

Overview of Chapter 15 Regulations for Protected Handicapped Pupils

Chapter 15 of the Regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education requires that school districts provide protected handicapped pupils enrolled in the district, without cost to the pupil or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to afford the extracurricular activities without discrimination and to the maximum extent appropriate to the pupil's abilities.

Chapter 15 regulations were designed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to enforce section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 assures equal access to services and prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities.

In general, Chapter 15 services are designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities that limit a major life activity such as personal care, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing speaking, breathing or learning. The Chapter 15 provisions should not be used for the routine adjustments that are frequently made to accommodate many individual student needs.

ELIGIBILITY – To be eligible for services under Chapter 15, a student must:

- Be of school age;
- Have a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the pupil's school program; and
- NOT be eligible for special education under Chapter 14.

Pupils are identified as eligible for Chapter 15 services on an individual basis following evaluation by the district. Such evaluation is usually initiated by the district, but parents may request, in writing to the school principal, that a 'Chapter 15 evaluation be conducted. When a child is eligible, a service agreement is then written to describe the related aids, services or accommodations appropriate for the pupil.

Administrative procedures for protected handicapped pupils are available for implementation by principals. Teachers who suspect that a student may be eligible for aids, services or accommodations as a protected handicapped pupil under Chapter 15 should contact the school principal. Teachers who are requested by parents to provide aids, services or accommodations to a student with a disability should contact the school principal.
