



Morehouse Parish School Board

504

Policies/Procedures
and
General Information

SECTION 504 POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with both Section 504 of the *Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973* and the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990*, the *Morehouse Parish School Board* attests that no qualified handicapped person shall, solely by reason of a handicap, be denied the benefits of, be excluded from participation in or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity; nor shall a qualified handicapped person be subjected to discrimination in employment.

The *Morehouse Parish School Board*, on an annual basis, shall provide notice that it adheres to stated policy and shall identify the individual designated as 504 Coordinator.

It is the policy of the *Morehouse Parish School Board* to provide a free and appropriate public education to each handicapped student within its jurisdiction regardless of the nature or the severity of the handicap.

It is the intent of the *Morehouse Parish School Board* to ensure that students who are handicapped within the definition of *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* are located, identified, evaluated (in native language), and if qualified, provided with appropriate educational services. Said educational services could consist of education in regular classes, special education and related services in separate classrooms for all or a portion of the school day. Special education may include specially designed instruction in the classroom, at home, or in private or public institutions and may be accompanied by such related services as speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, psychological counseling and medical diagnostic services necessary to the student's education. Students may be handicapped under this policy even though they do not require services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Due process rights of handicapped students and their parents under Section 504 will be enforced and a grievance procedure has been adopted and incorporates appropriate due process standards that provide opportunity for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section 504.

SECTION 504 MOREHOUSE PARISH SCHOOL BOARDS'S DYSLEXIA POLICY

The *Morehouse Parish School Board* will provide for the needs of suspected and identified dyslexia students through compliance of *Bulletin 1903: Regulations for Implementation of R.S. 17:7(11), The Louisiana Dyslexia Law*.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against any qualified persons with a handicap in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a handicap as anyone who:

1. Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.);
2. Has a record of such impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligation under *Section 504*, the *Morehouse Parish School Board* recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any programs and practices in the school system.

The school system has a specific responsibility under the Act which includes the responsibility to locate, identify, evaluate, and if the child is determined to be eligible under *Section 504* to afford access to free appropriate educational services.

In the opinion of the parent or guardian there is a question regarding discrimination with regard to any aid, benefit or services, the parent has a right to request a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. With respect to actions regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of students who, because of a handicap, need or believed to need special education or related services, the School Board has in place a system of procedural safeguards that include notice and opportunity for the parent/guardian of the student to examine relevant records, and obtain an impartial hearing with opportunity for participation by the student, parent or guardian and representation by counsel.

If there are questions, please free to contact Danny Nevala, 504 Coordinator for the *Morehouse Parish School Board*, at (318) 283-1674.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the *Morehouse Parish School Board* are hereby notified that this school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. The *Morehouse Parish School Board* pledges to protect qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, job training, fringe benefits, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment on the basis of disability.

The *Morehouse Parish School Board* will also provide qualified applicants and employees with disabilities with reasonable accommodations that do not impose undue hardship.

Any person having inquiries concerning the *Morehouse Parish School Board's* compliance with the regulations implementing *The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990*, or *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* is directed to contact

Danny Nevala
Psychological and Intervention Director, 504 Coordinator,
Morehouse Parish School Board
P. O. Box 872
Bastrop, LA 71221-0872
(318) 283-1674

who has been designated by the **Morehouse Parish School Board** to coordinate the district's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Section 504.

For questions concerning *Title VI and Title IX* contact **Prince Ella Williams** at 283-3400.

SECTION 504 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The *Morehouse Parish School Board* has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by **The Office of Civil Rights** regulations implementing *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* as amended (29 U.S.C. 794). Section 504 states, in part, that “no otherwise qualified handicapped individual ... shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance...”

Complaints shall be address to: **Danny Nevala, 504 Coordinator, Morehouse Parish School Board, P. O. Box 872, Bastrop, LA 71221-0872.**

1. A complaint shall be filed in writing, containing the name, address and telephone number of the person filing it as well as that person’s relationship with the School Board (i.e., employee, parent, student, etc.), and briefly describe the alleged violation of the regulations. If the person filing is different from the complainant, the name of the individual who is the subject of the alleged Section 504 violation shall be given, the person’s address and telephone number, and the identification of the school with which associated shall be part of the descriptive narrative.
2. A complaint must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days after the complaint, or the individual formally filing said complaint , becomes aware of the alleged violation, otherwise the complainant waives his/her right of action. The only exception would be if mitigating circumstances exist such as lack of knowledge, fraud, or duress in which case an equitable amount of time shall be allowed on a case by case basis.
3. An investigation, as may be appropriate, will follow a filing of a complaint. The investigation will be conducted by the **Superintendent of Schools or his designee**. These rules contemplate informal but thorough investigations, affording all interested persons and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit written evidence relevant to a complaint. All written evidence, whenever received, shall be stamped as of the date received and shall be made available to all parties to the complaint.

Under the *Office of Civil Rights* regulations, the *Morehouse Parish School Board* need not process complaints from applicants for employment or from applicants for admission to post-secondary educational institutions.

4. A written determination as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, will be issued by the **Superintendent** and a copy forwarded to the complainant no later than fifteen (15) working days after its filing.
5. The **Section 504 Coordinator** will maintain files and records of the *Morehouse Parish School Board* relating to complaints filed.
6. The complainant can request a reconsideration of the case in instances where he or she is dissatisfied with the resolution. The request for reconsideration shall be made within fifteen (15) working days to the **Superintendent**. The person handling the appeal shall render a written decision within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of the complaint. The Standard of Review for the appeal shall not be the of arbitrary and capricious, that is, the review officer shall not take new evidence, but shall judge the initial hearing officer's decision only as to whether or not he/she had a valid objective reason for his/her decision and that the decision was fairly arrived at considering all equal protection ramifications.
7. The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder will not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a Section 504 complaint with the responsible federal department or agency. Using this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
8. These rules will be construed to protect the substantive rights of interested persons, meet appropriate due process standards, and assure that the *Morehouse Parish School Board* complies with Section 504 and its implementing regulations.

Confidentiality: **The *Morehouse Parish School Board* is responsible for protecting the confidentiality of students' educational records and any and all documents generated during the evaluation and discernment process.**

The School Board will apply all of the conditions of the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*.

MOREHOUSE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD'S TEACHER GUIDE
FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF 504 PROCESS

1. Student is referred by parent, teacher, counselor, etc., because of a learning difficulty.
2. SBLC discusses the student's difficulties. Suggestions and interventions are recommended and the next SBLC meeting is scheduled.
3. Interventions and suggestions are implemented by the classroom teacher(s) for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days from date of initial referral.
4. The teacher returns to the SBLC with documented results of the interventions. The SBLC determines which of the following is appropriate:
 - a. continue in SBLC for further review;
 - b. a regular education intervention will resolve the concern;
 - c. a Section 504 assessment is indicated; or
 - d. a request for Psychological and Intervention Services to assist in determining if the student should be referred for support services and/or an IDEA evaluation.
 - e. student should continue in current program, no additional action is required.

MOREHOUSE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
Notice to Parents/Students of Rights Afforded By
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

To the Parents of: _____ **Date:** _____

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students with handicaps. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have a right to:

1. have your child evaluated, take part in, and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her handicapping condition;
2. have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law;
3. receive notice (in the native language) with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child;
4. have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with non-handicapped students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school system make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities;
5. have your child receive services and be educated in facilities which are comparable to those provided to non-handicapped students;
6. have evaluation, educational and placement decisions made based on a variety of informational sources including aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical conditions, social and cultural background, and adaptive behavior made by persons who know the student and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options. Only evaluation and placement procedures that insure the student is not misclassified, unnecessarily labeled as handicapped, or incorrectly placed by inappropriate selection, administrators or interpretation of evaluation materials will be implemented;
7. have transportation provided to and from alternative placement setting (if the school places a handicapped person in or refers such a person to a program not operated by the district). Such transportation will be at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the school district;
8. have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district;
9. examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification evaluation, educational program and placement;
10. obtain Copies of records at reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records;
11. request amendments of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe they are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school system refuses this request for amendment, it shall notify you within a reasonable length of time and advise you of the rights to a hearing; and
12. request review of an impartial hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement.

The person in the *Morehouse Parish School System* responsible for assuring that the district complies with Section 504

is: **Danny Nevala, 504 Coordinator**
Morehouse Parish School Board
P. O. Box 872
Bastrop, LA 71221-0872
Telephone: (318) 283-1674

SCHOOL BUILDING LEVEL PROCEDURES

Note: To ensure placement/program decisions are made by a group of qualified persons, the SBLC must include the following: person(s) knowledgeable about the child; person(s) knowledgeable about evaluation data; and person(s) knowledgeable about placement options.

The purpose of the School Building Level Committee (SBLC) is to assist students who are experiencing difficulties in the regular education program. This assistance may include general screening of student data, recommendations and evaluation of interventions, determination of Section 504 eligibility, or referral to Psychological and Intervention Services if an IDEA disabling condition is suspected.

I. Referral Procedures

- A. The person with a concern contacts the school (principal, counselor or teacher) This date is the beginning day for timelines for completion of a 504 Assessment. The SBLC chairperson schedules a meeting and notifies all participants. Additionally, specific information (cumulative card, health folder, work samples, report card grades, standardized test scores, etc.) is requested from the teacher(s) of the referred student.
- B. Out-of-parish or private assessments/evaluations shall be submitted to the Coordinator of Psychological and Intervention Services who shall review the document for compliance with IDEA.

If the assessment meets criteria to qualify the student for special education services an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) committee shall be scheduled.

If the assessment does not meet the above criteria, the SBLC shall review the document for Section 504 compliance. If the assessment meets Section 504 eligibility criteria, a Student Accommodation Plan shall be developed.

- C. Timelines: The Morehouse Parish School Board shall complete evaluation/Assessments within the timelines as follows:
 - 1. IDEA: 60 operational days from the date of receipt of parental written permission to evaluate and disseminate a report to the Supervisor of Special Educational Services.
 - 2. Section 504: The assessment will be completed within a reasonable time, depending upon the circumstances of the individual child. In case of suspected Dyslexia or other related disorder, the committee is to refer to Bulletin 1903 to assure timely response to the 60 operational days.

II. School Building Level Committee Meetings

Note: At any point, the SBLC may make one of the following determinations:

1. a regular education intervention will resolve the concern;
2. a Section 504 assessment is indicated;
3. a request for Psychological and Intervention services to assist in determining if the student should be referred for support services and/or an IDEA evaluation;
4. or student should continue in current program, no addition action indicated.

- A. The SBLC completes the following activities:
1. Logs the case on the SBLC Case Log Status Form (form 103.SBL).
 2. Reviews the available information and develops recommendations and/or accommodations in an attempt to resolve the concern(s).
 3. Schedules the next SBLC meeting to evaluate the effectiveness of the recommendations and/or accommodations.
- B. The SBLC continues to meet on a regular basis until one of the determinations in the above note is made.

C. SBLC Committee Decisions and Required Actions:

Decision	Required Action
A regular education intervention will resolve the problem.	Parents and all teachers of this student are to be notified of the program changes, interventions, and/or modifications. The student's program must be reviewed annually to maintain expected progress.
A Section 504 Assessment is indicated.	Packet for suspected area of concern should be distributed by the SBLC chairperson to be completed.
A request for Pupil Appraisal to assist in determining if the student should be referred for support services and/or an IDEA evaluation.	The SBLC Chairperson must request that their Pupil Appraisal contact person attend the next SBLC meeting.
Student should continue in current program, no additional action required.	Inform parents and referring individual of the SBLC decision.

- D. The SBLC Chairperson is to complete Form 100.SBL (School Building Level Report) and send to the parents when the decision is made.

Note: *Any time a student is evaluated by Psychological and Intervention Services and deemed "not eligible" under the IDEA, the SBLC should meet to make a determination regarding Section 504 eligibility.*

FORMS

Morehouse Parish School Board
Section 504
Parental Notification of School Building Level Committee Decision

To the Parent/Guardian of: _____ **Date:** _____

School: _____ **Grade:** _____

The School Building Level Committee has completed a review of the difficulties your child has been experiencing at school and made the following recommendation(s).

- _____ 1. Regular education intervention(s) have been developed that will resolve the concern. The intervention plan is attached for your records.
- _____ 2. An assessment is necessary to determine your child's eligibility for Section 504 accommodations. Please complete the enclosed form and return to school.
- _____ 3. A request for Psychological and Intervention Services to assist in determining if the student should be referred for support services and/or an IDEA evaluation has been made. You will be contacted by Pupil Appraisal personnel to assist in this procedure.
- _____ 4. The School Building Level Committee has determined that your child should continue in his/her current program. No additional action is required.

Should you have questions or need addition information, you may telephone me at _____ to set up an appointment to discuss your concerns.

Sincerely,

School Principal

Copies: Parent, Cumulative Folder, 504 Coordinator

School Building Level Committee

Case Log Status Form

School: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

SBLC Members Signature:

Title or Position:

STUDENTS	COMMENTS	DISPOSITION OR NEXT ACTION
Student: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: _____ Referred by: _____		
Student: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: _____ Referred by: _____		
Student: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: _____ Referred by: _____		
Student: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: _____ Referred by: _____		

