

# What you need to know...

## THE BASICS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

There are many misconceptions about special education and it is important that parents and students have the correct information to ensure students are receiving all the help they can to be successful.

**What is Special Education?**

A branch of education that provides services to students with exceptional learning needs.

**What is a disability**

A condition that makes it harder for someone to learn and do certain things

**What conditions are considered a disability?**

- Specific learning disability
- Speech and language impairments
- Other health impairments
- Autism
- Developmental delays
- Intellectual disabilities
- Emotional disturbances
- Multiple disabilities
- Hearing impairments

**How a does a disability affect students?**

- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Paying attention
- Understanding information
- Remembering things
- Performing mathematical calculations
- Coordinating movements

### IEP'S AND 504'S

- IEP's and 504's were created to help support students with disabilities and exceptionalities in the school setting
- IEP's and 504's offer student protections under the law in three main areas:
  - Academic modifications and accommodations
  - Environmental modifications and accommodations
  - Physical modifications and accommodations

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN A 504 AND IEP?

IEP (Individualized Education Programs)

**vs**

504 (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

- More formal than a 504
- Qualify by Medical diagnosis
- Qualify through testing
- Needed to ensure that student does not fall behind when learning with consistent monitoring throughout the school year

- Less Formal than an IEP
- Qualify by medical diagnosis
- Needed to overcome barriers to learning
- Students who do not "qualify" for an IEP may be able to for a 504
- Monitoring is not as frequent as with an IEP

# What you need to know...

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Keys from a Special Education Teacher

#### 3 Important Keys from a Special Education Teacher for parents of special education students

- 1** Attend meetings

IEP and 504 meetings are **EXTREMELY** important for parents and students to attend. The meetings are where accommodations, modifications, and daily procedures are discussed and decided upon. If you cannot attend in person, meetings can be done virtually or on the phone.
- 2** Speak Up In Meetings

Meetings are an opportunity for parents and students to speak up and let their feelings and opinions be heard. Never be afraid to voice your opinions.
- 3** Communicate with Case Manager Often

Your child's case manager is your point person at school for any concerns or issues you have regarding services. **NEVER** hesitate to contact them- the earlier the better!

### Did you know?

- ❗ Special education services extend beyond high school.

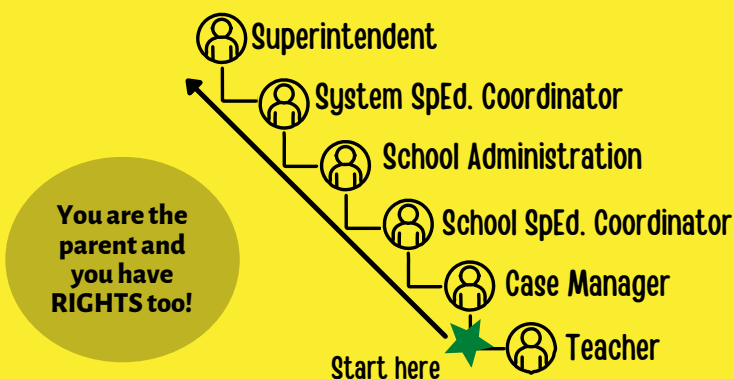
  - A student's IEP and 504 can follow the student to college so they can have their accommodations at the collegiate level. Be sure to discuss this with your high school counselor.
- ❗ The student can receive accommodations on the PSAT, ACT, and SAT.

  - Make sure to bring this up in IEP meetings as early as possible, as there are guidelines and deadlines that have to be met.
- ❗ Parents can request testing for their child if they feel special education services are needed.

  - Many parents think that only the teachers can suggest services but parents can start the process as well.

## How to Handle Concerns and Complaints

Parents should never be afraid to contact the school about their children. As a parent, you are responsible for your child, and when there is a problem, it is vital that your child feels supported by you. The hope is that all students have a perfect school year, but the reality is problems may arise throughout the year, and parents must know the correct process to address the problems.



### ALWAYS FOLLOW THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

The above is a general chain of command for most schools.

Always ask the your child's school what their specific process is for complaints.

If you contact each level of the school system and your issues are not resolved, then legal avenues can be used.

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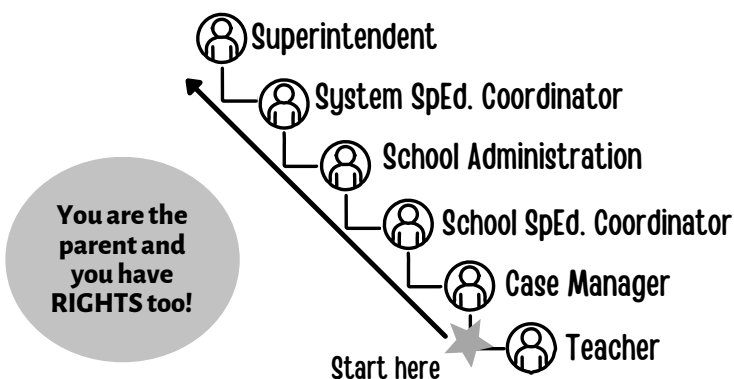
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