

Differences Between High School & College For Students with Disabilities

K – 12 (Federal Law – IDEA)	Higher Education(Federal Law – ADAAA)
Education is a RIGHT and must be provided in an appropriate environment to ALL individuals.	Education is NOT A RIGHT . Students must meet certain admissions criteria defined under ADAAA as “otherwise qualified.”
School district is responsible to identify a student’s disability.	Students must self-identify, then contact or be referred to DSPS to receive accommodations.
School district provides free testing and evaluation.	Student must provide documentation and pay for evaluation, if there is no current documentation.
School district develops Individualized Education Plans, (IEP) to define educational services.	Student must identify needs and request services.
IEP Team determines services and school district must ensure that services are provided under IEP. All teachers are contacted by Special Ed. Staff.	Student self-advocates to initiate accommodations. Faculty is then notified of the approved accommodations.
Modifications to curriculum and assignments may be required by the IEP.	Instructors are not required to modify or fundamentally alter the requirements of a course or program.
Modifications to test format may be provided (i.e., multiple choice vs. essay).	Changes to test format are rare and need to be supported by disability documentation.
Personal services for medical or physical disability are provided, when required.	Personal services are not required to be provided (i.e., personal care attendants, specialized tutoring).
Students go from one class to another every day of the week for about 6 hours per day. Students usually spend about 30 hours in the classroom each week. Often teachers help students study and prepare for tests in class.	Actual time spent in the classroom is considerably less in college. Professors usually expect students to read and study on their own. For every hour in a college class, a student should expect to spend 2-3 hours studying on their own. (Such as reading, reviewing notes, or researching.)
Classes are scheduled for students and their attendance in class is carefully monitored.	Students will arrange their own class schedule with the help of a Counselor or Advisor. Professors may not take roll - but they know who attended. Missing classes is directly correlated to failure in college.

Teachers provide students with information missed when absent.	Professors expect students to ask classmates for any notes or material from missed classes.
Teachers often write information on the board to cue note-taking. Note taking may not be essential.	Reading assignments can be lengthy and in-class material may be substantial. Professors will expect students to identify important points to include in their notes. Good class notes are essential.
Students are provided textbooks at little or no expense.	Students will need to budget for and purchase their textbooks.
Teachers give students materials to help them understand the course content. Often students are only responsible for what is presented in class.	Professors may or may not follow the textbook. They may offer illustrations, background information or relevant research to help students understand the content. They will expect the students to assimilate the textbook readings even if they aren't covered in class.
Homework is checked. Students are reminded if assignments are missing.	Professors often assume homework is completed and may not remind students of missing assignments or problems with work submitted.
Bottom Line: High Schools Provide a high level of support and take responsibility in IEP/504 plan.	Bottom Line: Colleges provide a different level of support, and it is the student's responsibility to ask for help and advocate for themselves.