

Designing 504 Plans to Promote Equity and Inclusion: *Parents as Partners with Schools*

Kathy Murphy, Section 504 Specialist

Donna Desaulniers, Manager,
School Psychology Services

Kristen Biernesser, Resource Counselor,
School Counseling Services



Participants will learn about:

- the role of student self- advocacy within the 504 process
- how to be an effective advocate for your child
- the purpose and process of Section 504
- development of accommodations and services
- communicating for effective partnering with schools

Turn-and-Talk

First, think of a **positive experience** that you have had with **your child's school**.

Then, turn to a neighbor and share what made this a **positive experience**.



Equity: *Promoting Inclusion by Meeting Individual Needs*

Equality



Equity



Student Voice



Self-Advocacy is...

- **Speaking up for yourself.**
- **Based on self-awareness.**
- **Using effective communication skills.**

Self-Advocacy is **not**...

- Doing it all yourself without the help of others.
- Having all of the answers.

It is about asking the right questions.



Student Self-Awareness

- Exploring personal interests, strengths and challenges
- Knowing the difference between wants and needs
- Making choices based on interests, strengths and needs
- Identifying and setting goal

Disability Awareness

- The student's disability does not define them
- Know what the disability is
- Understanding and accepting the impact of the disability
- Identify accommodations that work

Supporting Disability Awareness

Encourage identification of

- ✓ *Strengths*
- ✓ *Things they know how to do well*
- ✓ *Things they enjoy doing*
- ✓ *Things they have done that they are proud of*
- ✓ *Talents*
- ✓ *Things they have learned*
- ✓ *Positive personality traits*

Communication

- The ability to effectively use communication skills such as **negotiation**, **compromise**, and **persuasion** is critical to becoming a successful self-advocate.
- The foundational skills of **labeling**, **expressing**, and **regulating** emotions contribute to effective communication.



Think of something that you will do after today's session to support your child in growing their **self-awareness, communication, and self-advocacy.**

Putting it all together: 504 Plan contents and purpose

A student's 504 Plan details modifications, accommodations, and services that are needed for the student with a disability to participate in and enjoy the benefits of school programs at the same level as his peers without disabilities.

8 VAC 20-671-10

Defining Accommodation

When providing an accommodation to a student with a disability, we are:

Adjusting or ***adapting*** the way a student might typically be expected to access any programs and services provided by the school division – *in order to remove disability-related barriers.*

Accommodation Categories

Presentation: change how an assignment, lecture or assessment is delivered

Response: allow student to complete work in different ways/formats

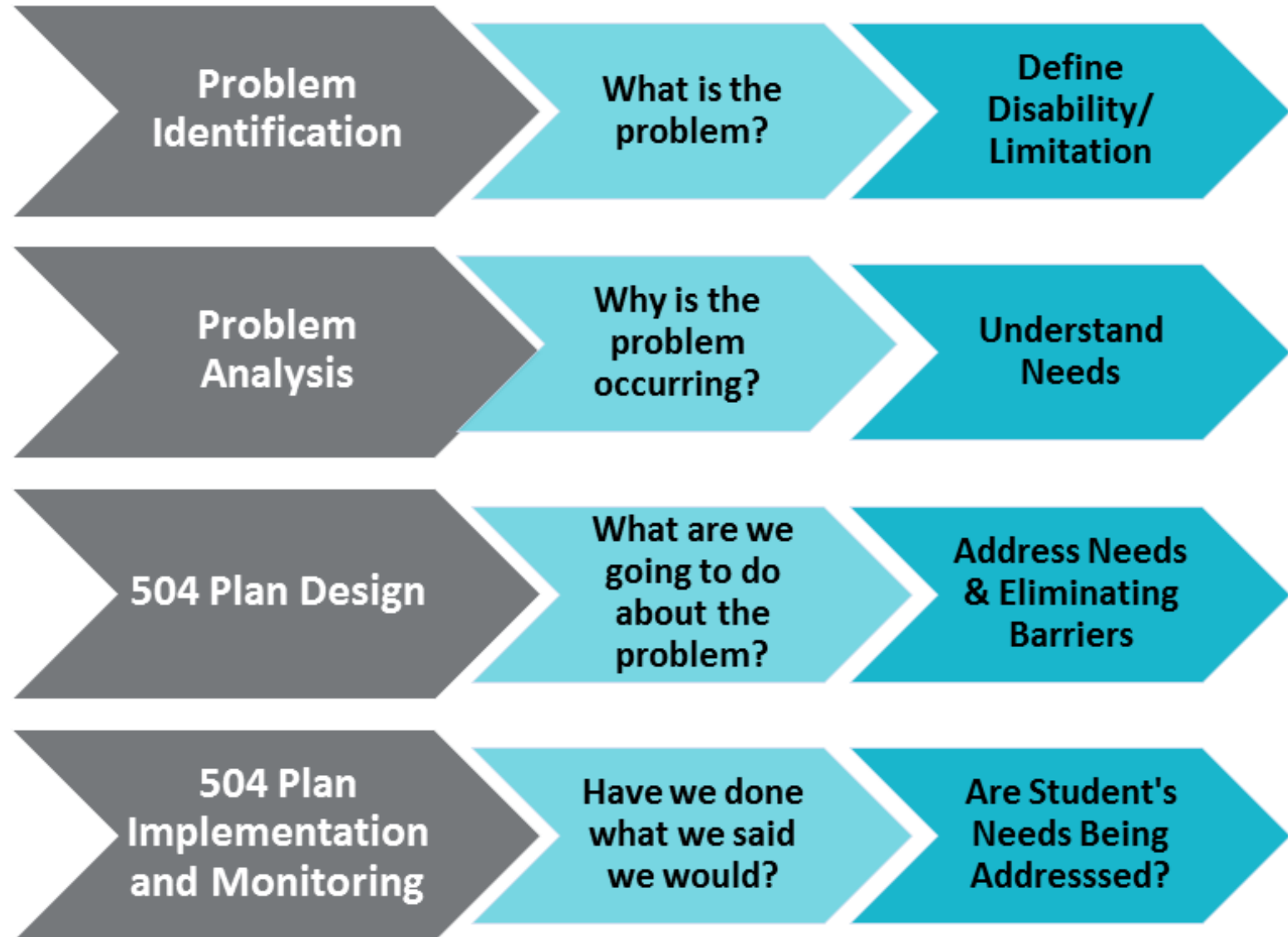
Setting: change the location or the conditions in which the work is delivered/completed

Timing/scheduling: adjust the length of time, or the way time is organized, for an assignment or assessment

Eliminating Disability-Related Barriers to FCPS Programs and Activities

Accommodations, modifications and services apply not only to a student's academic needs, but can relate to any access-related barriers the student faces based on their disability.

Applying the Problem-Solving Process



The Role of Parents in the Problem Solving Process



The Role of the Student in the Problem Solving Process



Reflection

Think about something that you have learned today that will help you and your child have a positive experience when partnering to develop effective 504 Plans.



Share with a partner



FCPS and Community Resources

Dyslexia Handbook: <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/dyslexia-handbook>. Guidance to FCPS schools and families regarding dyslexia (a language-based reading disability) and related resources.

Family Engagement Resources: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/family-engagement-resources>. Information about programs and supports offered in FCPS to build stronger family-school partnerships.

Family Support Partner Services: <http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html>. Peer support for parents and caregivers.

Healthy Minds Blog: <https://www.fcps.edu/blog>

Mental Health Resources and Emergency Services Information: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/mental-health-resources-and-emergency-services-information>. National and local crisis resources and community mental health resources.

Parent Resource Center (PRC): <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>. Free workshops, confidential consultations and lending library materials are available at the PRC.

FCPS and Community Resources (continued)

Portrait of a Graduate Family Resources: <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/portrait-graduate/resources>. How parents can support their child at home in developing “Portrait of a Graduate” attributes.

Resources for Families and Students: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources>. FCPS online resources for a variety of topics.

School Counseling Services: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/school-counseling-services>

School Psychology Services: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/school-psychology-services>.

School Social Work Services: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/school-social-work-services>.

Section 504 Information: <https://www.fcps.edu/section504>.

Student Wellness: Tips and Strategies: <https://www.fcps.edu/student-wellness-tips>

Technology Tools to Support All Learners: <https://www.fcps.edu/node/36595>

Twice Exceptional Learners (2e): <https://www.fcps.edu/node/33071>. Information for parents of students who have strong thinking and reasoning abilities as well as special needs.

504 Plan Meetings: Quick Tips for Parents

Before the Meeting:

- * Work with your child's 504 case manager to set a mutually-agreeable date and time for the meeting.
- * Gather together relevant documents (e.g., medical or other evaluation reports, etc.).
- * Inform the case manager if you are planning for additional person(s) to attend the meeting with you.
- * Talk with your child about what is working well and areas in which he or she might need additional support.
- * Decide on your/your child's top 2 or 3 priorities that you want to be sure are covered during the meeting.

504 Plan Meetings: Quick Tips for Parents

During the Meeting:

- * Support your child's participation in the 504 Plan meeting, whenever possible.
- * Ask the committee members to introduce themselves (if they haven't already) and identify their role/expertise.
- * Ask the team to use the 504 Plan Meeting Agenda if it has not yet been distributed.
- * Focus on active listening.
- * Focus on your child's unique strengths, weaknesses and disability-related needs.
- * Remember that the 504 Plan document is not an "insurance policy" for your child. The purpose of the document is to include all accommodations and services that are necessary (required) for your child to have the equal opportunity to participate in FCPS programs and activities, including the academic program.

504 Plan Meetings: Quick Tips for Parents

After the Meeting:

- * Talk with your child about how he or she feels about the 504 Plan accommodations.
- * Give the school time to take data on the accommodations and “work the plan.”
- * Ask the case manager to share any follow-up information with you regarding your child’s 504 Plan.
- * Keep the lines of communication open. We all do better when we presume positive intentions in others and notice/thank them for their sincere efforts.
- * At any time, the school or the family have the right to request that the knowledgeable committee reconvene to revisit the 504 Plan and make any necessary changes.

Contact Information:

Kathy Murphy, Section 504 Specialist
(kamurphy@fcps.edu) 571-423-1304

Donna Desaulniers, Manager, School Psychology
Services (dmdesaulnier@fcps.edu) 571-423-4265

Kristen Biernesser, Resource Counselor,
School Counseling Services (kjbiernesser@fcps.edu)
571-423-4404