

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1713 (Ransom) – As Amended March 16, 2026

Policy Committee: Higher Education

Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires, beginning September 1, 2027, a public higher education institution to recognize a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 plan, or both, issued by a local educational agency (LEA) for purposes of verification of the student's disability or diagnostic evaluation of a disability for an academic accommodation. The bill authorizes a public higher education institution to require supplemental information from the student only for determining the type of accommodation best suited to the student and their academic needs.

FISCAL EFFECT:

No new state costs.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

AB 1713 will require institutions of higher education to accept a student's diagnosis from their IEP or Section 504 Plan from their previous educational institution, fast-tracking their access to the accommodations they need and allowing them to spend more time in the classroom and less time in the doctor's office.

2) **Background.**

504 Plans and IEPs. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits a public school from denying an individual with a disability in the United States, as defined, solely by reason of his or her disability, participation in the benefits of education, or from subjecting a student to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Section 504 regulations requires a public school to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. To qualify for protections under Section 504, a student must (a) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (b) have a record of such an impairment; or (c) be regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning.

Unlike under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 regulations do not require that a student have one of a list of specified disabling conditions to qualify for a 504 plan. Some students who do not qualify for an IEP under the IDEA may qualify for a 504 plan. Process requirements for the development of 504 plans are less prescriptive than IEPs in several ways.

A school must make the “substantial limitation” determination on an individualized basis. Section 504 requires that a group of knowledgeable persons (sometimes constituted as a team) draw upon information from a variety of sources in making this determination. Unlike under the IDEA, the composition of group is not specified. This team develops a 504 plan that delineates the services or changes to the learning environment required to meet the needs of the child as adequately as other students.

Transition to Higher Education. Federal law requires that when a student with disabilities is 16, the student’s IEP—a federally mandated plan to determine services and supports for students with disabilities—be updated to include a postsecondary transition plan and services determined by the plan be provided. Students are invited to the IEP team meeting regarding the transition plan and the plan is to be updated annually thereafter. State law mirrors federal law, except to say postsecondary transition planning can begin earlier “if determined appropriate by the IEP team.” However, according to the National Center for Disabilities states, writing in support of this bill:

Many students with disabilities receive accommodations throughout Pre-K–12 education, but when they transition to college they must navigate new and often burdensome requirements for documentation of their disability. College students with disabilities are often saddled with a maze of new and frequently costly requirements to “prove” that they have a disability to access disability services. Many students must pay out-of-pocket (\$500-\$2,500+) for new psychoeducational evaluations to demonstrate they indeed have a disability, despite their well-documented history of having accommodations or supports for their disability in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan.

This bill allows a CSU, UC, or CCC student’s existing IEP or 504 plan provided by their local educational agency to serve as sufficient verification for purposes of establishing their disability.

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