

# Post-Secondary Education Planning for Students with Disabilities

Presenters: Charity Smith and Blaise Brescia

# Federal Mandates Behind the Services

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 504)
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act
  - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability
  - Applies to every school district and nearly every college or university
  - Does not apply to private postsecondary institutions that do not receive federal financial aid assistance (they are subject to Title III)
- Institutions of postsecondary education have no legal obligations under IDEA

# Disability Discrimination

- Can a student with a disability be denied admission?
  - If a student meets the essential requirements for admission he cannot be denied admission because of a disability.

# Disclosure of a Disability

- Do students have to disclose their disability?
  - Students do NOT have to disclose their disability to post-secondary schools.

BUT...

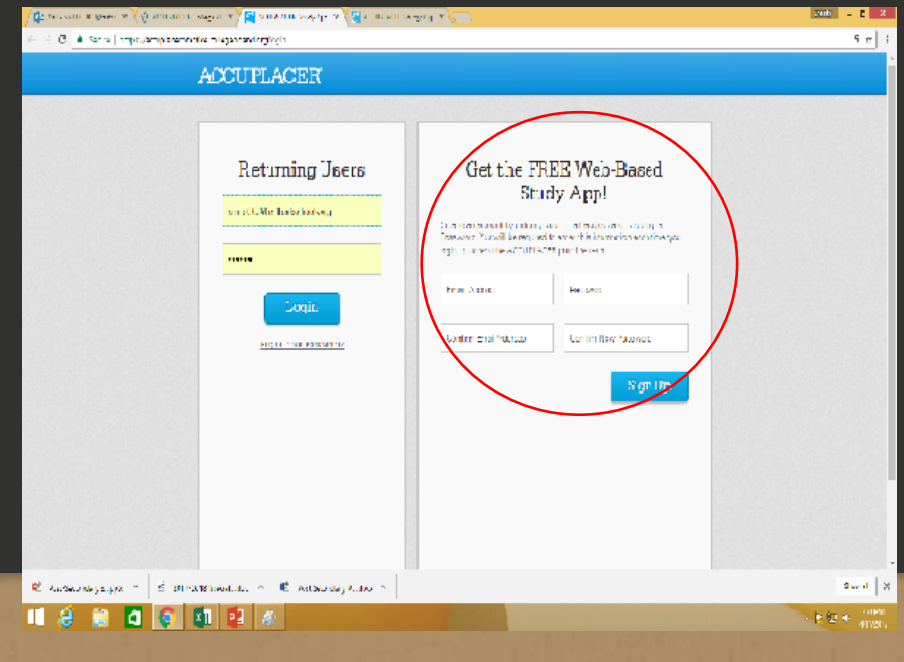
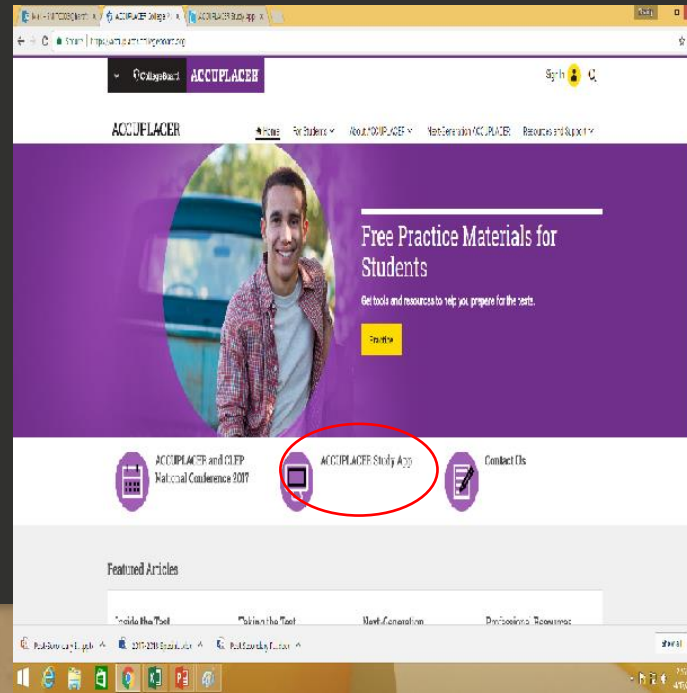
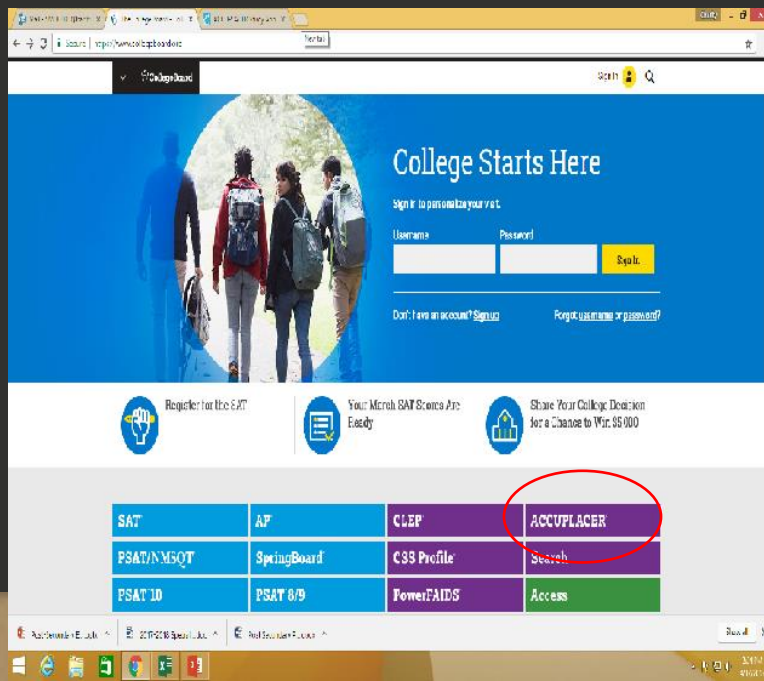
- If they are seeking academic adjustment, they must identify themselves as having a disability.
- If a student needs accessible facilities, she will also need to let the school know about the disability.

# SATs — 4 Year Colleges/Universities

- Spring of Junior year....take SAT
- Accommodations???
  - The College Board makes the decision case by case.
  - Postsecondary institutions will ONLY accept test scores with accommodations approved by The College Board.
  - Guidance and Special Education Teachers work together on applying for accommodations through The College Board
- KHAN ACADEMY!!
  - 20 hours in the 6 months prior to the SAT = 100-point improvement

# Accuplacer: 2 Year Community Colleges

- Accuplacer: exam that determines course placement.
- College Board offers free study app.
  - <https://accuplacerpractice.collegeboard.org/login>



# How to Apply for Academic Adjustments

- **Inform the Office of Support Services**
  - Disclosure is required (proof of disability)
  - Provide appropriate documentation of disability
    - Cognitive evaluation
    - Achievement testing
    - Medical diagnosis
    - Summary of Performance
  
- Postsecondary schools are not required to identify students as having a disability or assess a student's need.

# Proof of Disability

- Do I have to provide proof of a disability?
  - YES
- Documentation may include:
  - Reports from a medical doctor, psychologist or other qualified diagnostician
  - Summary of Performance, IEP, or 504 Plan
  - A diagnosis of the disability, date of diagnosis and how the diagnosis was reached
  - The credentials of the diagnosing professional
  - How does the student's disability affect a major life activity and how it affects a student's academic performance.



# Proof of a Disability

- An IEP or 504 plan is generally NOT sufficient documentation.
- If documentation provided does not meet the postsecondary school's requirements, a school official must inform the student in a timely manner.
- A new evaluation may be needed
  - Neither the student's high school nor the student's postsecondary school is required to pay for a new evaluation
    - If the student qualifies for services from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, he/she may qualify for the evaluation at no cost.

# Our Recommendations for Proof

- IEP or 504 Plan
- The Summary of Performance (SOP)
- Copies of recent assessments updated in his/her last year or two of high school

# Summary of Performance (SOP)

- IDEA requires the school to provide a summary of academic achievement and functional performance when a student graduates from high school or ages out of special education (21 years of age).
- SOP should include recommendations about ways to help meet postsecondary goals
- Should include the most updated information on performance and a student's abilities and aspirations

# Postsecondary Institution Selection Process

- Narrow the student's college or postsecondary education choices
  - Use research, campus visits and asking the right questions.
    - <https://www.naviance.com/>
    - <https://www.collegeboard.org/>
  - Meet with the disability services coordinator at each college or university.

# Postsecondary Institution Selection Process

- Apply for admission and financial aid
  - Pay attention to deadlines
    - Communicate regularly with Ms. Tamburro & Ms. Kaizer
  - Inquire about college-based scholarships for students with disabilities

# Transfer of Rights Upon Reaching the Age of Majority

- All rights under special education law transfer to the student at the age of majority
  - Age of majority is 18
- Rights can also transfer if a student is declared an emancipated minor
- After the transfer of rights, you will still receive all required procedural notices, but the student can consent or not consent to services
- Postsecondary school will direct ALL communications (including grades) to the student except financial/bills

# The Importance of Self-Advocacy & Attitude

- Student should understand their disability
  - What are their functional limitations, strengths and weaknesses?
  - Be prepared to explain their disability to an institution's disability coordinator
    - Explain where they had difficulty in the past
    - Explain what has helped them overcome these difficulties
    - Explain what specific adjustments might work in specific situations

# Self-Advocacy & Attitude

- Students should accept responsibility for their own success
  - Federal disability laws guarantee equal opportunity to participate but do not guarantee students will achieve a particular outcome (i.e. good grades)



# Tips for Becoming a Self-Advocate

- Students should begin practicing these skills in high school
- Students should ask for copies of their IEP/504 plan and assessments
- Students should review these plans and assessments with their case manager and family.

# The Importance of Preparation

- **Students should take an appropriate preparatory curriculum**
  - The need to have good study skills and the ability to write well
- **Students need to learn time management skills**
  - They need to manage their time with little or no supervision
- **Students should acquire computer skills**
  - Postsecondary students use computers for registering for classes, accessing course material and obtaining grades

# The Importance of Preparation

- Consider supplemental postsecondary education preparatory programs
  - Most postsecondary institutions have summer programs students can participate while still in high school or after graduation to ease their transition

# Department of Rehabilitation Services

- Any student with an IEP or 504 plan can access school-based services
- Level-Up: the goal is to assist students in identifying their strengths and learn the necessary skills for future employment and/or education
  - Assistive Technology
  - Peer Mentoring
  - Self-Advocacy
  - Workplace Readiness Service
  - Career Building Blocks & Job Exploration Services
  - Informational Interviews
  - Job Shadowing Experience
  - Counseling for Postsecondary Education & Training
  - Work Based Learning Experience

# Department of Rehabilitation Services

- Kerry Van Schaack
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- [kerry.VanSchaack@ct.gov](mailto:kerry.VanSchaack@ct.gov)
  
- BRS/Northern Region
- 184 Windsor Ave
- Windsor, CT 06095
- Tel: (860) 697-3533
- Fax: (860) 730-8437

# The Kennedy Center-Travel Training

- Teaches people with disabilities how to properly and safely use the local bus and rail system for their transportation needs
- Individualized to meet personal needs
- Qualified mobility instructor
- No time limit
- No cost for training program. Participants ARE required to pay the bus or train fare while training is taking place.
- [www.thekennedycenterinc.org](http://www.thekennedycenterinc.org)
- 203-365-8522 ext. 265
- [rcarlucci@kennedyctr.org](mailto:rcarlucci@kennedyctr.org)

# Fairfield University

- Services available through Student Support Services
- Designed to provide equal access to the learning environment
- Students with learning disabilities must provide documentation from an appropriate testing agent
- Students with ADHD must provide documentation from appropriate professionals (behavior rating scales) and diagnosis between ages 7-12

# Mitchell College

- Duques Academic Success Center offer academic and other supports through 5 functions
  - Tutoring Center
  - Career Center
  - Academic Advising Center
  - Disability Student Services
  - Bentsen Learning Resource Center (LRC)
    - Level 1: work with LRC Specialist 4x/week
    - Level 2: enhanced support program offering less-involved and less-directed assistance on an individual/small group basis with up to 2 scheduled appointments a week.
    - Also offers Academic Coaching for Empowerment designed for ADHD or executive functioning issues.



# Southern Connecticut State University

- **Disability Resource Center**
  - The mission of the DRC is to ensure educational equity for students with disabilities.
  - Provides access to full participation in all aspects of campus life.
  - Assists students in arranging for individualized accommodations and support services

# University of Connecticut

- **Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)**
  - Engages in an interactive and individualized process with each student in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations.
  - Accommodations such as: extended time on exams, notetaking assistance, alternate media for printed materials, foreign language and math substitutions, and assistive and learning technologies.
- **Beyond Access: Enhanced fee-for-service program**
  - Opportunity to work one-on-one with a trained strategy instructor on
    - Time management and organization
    - Study skills
    - Stress management
    - Self-advocacy
    - Memory and concentration
    - Social skills
    - Career preparation
    - Health and wellness
    - Reading and writing strategies

# University of Hartford

- Learning Plus program for any student diagnosed with LD
- Objectives include:
  - Understanding strengths and weaknesses
  - Provide learning strategies
  - Develop self-advocacy skills
  - Connect with campus resources
  - Develop decision making skills
  - Facilitation appropriate testing modifications
  - Legal rights and responsibilities
- Direct Strategies: assigned LP tutor and meet weekly
- Check In: meet every other week
- Drop In: "as needed" assistance

# University of New Haven

- **Campus Access Services (CAS)**
  - Students must self-identify and submit documentation
  - Promote access to university's educational programs and services for students with disabilities
- **Center for Learning Resources (CLR)**
  - Free tutoring for all students
- **Office of Academic Services**
  - Offers academic assistance to all students
  - Academic skills counselors work one-on-one with students to strengthen their abilities and develop individualized study strategies, which focus on reading, note-taking, time management, learning/memory, and test-taking skills.

# Western Connecticut State University

- **Office of Disability Services**

- **Directs and coordinates services for students with disabilities that impact their educational experience**
- **Provide**
  - **Advocacy**
  - **Early registration**
  - **Confidential counseling**
  - **Empowerment counseling**
  - **Complaint processing**
  - **Accommodation planning**
  - **Accommodation referrals**
  - **Referrals to other university services**
  - **Exam proctoring**
  - **Accessibility**