for accommodations on district and state testing, including PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP assessments. If your student does not qualify for a Section 504 plan, St. Michael-Albertville High School can submit an accommodations request based on your student's diagnosis with a signed release and outside documentation. ACT does take into consideration if your child accesses accommodations with everyday school tasks. The decision to accommodate for AP/PSAT/SAT/ACT testing is the sole responsibility of the testing companies (not STMA Schools). Students must be able to demonstrate a history of needing and receiving similar testing accommodations in their prior academic classes and test taking experiences. For more specific information on disability testing policies for the SAT test, go to the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html. For the ACT test, go to https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/accommodations.html