



Office of Academics

September 4, 2020

**Subject: Section 504 and H/GT Supports for Students**

**Dear Hill Community,**

It is an honor to be back at Hill for a new year of Excellence, Engagement, and Equity. As Principal Adams shared in The Hawk Talk (Family) last week, we at Hill have made a commitment to make this school year as normal as possible, and we are on that path. As we approach and carry out this work, one of our highest priorities is to provide Equitable accommodations for every student who needs them so that *all* Hill students can achieve Excellence through Engagement. This goes for students who may need accommodations due to a disability and also for students who may need accommodations due to advanced or unique abilities. We are one family at Hill, and we recognize and internalize that Hill students are people first, and that they are people who need differentiated supports in order to thrive – just as we all do.

My name is Parker Fulton, and I am a Senior Team Lead at Hill for the second year in a row. In addition to working closely with Hill's tremendous teaching faculty to ensure that they will have the supports they will need to provide our students with the best obtainable education and accommodations while at Hill, I also will serve the Hill community this year as the director of and primary point of contact for Hill's Section 504 and Gifted and Talented programs. These two programs are components of a spectrum of specialized services that also includes Special Education and English Language Acquisition programs.

Let me be very clear: my primary objective this year is to advocate for and support students and families with the supports and accommodations they will need to be successful this year, regardless of what challenges the year may hold in store. No matter what those challenges are or may be, we as a community will be able to collaborate, adapt, and overcome because we hold our values near and dear: Excellence, Engagement, and Equity.

Many students have 504 Plans that correlate to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and many others have Advanced Learning Plans, or ALPs, that correlate to Colorado's Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA). Both 504 Plans and ALPs provide accommodations by law, and under each of these programs, each student with one or both of these documents must be reviewed annually. As we work our way into a school year that is sure to be unlike any other, I will be working to ensure our Hill students have the accommodations and supports they need.

Because most students with existing plans were reviewed last year pre-COVID, most students' plans provide accommodations only for in-person learning, and many of those accommodations do not translate to our current remote learning environment. To address this issue, I – along with Hill's incredible School Nurse, Merri Hoffman – have spent the beginning of our year working to meet the remote learning needs of our most vulnerable students and student populations. As we move into the second phase of our year over the next two or three weeks, we next will be focusing on our first round

of students who were reviewed at the beginning of last year and may need changes made to their plans for remote learning.

While we are working to provide Hill students with immediate accommodations they will need for remote learning, we must be conscious of the fact that we may at some point return to in-person learning this year, and as such we are in a position of having to write plans that internally address two very different environments. In order to do our best to leave no stone unturned, we are approaching this work slowly and methodically so that it will be done right. Our students deserve that from us, and that is what we will provide.

Because I am here to advocate for and support students and their families, I am available to you should you have any questions or need to discuss your student's current situation – regardless of what it may be. You may have questions for me if you and your student(s) are in one of three positions:

- If you know or suspect that your child already has a 504 Plan or ALP in place, and if your child is adjusting well to remote learning without the need for immediate additional supports, you should expect a personalized communication from me by September 18, 2020, which will outline next steps for these students.
- If you are unsure as to whether your child has a plan in place, but you know or suspect that your child has a learning disability or medical condition that affects their ability to learn, please reach out to me. Your child may benefit from a 504 Plan, and we can provide a new one under qualified conditions.
- If you know or suspect that your child is gifted, please reach out to me. Your child may benefit from formal identification and an ALP, which we can provide under qualified conditions.

My email address is [parker\\_fulton@dpsk12.org](mailto:parker_fulton@dpsk12.org), and my phone number is (720) 227-1405. These are the two best ways to reach me quickly, and I will respond to you as quickly as I possibly can.

I am here for your student(s), and I am here for you, and I am looking forward to a wonderful year of Excellence, Engagement, and Equity at Hill Campus of Arts and Sciences. We are one Skyhawk family.

**In Collaboration,**

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