



Transitioning to Higher Education: A Guide to making a Smooth Transformation from High School to College

Dr. Jennifer Carpenter

Chair, Social Sciences and Education

Assistant Professor of Education

Georgia Highlands College

Are Students with Disabilities Going to College?

(Welding, 2023)

Students with disabilities represent 19% of undergraduate students enrolled in postsecondary institutions in the U.S.

Nearly 1 in 5 undergraduate college students reported having a disability in 2015-2016

12% of graduate students report having a disability

Trans and gender-nonconforming students report having autism at rates 5-8 times as high as cis students

The six-year graduation rate of students with disabilities at four-year colleges is 49.5%, compared to roughly 68% for students without disabilities

Just 37% of students report their disability to their college

15-43% of students who report their disability don't receive accommodations from their school

Are Students with Disabilities Going to College?

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In 2022, The American College Health Association (ACHA) surveyed 4,000 undergraduates

15% of students reported having ADD or ADHD

5% had a learning disability

4% were blind or had low vision

3% were autistic

2% were Deaf or hard of hearing

About 1% had a mobility or dexterity disability

About 1% had a speech or language disability



High School vs. College: Key Differences

High School	College
Applicable Laws	
Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)	Americans with Disabilities Acts of 1990 (ADA), Title II
Section 504, Subpart D of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Section 504, Subpart E of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
IDEA is about SUCCESS in school	ADA and 504 are about ACCESS, success is up to the student

High School vs. College: Key Differences

High School	College
Required Documentation	
IEP and/or 504 Plan	IEP and 504 Plans expire after high school and are not sufficient. Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category or disability.
School provides evaluation at no cost	Students must get evaluation at their own expense
Documentation focuses on determining if student is eligible for services under one or more disability categories in IDEA	Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations and demonstrate the need for specific accommodations

High School vs. College: Key Differences

High School	College
Self-Advocacy	
School staff identify the student as having a disability	Student must self-identify to Disability Support Services staff
School staff has primary responsibility for arranging accommodations	Student has responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations with staff of Student Support Services
Teacher approach you if they believe you need assistance	Professors can be open and helpful, but most expect students to initiate contact at the start of the semester

High School vs. College: Key Differences

High School	College
Parental Role	
Parent has access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process	Parent does not have access to student records and cannot represent the student without the student's written consent
Parent advocates for the student	Student advocates for self

High School vs. College: Key Differences

High School	College
Instruction	
Teachers may modify curriculum and alter assignments as outlined in IEP	Professors are not required to modify design or alter assignment deadlines
Students are expected to read short assignments that are discussed and often re-taught in class	Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class
Students seldom need to read assignments more than once, often listening in class is enough	Students need to regularly review class notes and text material

High School	College
Grades and Tests	
IEP and 504 may include modifications to test format or grading	Grading and test format changes (e.g., multiple choice vs. Essay) are generally not available. Accommodations in HOW tests are given (e.g., extended time, test proctors) are available when supported by disability documentation
Testing frequently covers only small amounts of material	Testing is generally periodic and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material
Makeup tests are usually available	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, students are responsible for requesting them in advance
Teachers often take time to remind students of assignments and due dates	Professors expect students to read, save, and consult the course syllabus that describes course expectations, assignments and grading scale.

High School vs. College: Key Differences

High School vs. College: Key Differences

High School	College
General Differences	
High school is an entitlement	College is a choice or privilege , a right to access
High school is mandatory and usually free	College is voluntary and costly
Others structure your time	You manage your own time
Permission is needed to participate in extracurricular activities	The decision to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities is up to the student
Parents and teachers remind the student of their responsibilities and assist them in setting priorities and goals	Balancing their time and setting priorities now becomes the responsibility of the student

How are services decided?

Disability Access determine appropriate accommodations and are responsible for the creation of the Faculty Accommodation Notice (FAN).

Disability Access works on behalf of the school and the students to:

- Collect documentation meeting USGBOR guidelines verifying a student's diagnosis and functional impact
- Discuss needs and prepare the Accommodation Notice that outlines the accommodations for which students are entitled
- Provide support services and programming to promote student success, retention, and progression towards graduation
- Provide support for faculty
- Meet with students and faculty together if needed to facilitate communication and provide the best possible educational outcome for the student



Faculty Accommodation Notification (FAN)

- The “IEP” of college
- It is the student’s responsibility to request a FAN each semester, share it with their course instructors, and to schedule a meeting with instructors to discuss accommodations they plan to use for each course
- Students can request any accommodation on their FAN for the current semester, although some may not apply in the online environment



Possible Accommodations

Accessible furniture,
such as adjustable
tables and seating

ACCUPLACER
accommodations

Alternative media
equipment, such as:
adapted keyboards,
monitors, and software

Alternative format
materials, such as:
electronic textbooks,
Braille, and enlarged
print

Assistive technology,
such as: screen reading
software, speech-to-
text software

Audio record lectures

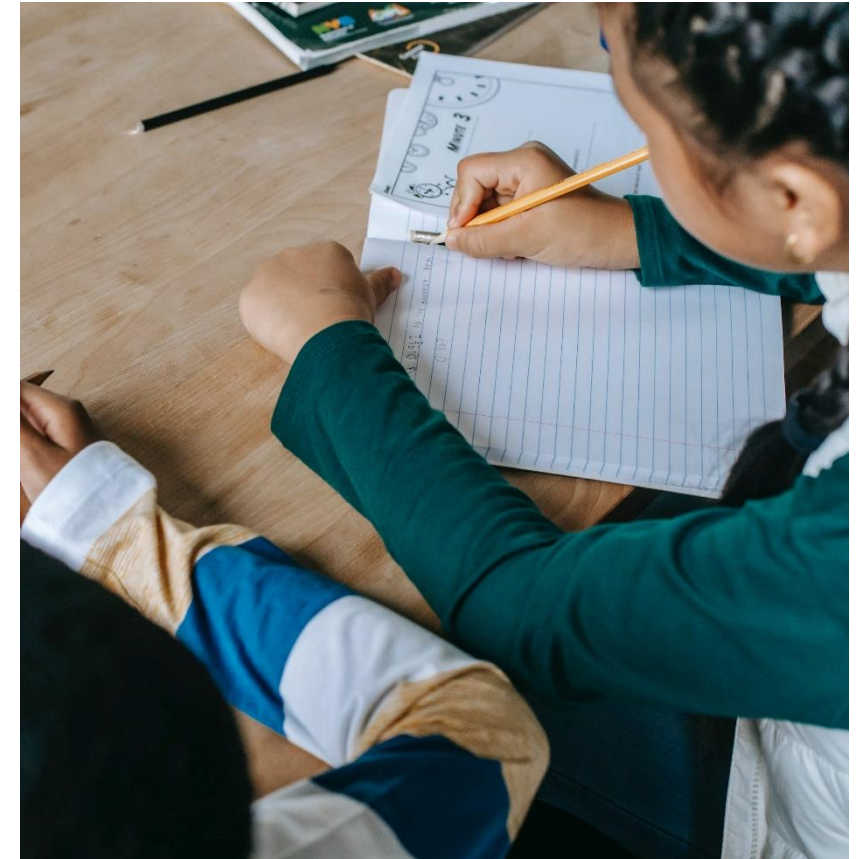
Help finding note-
takers

Preferential seating

Reduced course load

Sign language
interpreters/captioning
services

Test accommodations,
such as: extended time,
calculator,
spell/grammar check





FAN EXAMPLE



Student Support Services
Faculty Accommodation Notification

Semester:

Student ID:

Student Name:

Faculty- Keep this document for your records. This letter is valid only for the semester identified above.

The above named student is approved by Disability Access for academic accommodations, due to a documented disability.

The purpose of accommodations is to address disability-related functional impairments and to ensure equal access to educational opportunities, as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and BOR policy. If any of the academic adjustments results in a fundamental alteration of the course, please contact the Disability Services office. All information regarding a disability is confidential and should be discussed privately between you and the student. Disability Access looks forward to collaborating with you in order to fulfill GHC's commitment.

COURSE ACCOMMODATIONS

Access to instructor power point/notes ahead of time

50% extended time on in-class assignments

Permission to audiotape course lectures/use designated note taker

Electronic textbooks

Use of screen reading software (Ex: Claro read) to access electronic textbooks

Preferential seating

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

50% extended time on tests/quizzes/exams

Quiet, distraction-reduced test environment

Non-programmable calculator for exams requiring math calculations

Math formula sheet

Word bank

Use of a computer with spell/grammar check, and text reading software (Claro Read)

Instructor to provide electronic copy of test in a Word document or PDF (no paper tests)

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

Priority registration

Foreign Language substitution for program authorized by RCLD

Reduced course load authorized by RCLD

Student's Role: It is the student's responsibility to meet with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss specific needs and the provision of these accommodations in a manner appropriate to the course setting; however, students are not required to disclose the specific disability.

Faculty Role: It is the Faculty Member's responsibility to work with the student to arrange the accommodations listed on this form as they pertain to the course. Given the varying nature of many courses, our staff will be glad to work with you to assist in identifying alternate ways to provide the necessary accommodations. Please do not provide any student with an individual accommodation plan until they have provided the Faculty Accommodation Notification. Should support be needed to facilitate the arrangement of the identified accommodations, contact Disability Access for assistance.

Disability Support Specialist:

DSP Signature:

Cartersville & Paulding Sit



What is the professor's role in accommodations?

- Implement the accommodations approved by Disability Access
- Ask questions about the accommodations listed on the Accommodation Notice if there are concerns
- Suggest accommodations to the student's Disability Access Specialist that may meet needs specific to a course
- Share with the student's Disability Access Specialist when a troubling behavior and/or academic distress is seen
- Be willing, to a reasonable degree, to assist the student outside of class
- Ensure that students know about Disability Access
- Refer students to Disability Access who self-disclose a disability
- Provide reasonable accommodations that provide equal access, but do not modify course requirements

So How Can We Help Students Make the Transition?

Academic Preparation



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graph TD; A[Academic Preparation] --> B[Disability Documentation]; B --> C[Basic Documentation Requirements]; C --> D[Self-Advocacy]
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Disability Documentation

Basic Documentation Requirements

Self-Advocacy

Academic Preparation

- All accommodations at the college level are designed to ensure equal access
- Adults with disabilities have the right to equal access
 - ADA, Section 504 & 508 Compliance
- Success is up to the student
- There are no course modifications in college



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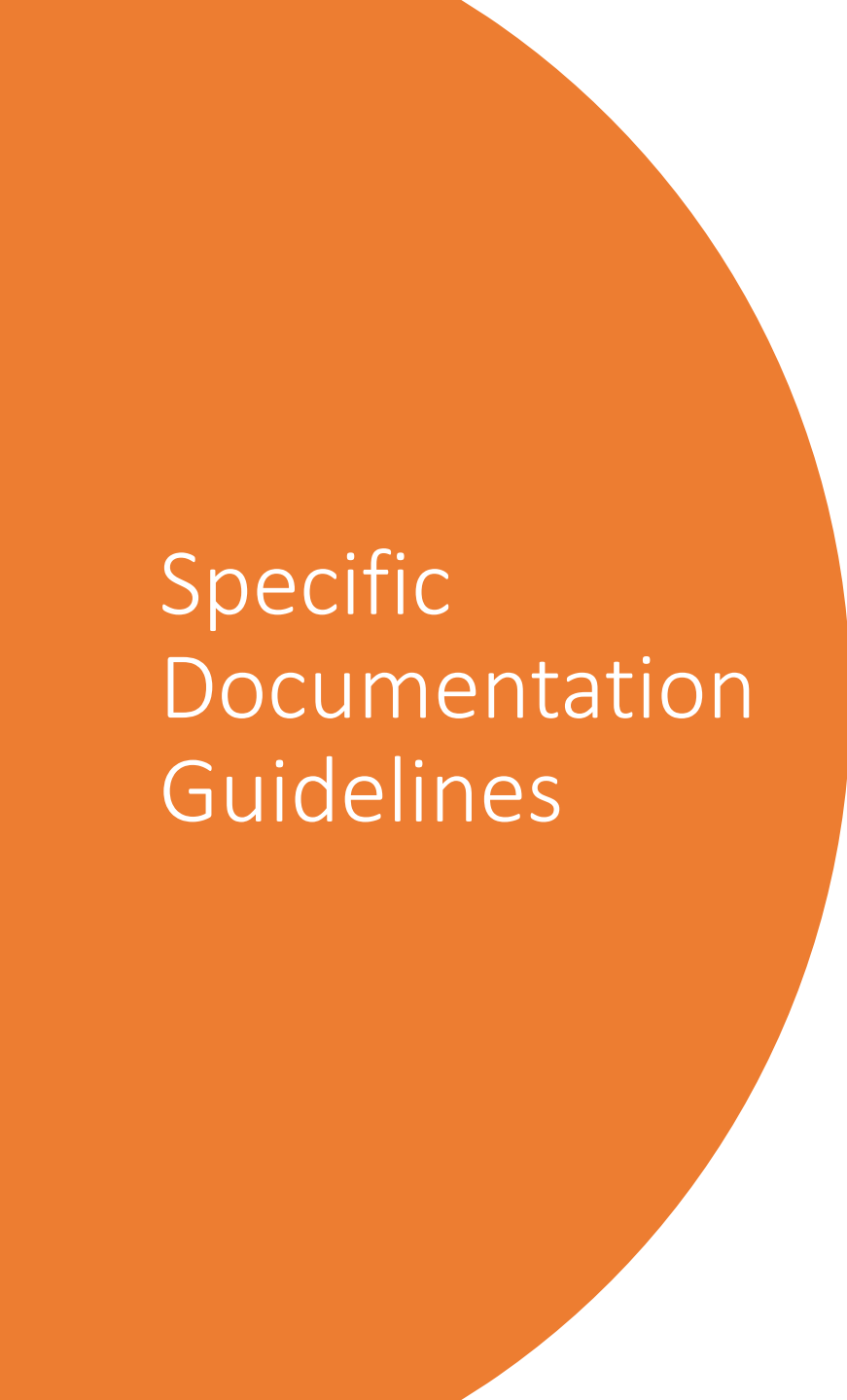
Disability Documentation

- IEPs' and 504 Plans **END** with high school graduation.
 - Both provide helpful background information, but rarely meet the documentation standard for college accommodations
- The Regents Center for Learning Disorders (RCLD) sets the standard for post-secondary documentation requirements to determine eligibility for appropriate academic accommodations.
 - The RCLD is part of the Board of Regents, the governing body for all public colleges and universities in Georgia




Basic Documentation Requirements

- A current evaluation (less than 36 months old) of the disability from a qualified professional
 - Licensed to diagnose the condition by Georgia law
- Specific symptoms that are present
- Evidence that these symptoms are associated with substantial impairment in a major life activity
- Specific requests for accommodations need to be linked to the student's current functional limitations, and the rationale for each recommendation clearly stated
 - Additional documentation information is available in the [USG Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 3, Appendix D](#)

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Specific Documentation Guidelines

- Specific documentation guidelines are organized into nine disability categories:
 - Learning Disabilities
 - Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
 - Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - Acquired Brain Injuries
 - Psychological Disorders
 - Sensory Disorders
 - Mobility Disorders
 - Systemic Disorders
 - Communication Disorders
 - Other Disabilities
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Self-Advocacy



Students are required to self-identify and request accommodations. Referrals cannot be accepted from parents, college personnel, or other agencies



It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with their course professors, to discuss and arrange approved accommodations



Transition Consultation

- The Regents Centers for Learning Disorders offers Transition Consultations for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students.
- The 60-minute consultation topics include:
 - Legal and practical differences between high school and college
 - Disability services in college
 - Issues related to the parent role in their student's transition
 - Importance of disability documentation
 - Accessing college accommodations
 - Action steps which may include updating documentation needs, researching college disability services offices, and personal skill building (e.g., time management, self-advocacy, assistive technology, and study skills)
 - At the end of the appointment, students will receive a folder with resources, action steps, and a quick reference transition guide (Transitioning to College: A Guide for Students with Disabilities).

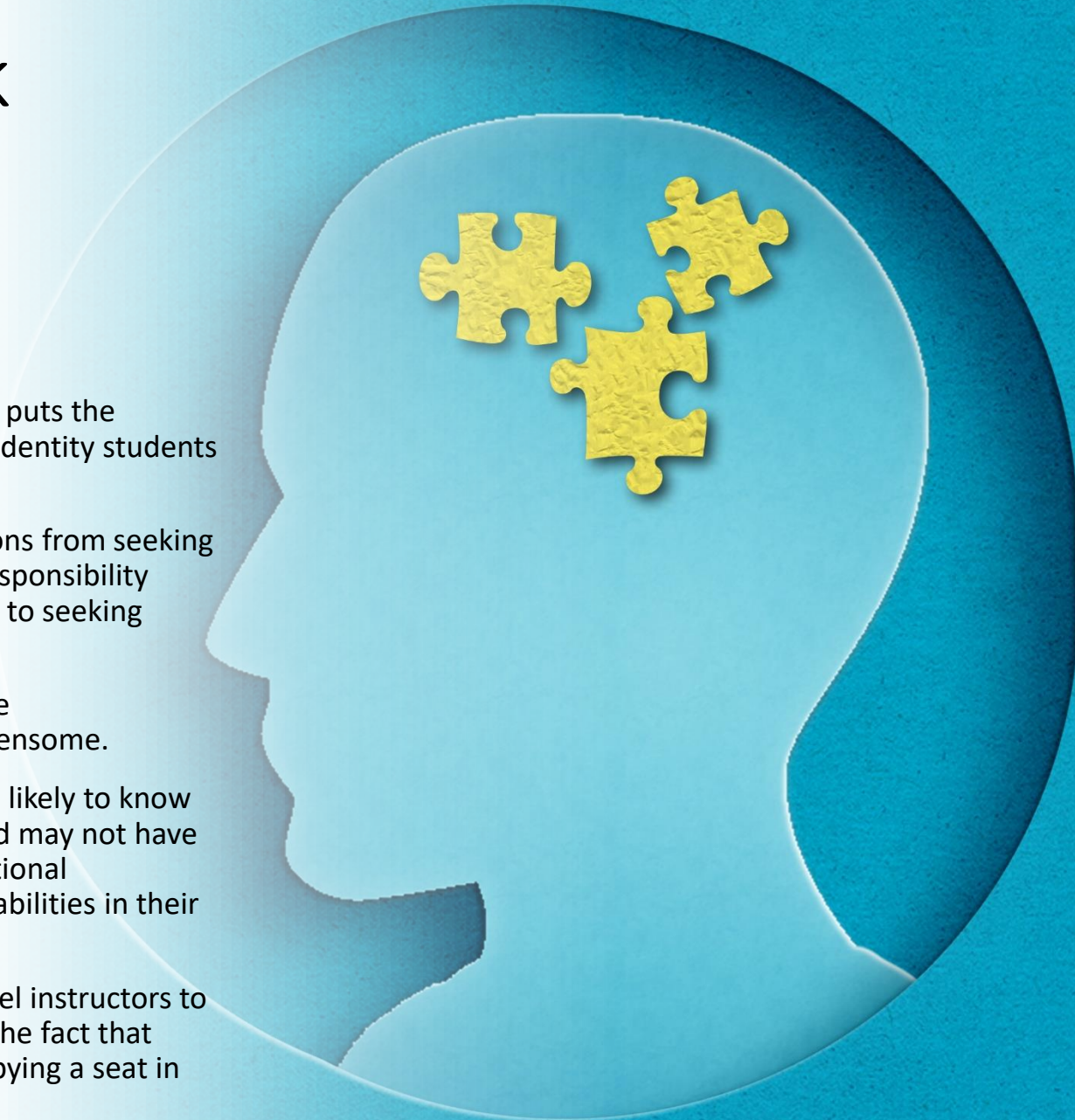
System-Level Accommodations

Students with learning disorders requesting system-level accommodations must contact the disability services professional at the enrolling institution to submit documentation for RCLD review

- Core Curriculum Quantitative Outcomes-Substitution of Core Math Course requirements
 - As a part of the core curriculum, all USG students are required to complete three hours of coursework that address learning outcomes in quantitative reasoning
 - [Section 3.3.6 Core Mathematics Course Substitutions](#)
- Admissions-Substitution of the Required High School Curriculum Foreign Language requirement
 - [Section 3.3.1, Admission Considerations](#)
- Learning Support- Testing accommodations for the Next-Generation Accuplacer placement test
 - [Section 3.3.5, Learning Support Considerations.](#)

Things to Think About and Remember

- IDEA contains a child find clause which puts the responsibility on the school district to identify students in need of special education.
- Section 504 and ADA prohibit institutions from seeking information on disability status. The responsibility transfers to the individual with regards to seeking special education services.
- Universities are not required to provide accommodations that are unduly burdensome.
- Instructors in higher education are less likely to know more than just the letter of the law and may not have the knowledge or skills to make educational accommodations for students with disabilities in their courses.
- There is no requirement for college level instructors to know much about disabilities beyond the fact that students with disabilities may be occupying a seat in their course.





Legal Precedents

- Wong v. Regents of the University of California, 1999
 - Alleged that the university discriminated against him in violation of the ADA and Section 504 because the university failed to accommodate his learning disability and he was dismissed when he did not meet the academic requirements of the medical school.
 - The court found that the student failed to show that he was substantially limited in any major life activity.
 - Institutions of higher education are not required to “fundamentally alter” the academic program

Legal Precedents

- Wynne v. Tufts University School of Medicine, 1992
 - Student brought a lawsuit alleging discrimination based on disability because he had been dismissed after failing his courses.
 - Specifically claimed that the university failed to accommodate him by not providing an oral exam.
 - The court found in favor of the university because tutoring, taped lectures, and un-timed and makeup exams had been arranged for.
 - Institutions should implement learning strategies, innovative teaching techniques, and other accommodations to ensure that SWD succeed.





Legal Precedents

- **Carten v. Kent State University, 2003**
 - Student was dismissed for poor academic performance.
 - Student claimed that the school failed to accommodate his learning disability.
 - Students must request reasonable accommodations and properly document their disability.

Legal Precedents

- Betts v. Rector, 1999
 - The student entered into a medical post-baccalaureate program that required students to maintain a certain GPA
 - Student failed to meet GPA, but the school allowed the student to stay in the program if he agreed to additional tutoring and learning disability testing.
 - Student continued to fail to meet GPA requirements and was dismissed.
 - The court supported the university's dismissal and reasoned the student's dismissal was solely based on his academic performance.





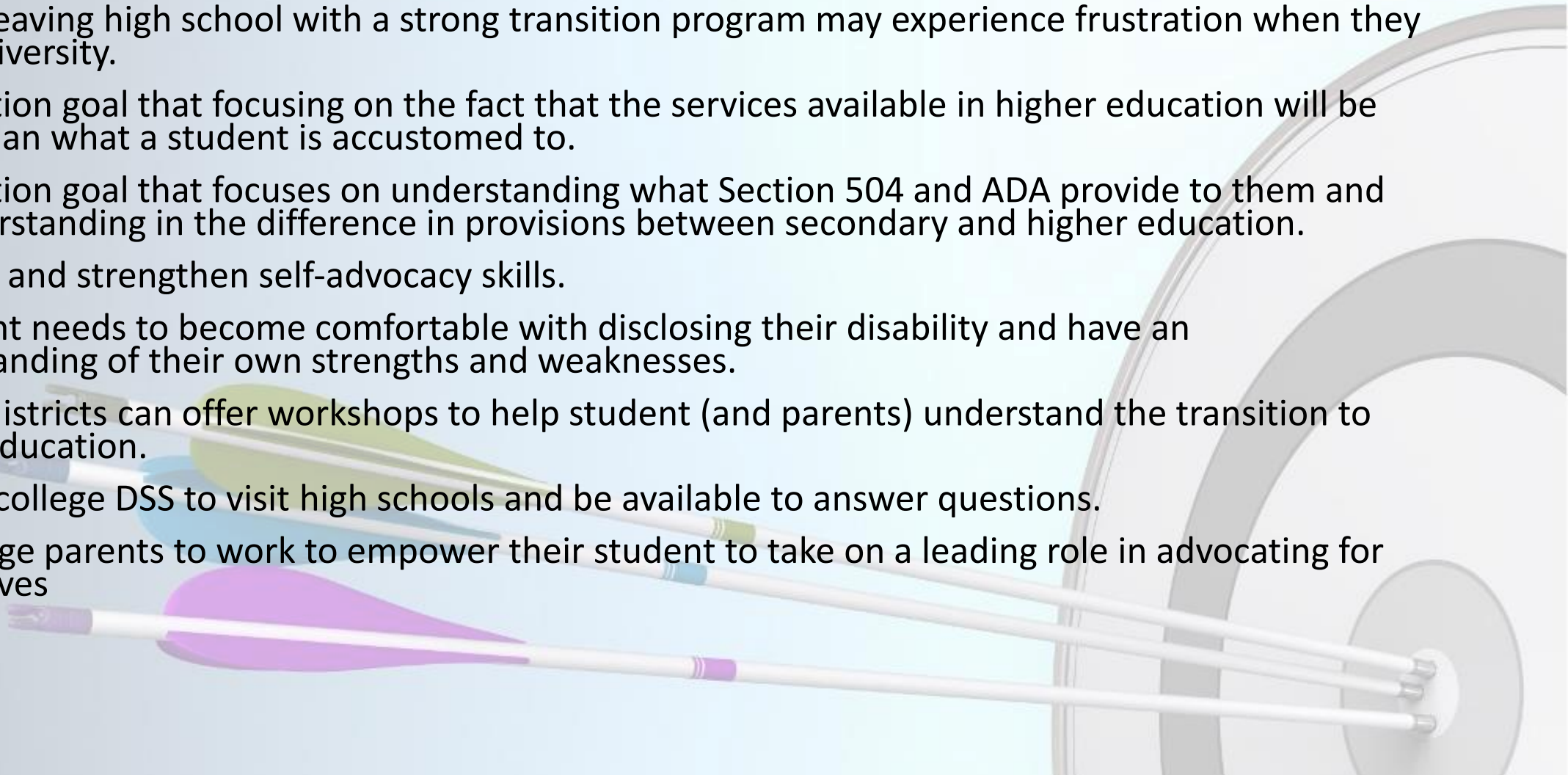
Necessary Skills

- Think about students in your districts that may be continuing their formal education after graduation from high school.
- What skills does the IEP committee need to make sure that they have?
- How can you address the necessary and needed skills in the transition plan?

Successful Transition

Students leaving high school with a strong transition program may experience frustration when they enter a university.

- A transition goal that focusing on the fact that the services available in higher education will be fewer than what a student is accustomed to.
- A transition goal that focuses on understanding what Section 504 and ADA provide to them and an understanding in the difference in provisions between secondary and higher education.
- Develop and strengthen self-advocacy skills.
- A student needs to become comfortable with disclosing their disability and have an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- School districts can offer workshops to help student (and parents) understand the transition to higher education.
- Invite a college DSS to visit high schools and be available to answer questions.
- Encourage parents to work to empower their student to take on a leading role in advocating for themselves



References

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Contact Information

Dr. Jennifer Carpenter

Georgia Highlands College

Chair, Social Science and Education

Assistant Professor of Education

jecarpen@highlands.edu

706-368-7622 (Office) – 706-409-3024 (Cell)