

Important Differences Between High School and College Supports for Students with Disabilities

| High School | College |
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| Special Education | Disabilities Services |
| IDEA & Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act | Americans with Disabilities Act and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act |
| Free appropriate public education | Access |
| Education is a <i>right</i> and must be provided in an appropriate environment to all individuals. | Education is an <i>opportunity</i> . Students must meet certain admissions criteria defined under the ADA as “ <i>otherwise qualified</i> ”. Students must also meet the criteria of the accepting institution such as health, character, technical standards, and conduct code and course objectives. |
| The school district is responsible to identify a student’s disability. | Students must self-identify to Disabilities Services to access accommodations and services. |
| School district provides free testing and evaluation. | Students must provide documentation that supports the requests for accommodations. Students are responsible for obtaining up-to-date evaluations and medical records. |
| School district develops Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or 504 plan to define educational services. | Student must identify needs and request services through Disabilities Services to develop a reasonable accommodation plan. |
| IEP or 504 Plan determine services and school district must ensure that services are provided. | A reasonable accommodation plan is available to eligible students. IEP’s do not apply. Disabilities Services will work closely with students to support implementation of accommodations by faculty. |
| All teachers are contacted by Special Education staff. | Students are responsible for presenting reasonable accommodations plans to faculty. |
| Fundamental alteration of programs and curricula are required. | No fundamental alterations of programs and curricula are required. Students are given equal opportunity to pursue courses and they are evaluated against the same course objectives as other students. |
| Student’s strengths and challenges are determined by specialists. | Students are expected to develop self-advocacy skills. Disabilities Services staff are available to work closely with students as they develop self-advocacy skills. |
| Personal services for medical or physical disability are required. | The college is not required to provide personal services. Disabilities Services may assist students in advertising for such services. |

* Adapted from Jeanne Kincaid, Esq., Presentations at AHEAD Annual Conferences