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# College Options for Students with Disabilities: Changing Expectations & Increasing Opportunities

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Think College  
University of MA Boston

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## Changing Expectations. Increasing Opportunities.

**Think College is a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving research and practice in inclusive higher education for people with intellectual disability.**

### **www.ThinkCollege.net**

The Think College website is a trusted source for information, training, and resources related to inclusive higher education for students with intellectual disability. The website includes:

- A searchable program directory to learn more about available college options
- A resource library that includes published research as well as field-created tools and resources
- Online learning modules on a variety of topics
- Research to practice briefs, e-newsletters, and journal articles
- Topical information on the critical issues
- A policy and legislation clearinghouse



# Agenda

- College opportunities
- How to research college opportunities
- How to apply
- How to prepare students for college
  - Differences between high school and college
- Paying for college

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# College opportunities





## Higher Education Programs for Students with ID in the U.S.



Higher Education Programs for Students with ID in the U.S.

# IHEs enrolling students w/ ID in US in 2019



57% 4-year college or university



40% 2-year community college



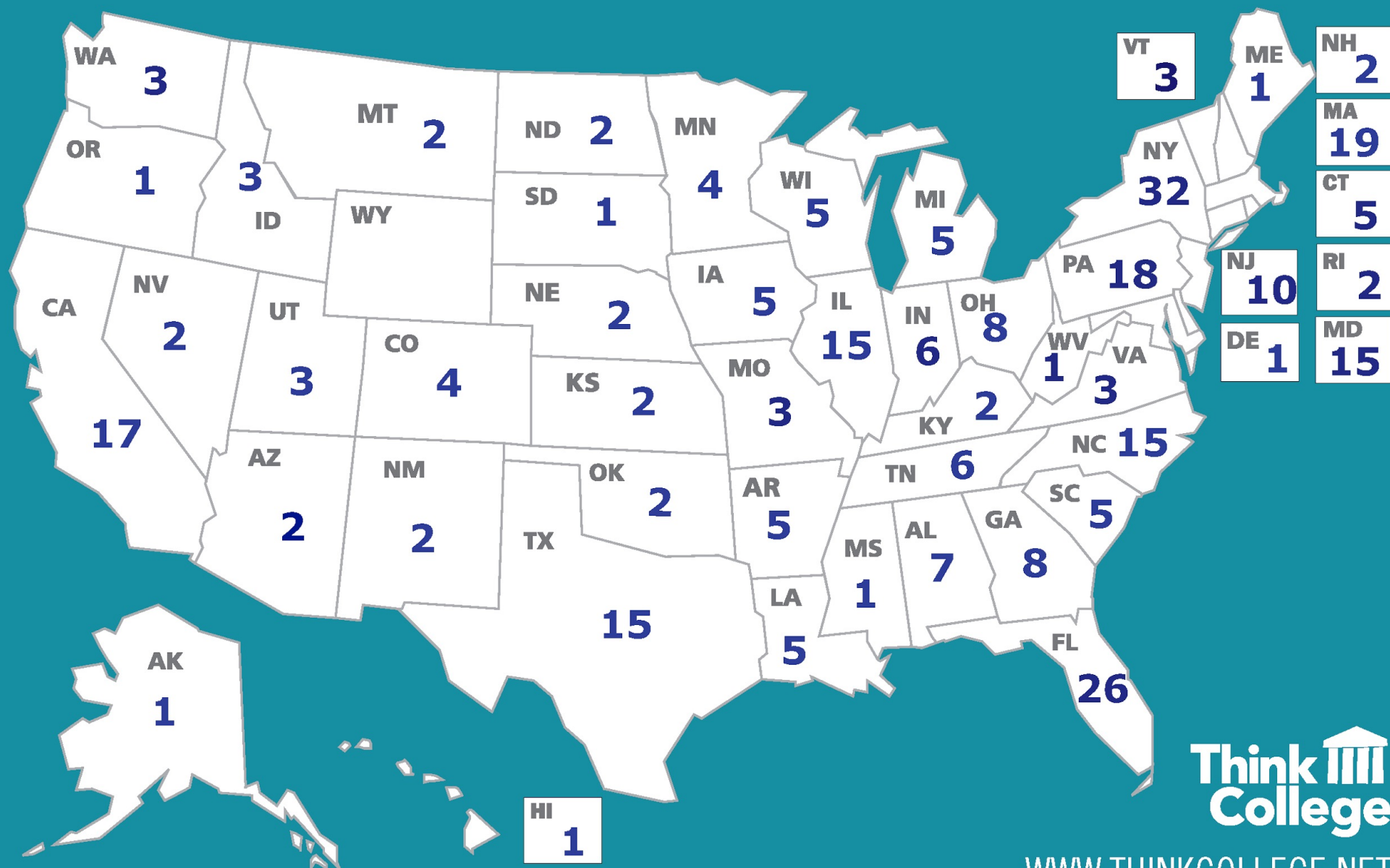
2% technical or trade schools



2% multiple campuses

# COLLEGE OPTIONS for STUDENTS with INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, November 2021

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMS: **308**



last updated 7-21-21

**Think College**

[WWW.THINKCOLLEGE.NET](http://WWW.THINKCOLLEGE.NET)

**So how did this happen?**

Let's start with the law.....

# Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA)

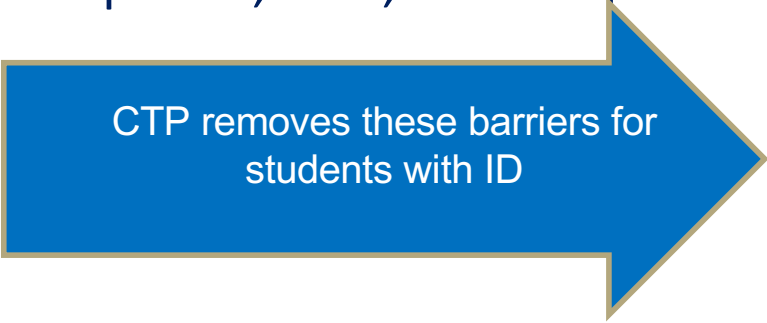
## Provisions Related to Students with Intellectual Disability (ID)

- **Federal Student Aid:** Established eligibility for Pell grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and Work-Study jobs via the creation of CTP designation.
- **Model Demonstration Programs:** Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSIDs) authorized to enable institutions of higher education (IHEs) to create or expand high-quality inclusive programs for students with ID.
- **National Coordinating Center (NCC):** Authorized to provide technical assistance, coordination between and evaluation of TPSID projects, and create implementation approach for Accreditation standards.

# What is a CTP?

A Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Program is a higher education program which has met federal guidelines to offer 3 forms of federal student aid to students with intellectual disability.

- Traditional student requirements for accessing Title IV financial aid:
  - working toward a degree or certificate
  - Received high school diploma, GED, or have passed an ability-to-benefit test



CTP removes these barriers for students with ID

Eligible  
student  
with ID with  
financial  
need



Program  
approved  
as CTP



**Access  
to Title IV  
financial  
aid**

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant
- Federal Work-Study

# **How to research college opportunities**





### FAVORITES

Click "♥ save" to add programs to your favorites. You can then save, compare and download basic information for each one.

See FAQ: [How do I save and compare programs?](#)

### RECENTLY ADDED

- [University of Maryland](#)
- [University of New Hampshire](#)
- [University of South Florida St. Petersburg](#)
- [Goodwin University \(CT\)](#)
- [University of Alabama](#)

### SEARCH

CLEAR

Program or Keyword

SHOW ALL

### LOCATION

- ☐ Alabama (7)
- ☐ Alaska (1)
- ☐ Arizona (2)
- ▼ Show more states

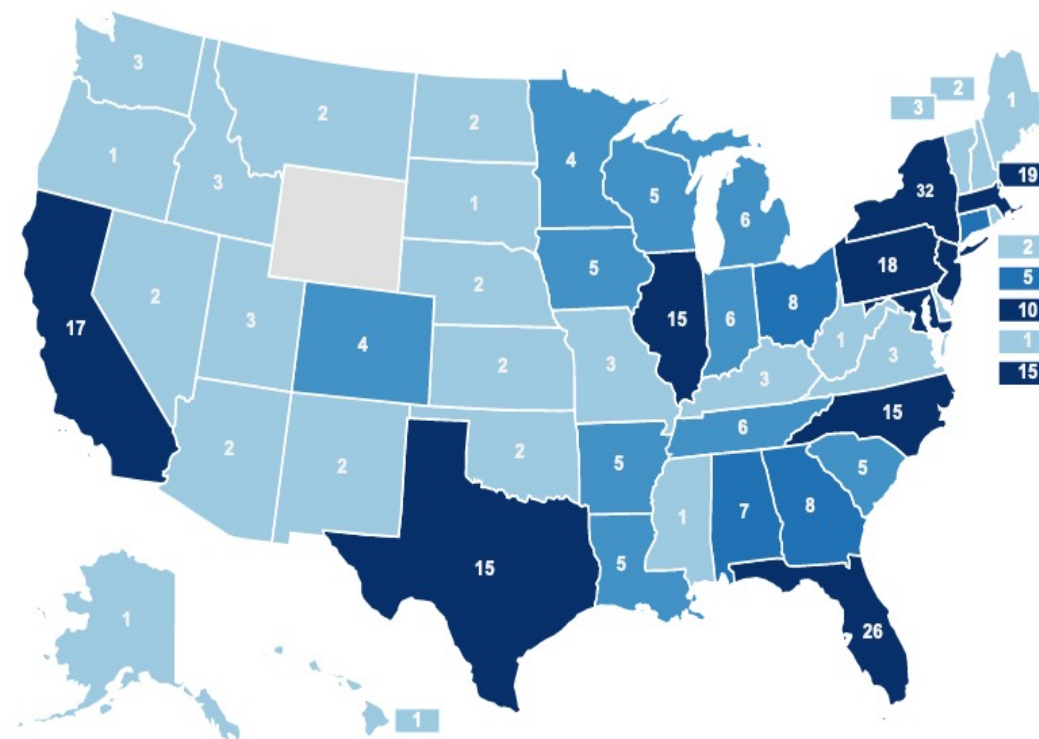
### PROGRAM FEATURES

- ☐ Serves Students in High School \*
- ☐ Offers Financial Aid (CTP)
- ☐ Offers Housing
- ☐ Program not limited by

## College Search

The only directory of its kind, Think College Search features **310** colleges and universities that offer postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability. Users of this searchable online database can filter by state, length of program, type of school, options for living on campus, and more. To learn more, view these [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about college programs, how we gather the information in the directory, and how to use the features of College Search.

Ready to start a college search? You may find this guide helpful - [Conducting a College Search: Questions to ask College Programs](#), developed by Think College with input from families and students. It includes dozens of questions to consider asking to learn more about the programs you are interested in.



# College Programs for Students with ID

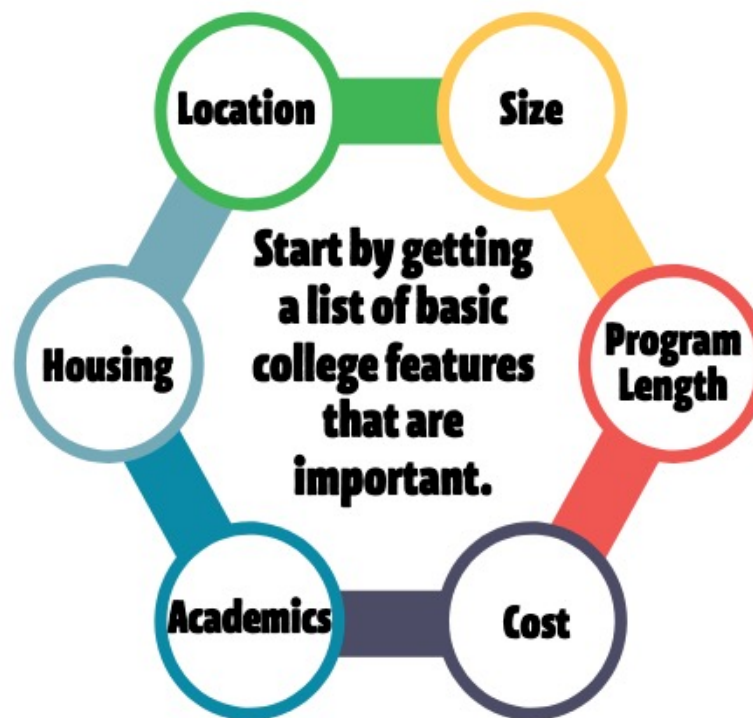
- Have alternative admissions process & requirements
- Accept students who are non-degree seeking
- Vary in length – most are 2 YR, some 4YR
- Vary in level of inclusion
- Established course of study that leads to certificate
- May offer federal student aid (not loans)

Conducting a college search is a daunting task for every family and every potential college student. All students need to think about factors such as the size of the college, its location, and whether or not to live on campus or at home (see Figure 1).

For students with intellectual disability (ID), there are some additional aspects to consider beyond the details you can learn in Think College Search. This resource provides questions, suggested by parents and students who have been through the college search process.

These questions may be answered by closely reviewing the college program

Figure 1. Sample College Features



This guide shares questions about important aspects of the college program, and are offered to help students and families learn as much as they can about program operations so they can make an informed choice about which college is best for them. Several questions are suggested in each of the ten areas below.

# Additional recommendations

- Visit campus
  - Meet with program coordinator
  - Plan time to meet with disability services
  - Ask to speak to a current student
  - Arrange to take tour
- If unable to be on campus
  - Ask how to navigate to virtual tour





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## Interactive Virtual Tours and Campus Maps

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CampusTours builds video tours, photorealistic interactive campus maps, mobile walking tours and custom data-driven multimedia applications for education, non-profit and government clients worldwide.

#### College Search

More than 30 Million students have used CampusTours to find virtual campus tours and maps.

##### School Name

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▾

[Search](#)

##### Search by Country

▾

[Search](#)

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AnyMap™



Turn any type of map artwork into a rich interactive map

AnyTour™



From community colleges to the United States Capitol,

# How to apply



# Navigate to college you are interested in....

GENERAL

REQUIREMENTS

ACCEPTANCE RATES

COST ACADEMIC

EMPLOYMENT

HOUSING

EXTRACURRICULAR

## REQUIREMENTS

Program serves students who have left high school? Some of our students have left high school

Deadline to apply to this program: Winter (as noted on website each year)

Link to admissions process: [Admissions link](#)

### Criteria for admission

- Age range: 18-25
- Have a significant intellectual disability and/or adaptive behavior limitations that would impact their ability to participate in a general post-secondary education curriculum (AAIDD definition of Intellectual Disability), display sufficient emotional and independent stability to participate in all aspects of the CCS coursework and campus environment, be interested in a collegiate based independent living experience, able to self-administer medicine, demonstrate a desire to continue their education and have ability to benefit from a college based program that focuses on career exploration/readiness, student/life community participation and life-long liberal learning.

Accepts out-of-state students?: Yes

Please indicate which disabilities students in this program have:

- Intellectual disability
- Autism
- Down Syndrome, Fragile X, TBI, Cerebral Palsy, Williams Syndrome

Program length: 4 years

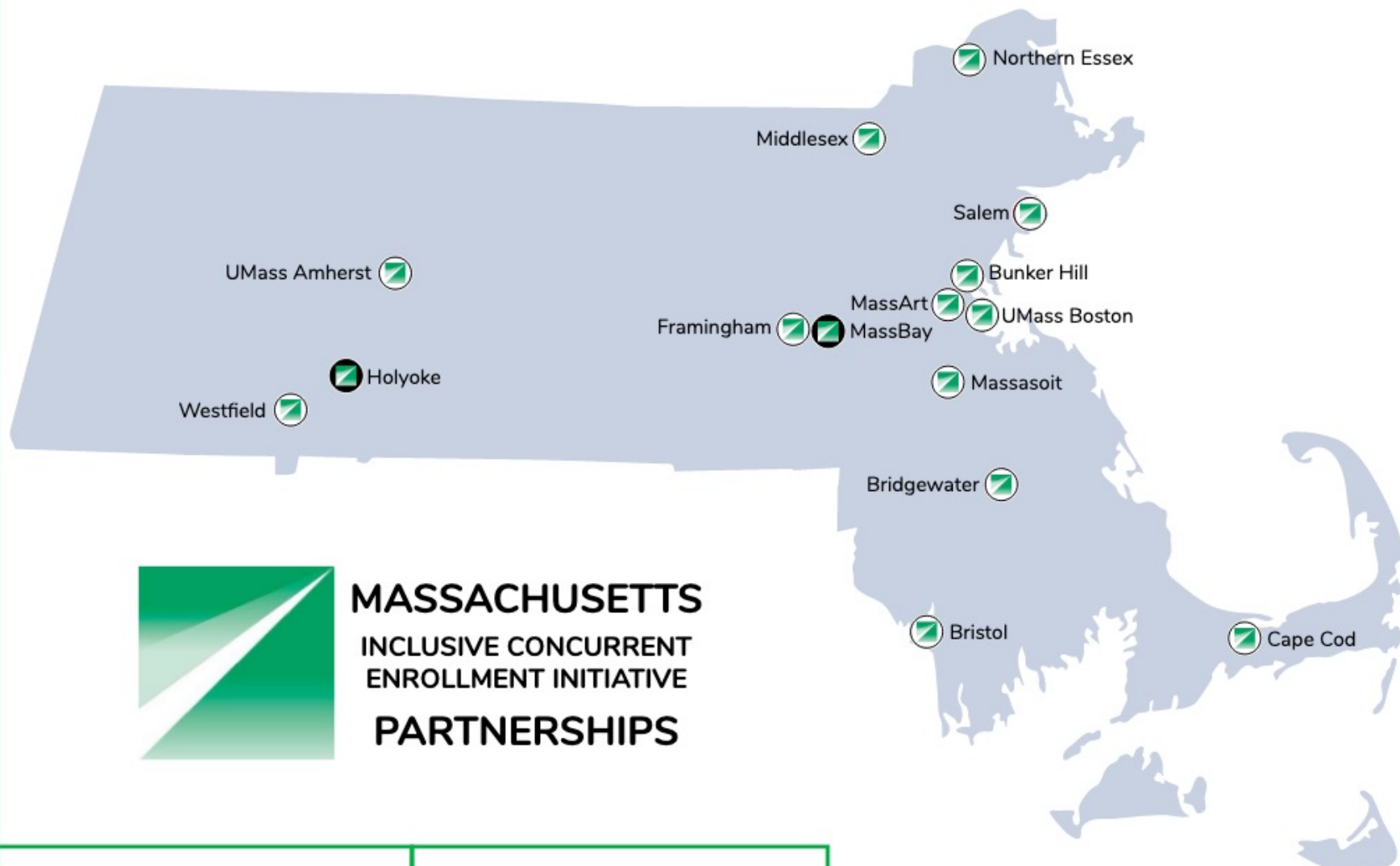
# Additional information

- When students are applying to attend a college program for students with ID, there is typically a different admissions process than the one used by degree-seeking students.
  - Unlike students who are applying to college through the standard admissions process, students will **NOT** need a regular high school diploma or SAT or ACT scores. They **WILL** need documentation of disability and support needs. Check the website of programs you are interested in to learn more about specific requirements.
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# **How to prepare for college (lessons learned)**



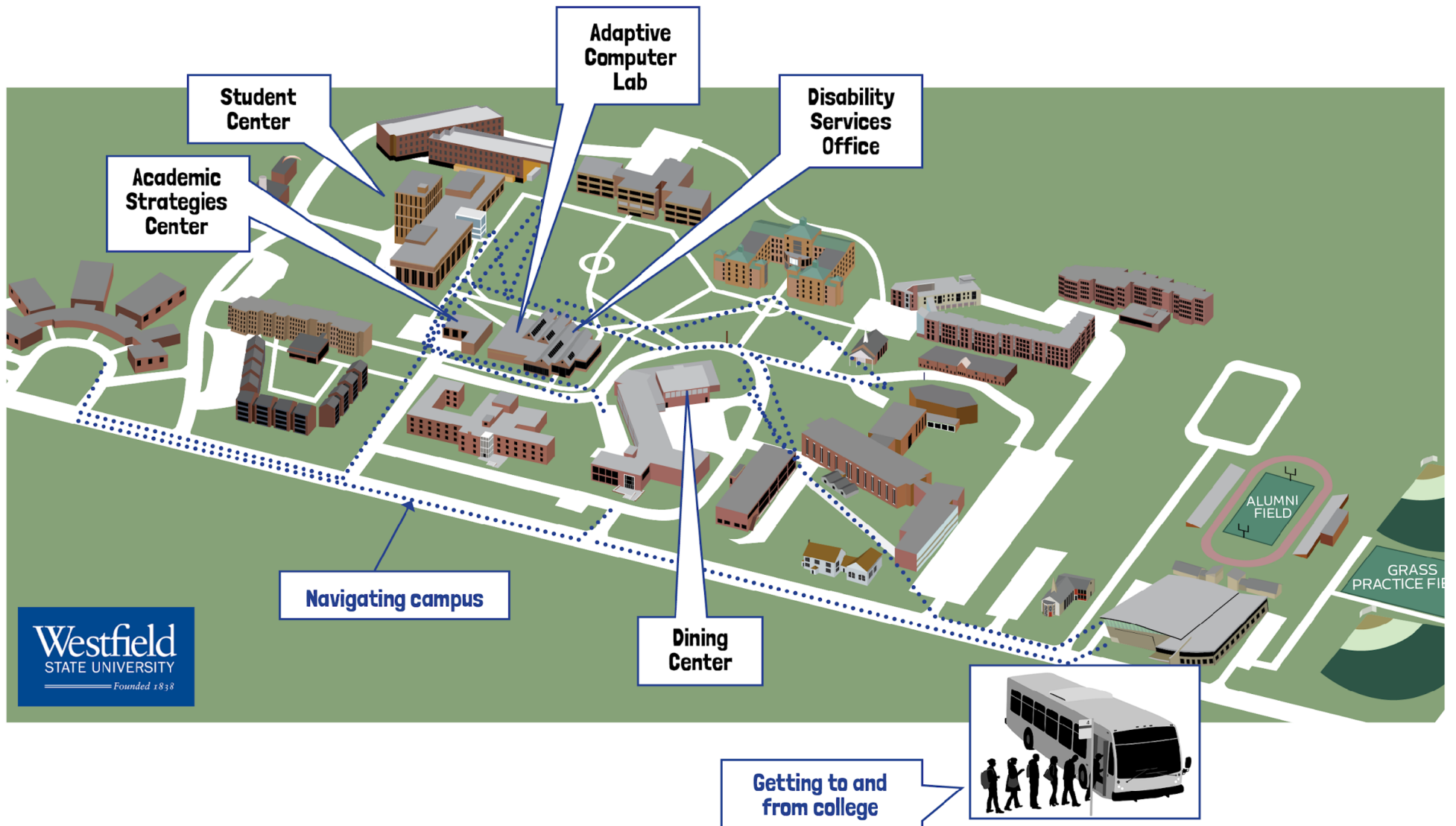


## MASSACHUSETTS INCLUSIVE CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

-  Currently funded partnerships
-  Independent partnerships

For more information, contact:  
Mary Price, Director of MAICEI  
Department of Higher Education  
(617) 994-6905 [mprice@dhe.mass.edu](mailto:mprice@dhe.mass.edu)

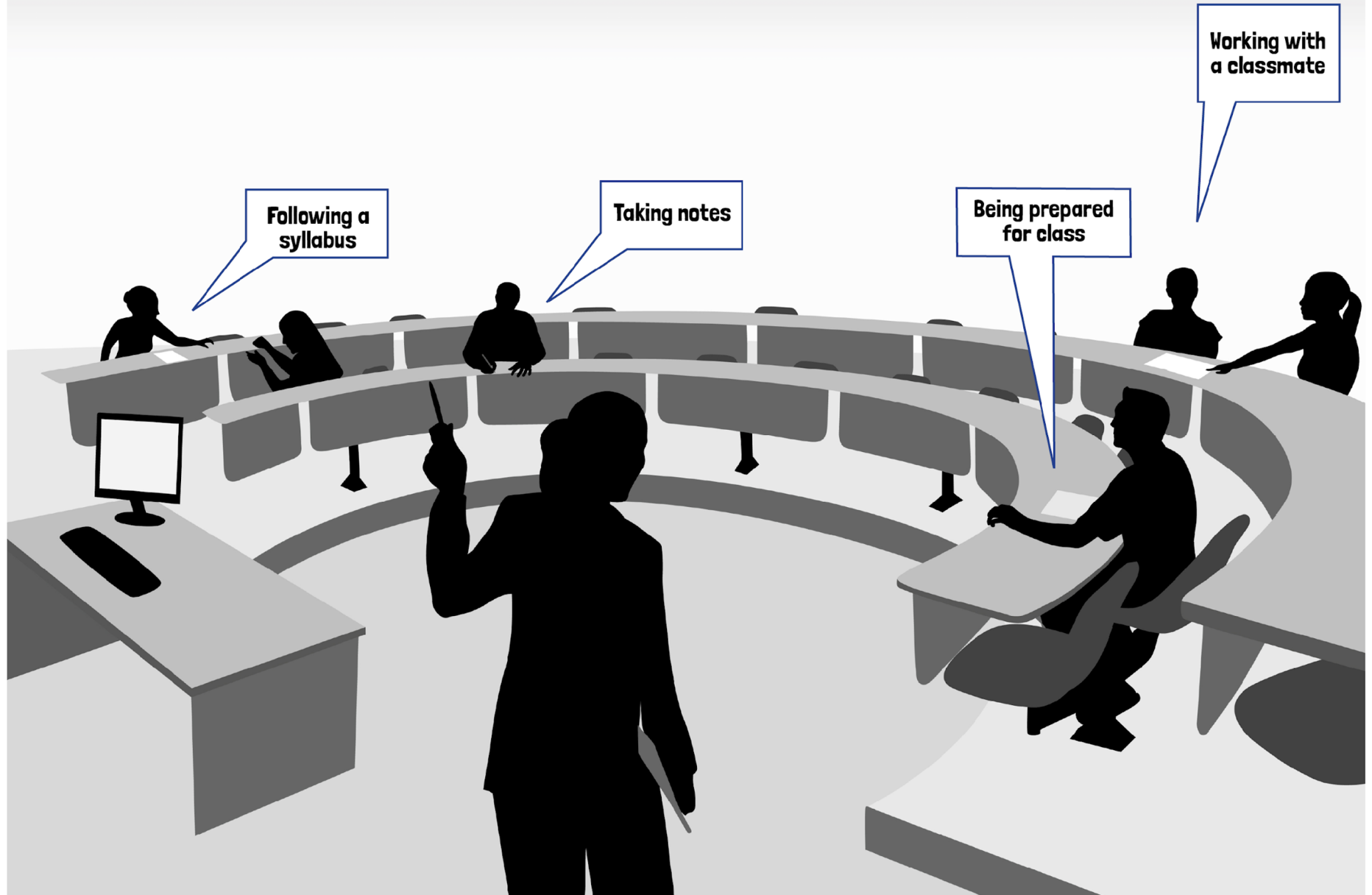
# College Campus



# College Campus Participation

College expectation	Secondary preparation
Getting to and from college	Early use of alternative public transport; apply for ADA/regional transit options. Build opportunities to plan travel to/from school
Navigating the campus	Build in opportunities to move about independently- increase duration, locations, time limits
Student Center	Create opportunities for students to plan their free time (e.g., meet friends, buy beverage/snack, managing campus card)
Disability Services	Review IEP for successful learning accommodation strategies/ self-identify disability
Academic Strategies Center/Adaptive Computer Lab	Build in opportunities to use accommodations rather than modifications/ review technology used in IHEs
Dining Center	Encourage students to buy lunch/ consider healthy choices/ socializing

# Academics



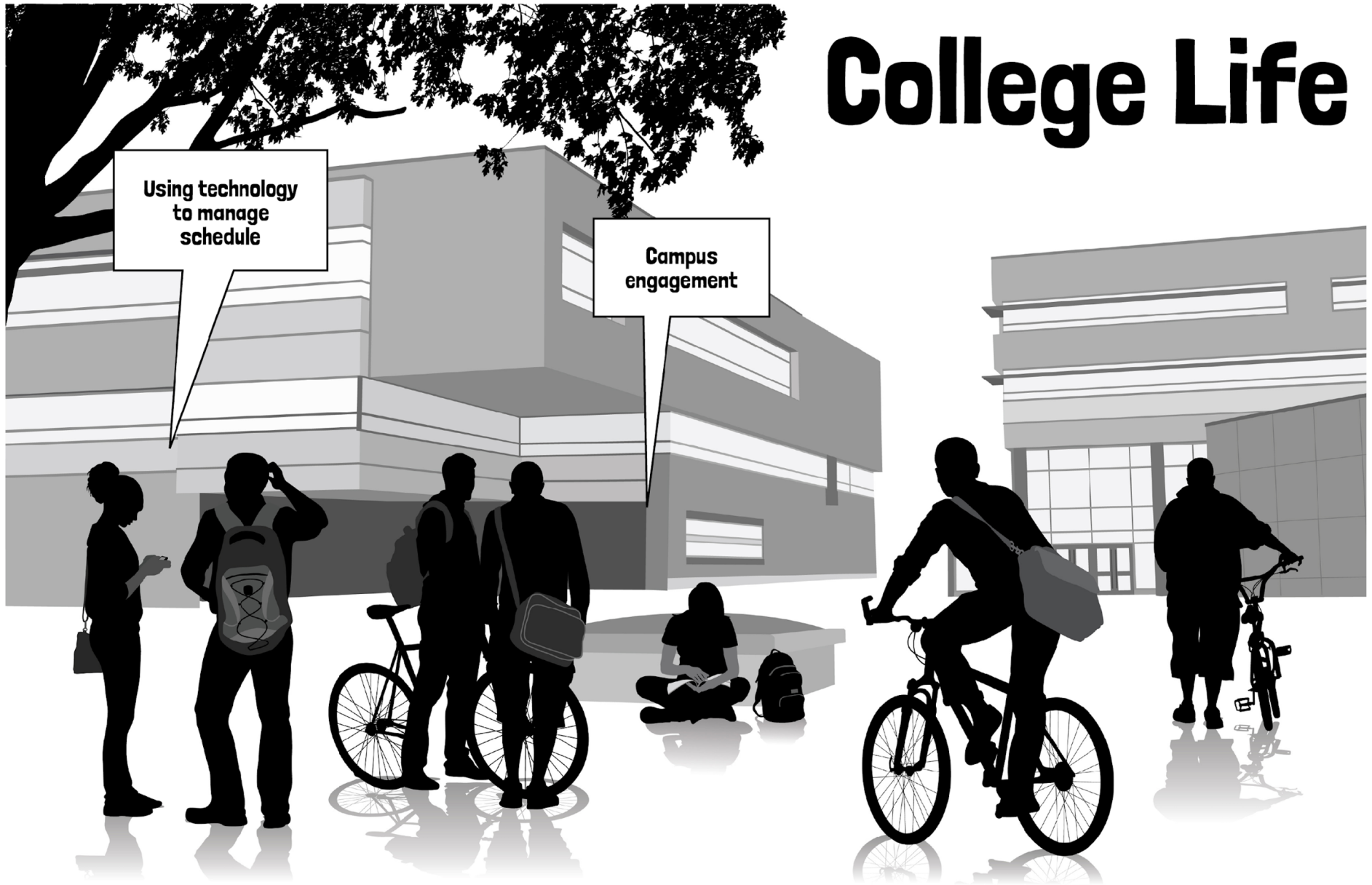
# Academic preparation

College expectation	Secondary preparation
Communicating with instructor	Discussing accommodations with teachers; discussing support; communication with teacher(e.g., absence, running late, set up meeting)
Following a syllabus	Reading and following a high school syllabus
Being prepared for class	Following checklist to complete prep: readings, notes, anticipated topics for discussion
Taking notes	Practice using smartpen (Livescribe), following and summarizing class discussions
Working with a classmate	Complete class projects with a partner; work in groups
Using learning management system (e.g. Blackboard, eLearning, PLATO)	Practice navigating with free tool such as Schoology

## Academic Support



# College Life





# College Life Participation

College expectation	Secondary preparation
Using technology to manage schedule	Build in opportunities for students to develop their own weekly schedule, make and record appts
Campus engagement: fitness center	Support students to build in fitness and sports as preferred and with a partner
Campus engagement: clubs	Support students to explore interests in high school or community clubs
Campus engagement: socializing/campus events	Assist students to engage in inclusive social activities in and out of school

# **Transition assessments, transition services and goals**



# Examples of transition assessment plans

<b>Carmen</b> (college, print shop job)	<b>Joseph</b> (college, dorm, office job)	<b>Dae</b> (college, apt, museum job)
<b>Task analysis</b> results: Traveling to school or college using bus and college shuttle	<b>Task analysis</b> results: Arranging own paratransit rides to and from school/college, home, work	<b>Text communications</b> with transition specialist: travel to school/college, internship, home
<b>Checklist</b> documenting accommodations used to complete reading assignments	<b>Record of weekly schedules</b> on his iPad to complete course assignments on time	<b>Observation notes</b> of student using accommodations to communicate with instructors, classmates, coach and peers
<b>Grades and assignments</b> from Intro to Graphic Arts class	<b>Grades and assignments</b> from Intro to Data Entry course	<b>Grades and assignments</b> from history course
<b>Results of social skills survey</b> administered over 5 days at school or college	<b>Results of independent living assessment</b> with consulting OT or IL staff	<b>Task analysis results:</b> Completing work at museum gift store

# Examples of other assessments used by transition and special ed staff

- **Student-Coach Agreement** (Helps students learn to direct their supports)
- **Kuder Navigator Career Assessment** (Offers a variety of career assessments)
- **Landmark's Guide to Assessing College Readiness** (Used to assess academic and executive function skills)
- **Work-Based Learning Plan** (Identifies soft skills needed for successful work experiences)
- **Transition Planning Inventory, 2nd Ed.** (Variety of informal assessments for multiple domain areas)
- **Person-Centered Planning** (Futures planning tool that relies on student's strengths and interests rather than perceived capabilities)
- **Informal tools** that represent college likes/dislikes/experiences, such as class observations, journals, checklists, photos of locations
- **CITE Learning Style Inventory** (Assessment tool to document learning styles)
- **ARC's Self Determination Scale** (Comprehensive self-determination assessment tool)
- **Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales** (Measurement of adaptive behaviors, coping with environmental changes, to learn everyday skills and to demonstrate independence)

## Transition services: FAPE and LRE; coordinated, results-oriented, accounts for student preferences, age-appropriate.

Student vision	Education	Employment/ training	Independent living
Carmen: college, print shop, travel	Intro to Graphic Art; writing courses	Working in a print shop 2 days a week	Learning to use public transportation
Transition specialist	X	X	X
Related services		X	X
Assistive technology	X	X	X
Career-Voc specialist		X	
Gen Ed or College coordinator	X		

## Annual goals: Related to transition services needs



- By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, Carmen will have successfully completed two classes that relate to her interest in graphics and printing.
- By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, Carmen will communicate with her teachers via email, text or in person discussions to discuss class concerns.
- By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, Carmen will navigate independently to attend her classes, eat lunch in the cafeteria and participate in two additional school activities each week such as a club meeting, tutoring or —service-learning activity.

# Related resources in the Think College Online Resource Library



- Wade's 2014 *Transition IEP Goals and Activities to Prepare for Inclusive Postsecondary Education*.
- Boyle's 2017 *Inclusive Dual Enrollment Student Evaluation Tool*
- Hart, Boyle, and Jones' 2017 *Foundational Skills for the College and Career Learning Plan*.

# **Paying for and saving for College**





# Resources

- [Federal Student Aid for Students with Intellectual Disabilities](#)
  - [Ruby's Rainbow: Scholarships for Students with Down Syndrome](#)
  - [O'Neill Tabani Enrichment Fund](#)
  - [Medicaid waivers \(some states\)](#)
  - [ABLE accounts for saving](#)
  - [PASS Plans – Plan for Achieving Self Support: A Social Security Program](#)
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## Family Resources



**As the parent or family member** of a young adult with intellectual disability, you may have heard a bit about Think College or seen videos or articles describing how students with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities are attending colleges and universities all over the United States.

We put this page together to respond to the most frequently asked questions that families have when first exploring and learning about college options. [Let us know](#) if you have more questions after reviewing these resources. We hope this page is a good start, and we are happy to help you find else you need as you learn more.

Pro tip: Families and students alike LOVE learning more about the options by looking at the college program listings in [College Search](#).



### Is College Possible?

These resources illustrate students with ID accessing college.

- Read some [Think College Stories](#) that share the perspectives of



### How to Prepare

Students in middle school and high school can be working on preparing for college!

- Suggested [IEP Goals](#) that help



### How to Apply

When students are applying to attend a college program for students with ID, there is typically a different admissions process than the one used by degree-

**For more information:**

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Institute for Community Inclusion

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thank you!