



# ST. JOHNSBURY ACADEMY

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2021/2022 school year

**To:** Special Education Directors and LEA's

**From:** Dr. Mathew G. Forest- Director of Special Services, St Johnsbury Academy

**CC:** Jacqui Kelleher- State Director of Special Services, Clare O'Shaughnessy- AOE Staff Attorney, Ernest Wheeler- AOE Special Services

**Regarding:** Section 504/ADA Individual Accommodation Plan

## Memorandum

Good Colleagues,

I'm writing this memo in hopes to clarify the Academy's relationships with public schools regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Over the past 2 years we have sought legal counsel and consulted with the Vermont Agency of Education for clarity on the roles between the Academy and public schools in choice towns, as we have shared students and responsibilities. I understand that the relationship between public schools and other independent schools may differ.

We (St. Johnsbury Academy) feel strongly that the positive working relationships with public school districts is crucial in meeting the unique needs of the children we both serve. We believe that the creation of a 504 plan should be a collaborative team effort between the Academy, sending district, and the family/student. Below is the process the Academy follows with all sending districts.

***LEA's assist in scheduling 504 meetings and provide written prior notice to families as well as the completed 504 plans. The Academy gathers all relative academic materials to assist in eligibility determination (if the student has not previously been determined eligible by the LEA). The Academy also provides oversight and implementation of all 504 plans. It is the Academy's responsibility to ensure all plans are followed by faculty and staff and communicate any concerns with the LEA.***

We prefer that LEAs participate as a team member in all 504 meetings. However, in the past if a school district chooses not to participate in the 504 processes, the Academy provided a case management service at the cost of \$1000.00 per student. When this occurs, the Academy takes over all the above roles. Please note this is the only time the Academy charged a fee for 504, when the districts choose not to participate in the process and a contractual agreement was made between both parties. The Academy will no longer be providing the service and will be phasing this service out after the 2021-2022 school year.

It is our hope to have strong collaborative working relationships with all school districts we share students with, and to work through challenges together the best we can to ensure students receive the appropriate accommodations and the best education possible.

We stand ready to work with you, through the 504 process and any other educational matters that involves our students. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.