

# A Wisconsin Postsecondary Guide to Disability Documentation

By the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, with a foreword by Tom Heffron



The Guide was developed and composed by the Wisconsin Disability Documentation Workgroup in 2003-04. The Workgroup was comprised of K-12 Special Educators, CESA representatives, Disability Services Staff from the University of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Technical College campuses. The Guide was reviewed by WTCS Office, University of Wisconsin System Office, the Department of Public Instruction, and many educators at the Spring 2004 Regional Transition Workshops.

The document is a guide, not state policy or procedures. The individual postsecondary institutions are responsible for establishing and implementing their disability documentation criteria and procedures. This Guide will assist organizations to determine their role in understanding needed documentation for students with disabilities transitioning from PK-12 to Wisconsin postsecondary education.

The Wisconsin Postsecondary Guide to Disability Documentation (2004) has the following sections:

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You may make copies and utilize all or part of the document to assist the disability documentation process. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact:

Tom Heffron, Education Director-Disability Services and Financial Aid Wisconsin Technical College System Office, 4622 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53707-7874; Phone: (608) 266-3738; TTY: (608)267-2483; Fax: (608) 266-1690; [tom.heffron@wtc.system.edu](mailto:tom.heffron@wtc.system.edu)

## A Wisconsin Post-Secondary Guide To Disability Documentation

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For an electronic copy or additional copies of the Disability Documentation Guide, please contact: Tom Heffron, Wisconsin Technical College System Office, 4622 University Avenue, PO Box 7874, Madison, WI 53707-7874; Phone: (608) 266-3738; Fax: (608) 266-1690; TTY: (608) 267-2483; Email: [tom.heffron@wtcsystem.edu](mailto:tom.heffron@wtcsystem.edu)

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## I. Disability Documentation Introduction

Wisconsin educators in pre K-12 and postsecondary institu-

tions, as well as disability services professionals in state agencies serving students, have expressed a need for guidance related to documentation of disability for adolescents and adults continuing their education after high school.

This guide will assist all organizations in determining their roles to understand and determine their roles in assisting students with disabilities who enroll in postsecondary education to obtain needed documentation. Each partner in K-12 and postsecondary has a role in disability documentation.

This Guide provides the following: Summary of Applicable Laws; Guiding Principles for Disability Documentation; Elements of Proper Documentation of the Disability; Resources; Websites; and Examples of a Transition Checklist and Letters showing Documentation History.

The guide is intended to improve the quality and usefulness of documentation of students' disabilities, and to create improved communication between K-12 schools and postsecondary education regarding transition planning to postsecondary education.

Procedures, guidelines, and practices for documenting disabilities and establishing appropriate accommodations for students may vary from district to district. Educators who want to locate and provide appropriate information for students as they progress through school often do not know the information that is required.

Regional meetings were held around the state in the spring of 2003, facilitated by DPI and the WI Technical College System, to discuss issues related to needed documentation for students with disabilities. At each session, a panel made up of members from K-12 schools,

University, and Technical College, transition professionals and a representative from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) facilitated discussions.

Key findings were:

- Students may not know what their disabilities are and what accommodations have been used to address them.
- Students with disabilities leave high school without self-advocacy skills, clear post school plans, and specific contacts.
- Students may not have appropriate documentation when they enroll in postsecondary education.
- There are critical differences between institutional laws and policies affecting high school students with disabilities as they exit from high school and enter postsecondary education programs.
- There is confusion about the distinctions between Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act 73.
- Students with disabilities, their parents, secondary teachers, and counselors need additional information about documentation.
- High schools use different kinds of testing, practices, and documentation to collect and communicate information about students. They may also use existing data to determine continuous eligibility for special education services.
- Postsecondary institutions do not have common practices and requirements for documentation of disabilities.
- The role and responsibility of students with disabilities in obtaining appropriate documentation for accommodations in postsecondary institutions should be clarified.

- Postsecondary institutions require current relevant data on a student's disability.
- Data must include a formal documentation, history of services needed, evidence of functional limitation, names of assessment tools administered, results tied to previous treatment, and needed accommodations.
- Added documentation may be needed for state and national certification, such as passing state board exams or licensure requirements (for example, GED/HSED, nursing, teaching, fire fighting, Emergency Medical Technician, and the State Bar).

In response to these issues and concerns, a work group comprised of high school teachers, a director of special education, university, college, and technical college district staff, and state agencies (DVR, DPI and WTCS) was established to develop and distribute a guide to improve the consistency and quality of documentation statewide. The guide is intended to deal with documentation issues across all areas of disability.

Currently there are no federal standards on documentation of disability at the postsecondary level. Documentation requirements and practices are determined by individual postsecondary education institutions. This guide may be used to support the development and implementation of institutional policies.

## II. Summary of Applicable Laws

There are three principal federal laws which affect individuals with disabilities transitioning from high school to postsecondary environments of work and/or education. In addition, there are state statutes which have an impact on this group.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal special education law. Initially passed in 1975, it places an affirmative obligation on school districts to locate, identify, and serve children with disabilities from age 3 through 21 or high school graduation. IDEA provides federal funding to schools to provide services to children with disabilities.

IDEA applies only to individuals who meet the criteria for one or more specific conditions or impairments and who, because of the impairment, require special education and related services. Special education is specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of an individual with a disability. Identification of eligibility is made by a group of people including the parents or adult pupil, special education teacher(s), regular education teacher(s) and others with knowledge of the individual. There are procedural safeguards to protect the rights of these persons and ensure school compliance with the obligations established by IDEA.

School districts are required to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability. FAPE is defined by an individualized education program (IEP), which must be reviewed and revised at least annually. The IEP contains measurable annual goals, with short term objectives and benchmarks, a statement of the special education and related services to be provided to the child, and beginning at age 14, statements relating to transition to life after secondary school.

Wisconsin law incorporates the provisions of IDEA at Subchapter V of Chapter 115. State law nearly mirrors federal law. IDEA and state special education law are enforced by the WI Department of Public Instruction.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (§504) differ significantly from IDEA. They are civil rights legislation. The focus of each is to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Section 504 applies to entities that receive federal funds, including high schools, colleges, and universities. While the basic prohibition against discrimination on the basis of disability is the same under the ADA and §504, the ADA has a broader coverage. It is not limited to only those organizations and institutions that receive federal funds.

Unlike the IDEA, the ADA and §504 do not provide funding for accommodations and services. Some individuals in public school may not be eligible under IDEA but may be protected by §504 and the ADA.

Section 504 and the ADA prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. In the words of §504:

“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

An individual with a disability is broadly defined as an individual who “(i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities; (ii) has a record of such impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

Major life activities means “functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.” Generally, the major life activity must relate

to access, or participation in, the program or activity for which accommodations are sought. In the educational environment, the major life activity most considered is learning. The individual's impairment typically must affect learning in such situations.

There is not an obligation under ADA and §504 for organizations to actively seek out individuals with disabilities. There is an obligation to ensure that programs and services of the school, college, or university are accessible to the individual with a disability. This can be an issue of providing physical accessibility or providing aids and services to enable the individual to benefit from the program.

The individual with a disability is required to make the organization aware of the existence of a disability. When the organization becomes aware that an individual has a disability, the organization determines the accommodations it will provide. The organization will usually request documentation supporting the current existence of a disability and its impact on the individual. The individual is responsible for providing the needed documentation.

When an individual with a disability disagrees with the sufficiency or appropriateness of the accommodations provided, there are procedures within the organization and through external enforcement to appeal the decisions of the organization. Enforcement of §504 is done by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education. The ADA is enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice.

In Wisconsin, there are also state statutes prohibiting discrimination in public schools, the Technical College System, and the University of Wisconsin System. Virtually identical language states that "no student

may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any service, program, course, or facility...on the basis of disability..." in the two postsecondary systems. Similar language prohibits discrimination in public schools on the basis of disability.

### III. Guiding Principles for Disability Documentation

The following guiding principles are intended to provide a framework to assist educational professionals and students in gathering sufficient disability documentation to establish eligibility for disability services at any Wisconsin postsecondary institution.

#### Background

An individual is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act when the individual has an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. In an academic setting, the disorder must substantially limit a student's ability to participate equally in activities associated with learning and/or demonstration of specific skills or knowledge. These activities may include but are not limited to reading, writing, note-taking, listening, seeing, test-taking, performing manual/motor-based skills, class attendance, or participation in laboratory activities.

Unlike the K-12 system, postsecondary institutions do not have an affirmative duty to identify students with disabilities. Rather, students are responsible for disclosing the presence of a disability, providing adequate disability documentation to the institution, and requesting accommodations in a timely manner. They also are responsible for abiding by the

accommodation procedures of the specific institution in which they are enrolled.

The purpose of disability-related accommodations also changes in a postsecondary setting. The educational institution becomes responsible for providing an opportunity for a student's educational success, rather than meeting an obligation to provide a free and appropriate education (FAPE). Accommodations are customized for each student to the extent that the specific impact of the disability is appropriately accommodated. Postsecondary disability service providers are responsible for assessing eligibility for services that provide equal access to educational activities. This assessment has three components: disability documentation, accommodation history, and an intake process with the disability services office.

#### Disability Documentation

Students must provide written documentation that establishes that a disability *currently* exists and substantially limits one or more basic life activities. Disability documentation shall:

Adequately verify the nature and extent of the disability in accordance with current professional standards and techniques.

Be prepared by an appropriately licensed clinical or educational professional(s) familiar with the history and functional implications of the impairment. Reports must be on letterhead, typed, dated and signed.

Provide evidence of current impairment as well as a historical record of impairment when appropriate. This information may be gleaned from the student academic record, formal and informal assessment tools appropriate to measurement of student performance and disability, teacher and parent input. A special education direc-

tor or school psychologist may either provide current psychological evaluation information or a written letter stating there was no change and state the current accommodations provided by K-12.

Clearly link the functional limitation(s) to the individual student's specific accommodation request(s). The report shall explain and document via formal and informal assessment how the requested accommodation mitigates the impact of the individual's disability on the specific task or activity (e.g., how extended time on an exam accommodates the impact of attention deficit disorder; how a learning disability interferes with note-taking skills such that a classroom note-taker is needed.) To the extent possible, the report should consider the impact of the disability and the need for the requested accommodation in a postsecondary educational setting.

Associate the evidence from the student's assessment to each specific accommodation need. Because accommodations are individually determined, a generic list of accommodations that may or may not be appropriate for the individual student should be avoided.

When a student has multiple disorders, sufficient information confirming the presence of each disorder is needed as well as any relevant information regarding how the disorders types may interact to warrant the requested accommodation.

#### *Accommodation History*

The student's record of accommodation plays an important role in determining eligibility for services beyond high school. An accommodation history provides helpful information about those services and accommodations that have positively affected the student's education.

Many services provided in high school continue to be provided in college. These accommodations typically include extended test time, audio presentation of reading materials, sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, adaptive computer technology, etc.

Because the educational goals and objectives of IDEA differ from the ADA and Section 504, students may also receive accommodations in high school that are not appropriate or cannot be provided through disability services in college settings (e.g., open-book exams, clarification of test questions, modified assignments). Knowing prior to enrollment that an accommodation will not be maintained can assist students in developing alternative and additional skills needed to be successful in college. Conversely, when a student requests an accommodation in a postsecondary setting but has not received that accommodation in high school, the supporting documentation needs to be especially clear in substantiating the need.

#### *Intake Process with Disability Services*

Corroborative information from the student regarding the substantial limitation in a major life activity is typically gathered during an interview with disability services staff either in the year prior to enrollment or shortly after the student arrives on campus. The purpose of the meeting is to review the areas in which the student feels the disability or disabilities have created interference and to learn about the student's opinions regarding the accommodations that have proved necessary and beneficial in high school. It is also an opportunity for students to gather information about campus policies and

procedures regarding disability services. In addition, the intake process immediately affords an opportunity for students to take responsibility for and ownership of their educational experience, a critical component in managing a disability at the postsecondary level.

On occasion, postsecondary service providers may participate in transition planning meetings while the student is still in high school in order to share information about available services and facilitate a coordinated transition.

#### *Summary*

Students making a successful transition to higher education bring with them:

- The requisite documentation that permits reasonable accommodation;
- A desire to actively participate in the accommodation process; and
- The ability to compete on a playing field made level by those accommodations mandated by law.

Students are encouraged to contact postsecondary institutions as early as ninth grade to learn more about admission requirements, disability services and the array of educational opportunities available to them as individuals with disabilities.

## IV. Elements of Proper Documentation of the Disability

Along with the previous section on the Guiding Principles of Documentation, the following elements of proper documentation are provided to assist school personnel and students in planning for the disability documentation required to be eligible for disability services in postsecondary institutions. The student's IEP or 504 Plan is considered helpful to establish a

history of disability, but sometimes is not sufficient to document a disability or to determine the appropriate academic accommodations at the postsecondary level. Students will sometimes need to seek a current assessment from practitioners in their area of disability. Students are advised to contact the disability support office at the postsecondary institution of their choice in order to determine specific disability documentation requirements.

The elements most common to proper documentation are described by disability category, e.g., Learning Disability, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Blind/Low Vision, etc. For all categories, documentation requires evidence to support each accommodation request.

Documentation submitted must:

- Be appropriate to verify eligibility according to the requirements of the institution the student plans to attend and the requirements of relevant laws;
- Demonstrate the current substantial impact on one or more major life activities; and
- Provide current evidence to support the request for accommodations, academic adjustments and or auxiliary aids.

When students are planning on attending postsecondary institutions it is recommended they:

- Check with individual postsecondary institutions for specific requirements per disability category for required documentation;
- Submit the "High School Report for Students Requesting Accommodations at Postsecondary Learning Institutions." See Appendix A, or other format as indicated by individual institutions; and

- Arrange to get updated psycho-educational testing done, if needed, before requesting accommodations at the postsecondary level.

### *Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*

Practitioners Who Can Provide a Diagnosis: Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Clinical Social Workers, Neuropsychologists and other appropriately trained medical doctors.

Recency of Documentation: ADHD is a condition that can manifest itself differently as people age. Therefore, it is generally recommended that a current evaluation be conducted that includes the items listed below. Students are advised to check with the postsecondary institution that they plan to attend in order to determine the required date of documentation.

### Contents of Documentation:

- 1) A specific diagnosis that conforms to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual - IV (DSM-IV) of the American Psychiatric Association for Attention Deficit Disorder, with or without hyperactivity. Symptoms of ADHD that were present in childhood and the current symptoms that have been present for at least the past six months and that impair functioning in two or more settings (e.g., school, work, home) must be identified.
- 2) Current functional limitations on major life activities resulting from the attention disorder. These may include but are not limited to: Cognitive functioning; Academic skill levels; Behavioral functioning; Learning; Social functioning; and Executive functioning.
- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may in-

clude but is not limited to:

- Aptitude/Cognitive ability. Assessed using a standardized test such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Third Edition or a similar instrument.
- Academic Achievement: Tests of Reading, Writing and Math Skills measured by standardized and comprehensive individual achievement tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Revised, or the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - II. Specific achievement tests may also be used such as the Test of Written Language-3 or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test.
- Clinical observations/interview
- Teacher observations
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment. This includes suggestions for the use of assistive technology, how the use of medications may alleviate symptoms of the attention disorder as well as any other recommended interventions such as counseling services.
- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

*Pervasive Developmental Disorders (includes Autism Spectrum Disorders, Asperger's, and others)*

Practitioners Who Can Provide a Diagnosis: Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Psychologists, Neuropsychologists, Psychiatrists and other relevantly trained medical doctors. The

documentation should include:

Recency of Documentation:

If documentation of an Autism Spectrum Disorder by a recommended practitioner has been established during the time that the student attended K-12 school, that diagnosis will generally be sufficient. However, a description of the current functional limitations of the disorder should be provided.

Contents of Documentation:

- 1) A specific diagnosis that conforms to DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition). A criteria for Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, or Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified.
- 2) Current functional limitations on major life activities resulting from the Autism spectrum disorder. These may include but are not limited to: Communication or Language Skills; Social Interaction; Restricted, repetitive and/or stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests or activities; Sensory functioning, especially sensitivity to environmental conditions that may be present in the educational setting; and Motor planning.
- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may include but is not limited to:
  - Aptitude/Cognitive ability. Assessed using a standardized test such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Third Edition or a similar instrument.
  - Academic skill levels, especially if student has received accommodations for academic skill levels in the past assessed using individually administered, standardized measures.
  - Standardized tests of language skills.

- Clinical observations/ Interview.
  - Teacher observations.
  - Standardized scales of symptoms related to autism.
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
  - 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment. This includes suggestions for the use of assistive technology, how the use of medications may alleviate symptoms of the autism spectrum disorder as well as any other recommended interventions such as counseling services or occupational therapy.
  - 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

*Cognitive Disability/Mental Retardation*

Practitioners Who Can Provide a Diagnosis: Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Psychologists, School Psychologists, Neuropsychologist, or other relevantly trained professionals.

Recency of Documentation: If a diagnosis of Cognitive Disability by a recognized practitioner has been well established during the time that the student attended K-12 school, that diagnosis is generally sufficient. However, current academic achievement data, adaptive skills and a description of the current functional limitations of the diagnosis should be provided.

Contents of Documentation:

- 1) A specific diagnosis that conforms to DSM-IV criteria for Mental Retardation.
- 2) Current functional limita-

tions on major life activities resulting from the Cognitive Disability. These may include but are not limited to: Cognitive development; Receptive and expressive language; Academic skills; Adaptive and/or self-care skills; Motor skills; and Social functioning.

- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may include but is not limited to:
  - Aptitude/Cognitive ability. Assessed using a standardized test such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Third Edition or a similar instrument.
  - Academic Achievement: Tests of Reading, Writing and Math Skills Measured by standardized and comprehensive individual achievement tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Revised, or the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - II. Specific achievement tests may also be used such as the Test of Written Language-3 or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test.
  - Adaptive Functioning: Measured by standardized checklists such as the Adaptive Behavior Assessment System or similar test.
  - Standardized tests of expressive and receptive language skills.
  - Teacher observation.
  - Clinical observation/ interview.
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the

individual in a higher education environment including suggestions about how specific effects of the disability may be accommodated through the use of assistive technology.

- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

**Specific Learning Disability Practitioners Who Can Provide a Diagnosis:**

Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Psychologists, School Psychologists, Neuropsychologists, and other relevantly trained professionals.

**Recency of Documentation:**

There is significant variation in postsecondary requirements for the documentation of learning disabilities. Some institutions will require recent intellectual testing with an adult-normed standardized test. Others will accept historical information if intellectual ability was well-documented during the K-12 years. In all cases, information regarding academic achievement and information processing skills needs to be current in order to establish appropriate academic accommodations at the postsecondary level.

**Contents of Documentation:**

- 1) A diagnosis of Specific Learning Disability that conforms or reflects the elements to DSM-IV criteria. The diagnosis must address exclusionary factors such as status as an English Language Learner or insufficient instructional opportunities. Refer to the documentation requirements of each institution of higher education for additional details or their websites.
- 2) Current functional limitations resulting from the Specific Learning Disability. These may include but are not limited to: Cognitive ability; Academic skill develop-

ment; Information processing; and Receptive or Expressive language skills.

- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may include but is not limited to:
  - Aptitude/Cognitive ability. Assessed using a standardized test such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Third Edition or similar instrument.
  - Academic Achievement: Tests of reading, writing and math skills measured by standardized and comprehensive individual achievement tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Revised, or the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - II. Specific achievement tests may also be used such as the Test of Written Language- 3 or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test.
  - Tests of Information Processing skills measured by standardized tests such as the Woodcock Johnson Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability.
  - Standardized tests of expressive and receptive language skills.
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment, including suggestions about how specific effects of the disability may be accommodated through the use of assistive technology.
- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

***Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD)/Severe Emotional Disturbance***

Please Note—Severe Emotional Disturbance, known in Wisconsin (PK-12) as Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD), does not require a mental health diagnosis at the PK-12 level. In postsecondary, the student may have a specific mental disorder as listed in the DSM-IV (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition American Psychiatric Association, Washington D.C. in order to be eligible for accommodations. Eligibility documentation under IDEA may not always reflect required diagnosis under DSM-IV.

**Practitioners Who Can Provide a Diagnosis:**

Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Neuropsychologists, Psychiatrists and other relevantly trained medical personnel.

**Recency of Documentation:**

Because Psychological Disabilities may manifest themselves differently as people age, it is recommended that a diagnosis and description of functional limitations be made that describes the current impact of the disability.

**Contents of Documentation:**

- 1) A specific diagnosis that conforms to DSM-IV criteria for a specific psychological disorder. The diagnosis should also list the specific symptoms and severity of symptoms that are currently present.
- 2) Current functional limitations resulting from the specific psychological disorder. These may include but are not limited to: Cognitive functioning; Behavioral functioning; Ability to learn; and Social functioning.
- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This



may include but is not limited to: Teacher observation; Clinical observation/interview; and Standardized checklists or scales of emotional functioning.

- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment. This includes suggestions for the use of assistive technology, how the use of medications may alleviate symptoms of the psychological disorder as well as any other recommended interventions such as counseling services.
- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

### *Traumatic Brain Injury*

Practitioners Who Can Provide a Diagnosis: Neuropsychologist or medical doctor with expertise in the area of Traumatic Brain Injury.

Recency of Documentation: If residual effects of the Traumatic Brain Injury are stable, then the original diagnosis along with recent documentation of the current effects of the TBI is needed.

Contents of Documentation:

- 1) A specific diagnosis of Traumatic Brain Injury.
- 2) Functional limitations on major life activities as a result of the brain injury. These may include, but are not limited to: Cognitive ability; Memory; Attention; Emotional/behavioral functioning; Motor ability; and Sensory impairments.
- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may in-

clude but is not limited to:

- Aptitude/Cognitive Ability: Assessed utilizing a standardized test such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Third Edition or a similar instrument.
- Academic Achievement: Tests of reading, writing and math skills measured by standardized and comprehensive individual achievement tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Revised, or the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - II. Specific achievement tests may also be used such as the Test of Written Language- 3 or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test.
- Tests of Information Processing including attention, memory, executive functioning.
- Receptive and Expressive Language: Assessed using standardized measures of receptive and expressive language ability.
- Teacher observation.
- Clinical observation/interview.
- Standardized checklists or scales of emotional functioning.
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment including suggestions about how specific effects of the disability may be accommodated through the use of assistive technology.
- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

### *Physical Disability/Other*

#### *Medical Condition*

Practitioner Who Can Provide a Diagnosis: Licensed Physician with expertise in the area of disability, (i.e. Neurologist, Orthopedist, Psychiatrist)

Recency of Documentation: If the physical disability or other medical condition is stable, then the original diagnosis along with recent documentation of the current impact of the condition is needed. If physical condition is unstable, it is best to provide documentation that is as close as possible to the date that accommodations are requested, usually within the last six months.

Contents of Documentation:

- 1) A specific medical diagnosis.
- 2) Functional limitations on major life activities as a result of the physical or medical condition. These may include but are not limited to: Limitations on functional activity such as walking, sitting, reaching, etc., should be as detailed as possible; Fatigue; Ability to physically attend classes; and Cognitive impact due to medical treatment.
- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may include but is not limited to: Teacher observation; Clinical observation/interview; Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy Evaluation or Report; and School Nurse Report.
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment. This includes suggestions for the use of

adaptive equipment and assistive technology. Also discuss how the use of medications may affect impairments or functional abilities and how any side effects from medication may impact the student's ability to perform adequately in the postsecondary setting.

- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed. This should also include any anticipated changes in the student's condition.

### Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Practitioners Who Can Provide a Diagnosis: Licensed Audiologists, and similarly trained medical professionals.

Recency of Documentation: If hearing is stable, a statement to that effect and the most recent documentation is usually sufficient. If hearing is not stable, documentation should be as close as possible to the date that accommodations are requested, usually within the last six months.

#### Contents of Documentation:

- 1) A specific designation as deaf or hard of hearing.
- 2) Functional limitations on major life activities as a result of being deaf or hard of hearing. These may include but are not limited to: Communication; Receptive and/or Expressive language skills; and Academic skill development.
- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may include but is not limited to:
  - Audiological results
  - Age of onset
  - Academic Achievement: Tests of reading, writing and math skills measured by standardized and comprehensive individual achievement tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Revised, or the Wechsler Indi-

vidual Achievement Test - II. Specific achievement tests may also be used such as the Test of Written Language- 3 or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test.

- Receptive and Expressive Language: Assessed using standardized measures of receptive and expressive language ability
  - Clinical observation/ interview.
  - Teacher observation.
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment, including suggestions about how assistive technology may be used.
- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

### Blind/Low Vision

Practitioners Who Can Make the Diagnosis: Optometrists, Ophthalmologists, Vision Specialists, or other relevantly trained professionals.

Recency of Documentation: If vision is stable, a statement to that effect and the most recent documentation is usually sufficient. If vision is not stable, documentation should be as close as possible to the date that accommodations are requested, usually within the last six months.

#### Contents of Documentation:

- 1) A specific designation as Blind or Low Vision
- 2) Functional limitations on major life activities as a result of being Blind or having Low Vision. These may include but are not limited to: Impact on

ability to utilize standard educational materials; Orientation and mobility; and Academic achievement.

- 3) Evidence to support the functional limitations statements made in #2. This may include but is not limited to:
- Results of vision testing;
  - Age of onset;
  - Academic Achievement: Tests of reading, writing and math skills measured by standardized and comprehensive individual achievement tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Revised, or the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - II. Specific achievement tests may also be used such as the Test of Written Language- 3 or the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test:
    - Clinical observation/interview; and
    - Teacher observation.
- 4) Recommended Accommodations. All accommodations should be directly related to functional limitations listed in #2. The rationale for each recommendation should be contained in #3 above.
- 5) Recommendations for other supports, strategies or services that may benefit the individual in a higher education environment, including suggestions about how specific effects of the disability may be accommodated through use of assistive technology.
- 6) Other pertinent diagnoses or recommendations for other evaluations that may be needed.

## V. Websites for Disability Documentation Information at Wisconsin Colleges

Many colleges and universities have information about disability services and required documentation on their websites. The following web addresses show the location for available information for each of the colleges and universities in Wisconsin.

### *University of Wisconsin Campuses*

UW System

[www.uwsa.edu/](http://www.uwsa.edu/)

UW Colleges

[www.uwc.edu/student\\_services/disability\\_services.asp](http://www.uwc.edu/student_services/disability_services.asp)

UW-Eau Claire

[www.uwec.edu/SSD/](http://www.uwec.edu/SSD/)

UW-Green Bay

[www.uwgb.edu/esms/ds/](http://www.uwgb.edu/esms/ds/)

UW-La Crosse

[www.uwlax.edu/drs/html/DRSGuidelines.html](http://www.uwlax.edu/drs/html/DRSGuidelines.html)

UW-Madison

[www.mcburney.wisc.edu/](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/)

UW-Milwaukee

[www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/)

UW-Oshkosh

[www.tts.uwosh.edu/dean/disabilities.htm](http://www.tts.uwosh.edu/dean/disabilities.htm)

UW-Parkside

[oldweb.uwp.edu/admin/disability.services](http://oldweb.uwp.edu/admin/disability.services)

UW-Platteville

[www.uwplatt.edu/~disability/index.html](http://www.uwplatt.edu/~disability/index.html)

UW-River Falls

[www.uwrf.edu/academic-success/Disablty/disablty](http://www.uwrf.edu/academic-success/Disablty/disablty)

UW-Stevens Point

[www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/index.htm](http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/index.htm)

UW-Stout

[www.uwstout.edu/disability](http://www.uwstout.edu/disability)

UW-Superior

[staff.uwsuper.edu/support/eduservices.htm#Services](http://staff.uwsuper.edu/support/eduservices.htm#Services)

UW-Whitewater

[www.uww.edu/stdrcses/dss/Index.htm](http://www.uww.edu/stdrcses/dss/Index.htm)

### *Wisconsin Technical Colleges*

Wisconsin Technical College System

[www.wtcsystem.org/](http://www.wtcsystem.org/)

[www.witechcolleges.com/](http://www.witechcolleges.com/)

Blackhawk Technical College

[www.blackhawk.edu/sr/ssspecserv.htm](http://www.blackhawk.edu/sr/ssspecserv.htm)

Chippewa Valley Technical College

[www.cvtc.edu/Services/Support/Disabilities.htm](http://www.cvtc.edu/Services/Support/Disabilities.htm)

Fox Valley Technical College

[www.fvtc.edu/tp2.asp?ID=Special+Needs](http://www.fvtc.edu/tp2.asp?ID=Special+Needs)

Gateway Technical College  
[www.gtc.edu/pages/special\\_needs.asp](http://www.gtc.edu/pages/special_needs.asp)

Lakeshore Technical College  
[gotoltc.com/](http://gotoltc.com/)

Madison Area Technical College  
[matcmadison.edu/matc/studentresources/servicessupport/disability.shtm](http://matcmadison.edu/matc/studentresources/servicessupport/disability.shtm)

Midstate Technical College  
[www.mstc.edu/students/disabilityservices.htm](http://www.mstc.edu/students/disabilityservices.htm)

Milwaukee Area Technical College  
[www.matc.edu/profile/studenterv/sprtserv/disability.htm](http://www.matc.edu/profile/studenterv/sprtserv/disability.htm)

Moraine Park Technical College  
[www.morainepark.edu/services/student/special-needs.shtml](http://www.morainepark.edu/services/student/special-needs.shtml)

Nicolet Area Technical College  
[www.nicoletcollege.edu/placment/placment.htm](http://www.nicoletcollege.edu/placment/placment.htm)

Northcentral Technical College  
[www.ntc.edu/services/CSD/index.html](http://www.ntc.edu/services/CSD/index.html)

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College  
[www.nwtc.edu/services/specneeds.htm](http://www.nwtc.edu/services/specneeds.htm)

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College  
[www.swtc.edu/academic\\_resources/disability\\_resources/index.htm](http://www.swtc.edu/academic_resources/disability_resources/index.htm)

Waukesha County Technical College  
[wctclnx.waukesha.tec.wi.us/tic/acadsupp/index.html](http://wctclnx.waukesha.tec.wi.us/tic/acadsupp/index.html)

Western Wisconsin Technical College  
[www.wwtc.edu/counseling/disabilitysvs.asp](http://www.wwtc.edu/counseling/disabilitysvs.asp)

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College  
[www.witc.edu/s-servic/](http://www.witc.edu/s-servic/)

### *Wisconsin Independent Colleges*

Wisconsin Independent Colleges  
[www.wisconsinmentor.org/](http://www.wisconsinmentor.org/)  
[www.waicuweb.org/home/](http://www.waicuweb.org/home/)

Alverno College  
[www.alverno.edu/campus\\_resource/ac\\_support\\_disability.html](http://www.alverno.edu/campus_resource/ac_support_disability.html)

Beloit College  
[www.beloit.edu/~dss/](http://www.beloit.edu/~dss/)

Cardinal Stritch University  
[www.stritch.edu/](http://www.stritch.edu/)

Carroll College  
[www2.cc.edu/alumni/alumni\\_index\\_cs\\_disability.html](http://www2.cc.edu/alumni/alumni_index_cs_disability.html)

Carthage College  
[www.carthage.edu/advising/learning.html](http://www.carthage.edu/advising/learning.html)

Concordia University  
[www.cuw.edu/](http://www.cuw.edu/)

Edgewood College  
[www.edgewood.edu/student\\_resource\\_center/lss/](http://www.edgewood.edu/student_resource_center/lss/)

Lakeland College  
[www1.lakeland.edu/hayssen/faq.htm](http://www1.lakeland.edu/hayssen/faq.htm)

Lawrence University

[www.lawrence.edu/dept/student\\_acad/disability\\_services/index.shtml](http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/student_acad/disability_services/index.shtml)

Marion College

[www.mariancollege.edu/CurrentStudents/Disability\\_Services/disability\\_services.htm](http://www.mariancollege.edu/CurrentStudents/Disability_Services/disability_services.htm)

Marquette University

[www.marquette.edu/oses/](http://www.marquette.edu/oses/)

Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design

[www.miad.edu/degree/foundations/support.html](http://www.miad.edu/degree/foundations/support.html)

Milwaukee School of Engineering

[www.msos.edu/st\\_life/trio/supt\\_serv/](http://www.msos.edu/st_life/trio/supt_serv/)

Mount Mary College

[www.mtmary.edu/student\\_serv.htm](http://www.mtmary.edu/student_serv.htm)

Northland College

[www.northland.edu/studentlife/incoming\\_home.html](http://www.northland.edu/studentlife/incoming_home.html)

Ripon College

[www.ripon.edu/administration/sss/](http://www.ripon.edu/administration/sss/)

St. Norbert College

[www.snc.edu/disable/index.htm](http://www.snc.edu/disable/index.htm)

Silver Lake College

[www.sl.edu/](http://www.sl.edu/)

Viterbo University

[www.viterbo.edu/academic/as/LearningCenter/disability.html](http://www.viterbo.edu/academic/as/LearningCenter/disability.html)

Wisconsin Lutheran College

[www.wlc.edu/services/](http://www.wlc.edu/services/)

### *Resource Websites*

AHEAD-Association on Higher Education

[www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)

American Psychological Association

[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Educational Testing Service (ETS)

[www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

[eeoc.gov](http://eeoc.gov)

Great Lakes ADA & IT Center

[www.adagreatlakes.org](http://www.adagreatlakes.org)

HEATH Resource Center

[www.health.gwu.edu/](http://www.health.gwu.edu/)

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

[janweb.icdi.wvu.edu](http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu)

National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs

[www.NAASLN.com](http://www.NAASLN.com)

National Center for Secondary Education and Transition

[www.ncset.org/](http://www.ncset.org/)

Office of Civil Rights, edpubs document on *Postsecondary Students with Disabilities*

[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)

University of Wisconsin System  
[www.uwsa.edu](http://www.uwsa.edu)

University of Wisconsin-2 year Colleges  
[www.uwc.edu](http://www.uwc.edu)

US Department of Education, Office of Disability Employment Policy  
[www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep)

US Government Disability Information  
[www.disabilityinfo.gov](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov)

US Office for Civil Rights  
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR>

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
[www.dpi.state.wi.us](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us)

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
[www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr/](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr/)

Wisconsin Independent College  
[www.wisconsinmentor.org](http://www.wisconsinmentor.org)

Wisconsin Technical College System  
[www.witechcolleges.com](http://www.witechcolleges.com)

PLEASE SEE YOUR TECHNICAL COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, OR INDEPENDENT COLLEGE SPECIAL SERVICES STAFF FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE. THIS GUIDE IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS UPON REQUEST.

## VII. Appendices

### A. Example of a High School Report for Students Requesting Accommodations at Post-Secondary Institutions

To School Personnel: Please complete all pages of this document. The information will be used to plan postsecondary accommodations for this student under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the American's with Disabilities Act. The requirements for disability-related services are different at the postsecondary level than at the high school level and services that were required or provided in high school may not be required or appropriate at the postsecondary level. Complete and accurate information will lead to the best programming decisions for this student and will increase the likelihood that the student will be successful in postsecondary education.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Graduation \_\_\_\_\_ High School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Received Services under: Section 504 \_\_\_\_\_  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \_\_\_\_\_

Disability Area \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Disability Determination \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Last Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Last Individual Educational Program (IEP) or 504 Plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please attach the student's most recent IEP or 504 Plan)

Form Completed By: (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

During the last two years of high school, did the student receive any instruction outside the regular classroom environment? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, list courses and explanation

During the last two years of high school, did the student receive any modifications to the content of their regular education curriculum? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, describe such modification and explanation.

(Examples include reduced or altered assignments, lower level reading material, reduced writing expectations, etc.)

During the last two years of high school, please describe the level of direct support that this student required in order to be successful in the regular classroom. Direct support includes services such as assisting with assignment completion, helping the student organize work, reteaching or tutoring, etc. Please be as specific as possible.

During the last two years of high school, what types of assistive technology has this student used effectively?

**B. Example of a Transition Checklist**

A portfolio is a collection of work samples that provides a clear picture of a student's skills and accomplishments. A Transition Portfolio not only includes the student's accomplishments and competencies, but it also contains the needed material that can be used if students are planning on continuing their education at a postsecondary institution. The following is a list of items that are recommended for students to collect in order to help aid them through the admissions process and/or the procedures required for requesting support services at a postsecondary institution.

TRANSITION PORTFOLIO CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

- A copy of the I.E.P. or 504 Plan
- A copy of any current test scores (Wisconsin Student Assessment System, Woodcock Johnson)
- Any current evaluation or reevaluation reports
- A copy of high school transcripts
- Any medical reports or information pertaining to the student's disability
- Any results from postsecondary admission exams (Assessment of Skills for Successful Entry and Transfer (ASSET), Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (Compass), Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), and American College Testing (ACT)).
- Samples or evidence of assistive technology usage (Dragon Naturally Speaking, Kurzweil, taped textbooks, electronic dictionaries)
- Evidence of participation with any outside agencies relating to receiving support services (D.V.R., Health and Human Services)
- Learning styles inventory

Another available resource for planning for postsecondary education is this website:  
<http://www.stlcc.cc.mo.us/fv/moahead/guidebook/index.html>

EXAMPLE OF A LETTER FROM A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE REQUESTING DOCUMENTING DISABILITY HISTORY & FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS FROM A SCHOOL DISTRICT

Please rate the following:

	Weak	Average	Strong	How assessed (test data, teacher observation, student/parent report, etc.)
Written Expression				
Reading Comprehension				
Math Skills				
Oral Expression				
Listening Comprehension				
Study Skills				
Organizational Skills				
Memory				
Knowledge of strength/weakness				
Self Advocacy skills				
Goal Orientation/Motivation				



DOCUMENTATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS: THE FOLLOWING SECTION DOCUMENTS ACCOMMODATIONS THAT WERE ACTUALLY USED DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL. PLEASE BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.

**Strength Areas:** Student strengths can be used to enhance learning success. Promotion of these skills and application of teaching strategies that focus on student strengths may be effective in ensuring that this student gains the maximum benefit from the learning environment. (Attach additional page as necessary)

<b>Areas of Strength</b>	<b>Effects</b>	<b>Accommodation or Method of Utilizing Strength</b>
Example: Auditory Memory	Student gains maximum benefit from listening to instruction.	Allow student to listen to lecture w/o taking notes.

**Functional Limitations:** These are weaknesses or limitations that contribute to this student's disability. Employing the following accommodations allows this student access to the learning environment and instruction despite the effects of a disability. (Attach additional page as necessary)

<b>Functional Limitations</b>	<b>Effects</b>	<b>Accommodation or Method of Utilizing Strength</b>
Example: Visual-motor coordination	Handwriting is slow/laborious. Writing activities often go unfinished because student cannot write quickly.	Provide notes or not outline. Dictate responses to lengthy writing assignments. Use of word processor. Use of large writing spaces. Student may need additional time for written responses.

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**SUBJECT: DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY**

This letter is a request to document my history and functional limitation related to my involvement within the LD program offered in special education at \_\_\_\_\_ public schools. I participated in the LD program from second grade until I graduated in 1999. I need to document clearly that I had a diagnosed disability which resulted in functional limitations and the need for accommodations.

I am a third year student enrolled at \_\_\_\_\_ and have an overall grade point of 3.36 and am majoring in elementary education/special education. I am required to take the Pre Professionals Skills Test (PPST) in order to be admitted into the school of education and to continue taking my courses within my major area of emphasis.

When I was in high school I did receive extended time in taking tests, in some classes where I received double time, due to my slow reading speed, I also had exams and directions read to me and used a computer for writing (spell check etc.), all of which related to my learning disability. Please include any evaluation dates and test results that took place over time to demonstrate disability and need for accommodation throughout my enrollment within Public Schools.

I have attached the current Praxis registration bulletin for your information. On page 49 is the ETS documentation. Criteria and Verification Statement for your completion, thank you in advance for assisting me with this process. I am learning first hand how difficult it can be to be an effective teacher, I am grateful to those teachers from \_\_\_\_\_ that served as effective models for what teaching excellence is all about. Thanks again for the help.

Sincerely,

Enclosure (1)

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being written on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ was first identified as having a learning disability on February 10, 1989 while in second grade. Specific areas of concern were in reading, decoding, and spelling, as demonstrated by her performance on the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery, The Boder Tests for Identifying Children with Specific Language Disability.

Upon reevaluation on February 25, 1992 in fifth grade, \_\_\_\_\_ was again determined to have a learning disability in need of special education. The areas of concern were reading (phonetics) and spelling. The assessment tools used to document the learning disability were the Woodcock-Johnson Revised: Achievement Tests, Test of Written Spelling and Test of Written Language.

A second reevaluation was conducted on May 22, 1995. Again, \_\_\_\_\_ was determined to have a learning disability in need of special education. The areas of concern were reading (Word Identification) and spelling. \_\_\_\_\_lacked structural, visual analysis and word attack skills necessary to decode and spell many words. The tests used to document the learning disability were the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement and The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test.

A final reevaluation was conducted on May 28, 1998 when \_\_\_\_\_ was in eleventh grade. She continued to exhibit delays in reading, writing, and spelling. Tests used to document the learning disability were California Achievement Test-Reading and Gray Oral Reading Test.

As you can see by the summary of evaluations and reevaluations, \_\_\_\_\_ has been identified as having a learning disability in reading and writing since second grade. She was involved in special education programming from the time of original identification through graduation in 1999. Throughout her school years in \_\_\_\_\_, received several accommodations due to her learning disability. These were:

Oral Tests

Extended time on tests-up to double time

Time extensions on lengthy written assignments

Word processor with spell check for written assignments and essay type exams

Books on tape

Proofreaders and note takers

Tape recorder

All of these were beneficial and allowed \_\_\_\_\_ to perform at a level which was more consistent with her ability which is in the average to above average range. Without these accommodations, her learning disability interferes with her ability to function-read and write.

A copy of any or all of the test scores are available from me. I would be more than happy to send copies to you. I would also be very happy to discuss this with you further in attempt to ensure that \_\_\_\_\_ is given the testing accommodations she is entitled to. Please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ if you have questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,