

Section 504 – Students

The public charter school recognizes its responsibility to provide a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Accordingly, no otherwise qualified individual with disabilities shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any public charter school program or activity or those provided by the public charter school through contractual or other arrangements. Public charter school aids, benefits and services will afford qualified students with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result, gain the same benefit or reach the same level of achievement as students without disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the student's needs. Programs and activities shall be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

A qualified individual with disabilities under Section 504 is an individual who has a physical or mental impairment¹ that substantially limits one or more major life activities²; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

In compliance with the provisions of Section 504, the public charter school will:

1. Provide written assurance of nondiscrimination in accordance with application procedures whenever the public charter school receives federal money;
2. Designate the administrator coordinate compliance with Section 504;
3. Provide procedures to resolve complaints of discrimination under Section 504;
4. Provide notice to students, parents, employees, including those with vision or hearing impairments, of the public charter school's policy and compliance with law assuring nondiscrimination in admission or access to, or treatment, in public charter school programs, activities or employment. Notice will be included in student/parent and staff handbooks and other materials as appropriate;
5. Annually identify and locate all Section 504 qualified students with disabilities in the public charter school who are not receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE)³;

¹ Impairments which may substantially limit major life activities, and without regard for the ameliorative effects of medication or aids/devices include, but are not limited to, chronic asthma and severe allergies, blindness or visual impairment, cancer, diabetes, deafness or hearing impairment, heart disease, mental illness and conditions which may be episodic or in remission.

² "Major life activities," as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008, includes caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, learning, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating; and major bodily functions, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions.

³ "Appropriate education" (34 C.F.R. § 104.33) means the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of persons without disabilities

6. Ensure that tests and other evaluation materials have been validated, are administered by trained personnel, are tailored to assess educational need and are not based on IQ scores, and reflect what the tests purport to measure;
7. Provide nonacademic and extracurricular services⁴ and activities in such a manner as to afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in such services and activities;
8. Annually notify students with disabilities and their parents or guardians of the public charter school's responsibilities under Section 504, including those with limited proficiency in English and those with vision or hearing impairments;
9. Provide parents or guardians with procedural safeguards, including notification of their right:
 - a. To be notified in writing of any decisions made by the public charter school concerning the identification, evaluation or educational placement of their student pursuant to Section 504[. The public charter school will request parental consent prior to conducting an evaluation of the student];
 - b. To examine, copy and request amendments of the student's educational records;
 - c. To request an impartial hearing, with opportunity for participation by the student's parents or guardian and representation by counsel regarding public charter school decisions concerning identification, evaluation or educational placement of their student. A review procedure will be provided.

Students identified as qualified individuals with disabilities under Section 504 shall be placed in the regular educational environment unless it is demonstrated by the public charter school that the education of the student with the use of related aids and services in such a placement cannot be achieved satisfactorily. All placement decisions will be made by an evaluation team comprised of persons designated by the administrator, knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data and placement options.

Students will be reevaluated periodically, but no less than every three years. Additionally, before implementing discipline that constitutes a significant change in the placement (i.e., expulsion, serial suspensions which exceed 10 school days in a school year, a series of suspensions each of which is 10 or fewer school days in duration but that creates a pattern of exclusion), the public charter school shall conduct a reevaluation of the student to determine whether the misconduct in question is caused by the student's disability and, if so, whether the student's current educational placement is appropriate.

If it is determined that the misconduct of the student is caused by the disability, the district's team, in which the public charter school is located, will continue the evaluation following the requirements of Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA) for evaluation and placement to determine whether the student's current educational placement is appropriate. Due process procedures that meet the requirements of the

are met and are based upon adherence to appropriate procedural requirements of 34 C.F.R. §§ 104.34, 104.35 and 104.36 concerning educational setting, evaluation and placement and procedural safeguards.

⁴ Nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities may include, but are not limited to, counseling services, transportation, health services, athletics, intramurals, clubs or organization activities, referrals to agencies which provide assistance to persons with disabilities and employment of students, including both employment by the public charter school and assistance by the public charter school in making available outside employment.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) may be used to meet the procedural safeguards of law. If it is determined that the misconduct is not caused by the student's disability, the student may be excluded from school in the same manner as are similarly situated students who do not have disabilities.

A student identified as a qualified individual with disabilities under Section 504, who is also covered by the IDEA, will be disciplined in accordance with Board policy JGDA - Discipline of Students with Disabilities and accompanying administrative regulation.

A reevaluation will also be required before any other significant change in placement (i.e., transferring a student to alternative education, graduation from high school, significantly changing the composition of the student's class schedule, such as from regular education to the resource room, etc.).

END OF POLICY

Americans with Disabilities Act

The public charter school, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008 (ADA), is committed to maintaining employment practices, services, programs and activities that provide equity to qualified individuals with disabilities.

The public charter school will provide reasonable accommodations for the known disabilities of all applicants and current employees in all employment application procedures; hiring, advancement or discharge; employee compensation; job training; other terms, conditions and privileges of employment upon request and advance notice.

A reasonable accommodation must not present an undue hardship for the public charter school, be unduly costly, extensive or disruptive; nor present a direct threat to the health or safety of the individual or others in the workplace.

Public charter school services, programs and activities will be accessible and usable by qualified individuals with disabilities, consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA. Accessibility may be achieved through nonstructural as well as structural methods.

In order to achieve equal access, the public charter school will make available appropriate auxiliary aids and services that promote effective communications. Primary consideration will be given to the request of individuals with disabilities in the selection of appropriate aids and services. Final determination will be made by the public charter school board. Auxiliary aids and services determinations will be based on availability, effectiveness and financial or administrative burden to the public charter school.

The public charter school board directs the administrator to develop and implement an appropriate plan that provides for public charter school compliance with the ADA, including the appointment of an ADA compliance officer and the establishment of a process for the investigation and prompt and equitable resolution of any complaint regarding noncompliance.

Retaliation is prohibited against anyone who files a complaint of discrimination, participates in an Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program proceeding or otherwise opposes discrimination federal or state laws.

END OF POLICY
