



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Senator Hanna M. Gallo , Chair Senate Education Committee
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: Senate 2214 AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-01110) for additional information.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Rhode Island Department of Education regulations, school districts are obliged to provide transition services to students who are eligible for special education services, but not those students who have 504 plans. Consequently, students with 504 plans are often adrift and unaware of their rights upon graduation.

School districts are required to identify and provide supports for students who require specialized instruction to access the curriculum. Children with disabilities who do not require specialized instruction but require accommodations or modifications to participate in classes or school activities are entitled to a "504 Plan" to them under Section 504 Rehabilitation Act. Approximately 14% of students in the United States receive special education services, and 3% have 504 plans.

While students are still in school, it is the responsibility of the school district to identify students with disabilities and provide them with what they need; however, once students leave school, responsibility transfers from the school staff to the individual. As adults, they must seek out, request, and advocate for services, support, and accommodations themselves. Because these services are not automatic, there can be an interruption or cessation of services.

To help prevent this and facilitate a smoother transition to adulthood, students who are eligible for special education services are entitled to transition services from the school district. Starting at age 14, the special education team considers a student's post-graduation goals and determines what is needed for the student to reach these goals. Services are provided to the

student to meet these goals, including life skills training, vocational training, or referrals to agencies such as BHDDH or ORS.

Students with 504 plans, however, do not receive transition services. While they may be eligible for the same services as students with IEPs, such as vocational services, they do not get referrals. They may not receive the training they need to live or work in their community. They may not know how to advocate for accommodations at college or at a job. Providing transition services to students who have 504 plans would facilitate their access to services and accommodations that would put them in a more equitable position compared to their non-disabled peers and students who received special education services. They would know where to access services, such as ORS or the disability services department of a college. They would know how to ask for a reasonable accommodation for their disability and the process of requesting one. These things would ensure their better success and independence in adulthood.

We do have one modification that we respectfully request. We would ask that on page 3 line 20, the language be changed to remove the word "traumatic" so the line reads "brain injury". This would include students who obtain brain injuries that aren't the result of trauma, such as a stroke or infection.