

Lindale ISD

# **SECTION 504**

ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR  
ACTIVITIES

August 2025

**CONTENTS**

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities.....	3
What is Required.....	3
Athletics .....	4
Non-Educational Services.....	5
Evidence of Implementation .....	5
Resources .....	6
CITATIONS.....	6

## **Athletics and Extracurricular Activities**

### **What is Required**

Section 504 requires the District to provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in nonacademic and extracurricular activities provided by the District. These activities include but are not limited to activities such as: District-sponsored special interest groups or clubs, recreational activities, recreational athletics, counseling services, transportation, health services, referrals to agencies that provide assistance to individuals with disabilities, and employment of students. The District must provide supports to enable the student to equally participate in the activity, even if the activity is not included in the student's Section 504 plan.

The District must determine on a case-by-case basis whether reasonable modifications or necessary aids and services would provide a student with a disability served under Section 504 with an equal opportunity to participate in an extracurricular activity. Typically, the Section 504 Committee will convene to make this determination. In addition, the Section 504 Committee should also address a student's behavioral problem(s) that may impede the student's ability to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities, if any. The District may not deny a student the opportunity to participate in an activity because the program is not equipped to handle such behavior challenges.

Providing a student with a disability with an "equal opportunity to participate" does not give a student with a disability an automatic right to participate in an activity. Where a student cannot participate in an activity despite the provision of reasonable accommodations and supports, the District may deny the student participation in the activity. Likewise, the District may still require students with disabilities to demonstrate a certain skill level or ability to participate in a selective or competitive program or activity, as long as the selection or competition criteria are not discriminatory based on disability. Campus Personnel must not rely on generalizations, assumptions, prejudice, or stereotypes about disabilities in determining whether a student with a disability is capable of or eligible to participate in an athletic program or extracurricular activity.

Furthermore, the District may, but is not required to, create separate or different activities solely for students with disabilities. The requirement that the District educate students with disabilities in their least restrictive environment also includes athletics and extracurricular activities. Thus, the District must ensure that students with disabilities are able to participate with non-disabled peers in those activities to the maximum extent appropriate. Should the District create separate or different activities for students with disabilities, the student's Section 504 Committee must consider whether participation in the activities will impact the student's ability to receive a FAPE in the least restrictive environment.

The Section 504 Committee shall document in the meeting minutes that discussion between the Campus Section 504 Chairperson and designated District or Campus Personnel responsible for implementing the extracurricular and nonacademic activities will take place to consider an equal opportunity for participation.

## **Athletics**

Athletics are an important component of many students' educational experiences, regardless of disability. Therefore, Section 504 requires the District to provide an equal opportunity for participation in athletics to all students with disabilities. Further, the District must ensure that no student is rendered ineligible to participate in any aid, benefit, or service due to a disability. However, the District may require students with disabilities to meet the skill level requirements of a selective or competitive athletic program despite their disability. "Equal opportunity" does not mean that every student with a disability is guaranteed a spot on an athletic team for which other students must try out.

The Section 504 Committee will first determine on a case-by-case basis whether an accommodation or modification is necessary to ensure equal opportunity. If the accommodation or modification is necessary, the District must allow it unless it would result in a fundamental alteration of the nature of the athletic activity. The District may deny participation in an athletic program where the accommodation or modification would represent a fundamental alteration to the athletic program—i.e., if it changes an essential aspect of the activity or game in such a way that would be unacceptable even if it affected all competitors equally or gives a particular player with a disability an unfair advantage over others. If a specific accommodation or modification would constitute a fundamental alteration, the Section 504 Committee must determine whether other accommodations or modifications are available to allow the student the opportunity to participate.

The District may create disability-specific team sports, such as wheelchair basketball, to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in athletics. However, the provision of *unnecessarily* separate or different services is discriminatory, and the District should only provide such programs when the interests and abilities of students with disabilities cannot be fully and effectively met by the District's existing programs. Additionally, the District may only offer separate or different athletic activities for students with disabilities if the separation or differentiation allows the student to be educated to the maximum extent with peers without disabilities, unless the District can demonstrate that education of the student in the general education setting with supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved. If a Campus lacks enough students to field a disability-specific team, the District may consider developing District-wide teams for students with disabilities, co-ed teams, or "unified" teams where students with and without disabilities participate together. The District also encourages collaboration with approved community organizations to match student with disabilities with opportunities for participation in athletics.

**Non-Educational Services**

Like athletics and extracurricular activities, the District must also provide students with disabilities equal opportunities to participate in non-educational services offered by the District, including meals, award ceremonies, recess periods, field trips, counseling services, employment of students, afterschool care, and summer recreational programs. Unless the District can show that the accommodation or modification would fundamentally alter the program, the Campus and District Personnel must make reasonable accommodations or modifications and provide the necessary aids and services to allow the student to participate in the activity. Whether a student has an equal opportunity for participation is decided on a case-by-case basis. Section 504 is not designed to provide students with disabilities an unfair advantage to students without disabilities. Where an accommodation or modification to the activity would provide a student an unfair advantage or would fundamentally alter the program, the District may consider implementing alternative accommodations, modifications, aids, or services to the student.

**Evidence of Implementation**

- Section 504 Meeting
- Section 504 Plan/BIP
- Discussion with Campus and District Personnel Regarding Student Participation and Needs
- Implementation of Accommodations and Modifications
- Disability-Specific Teams/Programs/Activities
- Participation in Teams/Programs/Activities

## **Resources**

[Title 34, Section 104 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(“Section 504 Regulations”\) - Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#)

[Technical Assistance: 504 - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Section 504 Fact Sheet for Parents - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Dear Colleague Letter - U.S. Department of Education \(Jan. 25, 2013\)](#)

[Dear Colleague Letter: Background and Fast Facts - U.S. Department of Education \(Jan. 25, 2013\)](#)

[Students with Disabilities: More Information and Guidance Could Improve Opportunities in Physical Education and Athletics - United States Government Accountability Office \(June 2010\)](#)

[TEA & UIL Side-by-Side – University Interscholastic League](#)

## **CITATIONS**

Board Policy FB; 29 USC 794; 34 CFR 104.34, 104.37, 300.107(b)