

# Preparing High School Students with Disabilities for College



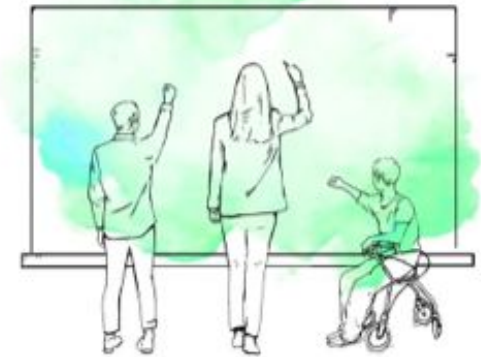
## Equality



## Accommodation



## Accessibility



[Image description: Three frames, labeled Equality, Accommodation, Accessibility. Equality depicts a shorter person, taller person, and person utilizing a wheelchair attempting to write on a board hung high, indicating struggle for the shorter person, ease for the taller person, and no access for the person using a wheelchair. Accommodation shows a box provided for the shorter person and a ramp provided for the person using a wheelchair, allowing each person full access to the board. Accessibility depicts the same three people with the Board lowered to a height that is functional for all, without the need for boxes or ramps, allowing each person full access occurring without additional resources.]

# Overview

- Welcome
- Introduce Disability/Accessibility Service Providers and Admissions representative
- Expectations
- Admissions issues
- Services offered through Disability/Accessibility Services
- Other support services available
- Q&A – please save until the end



# Transitioning to college level support

For some students and parents, this is the most challenging aspect of going to college.

In K-12, the IDEA provides for IEPs that are designed to have the student succeed. This often means that a student is graded differently than peers and does less work than peers - shorter papers, fewer questions for homework and tests, and recently we have learned that some students are only given 2 selections in a multiple choice questions.

In college, reasonable accommodations under the ADA and Section 504 are designed for the student to access the curriculum and perform on a level playing field. The student must do the same amount of work and is expected to meet the same standards as all students. Reasonable accommodations are about access to education, not modification of standards or expectations. Getting assignments early or taking a longer time to complete an exam are examples of reasonable accommodations.

To make a smoother transition to college, wean yourself off of modifications that require you to do less work.



# Independent

Heightened expectations of students.

- Students must take initiative in requesting services
- Students must actively participate in the interactive process of discussing their diagnosis(es), the impact they experience, and possible accommodations
- Students should learn how to figure out how they are doing in class (no more PowerSchool!)
- Students should request assistance. If accommodations not provided or insufficient – reach out!
- Students must take initiative to speak with professors

# Prepare to advocate

Students should lead their IEP or 504 meetings.

- Read your documentation
- Know what your disability is
- How it affects your learning or other ability
- Students should begin discussing accommodations with teachers
- What accommodations have been useful and helpful
- Learn about how to request accommodations at the college level
- Get a copy of original reports and IEPs for future use.
- Contact DS at the colleges you want to attend.

# College Level Work

**Colleges look for students who are prepared to do college level work, independently.**

- Students should learn how to figure out what course information is important and not wait for the teacher to give a study guide
- Hint: Teachers give methods such as creating questions to use for reading, or filling in grids to categorize information. Students should use these tools when reading and studying in college.
- Students will not have anyone in the class to ask questions of except for the professor
- Students must spend more time reading, writing and studying their coursework.

# Time Management

Full Time Status – 12 credits or more  
Part/Half Time Status – under 12 credits

## General Rule

For every credit, a student takes they will be in class for 1 hour.

- 3 credit course = 3 hours of class time

For every credit, a student takes a student is expected to have 2-3 hours of study time

- 3 credit course = 6-9 hours of studying (includes tutoring, attending office hours, etc.)

## Putting it into Perspective

A student takes 4 classes (12 credits)

- 12 hours spent in class
- 24-36 hours spent studying
- Totaling 36-48 hours per week for school

A student takes 5 classes (15 credits)

- 15 hours spent in class
- 30-45 hours spent studying
- Totaling 45-60 hours per week for school



# Role of Parents

The involvement of parents is crucial to many students' success. The role for parents in college differs from that in high school. To be successful, students independently must access university resources.

- Encourage students to become independent.
- Act as a coach for your adult child, refrain from doing things for them.
- Know the resources at your adult child's college and refer students to them for papers, tutoring and other academic support.
- Encourage students to share their experiences and progress with you.
- Less communication with college because of FERPA protections for the student.



# Admissions Considerations

**Students must meet the same standards as other applicants. For Massachusetts, those requirements are available at the Department of Higher Education website at [www.mass.edu](http://www.mass.edu).**

Course requirements for Massachusetts Universities are listed in the DHE's Admissions Guidance document at the same website.

- Math requirement not normally waived
- Foreign/World Language requirement is waived in certain circumstances
- CP2 level math courses implications

Check each college to see

- What their admission requirements are
- Which application to use (some are not on common app)

# Admissions Considerations

**In general admissions decisions should never consider disability.**

Moving from IEP to 504 is not a consideration for admissions **or** the accommodations they receive at the university level

## Exceptions

- student is requesting an SAT/ACT or Foreign Language waiver
- student raises it for positive reasons.
  - However, they cannot for example, decide a student with disabilities would not be accepted because it costs too much to accommodate or because there is an erroneous belief that the student can't do the work. (i.e.; 2% reading fluency – they might think they can't read – can't do the work)

# Waivers of requirements

- SAT or ACT Waiver
  - Most Massachusetts Universities do not require the SAT or ACT. Check with each school.
  - **“Applicants with professionally diagnosed and documented learning disabilities (documentation must include diagnostic test results) are exempt from taking standardized tests for admission to any public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth. However, these applicants must complete all required academic courses and earn a minimum average GPA of 3.0 or present other evidence of the potential for academic success.”** (p.8)
- Foreign Language Waiver
  - Allowed in Massachusetts Universities admissions:
  - **“An applicant with learning or other disabilities may substitute two academic electives based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for the two required foreign language courses if they have submitted to the high school the results of an **evaluation, completed within the past three years, that indicates a specific diagnosis of a learning disability that affects the ability to learn a foreign language.**”** (p. 8)

# Services Offered –

## Disability/Accessibility Services

- Provides a wide array of reasonable, appropriate accommodations for students with learning, physical, psychological, or medical challenges.
- Staff will help students figure out how to register and request accommodations.
- Students are expected to register with the office and request their own accommodations.
- Students must provide current documentation of their medical or mental health conditions for determination of disability.
- Provides support for negotiating with professors where appropriate.
- Provides referrals to other supports on campus.

# Reasonable Accommodations

**All reasonable accommodations are determined on an individualized basis in consultation with the student and upon review of supporting documentation.**

**Accommodations are reassessed at the college level.**

**Should never be costs for accommodations**

**Students pay for personal services such as PCAs, SmartPens, etc.**

Some accommodations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Exam accommodations (including 50 or 100% extended time, readers, scribes, laptop use, distraction reduced room, exam room, remote proctoring)
- Note taking assistance for classes
- Extended deadlines or assignments early
- Calculators
- Effective communication services
- Kurzweil 3000 (screen reader) and scanners – electronic texts
- Housing and dining
- Leniency with tardiness and attendance

**Professors know the accommodations - not the reasons why. Colleges differ on how faculty learn about the accommodations. At some, the student brings a letter to professors. At others, emails are sent to professor and student.**

# Contact Disability/ Accessibility Office

Contact Disability/Accessibility Office at college of interest

- Most D/AS offices are happy to discuss what MIGHT be available to a student as long as there is supporting documentation. Some have staffing limitations and will meet with prospective students at set times of the year.
- DS Offices should never disclose an applicant's disability to Admissions as it should not be considered in the admissions decision.
- D/AS websites explain what might be available to students or commonly used accommodations.
- D/AS websites include documentation guidelines and some include forms for medical and mental health practitioners to fill out or answer.

# Other Support Services

- Tutoring
- Writing
- Research Librarians
- Learning Assistance/Academic Skills/Strategies/coaches
- Math Centers
- TRiO Student Support Services
- Honors Programs
- Professors and instructors
- Mentoring
- Advising Office
- Counseling Services
- Dining Services
- Residential Life/Engagement staff
- Student Activities



# The Learning Disabilities Program

The Learning Disabilities Program at Westfield State University is a free academic support program for incoming, first-time, first-year students who have at a minimum, a primary or secondary diagnosis of a learning disorder and/or ADHD.

- A program advisor (**one** point person) to follow a student from orientation to graduation.
- We **meet with students** once or twice a week to help with studying, organizing, and finding resources.
- We meet with first and second year students each semester to help with **early course registration**.
- We **work with students** to determine which accommodations are reasonable and appropriate.
- We **reach out** to students regularly and monitor their academic progress.
- Application priority deadline is February 1.

# Other types of support programs

## Transition Support

Next Step: College Success &  
Independent Living  
Mass General Aspire  
AANE

Visit:

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

for more resources and  
events

## LD and ADHD:

Landmark College  
Curry College  
Dean College  
Lesley University  
Mitchell University

Mental health: Boston  
University

## Autism:

Go to

[www.collegeautismspectrum.com](http://www.collegeautismspectrum.com) for a list



Thank you!