

Supreme Court Decision Clarifies Standard for Student Disability Discrimination Claims Against Schools

Schools can't hold disabled students to a higher bar anymore. The Supreme Court just said so — and families need to know it.

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI, UNITED STATES, May 26, 2026

/EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision has important implications for students and families pursuing disability discrimination claims against schools under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In *A.J.T. v. Osseo Area Schools*, the Court held that schoolchildren bringing ADA and Rehabilitation Act claims related to their education are not required to make a heightened showing of “bad faith or gross misjudgment,” but instead are subject to the same standards that apply in other disability discrimination contexts. [You can read about it here.](#)

“

Families often assume that if a school frames a problem as merely an IEP disagreement, that ends the analysis. It does not”

Keith Altman

Why the ruling matters:

The Court’s opinion addresses a procedural barrier that had made some education-related disability claims harder to pursue in certain jurisdictions. According to the opinion, nothing in the text of Title II or Section 504 supports imposing a distinct, more demanding standard simply

because the claim arises in the educational services setting. The Court vacated the Eighth Circuit’s judgment and remanded the case for further proceedings.

For families, the decision is a reminder that an IDEA dispute and a disability discrimination claim are not always the same thing. Schools still have obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, but Section 504 and the ADA provide separate antidiscrimination



For years, disabled students had to climb higher than everyone else to be heard. The climb just got shorter.

protections. When educational access, accommodations, or equal participation issues arise, careful issue-framing and record development remain critical.

“Families often assume that if a school frames a problem as merely an IEP disagreement, that ends the analysis. It does not,” said [Keith Altman](#), Founder and Managing Partner of [K Altman Law](#). “When a student is denied meaningful access because of disability, schools and families should evaluate not only IDEA obligations but also the independent protections available under Section 504 and the ADA.”

The decision does not guarantee outcomes in any individual case, and the legal standard for damages issues may still require further analysis depending on the jurisdiction and facts. But it does reinforce that students with disabilities should not face extra hurdles simply because the dispute arises in a school setting.

What families and students should do now:

- Preserve emails, evaluations, IEPs, Section 504 plans, meeting notes, and attendance records.
- Document how the school’s decision affected access to instruction, services, transportation, scheduling, or participation.
- Ask for written explanations when accommodations are denied, reduced, or delayed.
- Evaluate whether the issue is solely an IDEA matter or may also implicate Section 504 or ADA discrimination protections.
- Seek jurisdiction-specific legal guidance before making strategic decisions about complaints, hearings, or litigation.

About K Altman Law:

K Altman Law represents students, families, and professionals in matters involving education law, civil rights, student defense, special education, Title IX, and related administrative and litigation issues nationwide.

Disclaimer

This press release is for general informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Outcomes vary by facts and jurisdiction. Reading this material does not create an attorney-client relationship.



Keith Altman Founder of K Altman Law

Keith Altman
K Altman Law
+1 888-984-1341
kalonline@kaltmanlaw.com

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/914444741>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.