IECA

Collaboration Success: IECA, Applerouth, and the Possibility Project

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- A holistic approach
- Students with autism
- International students with LD
- College supports and accommodations

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Neuroscience and IECs

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INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Independent Educational Consultants Association

April/May 2017

Calendar

April 11
Webinar: The Gig Economy: Preparing High School Students for Careers in 2020

April 21–25
IECA at SACAC/TACAC/RMACAC Conference, San Antonio

April 23
Transitioning to Private Practice Pre-Conference Workshop, San Antonio

IECA at PCACAC Conference, Williamsburg, VA

May 9
Webinar: Better Grades in Less Time

May 8–10
Campus Tours, Colorado & Wyoming

May 10
Pre-Conference Workshops

May 10–13
IECA Spring Conference, Denver

May 13
IECA Board of Directors Meets

June 13
Webinar: TBA

Transitioning to Private Practice, Pre-Conference Workshop, WACAC

June 13–15
IECA at WACAC Conference, Visalia, CA

July 11
Webinar: Social and Cultural Transition for First Year LD Students

August 1–5
Summer Training Institute, Swarthmore College

August 11
Webinar: Counseling Students and Their Families in the Indian Market

Inside Insights

Securing Students' Success, not Admission, Makes IECA Unique

By Mark Sklarow, CEO, IECA

Recently, a small group of new independent educational consultants (IECs)—all college-focused—were gathered at an IECA event. Seeing me, they waved me over. Why, they wondered, did we not have the word *admission* in the organization's name? I noted that the word *admission* didn't appear in our name, our by-laws, our purpose statement, or any tag line at any point in our 40-year history. Jaws dropped.

*Is it better to be judged as successful in our work because of where students get **in**—or by how they progress, learn, and get **out**?*

To be sure, there are others who embrace that mantle. There are organizations with admission in their name, in fact more than 50 of them. There are others who refer to admission in tag lines that appear under their name and still more with admission in their mission statements. One group ignored the organization's own name, building their Twitter account around admission. What could possibly explain IECA's apparent omission?

Of course, admission—whether boarding schools, colleges, grad school, emotional or behavioral needs programs, even summer and gap opportunities—is the basis on which members work. But I would argue strenuously that admission is not our primary goal. The work of an IEC is not hyper-focused on getting an acceptance letter. Does any IECA member believe that our mission, our raison d'être, is to get our clients admitted? I can picture some readers' heads nodding. But hold on.

Is an IECA member's success judged at the moment an acceptance is received? Or is success judged once a student settles in and discovers they've landed at the right place? When the student—and the family—see that the student is growing, maturing, succeeding, and thriving

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President's Letter

Growing Pains and Possibilities

We would all agree that when families are puzzled by decision making for school, college, or therapeutic placements, one of the best investments they can make is to engage an independent educational consultant from IECA. The developmental challenges of adolescence, in particular, are best navigated with the support of a subject-matter expert who offers perspective, expertise, and strategy.

Like a student faced with the prospects of entering a new phase in his or her development, IECA is entering an exciting and yet complex stage in its growth. A 20% increase in membership over the past five years has yielded nearly 1,700 members, 10 staff members, and more than two dozen regional groups that span the globe. Although these accomplishments are a testament to the firm foundation established by our current and past leadership team, including CEO **Mark Sklarow** and his staff, Boards, and current and past volunteers, we must position ourselves for the next phase of our development.

To that end, this past month the Board requested and has received proposals from consultants who can assist us in the process of change. We are seeking a firm that specializes in change management within membership associations that can help us answer these and other questions:

- Is the organization properly structured to deliver on its promises to meet the increasingly complex and diverse needs of its membership?

Ann Rossbach

- How can our conferences and other regional meetings best meet our members' needs?
- How might members take fullest advantage of educational offerings and professional support?
- How can we increase our brand awareness among our members' potential clients and among all stakeholders?

Bringing in a consultant team is not a one-off "event," rather it will be an ongoing approach that requires continued vigilance in vision, strategy, and communication. We plan to start the study in mid-March and have data and recommendations in hand by

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IECA+ INSIGHTS

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In Focus

Six-year outcomes for the Fall 2010 cohort of degree-seeking students with first-time enrollment by institution type.

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC

(N=1,222,120)

- 49.5% Completed at Starting Institution
- 9.8% Completed at Different Four-Year Institution
- 3.2% Completed at Different Two-Year Institution
- 13.2% Still Enrolled
- 24.3% Not Enrolled

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE

(N=490,006)

- 60.9% Completed at Starting Institution
- 10.6% Completed at Different Four-Year Institution
- 2.4% Completed at Different Two-Year Institution
- 8.4% Still Enrolled
- 17.7% Not Enrolled

Source: Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates—Fall 2010 Cohort

Possibilities Abound: The Power of Collaboration

By Diana Cohen, Applerouth Tutoring Services

When the team at Applerouth Tutoring Services first read in *Insights* that IECA was providing pro bono college counseling to students through The Possibility Project, we were immediately inspired to also help support teens in the New York City after-school program. (*See "*Possibilities Abound*," Insights*, April/May 2015). We approached volunteers **Marilyn Emerson**, a former IECA president, and **Ann Rossbach**, the current IECA president, and offered to supplement IECA's college mentoring with a pro bono SAT class. Today, headed into our third year of collaboration, we're more excited than ever about the possibilities that abound when organizations work together for student success. We hope the story of our collaboration will provide guidance and inspiration for others in their efforts.

Three Organizations Come Together

One need only spend a minute on The Possibility Project's website to glimpse the amazing work the organization is doing for New York City teens. The program brings together students from all five boroughs of the city to write, produce, and perform an original musical based on the students' life stories and a vision for a better future. Theater serves as a vehicle to turn negative forces in the students' lives and communities into positive action.

"A key organizational goal is educational attainment," explained Meagan DuBois, the Possibility Project's artistic director and the liaison with IECA and Applerouth. The project's educational outcomes are excellent: 99% of participating 12th graders graduate from high school or attain a GED, and 92% from the Saturday and after-school programs go on to college. "We want the college attendance number to be at 100% for every student who wants it," said DuBois. "We also want to get our young people into their top-choice schools and with better financial aid."

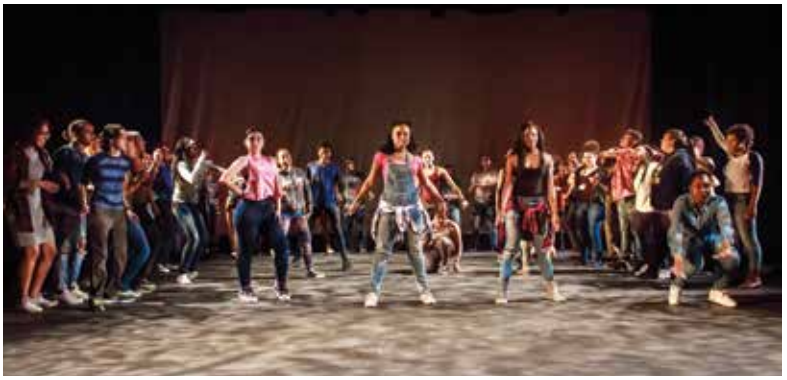
When The Possibility Project approached IECA several years ago about a one-time college admissions workshop, Emerson, then president, quickly identified the opportunity to do more. With the support of the IECA Board, she launched an effort to match Possibility Project students with IECA mentors. That effort has grown into a multi-faceted program that includes mentorships, college campus visits, a June workshop series with admissions representatives, and a fall SAT class with Applerouth. The Possibility Project also received an IECA Foundation microgrant in 2016.

Communication Makes It Work

Within a few weeks of Applerouth's offer to provide test preparation support, all parties were on a conference call to discuss everything from class schedules to a calculator drive. Emerson and Rossbach provided critical guidance on the timing for the class according to application deadlines and potential score goals, and DuBois helped us understand the student body and the program.

Armed with those insights, Applerouth identified tutor Jess Kelley-Madera—a Cornell graduate and performing artist who studies improvisational theater—as the instructor for the SAT class because she understood the value of the theater-based programming.

Improvisers, like Kelley-Madera and her Possibility Project students, are trained to listen and provide a valuable contribution to what's been stated. "Listening and understanding my students' lives is a role I take very seriously," she says. The shared love of improvisation has helped fuel the Applerouth SAT class. Because the students in the class all knew one another from their theater work, there was no need to break the ice.



The students' hard work and creativity pay off when they perform their material.

But the SAT class was not without its challenges. In the first year, students were still trying to orient themselves to the college admissions process, and they had many questions about the SAT's importance and necessity. Eager to ensure that each organization was delivering its unique expertise to the students, she shared her observations with the others.

Once again, the three organizations held a conference call to discuss what they'd learned and how they could enhance the program. We all agreed that an introduction to the college admissions process was needed as a precursor to the mentorship and SAT class. The IECA volunteers planned a summer workshop series that Emerson would lead throughout June. Kelley-Madera, who was gearing up for her second year of teaching the SAT class, attended the workshops to stay abreast of what her students were learning about admissions.

A Year in the Life of the Program

The enhanced collaboration proved to be very successful in 2016. The year kicked off with college tours in February. While touring Siena College, Emerson arranged for a former Possibility Project student and mentee to speak about her experience at the school. As DuBois observed, that connection is invaluable: "The college tours are important because they allow our teenagers to see that it's possible or realistic to go to college--that someone like them is at college and thriving, which makes their dream real."

The newly-added June workshop series built off that momentum, arming students with information about admissions, financial aid, and what to look for in a college. Admissions representatives from the University of Rochester, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Purdue, and NYU spoke at the workshops. After the series was over, Emerson met individually with each student to help them complete the Common Application. Each student then worked with an IECA volunteer mentor on the college essay.

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Success, from page 1

(my favorite word, as STI alumni know)? Is it better to be judged as successful in our work because of where students get **in**—or by how they progress, learn, and get **out**?

I understand the thrill that comes with an acceptance letter. I've been there with my own daughters. We cried; we exulted; we called relatives. But that moment is fleeting. What has stayed with my daughters—and your clients—is the joy of reflecting on how much the school, college, or program shaped them.

And one more thing: there are some out there who wonder about IECA being "split" with some IECs doing school advising, some therapeutic, some LD, some grad school, and 85% working in the college search and application area. I dismiss this split talk as nonsense. Because if we are an organization concerned about students succeeding, learning, maturing, and thriving rather than solely being admitted, then we had better recognize that so much more goes into our work than test scores, GPAs, and scattergrams.

How can we effectively advise students today without understanding the impact of emotional issues, such as executive functioning problems, depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and autism spectrum disorders? Can we effectively advise for success without caring about ADD, dyslexia, and scores of other identifiable learning issues? And what about the impact of a growing number of behaviors related to addiction to phones, online gaming, and substances? It is our ability to understand the entire child—the hopes and fears behind the GPA, the challenges and difficulties hidden behind the activities list, the personal struggles and successes—that makes our work significant.

It may be possible to secure admission to a school or college based on scores, numbers, and great essay advice, but securing success for a student requires a much deeper dive. And that's the unique basis of membership in IECA: expertise on what adolescents, teens, and young adults need to achieve success. We help students with admission, certainly, but we are so much more.

President's Letter, from page 2

June. Your participation is integral to the success of this goal. Some of you may be interviewed; others may be asked to participate in focus groups; *all* of you will be asked to complete a survey designed to provide data that will drive decision making about your membership.

As IECs, we know first-hand the value that a consultant can bring to problem solving. We also know that growth and change bring exciting opportunities. The Board invites you to be part of that process by engaging in this study with us and by celebrating our move through IECA's adolescence.

Ann Rossbach, MAT
IECA President

Possibilities Abound, from page 3

Reflecting on her experience teaching the SAT class after the June workshops were added, Kelley-Madera saw marked improvement for her students: "Everyone was clear on the purpose of the test and had rough goals in terms of scores....I had no reservations about the students getting to college and even being ahead of the process." DuBois also noticed that the 2016 cohort seemed more focused on their applications. "I had students contacting me in October for recommendations, saying, 'Hey, I'll need this by Thanksgiving,'" she said.

Tamia Young, a senior, works with Meagan Dubois, artistic director for The Possibility Project.

But the journey doesn't end with college admissions. "When students leave [The Possibility Project], they need to know what else is out there to support them . . . not being afraid to reach out [to adults] is critical," said DuBois, noting that the goal is to connect the teens with adult mentors and that IECA and Applerouth have helped support that important goal. For example, Tamia Young, a senior, recently consulted Kelley-Madera about whether to take the SAT again and decided to do so, reporting that "Jess thinks it's a great idea."

Tamia echoed the importance of having trusted people to help her with the process. "She wanted to get to know me and push me forward," she explained about her experience with Kelley-Madera. Tamia also appreciated that her IECA mentor asked questions that helped improve her essay—e.g., What's the turning point?—and provided same-day feedback on drafts. She was almost finished with her college applications when we spoke in January; she plans to study theater and is interested in attending college outside of New York City.

Looking to the Future

Everyone is buzzing about the future of the program and has ideas for further growth. The shared excitement about what we've done together should come as no surprise. As DuBois aptly observed, "The thread of all these organizations is the success of our young people."

If you'd like to help foster the success of this particular group of young people, please contact Marilyn Emerson about mentoring a Possibility Project student. Although efforts to help are sometimes met with a learning curve, they are also always met with great appreciation. We invite you to join us on the journey.

Diana Cohen can be reached at dcohen@applerouth.com.

A Holistic Approach to Preparation, Planning, and Placement for Students With LD

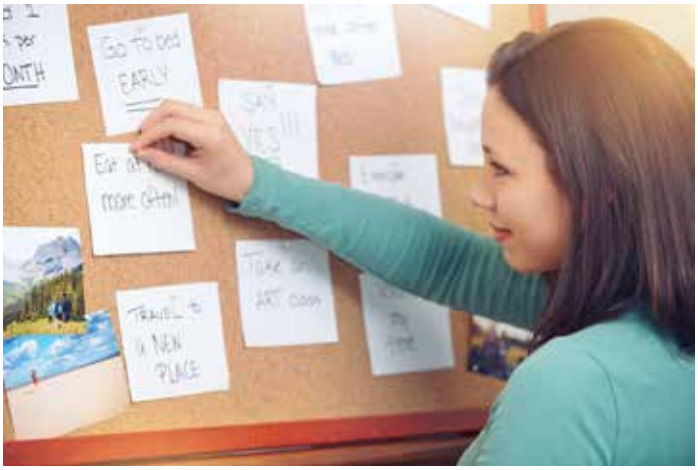
By Kyle Kane, JD, IECA (SC)

The last several years have seen a welcome increase in the number of students with learning challenges going off to a four-year college. Although students with learning disabilities attend at half the rate of the general population, they are beginning to recognize that they can also reap the benefits of participating in the traditional college experience.

That is the good news. The bad news is that just 34% of them will graduate in four years, which compares to the national average of 52% of their neurotypical peers (Sanford et al. 2011). That low completion rate is traumatic for the students who fail and expensive for their families. Although students with learning differences drop out of college for a variety of reasons, many of them are simply not prepared for the transition to college and independence.

As independent educational consultants (IECs), we must be leaders in the process of educating families, helping them identify areas of challenge, find resources to address those deficits, and develop practical plans for support in college. We can do this in many ways, including:

- **Guiding families and students to critically examine their academic skill level.** Families frequently overlook the all-important invisible academic skills, such as planning, writing, and studying. Do students understand how to plan for the completion of the assignment? Do they understand how to construct and execute an essay? Are they highlighting too much? Too little? These are areas that IECs become aware of when they work with students on their essays and applications. If students exhibit significant deficits, it is important to take steps to resolve them. High school is the time to target those issues.
- **Guiding families and students to evaluate their nonacademic skills, such as independence and social-emotional competence.** We help families identify areas of challenge as early as possible and use effective strategies to strengthen these essential skills. Being capable of handling money, taking medications, and socializing appropriately are important skills to have and must be practiced regularly in the safe setting of home under the guidance of families.
- **Helping students hone their self-advocacy skills.** The difference between accommodations in high school and college are significant. Students' IEPs do not follow them to college, and colleges are not required to seek out and accommodate students; instead, the responsibility lies with the student to access the accommodations and services they need to be successful. The difference is because colleges are governed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), not the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Given the freedom to choose whether to disclose a learning disability, most students choose not to disclose in college. In fact, only 17% of students eligible for disability services will register for them in college, although 94% of them used accommodations and services in high school (Cortiella and Horowitz 2014). To be successful, students must understand this difference, acknowledge their need for support, and practice exercising their self-advocacy skill muscles while in high school. We can help students practice throughout our process by talking to them frankly about strategies that help them succeed and encouraging them to use them.



- **Providing insight and advice about the appropriate level of college accommodations and support based on the psycho-educational or neuropsychological report and consultation with the psychologist.** Obviously psycho-educational and neuropsychology reports provide a perspective on the student that is highly valuable in evaluating student capabilities and readiness. But frequently families do not understand—or they misunderstand—the report in terms of the student's functional limitations and the implications for college placement. IECs can provide clarity and perspective to families that will help them make solid decisions about the best learning environment for their students.
- **Collaborating with the professionals in students' lives.** Although most professionals who work with students with learning challenges are focused on one specific aspect of need, IECs provide the 30,000-foot view of what is necessary for college and beyond. We are uniquely positioned to start the conversation about where the students are and where they need to be by graduation from high school. Gaining the insights of other professionals is also highly useful because it provides a depth of knowledge about the student that is important as IECs search for the best next step for students.

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Engineering, from page 7

- **Introducing tutors, coaches, and advocates who understand students' different learning styles.** It is often difficult for families to find tutors, coaches, and others who truly "get" their students. IECs work to develop a network of tutors, teachers, coaches, and advocates who bring the knowledge, creativity, and experience to effectively work with our students.

As IECs, we have a responsibility to do as much as we can to increase the college-readiness and college success of the young people we serve. We must approach our students in a holistic manner and ensure, as best we can, that they are prepared to succeed in college and beyond.

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Cortiella, Candace and Sheldon H. Horowitz. 2014. *The State of Learning Disabilities: Facts, Trends and Emerging Issues (Third Edition).* New York, NY: National Center for Learning Disabilities.

Sanford, Christopher, Lynn Newman, Mary Wagner, Renee Cameto, Anne-Marie Knokey, and Debra Shaver. *The Post High School Outcomes of Young Adults With Disabilities Up to 6 Years After High School: Key Findings, From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) (NCSER 2011-3004).* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Kyle Kane, The College Consulting Collaborative, can be reached at kyle@collegeLD.com.

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Advising Students on the Autism Spectrum

By Marci Schwartz, LCSW, PhD, IECA Associate (CA)

When working with students on the autism spectrum, it is important to understand the unique ways in which students are affected by the diagnosis. Because each student presents differently and has varying strengths and challenges, there is no one way to work with this population of students. There are certain steps, however, that an independent educational consultant (IEC) can take to ensure that they are understanding and supporting the needs of each student in an effort to locate the best college fit.

AUTISM AND ITS IMPACT

According to the 2015 *National Autism Indicators Report: Transition into Young Adulthood* (Roux et al. 2015), about 50,000 students with autism will graduate from high school in the United States each year. What was once a rare diagnosis can now be found in 1 in 68 children. Further exploration of the data indicates that 36% of young adults attended postsecondary education including two-year, four-year, and vocational programming. Considering this, it is likely that most IEC's will encounter a student on the autism spectrum at some point in their practice.

Understanding the incidence of students with autism who are seeking postsecondary education is just one piece to consider. It is also important to note that it is uncommon to find a student with only a diagnosis of autism without having an additional health or mental health condition. Sixty percent of the youth in the 2015 report by Roux et al. had at least two additional health or mental health conditions. This is crucial information for IECs to be aware of because those additional health and mental health conditions will need to be accounted for when working with students. Examples of cooccurring conditions include anxiety, depression, or ADHD, to name a few.

STEPS TO FINDING THE BEST COLLEGE FIT

To effectively work with students with autism to find the best college fit, IECs must be prepared to understand their unique needs for support in their transition to college.

Step One:Understand the Student

First, expand your knowledge and understanding of the student because there may be areas outside of the student's academic profile that should be taken into consideration when developing a college list. Understanding a student and how his or her disability creates challenges as well as how it positively affects the student is the best place to begin. Finding a good college fit for a student with a disability goes beyond knowing what a particular college's disability office has to offer. It will be a match between the student's strengths and challenges and how his or her unique characteristics match up with the services provided by a college. IECs must know the types of environments in which a student will likely thrive and the types of supports the student will need to be successful. Families will count on your extensive knowledge of the college environment as well as your ability to complement that knowledge with what you know about the student and his or her needs.

One way to understand the student is to obtain updated evaluations that delineate learning challenges and mental health issues as well as information on their independent living skills, executive functioning skills, processing speed, and numerous other areas of development that can have an effect on college success. Psychological assessments and neuropsychological assessments can offer comprehensive feedback to families that is important in guiding the transition to college. Understanding how a student sees and processes the world around him or her—not only academically but also in his or her ability to manage day-to-day experiences and tasks—cannot be overlooked.

Two key areas to ensure that you understand are the student's awareness of his or her disability and the student's ability to self-advocate. Most professionals in the field agree that a student's ability to self-advocate is crucial to success in a college setting. Students who are not able to make use of the services offered by a college because they do not have the skills to initiate and maintain contact with the service providers may struggle even at a college with excellent services available.

Step Two: Pull Together All the Information

As you get to know the student through an assessment, discussions with the student and parent, and contact with therapists or other professionals as needed, it is possible explore the elements of what will make a college a good fit for a student. Here is an example of a student any IEC may encounter:

In a first meeting with a junior and his parents, the student presents with a strong academic record and with a diagnosis of autism and anxiety. The family reports that the student receives tutoring several days a week for organizational skills as his only form of support outside of school. He receives extended time on tests, which is the only accommodation he is making use of at this time from his IEP. The student is excited for college and engaged in the process. The student reports that he has never been away from home and has a few friends that he plays video games with on weekends. When the student is asked about any challenges he might experience either at home or at school, he can articulate very few.

When working with such a student, ask questions to find out more about:

- His self-awareness and his ability to advocate for his needs while in a college setting. He may be fine, but it will be important to learn more as he articulated few areas of need.

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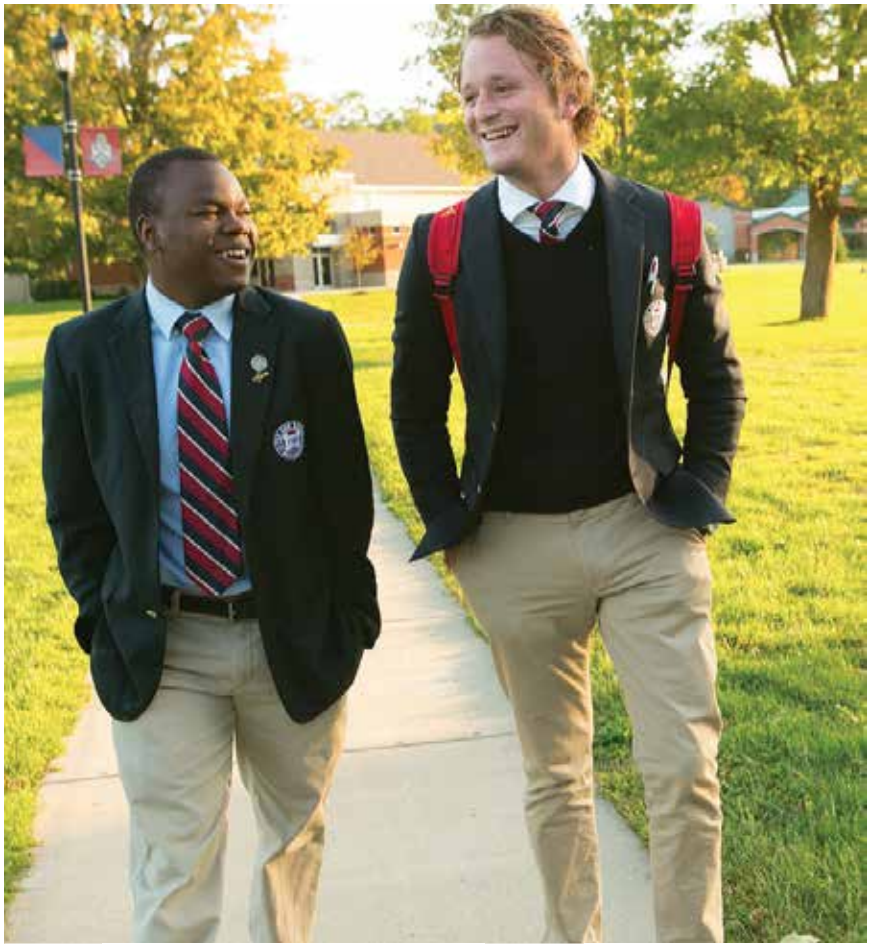

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Autism, from page 11

- The level of challenge he is experiencing with his organizational skills, and whether he has the appropriate resources (e.g., assistive technologies) to support his transition to college. For example, does he advocate for support when he sees the tutor, or does the tutor direct the work?
- His social and communications skills and how those challenges might play out in a college setting. It will be important to learn more about this based on his description of his interactions with peers.
- His anxiety and how it will be affected as he transitions to a new environment. Learning more about this will be important to ensure that anxiety does not become more of an issue if his environment changes. Because he has never been away from home, there are no experiences to draw information from.
- His functional living skills (e.g., independence in taking daily medication, doing laundry, personal hygiene, and so on) as well has his problem-solving skills in unstructured environments (e.g., a college party). For example, how much are the parents scaffolding regarding his daily living skills? How much is he independent in these areas?

In getting to know a student with these considerations in mind, it will be possible to get answers to the above questions partly from the results of an evaluation, but mostly from discussing these questions with the student and parent directly. From pulling these pieces together, it is then easier to explore college settings and supports that will be able to meet the needs of the student.

Step Three: Use Resources

A next step an IEC can take is having material available to guide the student on the transition from high school to college. The HEATH Resource Center at George Washington University offers great resources through their National Youth Transitions Center (*www.heath.gwu.edu/self-advocacy*). The information is very user-friendly and applicable for IECs who are working with students to understand the importance of self-advocacy in college. It provides information on how a student's college experience will be different from their high school experiences when it comes to accessing the support that they will need to be successful.

Landmark College has a wonderful assessment to help families explore areas of need for the student in an effort to identify skills for college success *(https://aea8transition.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/guide-to-assessing-college-readiness-v5pgs1.pdf*). Other areas that could be added to the Landmark College form are money management, personal hygiene, medication management, and the ability to independently meet individual nutritional needs, to name a few. The wonderful part about beginning to work with students when they are in grades 10 or 11 is that many of these areas of need can be addressed before it is time to leave for college. Working with parents to give the student more independence in preparing meals, doing laundry, or managing their money can be helpful, in addition to encouraging discussions about how to problem-solve social situations the student might encounter in a college setting (e.g., roommate issues and dating). Finding summer programs where the student can practice the skills they need or encouraging the student to take a community college class are also options to consider.

Step Four: Be Open to Where the Process Will Lead

Some students might realize over time that they could benefit from a gap year at a bridge program to help them be prepared for their college experience. Other students might realize that they could benefit from a transitional program that some colleges offer to support the students becoming comfortable on campus before the other students arrive and classes begin all at once. Students with autism and other learning differences want to feel understood for who they are and what they want while you guide them through the supportive resources that will help them make the difficult but exciting transition into college and adulthood. Each student will have his or her own path to success. Our job as IECs is to help them along the path of transition in a way that is meaningful not only to their present but also to their future.

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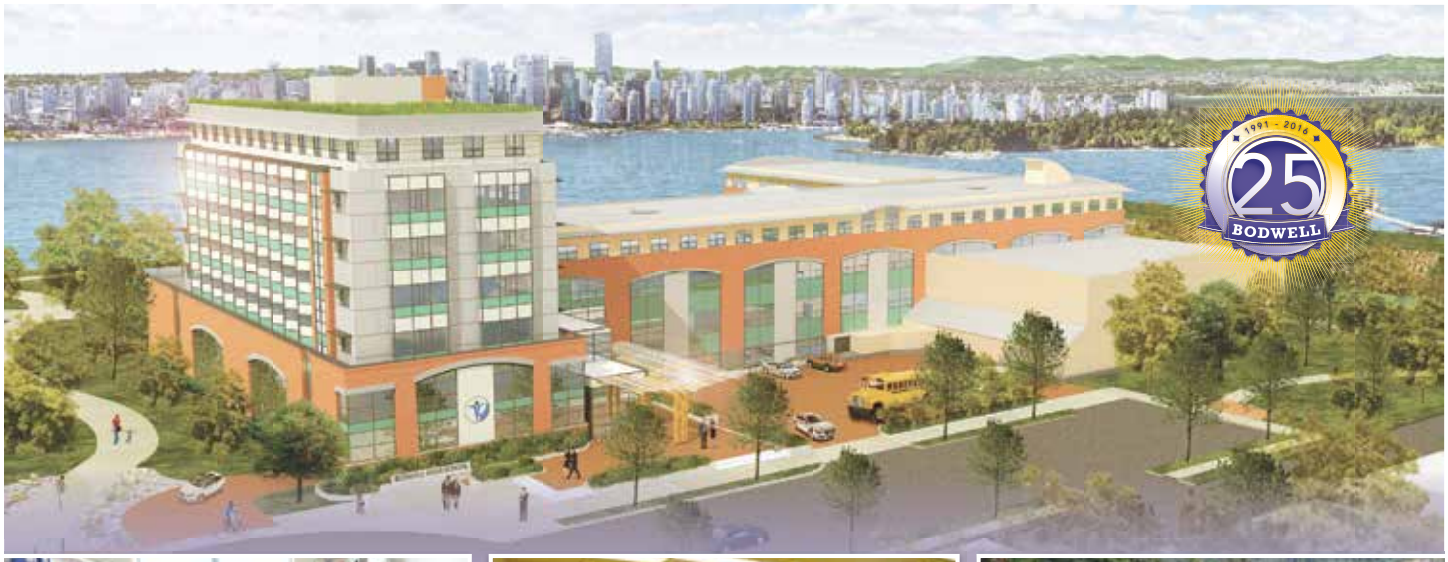

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International Students With Learning Disabilities: What IECs Need to Know

By Rebecca Grappo, MEd, IECA (CO)

Without a doubt, one of the factors that makes a US education attractive to students around the world is the way students with learning differences can be supported. This holds true whether one is discussing support through IEPs and 504 plans in public schools; learning support centers in independent schools, including boarding schools; or higher education in colleges and universities throughout the country. Obviously, the level and quality of support can vary, and that is why international students find the services of an independent educational consultant (IEC) indispensable to navigate the landscape of services.

Top Priorities

What do IECs need to know when working with international students? In talking with various colleagues who work across borders, the following areas are those that need the most attention.

RELIABLE PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL TESTING

Does the student come with reliable psycho-educational testing? The first things to look for in testing are the date of the testing, the measurements used, and the credentials of the person doing the evaluation.

- Is the testing recent or does the student need an updated evaluation?
- Which measurements were used in the evaluation? How comprehensive is it? Are there measures for both cognitive strengths and deficits as well as academic achievement? How deep did the testing go? Does the testing also address the psycho-social needs of the student and developmental history? Does the testing have a clear diagnosis, summary, and recommendations?
- Where and how was the evaluator trained? Different countries have varying standards and licensing requirements for the administration of psycho-educational testing. In our practice, we have seen some excellent evaluations by practitioners overseas but also some very substandard work by those who might possess a bachelor's degree in psychology but have no formal training in testing.

There are instances in which the student and family will need to travel to another location to find someone truly qualified to administer the evaluation. If we feel the next round of evaluations will yield inadequate findings, we will urge our families to put off testing until an evaluation can be scheduled with someone we know and trust. And sometimes we rely on our international colleagues to help us find the right person to do the evaluation.

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THOROUGH INTAKE PROCESS

Is the intake process thorough enough that you do not miss an important piece of the puzzle? Very often, working with international families means that we are working remotely with a child or an adolescent we have not met in person. Therefore, it is crucial to use additional screening to attempt to assess the situation fully. The intake questionnaires should be thorough and ask questions that might lead to further clarification. From asking direct questions about previous history with learning issues to the more-subtle questions that ask about the child or teen's friends and peer group, the IEC can learn a lot just by listening to cues. Keep your antennae up and listen for "red flags," i.e., things related to friends and social communication; school attendance; and relationships with family members, teachers, and even household staff.

A good questionnaire might ask parents and students about their perception of the student's strengths and challenges. It's easy to focus on the challenges, but it's also important to focus on a strength-based approach. **Sandy Furth** (CO) of World Student Support asks students what a school would look like if they could create their own and has them write a fictional letter to their teacher with what they want him or her to know.

Getting a good intake is bit like detective work. Dig deep—important information might not come out in the first session. Look for what the parents don't say as much as what they do say. Watch for subtle clues that might indicate that vital information might be withheld. This is understandable if the family is coming from an environment in which bad news is frequently suppressed out of fear that telling the truth might bar them from entry into a new school. It's up to the consultant to allay the parental fears so that they truly begin to trust those who will work in the new school setting.

Lastly, beware of when a supposed LD case is really straying into therapeutic territory. When a consultant gets a call to help the family find a new school, it's important to be alert to signs that perhaps there is also a mental health or substance use issue at play. No one wants to be responsible for sending a student to a school that can't meet his or her needs, so it's important to have a very clear picture of what those needs truly are.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Are you sensitive to the cultural considerations inherent in working with people who might have very different value and belief systems? Those who work with international students agree that often the most difficult part of the case is working across cultures. Hearing the news that something is "wrong" with their child is not always well-received. Or maybe the family has approached the consultant for help, but still is not ready to hear the unvarnished truth. But we can't avoid it just because it's unpleasant if we really want to make the appropriate placement or college list recommendations.

"You have to tread lightly sometimes and think about where they're coming from. Sometimes confronting a learning issue is new to a culture and doesn't sit well with the family right away," Furth said. "Often 'learning disabilities' is a very foreign concept and they need someone to walk them through it and make them understand that their child will make it through this and do beautifully."

Interactions between consultants and students and families are influenced by each participant's own cultures. For example, Americans tend to be direct in communication, and some cultures are not used to such directness. They may react with nods and appear to assent so as to not offend. It may even seem like the meeting has gone well and everyone is on board with the consultant's plan. But not so fast! Pleasant agreement does not mean that students and families will follow through. In some cultures, particularly in Asia, people are very deferential and respectful to anyone in authority, especially those in education. In the Middle East, one might hear a nod of the head and the word, *Inshallah* (God willing). *Inshallah* may have many hidden meanings from yes, to maybe, to no-way-but-I'm-not-going-to-tell-you-no-to-your-face. Other cultures may not show the same level of respect for professional expertise. The IEC needs to interpret what is not being said as well as what is not being said. Therefore, it is important to find a cultural interpreter if the you are new to a culture.

Many families also rely on larger spheres of influence within their own families. In the United States, for example, parents are the ones who unilaterally make most decisions. But in other cultures, the role of the extended family is much more important. You may think that you have reached agreement with a student and parent on a course

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of action only to find out that the extended family "council" nixes the recommendations.

Another cultural consideration might also have to do with the denial of the diagnosis and the resulting shame. It is so important to save face with family, social contacts, and peers, so it is not unusual to see some families minimize the results of the most sophisticated of findings. You might be called upon to engage in extensive education and summon extra reserves of patience when dealing with someone whose cultural orientation is very different from your own. "People don't like to lose face," added Furth.

Heidi Molbak (LA) shared her insights into working with international families. "Because learning disabilities can be misunderstood as a personal deficit, it helps the family to know we can show them schools that recognize and teach to their children's strengths while helping them with their challenges."

VISA CONCERNS

Have you considered the visa issues in placement recommendations? When making recommendations for school placements, it's also very important to consider whether the school is SEVIS approved and can issue the I-20, the document used to get a student visa.

General Advice

There are general considerations for working with any international student whose language and culture are different from those where he or she may attend school. The following advice is helpful for working with international families and students:

- When speaking with parents whose first language may not be English, be aware that speaking and understanding a foreign language on the telephone can be very difficult at times. Without being patronizing, it's helpful to slow down the pace of speech a bit, enunciate words, and avoid the use of slang or popular expressions that may be difficult for the nonnative speaker to understand.
- Make sure parents know what kind of expenses they might incur before going down the contractual road.
- Online learning might provide just the solution needed. Molbak is an advocate of online learning. She stated, "High quality, personalized online learning is increasingly opening up options for international children by offering both accommodation and remediation of some specific learning disabilities as well as helping with attention deficits. By no means is this effective across all students with all challenges, but I have found some older children who are distracted by an in-person classroom report being able to focus much better through synchronous online teaching and tutoring."
- SSAT, TOEFL, SAT, and ACT testing may be more difficult to obtain overseas than in the United States. Test-taking opportunities are not as frequent and there are no FLEX tests given outside the US, so be sure to plan well in advance if any of those exams are required, especially if the student plans to apply for accommodations.
- College clients require special considerations. Much of what is said here is also true for students applying to university, but the assessment piece is perhaps even more important, because the student will be independent in a college setting. It's important to assess college readiness in addition to the support that will be needed so young adults are not put in situations that are over their heads. You might also work with the student to help him or her understand how to access appropriate support resources in a college setting.

Challenge and Reward

In sum, working with families around the globe is tremendously challenging but also tremendously rewarding. The key is for an IEC is to be prepared for the unexpected and be ready to step in with consulting that will help the student and family find just the right environment where the student will thrive. When the student finds the right setting, you can sit back and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you helped bring light and hope to a student who might have been despairing of ever achieving academic progress. It just doesn't get any better than that!

Rebecca Grappo, RNG International Educational Consultants LLC, can be reached at becky.grappo@gmail.com.

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Details Matter: Advising College Students about Campus Supports

By Casey Schmalacker, Long Island Coordinator, and Samantha Feinman, Director, New Frontiers in Learning

The college search process can be a difficult one for students, especially those diagnosed with various learning differences. Independent educational consultants (IECs) who work with students with unique learning challenges are charged with the task of addressing each individual student's unique strengths and needs in their college search and choice process. IECs have the dual responsibility of helping students research schools that take into consideration both the same factors that apply to all students—i.e., school culture, majors offered, distance from home, large vs. small university, and so on—as well as those that address the students' unique needs for reasonable accommodations, access to academic tutoring, executive functioning support, and more. Each institution has its own system of accommodations to meet the diverse learning needs of enrolled students, so IECs, students, and parents need to know the best questions to ask to avoid confusion about what colleges and universities offer.

Exam Accommodations

Exam accommodations are common for students who can provide documentation that supports their slower processing speeds, susceptibility to distraction, and need for a longer testing time to demonstrate knowledge. Accommodations may include extended time, distraction-reduced environment, readers or scribes, and computer access.

If such accommodations are approved and on record at the school, students will be responsible for accessing them. Some questions that IECs and students should ask the following questions:

- What is the system for setting up exams?
- Does the school use an online system to sign up for accommodations?
- Must the professor sign off on each exam prior to taking it?
- How long before an exam must the accommodations be set up?
- Can all the exams be set up at the same time?
- How does the disability office receive the exam?
- How many slots to take exams are available at any given time?

Understanding the exam accommodations process from start to finish can help avoid situations where students are unable to access such resources because of poor planning. Students can develop their own systems that work within the parameters of the institutions' systems to ensure that they are able to access the testing accommodations.

Classroom Accommodations

Classroom accommodations, which may include notes, notetakers, audio recording, and e-texts, are sometimes offered to students who demonstrate a deficit in putting content down on paper. That includes deficits that affect attention, auditory processing, or visual processing. Some schools offer notetaking services, where a student in the class takes notes for students with such an approved accommodation.

Assistive technology options allow for audio recording in the classroom. Those services allow students to record audio files of lectures to review after class. Students who succeed with this support must have the initiative and follow-through skills to go back and listen to the lecture to pull out information that was missed the first time around.

Textbook accommodations are also offered to assist students who struggle with reading. Audible, an e-book service, is offered on some campuses, as is support from organizations like Learning Ally.

Assigned books may or may not be available through these resources. Colleges sometimes also offer text-to-speech software like *Read & Write* to decode certain documents and texts that are not available through other technology. Some questions regarding classroom accommodations include:

- What systems are offered to assist students (i.e., notetakers, audio recording accommodations, notes in an alternate format, etc.)?

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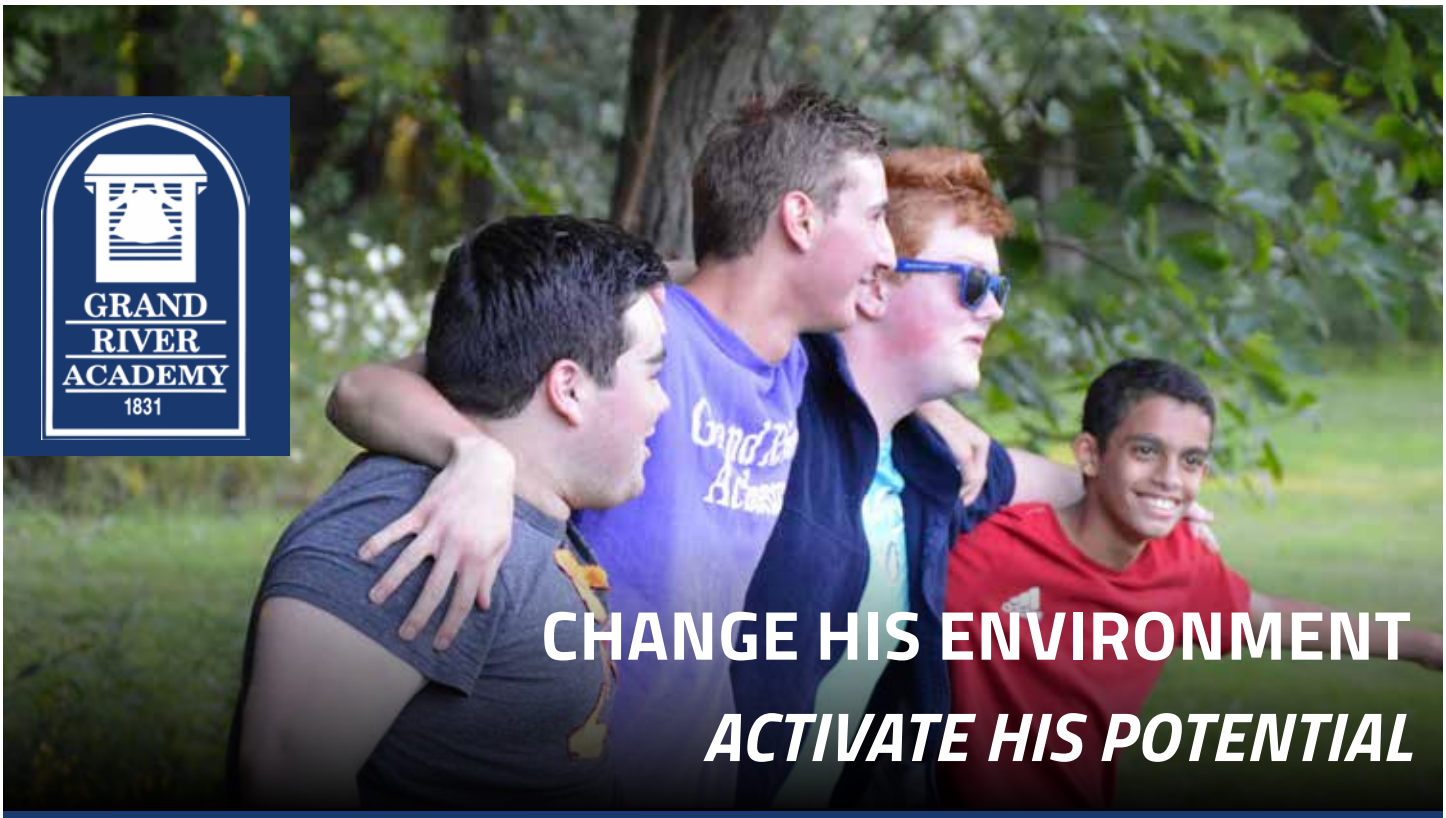

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Campus Supports, from page 21

- What is the system for receiving notes? Is an online platform used? Do students share notes directly with one another?
- If a student receives incomplete or poorly transcribed notes, who can they turn to for accountability?
- If audio recording is offered, is this in place of a notetaker?
- Does the school provide the technology for audio recording?
- What textbook accommodations are offered? What if a required textbook is not available on the offered service?
- What service is offered to assist with the reading of .pdf files and other scanned documents?

Different forms of accommodations are appropriate for different types of students. These questions will also help ensure that a student understands the follow through necessary to receive the accommodations. Rather than assuming that accommodations will be the same as in high school, students and families must prepare for a new type of accommodation system.

Advisement Accommodations

Advisement accommodations, such as course substitutions and reduced course load, are offered to students with a variety of learning differences, and course substitutions are offered on a case-by-case basis. Often course substitutions are offered to students with language-based disabilities to substitute alternative classes in place of foreign language requirements. Reduced course loads are also offered to students who demonstrate difficulty managing a full course load. This accommodation is especially important when a student takes a reduced course load to ensure that he or she is eligible for all the benefits offered to a full-time student. Questions to consider include:

- Are course substitutions offered, and, if so, what documentation is necessary to receive them?
- When will the substitutions become apparent on the transcript?
- What courses need to be completed in place of the substitution?
- Are part-time students and full-time students treated differently?
- Does a reduced course load accommodation allow for a student to maintain full-time status?
- Will a reduced course load affect registration time, housing, or access to other on-campus services?

By understanding advisement accommodations and course substitutions before choosing a college, students can make the best decision as to whether they will be able to succeed on a campus.

Finding and choosing the appropriate schools for students with various learning differences requires an understanding of the caveats of services and accommodations at each individual school. Asking the right questions can help students find the school that fits their individual learning profile best.

Casey Schmalacker and Samantha Feinman can be reached at info@nfil.net.

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Neuroscience in Consulting: Instilling Hope With Research

By Helen H. Waldron, MEd, Educational Therapist, Leadership Team, FlexSchool Inc.

A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.
—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

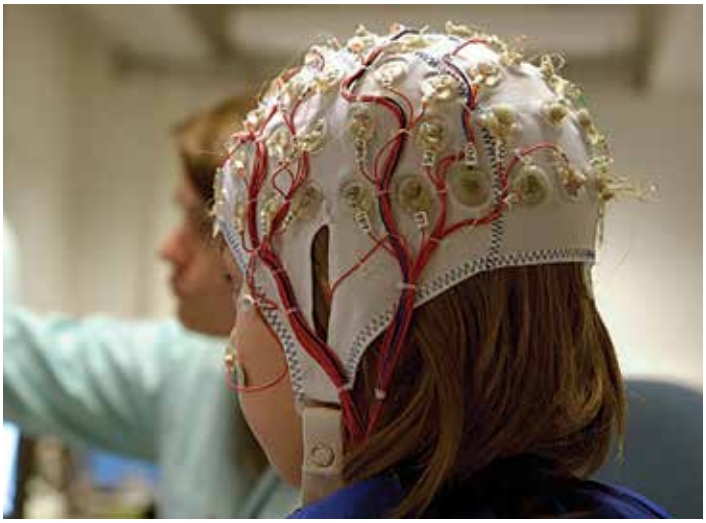
Scientists used to believe that our brains were hardwired at birth. Back in the 80s when I studied psychology, professors taught us that we are born with a finite number of brain cells and that once dead, a brain cell cannot regenerate. They told us that plasticity occurs in early childhood, and when adulthood is reached, a state of "neural decline" begins. Tuition refund please!

Not long after I graduated, pioneering brain researchers found otherwise. The advent of brain scans provided a window into the brain's neural activity. Researchers were seeing unexpected changes in brain activity while studying innovative solutions for stroke recovery and deafness. The scans revealed that the brains of their patients were rewiring in radical ways that confounded the idea of a hardwired brain.

In the mid-90s brain "maps" were identified, and in 1998, a study in *Nature* showed that neurogenesis is possible in adults. Regardless of age, our brain can adapt to changing environmental stimuli. This is called *neuroplasticity*, and it is the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life. Dr. Judy Willis (2017), a neurologist and authority on brain research regarding learning, provided further insight:

> Neuroplasticity is equal opportunity. The process doesn't come as quickly to some—there are kids whose brains are more responsive and get neuroplasticity going sooner," but students need to believe that, because of neuroplasticity, past performance is not a limitation on the future.

In my work with families, I try to stretch their thinking by sharing some of this work. After a diagnosis of a learning difference, most



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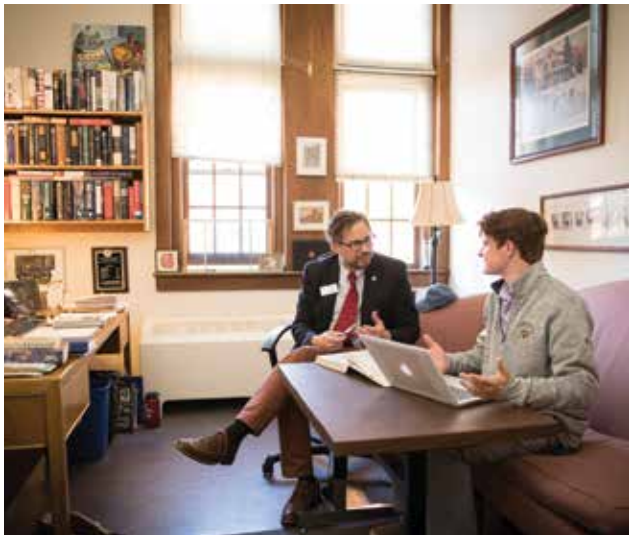

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parents feel devastated and confused. They wonder, What did we do wrong? Will she ever learn? Will he go to college? The child often feels overwhelmed, ashamed, and afraid and may wonder, Does this mean I am dumb? Why can't I just be like everyone else?

Independent educational consultants (IECs) are often the ones unpacking those feelings with parents and children and are uniquely positioned to provide a strong message of hope. One way to broaden your clients' perspectives and reduce fear is to use neuroscience research. That can be the first step toward building a productive relationship with the family and helping the them feel more confident about the future.

Sharing Accessible Research

As an educational therapist, I've found the studies on mind-set most accessible to my students. We have heard about the work of Carol Dweck and her colleagues at Stanford, but our families most often have not. I like to share those findings with my students—whom I find them to be very receptive and curious about the brain—before we begin our work.

Dweck (2006) and her colleagues have demonstrated that everyone has a mind-set—a "core belief about how [they] learn" that affects learning behaviors which in turn create learning outcomes. Folks with a growth mind-set believe that with hard work, the brain can learn better. Those with a fixed mind-set believe that you can't change your intelligence, or smartness. The good news is that changing our mind-set and believing we can learn better will change the learning pathways (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007) and allow us to achieve at higher levels. That is great news for our families.

For example, one of the mind-set studies provided a survey to seventh-grade students that measured their mind-set. For two years, researchers monitored their mathematics achievement. The results were remarkable, showing that students with a fixed mind-set stayed constant, but those with a growth mind-set improved their grades. (Blackwell et al. 2007)

A related study showed the relationship between what we believe and brain activity. Using brain scans, researchers discovered that when a mistake was made, subjects with a growth mind-set had more brain activity than those with a fixed mind-set. Those with a growth mind-set also had more awareness of errors than those with a fixed mind-set. The growth mind-set subjects went back and corrected mistakes and the fixed mind-set subjects did not. (Mangels et al. 2006)

Being Mindful About Our Mind-Set

Before sharing this research with families, tune into your own mind-set. Do you use words that speak to a flexible mind-set? Those words should focus on the process, not a fixed concept. For example, someone with a flexible mind-set says, "I can tell you've been practicing," instead of "You are so smart!" Instead of saying "You are so creative," we say "You've found a really good way to build that." Once we are sure that we have a growth mind-set, we can bring the concept into our work. Dweck reminded us that the process will take time and encouraged us to "have a growth mind-set about developing a growth mind-set!"

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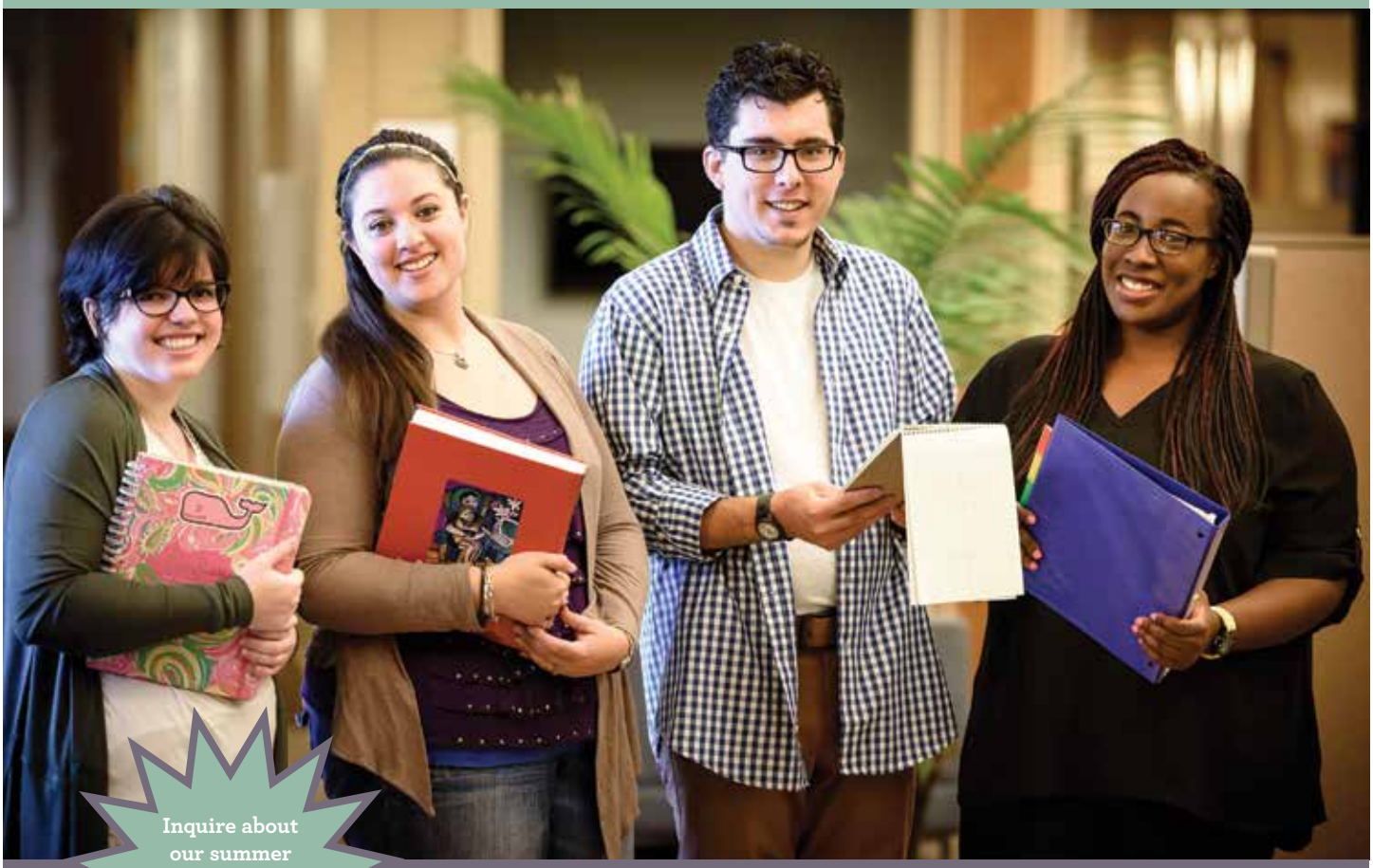
Open Doors to Opportunity



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Once the family embraces this new concept, encourage them to practice. They, too, must start with developing a growth mind-set. I share the following advice with my students and their parents:

Learn about the brain together. Discover how neurons work and connect when we learn. Teach and remind children that as the brain learns, neurons relay information faster and more efficiently. Neurons become "wired" together. Those connections are strengthened with practice, such as participating in learning and asking questions. Children are empowered by learning that they have control over their growing brains.

Praise the process. Dweck (2006) urged parents and teachers to praise the *process* and *strategies for effort*, not intelligence. She suggested these phrases:

- Wow, you really practiced that, and look how you've improved.
- See, you studied more and your grade on this test is higher.
- You tried different strategies and you figured out how to solve the problem.
- You stuck to this and now you really understand it.

Stress that mistakes are opportunities. Help children see mistakes as feedback, not failure. Mind your words and actions while you model this for them. When working outside of our comfort zone, mistakes are part of the experience. Even better, Dweck and her researchers found that learning is enhanced by mistakes. When students learn to try new approaches after a mistake, they learn to do things differently. My students know that when they report, "I can't do this," I will have them rephrase that thought with a "yet" at the end. They learn to say, "I can't do this, yet, but with more practice, soon."

The brain is much more malleable than we once believed. Neuroplasticity provides a new lens through which we understand learning. I've only scratched the surface of the research because the work on growth mind-set is both deep and wide. But when we invite our clients to share our interest in neuroscience, we open up a new world of possibility.

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Additional Resources

Mindset: How You Can Fulfill Your Potential by Carol Dweck

Your Fantastic Elastic Brain by Jo Ann Deak, PhD

www.mindsetworks.com

Helen Waldron can be reached at helenwaldron93@gmail.com.

Why Trauma-Based Anxiety Presents Like ADHD

By Bob Burroughs, PhD, academic consultant

As a consultant with adopted children myself, I often placed adopted clients in therapeutic schools and treatment centers. Many of those clients were adopted from foreign orphanages at later ages and had experienced a good deal of trauma before and after entering an orphanage. Some of those clients involved kinship adoptions in which clients lost their parents and were placed with less-than-ideal relatives. In almost all cases, clients were diagnosed with ADHD and other learning difficulties.

As the academic director at Calo, a residential treatment center for adopted and traumatized children and teenagers, I saw much the same thing. Almost every student's testing that passed my desk listed ADHD as at least one of the client's diagnoses. Although many of those students certainly had behaviors that looked like ADHD, the uniformity of diagnoses gave me pause. Why did so much ADHD seem to be associated with adoption?

I don't have the definitive answer to that question, but I would like to share some educated guesses. First, it is worth noting that ADHD often looks a lot like anxiety does in a classroom. Anxious students are often scanning their environments or brooding on internal worries, affecting their abilities to concentrate or focus on a teacher or a classroom activity. Adoption itself involves a form of trauma, as Nancy Verrier makes clear in *The Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child* (Gateway Press 2003). But trauma, especially prolonged developmental trauma like abuse or neglect, almost always produces anxiety. The majority of the students I encountered at Calo had experienced such trauma.

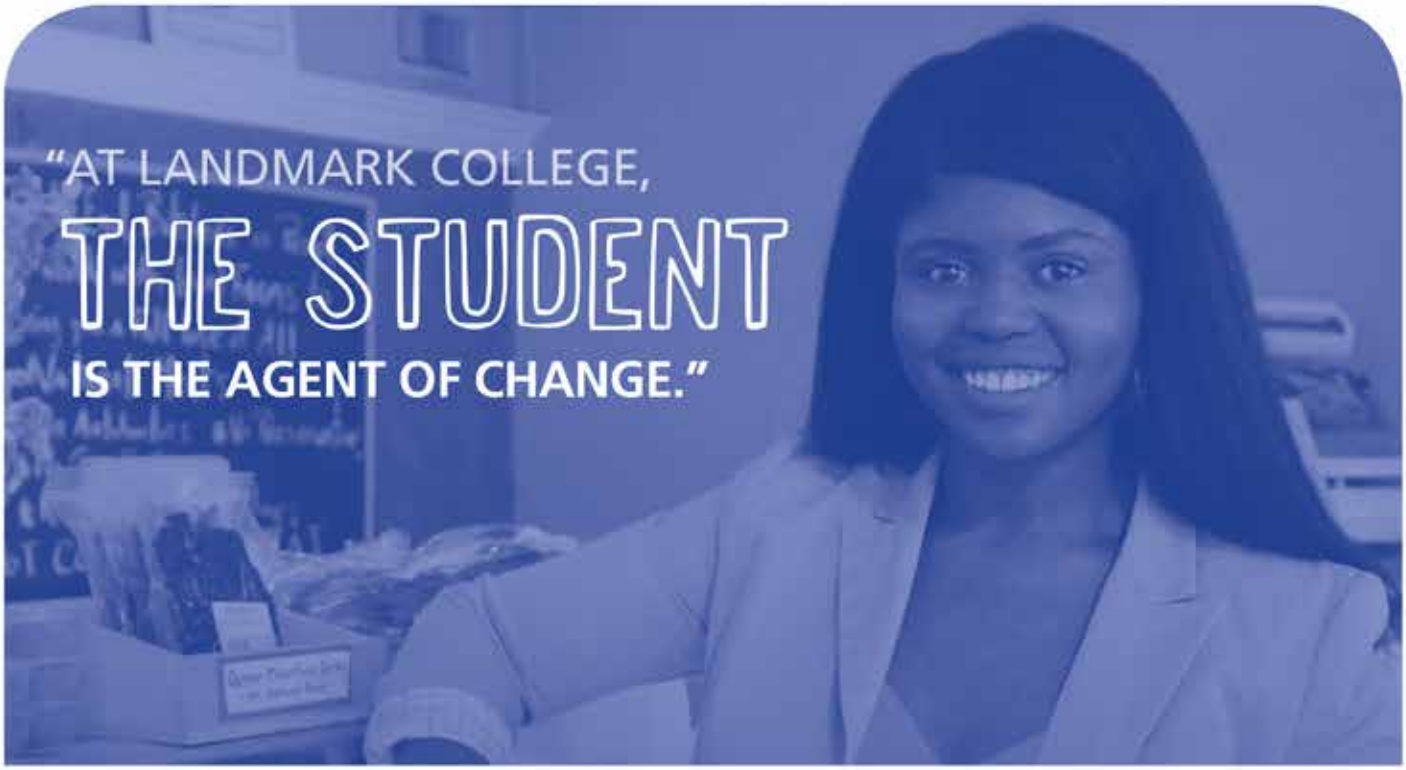
The Prevalence of Trauma

Developmental trauma is more common and destructive than we may think. Studies by the federal government's Center for Disease Control (CDC) puts trauma exposure at about 25% of the US population. All geographic areas of the country and all social classes of population are affected. Trauma affects general health, learning, work, and relationships. The evidence for these conclusions comes from the landmark research in 1997 of the *Adverse Childhood Events (ACE)* study conducted by CDC researchers and doctors at Kaiser Permanente hospitals in California (see *www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html*).

ACE was a large-sample survey (over 17,000 respondents) of middle-class adults in San Diego, roughly split between genders. Researchers asked survey participants about 10 specific adverse childhood events (ACES) that fell into the general categories of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. Specific household factors included mental illness, incarcerated relative, mother treated violently, substance abuse, and divorce. Results showed that 28% of respondents reported physical abuse and 20% reported sexual abuse during childhood. (More men reported physical abuse and more women reported sexual abuse.) Almost 10% reported physical neglect, 27% reported substance abuse, and 19% reported mental illness. Since 1997, those findings have been replicated in studies of other geographical areas and social classes.

What was and continues to be stunning about those findings is not just the extent of such trauma, but the toll that it takes on health and mental wellness. ACEs are often comorbid: 40% of respondents report at least 2 of the 10 ACEs. Moreover, ACEs have a dose-response relationship with health problems; that is, the more ACEs, the greater the effect on health. For example, ACEs correlate highly with risky behaviors like smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, promiscuity, and severe obesity. Moreover, ACEs are correlated with ill-health conditions like heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and shortened life span. Respondents who report 4 ACEs are seven

continued on page 33



"At LC, techniques like active reading enabled me to comprehend and stay engaged with my reading and writing. These were critical to my successful internship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and my ultimate job offer there."

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Landmark College will provide free bus transportation from Boston to its campus in Putney, Vermont, on

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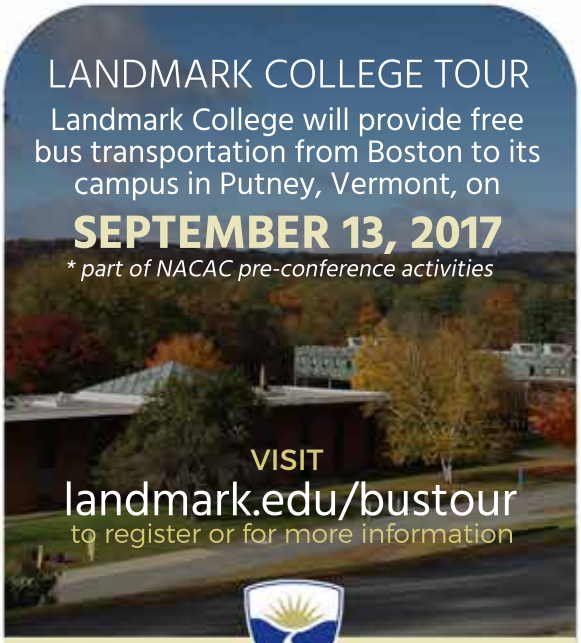
** part of NACAC pre-conference activities*



VISIT

landmark.edu/bustour

to register or for more information

LANDMARK COLLEGE

Putney, Vermont

Trauma-Based Anxiety, from page 31

times more likely to suffer from alcoholism, twice as likely to suffer from cancer, and four times more likely to have emphysema than a respondent with 0 ACEs. Finally, ACEs can be lethal: with an ACE score of 6, one is thirty times more likely to attempt suicide.

As might be expected, ACEs have profound effects on learning and are correlated with school problems, often a major reason that families seek out IECs. For example, with more than 1 of the 10 ACEs, students are at 1.5 times risk of academic failure and at 2.4 times risk for severe school behavior concerns, according to the website *acestoohigh.com*. At 3 or more ACEs, the website reports that students are at 2.9 times higher risk of academic failure and 6.1 times more likely to exhibit severe school behavior concerns.

Trauma and Anxiety

Why might trauma so heavily tilt the odds toward school failure? I believe it has to do with trust. Children who grow up in abusive, neglectful, or dysfunctional households lose trust in the adults who are supposed to be caring for them. Without trust, such students are always on the defensive, always employing heightened senses on the lookout for trouble. Indeed, brain scans of traumatized children show overactive areas in the brain that sense danger and underactive areas that promote cognition. As a result, traumatized students are hypervigilant in most social situations, including school. This hypervigilance creates anxiety that compromises students' abilities to concentrate on tasks, mentally process information, and have relationships with peers and teachers.

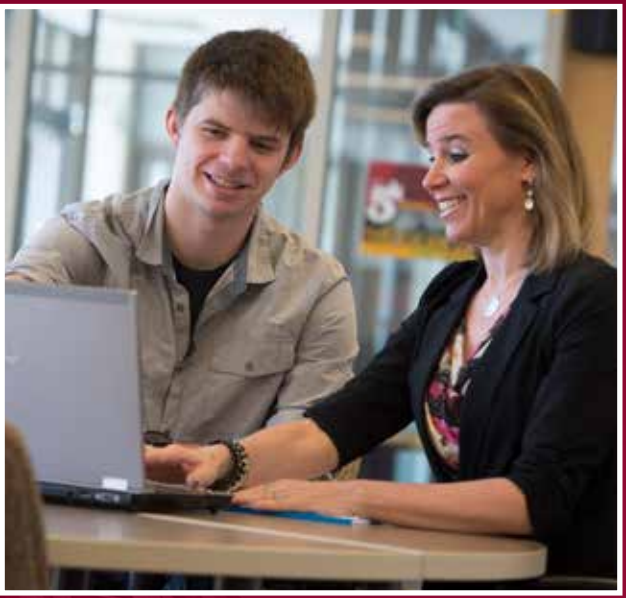
Successful school learning relies on safety, trust, and community to fully realize its potential. Students must feel physically and emotionally safe in a classroom; they have to trust their teachers and their peers; and they have to be able to form and maintain a sense of community. How can a traumatized student succeed in such an environment when she is always on the lookout for danger?

It is that vigilance that makes trauma-based anxiety look similar to ADHD in a classroom. The stress of that anxiety produces what trauma researchers call fight-flight-freeze responses. Fight responses produce behaviors that are oppositional, argumentative, stubborn, violent, and challenging of authority. Flight responses produce distracted, hyperactive, attention-seeking behaviors, as well as fleeing or hiding. Freeze responses appear as daydreams, laziness, or staring off into space. Many flight and freeze responses look like ADHD symptoms in a classroom and would correlate with low scores on WISC subtests for processing speed and working memory.

Back to the Beginning

Finally, to return to my original question about ADHD and adoption, we can see that the question conflates adoption and trauma. To the extent that my Calo students had multiple ACEs—and many students were adopted out of foster care or from foreign orphanages at later ages, which would suggest potential ACEs—it was more likely the trauma that aggravated the anxiety, rather than just the adoption. Nevertheless, given the prevalence of ACEs in the general population, I would advocate that IECs consider trauma-based anxiety along with ADHD as a factor in program placement.

Bob Burroughs can be reached at bburroughs82@gmail.com.



THE ARCH LEARNING COMMUNITY

The Arch Learning Community is a comprehensive program designed to support students with diagnosed learning disabilities and/or learning challenges. Through cohort classroom learning, customized academic coaching, weekly seminars, specialized advising and a pre-orientation program, students acquire the necessary skills to be successful in their degree program.

For more information contact:

Julie LeBlanc

Director of Morton Family Learning Center
Director of the Arch Learning Community

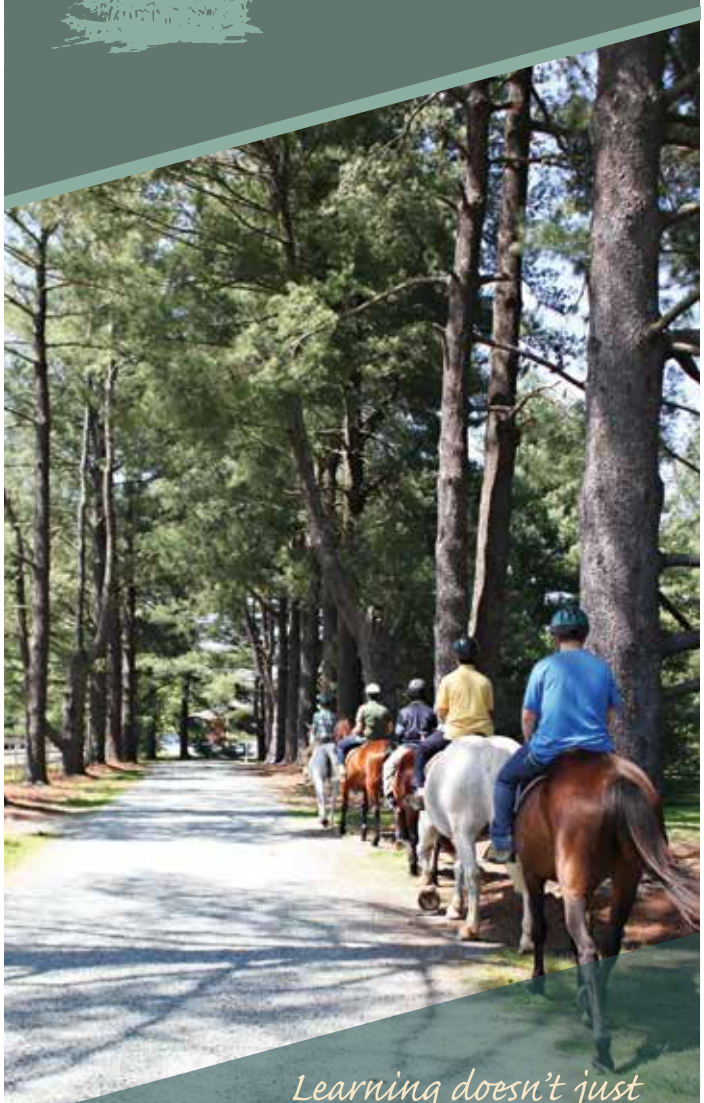
508-541-1768 | **jleblanc@dean.edu**

DEAN COLLEGE

dean.edu/arch

Little Keswick SCHOOL

EST. 1963



Learning doesn't just happen in the classroom!

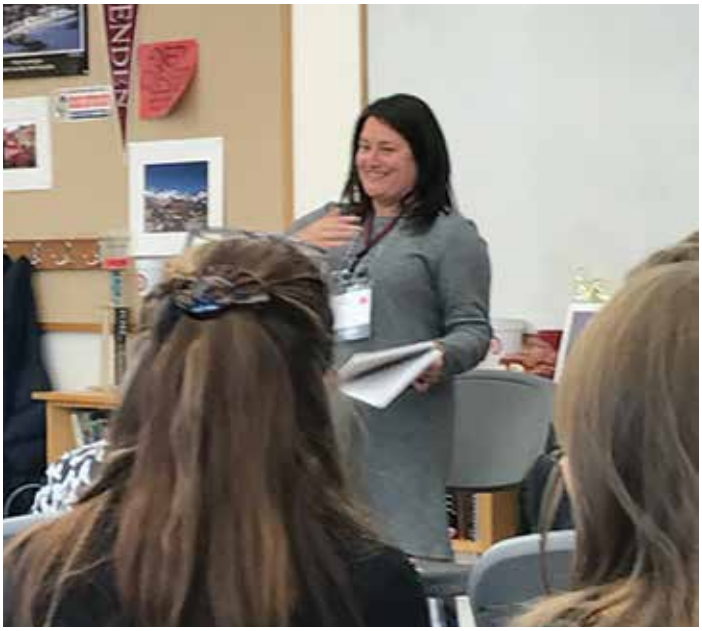
Little Keswick School is a nonprofit therapeutic special education boarding school that serves boys 9–15 years old with social/emotional challenges and learning disabilities. The small school setting provides warm and nurturing relationships, intensive clinical interventions, and individualized education for 35 boys in a highly structured environment that ensures successful development.

Terry Columbus: tcolumbus@littlekeswickschool.net, 434-295-0457

WWW.LITTLEKESWICKSCHOOL.NET

On the Road

Nearly 50 IECA members, along with CEO **Mark Sklarow**, took part in the Small Boarding Schools Conference in late March on the campus of the Fessenden School. Sklarow was involved in an IEC discussion, and he and **Allison Matlack** (MA) led a session on best practices between IECs and the admission office. **Krissy Naspo** (CT), pictured, led a discussion on best practices for schools and consultants.



Regional Groups

Washington

Members of the **Seattle** Area College Consultants group attended a February luncheon and college fair hosted by ARROW, a group of regional college admission representatives living on the West Coast, at the Space Needle. Colleges represented included **Gettysburg College**, **Salve Regina**, **Macquarie University**, **Embry Riddle Prescott**, **Franklin University Switzerland**, **John Cabot University Rome**, **Hawaii Pacific**, **FIDM**, **Colby Sawyer College**, **Seton Hall**, **Boise State**, **Arizona State**, and **University College Dublin**. Pictured (l to r) are Courtney Wege Best, senior associate director of admissions at Gettysburg College; Kiersten Murphy; Anita Chung, Associate member; and Teri Thompson, Associate member. Contact Kiersten Murphy (*kiersten@schoolconsultant.com*) for more information.

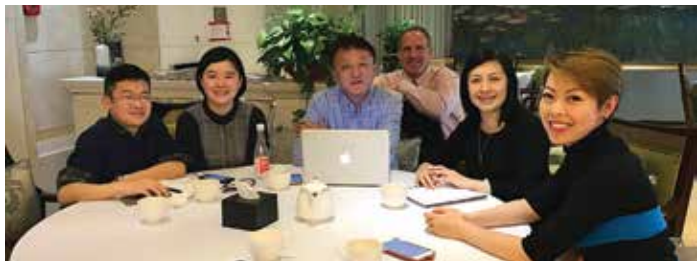
New Jersey

The **New Jersey** group attended a luncheon at the University of Hartford. Pictured in the first row (l to r) are Carolyn Mulligan; Nellie Zigami, regional admissions counselor, University of Hartford; and Courtney Culler, manager, undergraduate student services for the Barney School of Business, University of Hartford. In the second row are Laurie Weingarten; Carole Kraemer, Associate member, Jill Siegel, Associate member, Jodi Nadler, Associate member, Janet Loren; (third row) Alice Fuscaldo, Student member; Pamela Kwartler, Associate member; Diana Towle; and (fourth row) Larry Blumenstyk; Tony Carnahan; Traecy Hobson; and Melanie Talesnick, Associate member. Contact Carolyn Mulligan (*insidersnetwork@comcast.net*) for more information.

Send your group news to *Insights* at *Insights@IECAonline.com* As you hold events; host speakers; and visit colleges, schools, and programs, don't forget to take photos!

Beijing

The **Beijing** group met at the Palm Spring International Compound Clubhouse in Beijing on February 28. IECA members attending were Wanning Ding, Associate member; Jack Cao; Hamilton Gregg; Sue Zhong; and Nini Suet. Contact Jack Cao (*jack@dyo.com.cn*) for more information.



Connecticut

The **Connecticut** group visited **Trinity College** on February 14. We met with Angel Perez, VP, Enrollment and Student Success; Julia Pitassy from admissions; a representative from the Career Development Center; and a "Trinsition Fellow." We also enjoyed student-led tours and were treated to lunch. Contact Janet Rosier (*janet@janetrosier.com*) for more information.

In the News

Associate member **Robbye Fox** (MD) was quoted in the *Washington Post Magazine* article "Tired of People Asking Where You're Going to College? Here's What to Say" on February 23.

Heather Ricker-Gilbert (PA), **Laurie Crockett Barclay** (PA), **Ashley McNaughton** (PA) , and **Sarah Brachman**, IECA manager of communications, were interviewed for "Students Pursue Help Outside of School: Parents Seeking More Personalization to Help Sort Out Options After HS" in the *Altoona Mirror* on February 20.

Laurie Kopp Weingarten (NJ) was quoted in "Here's What a Penn Student Found When He Pulled His Admissions File" in the *Daily Pennsylvanian* on February 8.

Sandra Moore's (NY) article "Don't Get Fooled by Aid Offers" was published in the *Poughkeepsie Journal* on March 11.

Associate member **Andrea Goldman's** (NY) practice was featured in a Chamber of Commerce article "A Familial Perspective" in the *Plainview-Old Bethpage Herald* on January 25.

Kristina Dooley was interviewed for "Keys To Preparing For College With Kristina Dooley," a February 14 podcast on *Hired Graduate*.

The Daily Herald reported that **Thomas Jaworski**, an Associate member (IL), will conduct a series of three free sessions on college financial aid and scholarships from March to May at the Dundee Public Library.

Kat Cohen was quoted in "5 Pieces of Real Talk About Getting Rejected From Your Early Decision School" in *Her Campus* on December 3 and in *Redbook's* "45 Simple Ways To Be a Great Parent" on December 13.

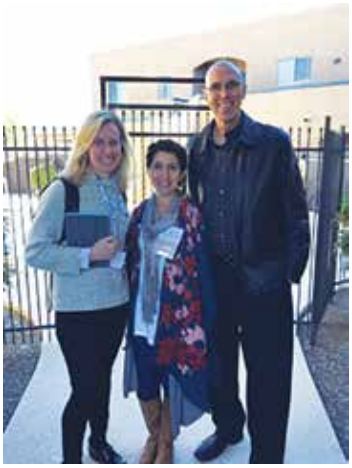
Janet Rosier's op-ed "College Athletics=Big Bucks?" was published in the *Norwalk Hour* on February 21.

Initiatives

On February 16, Minnesota IECs **Jenny Buyens** and Associate members **Susan Hoff** and **Garth Robertson** had the privilege of presenting a $1,000 IECA Foundation Grant to the MACAC Board for the Inclusion, Access, and Success Committee's future Show on the Road events. Along with Associate member **Clarinda Low** (not pictured), they developed the Show on the Road initiative for MACAC.

Campus Visits

IECA members from across the country toured Chapel Haven West during the NATSAP conference.



Pictured are (l to r) Edith Adams (MA); Rosemary Tippett (GA); and Kenneth Hosto, executive director, Chapel Haven West.

Pictured are Michael Storz, president, Chapel Haven West (far left); Kenneth Hosto, executive director, Chapel Haven West; and IECA members Jessica Romeyn (CA); Jamie Goodman (IL); and Jennifer Hendrick (CA).

Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

Liheng Bai (China) has been an IEC for three years. She holds an MA from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a certificate from the Harvard Summer Institute on College Admissions. She attended the 2013 IECA Transitioning to Private Practice College Consulting at NACAC and is a member of IACAC.

Bai is the founder of the US Women's Symposium in China. As an educational columnist, she regularly publishes essays to demystify the US college application processes for Chinese parents and students. In the past two years, she has led seminars on China recruitment issues during IACAC annual conferences. Through those efforts, she always tries to bridge the gap between Chinese families and US admissions officers.

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Specialty: C

Jennifer Bartlett (ME), advised students as a high school counselor for 19 years and began working as an IEC 1 year ago. Her current position is at Kennebunk High School—one of three IB World Schools in Maine—where she has worked for the past 6 years.

Bartlett has a BA in psychology from Brown University and an MEd in school counseling from Georgia State University. She attended IB counselor training in Florida and the 2016 IECA Summer Training Institute. She is a member of NEACAC.

Bartlett has provided extensive pro bono services for students and families outside of her school caseload, including substantial assistance with college search, financial fit, essay preparation, application help, and support for FAFSA and CSS Profile completion.

Bartlett is married and has two daughters. She loves Zumba, swimming in the lakes of Maine, and kayaking in Kennebunkport.

Jennifer Bartlett, MEd
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Specialty: C

Antoinette Battiste (CA) has been an IEC for 8 years and an Associate member for 4. After 20 years in senior level project and program management roles for technology companies, she began the transition to independent educational consulting after serving on the board of and as interim executive director for a nonprofit college access program. She earned an AB in psychology and African & African-American studies from Stanford University and an MBA in information systems from Golden Gate University. In addition, she holds a certificate in College Counseling from UC Extension San Diego, attended IECA's 2012 Summer Training Institute, and has attended four IECA conferences. Her memberships include NACAC, WACAC, SACAC, NCAN, NABSE, and Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Battiste has served as secretary for the Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators, is the founder and president of the Northern California Association of Morehouse Parents, and sits on the board of the Ivy & Pearls Foundation. She recently received the Far Western Regional Director's Leadership Award from Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Every year, she offers several free college planning workshops for community organizations. In addition, she is a founding member of the YWCA of the Mid-Peninsula Donor Advised Fund.

Battiste is married with two adult children and three grandchildren. In her spare time, she enjoys attending concerts and jazz festivals with family and friends.

Antoinette Battiste, MBA
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www.antoinettebattiste.com
Specialty: C

Brenda Gerhardt (OH) has been an IEC for five years and was an Associate member. Her former positions include adjunct professor of school counseling at the University of Dayton and an Ed PASS Specialist at the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio.

Gerhardt earned a BS in science education from Ohio State University, where she also earned her a PhD in school counseling, cognate in educational administration. In addition, she holds an MA in school counseling from Eastern Michigan University and has a principal license for grades 5–12. She attended IECA's 2012 Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC, ASCA, NASSP, ASCD, ACA, and ACES.

In other endeavors, Gerhardt works with college access agencies to increase awareness of college counseling for practicing school counselors and with state level agencies that support students impacted by the foster care system. She is a board member of the Tri Village Mentor League.

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brenda.gerhardt@gmail.com
www.gerhardteducation.com
Specialties: C+LD

Michelle Grappo (CO) has been an IEC and an Associate member for three years. Her work experience includes working as a school psychologist and as a special education instructor. She has a EdM in school psychology and attended IECA's 2013 Summer Training Institute.

She is a member of NATSAP and serves as cochair of the IECA Therapeutic Committee.

Grappo is an active member of the Junior League of Denver. She enjoys hiking, skiing, cooking, yoga, and travel.

Michelle Grappo, MEd
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Specialty: T

Penny Klein (VT), an Associate member, has been an IEC for 5 years. Her past positions include 14 years as a school counselor and 6 years as an English teacher.

Klein earned an MA in counseling from Ohio State University and a BA from Ohio Weslyan University and spent more than two years volunteering with the Peace Corps. She attended the 2011 IECA Summer Training Institute. Her volunteer efforts are focused on her membership in her local Rotary Club, particularly serving on the Youth Committee.

Klein lives with her husband, Don, and golden retriever, Boots, in a historic farmhouse that is surrounded by flower gardens, a reflection of another of her lifelong passions. She is a yoga instructor and offers classes in her home studio to neighbors, community members, and her students.

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Upcoming 2017 IECA Webinars

April 11	May 9	June 13	July 11	August 8
The Gig Economy: Preparing High School Students for Careers in 2020	Better Grades in Less Time	Breaking Down Insurance Barriers: Coverage for Wilderness Therapy, Residential Treatment, and Behavioral Health Services	Social and Cultural Transition for First Year LD Students	Counseling Students and Their Families in the Indian Market

Introductions, from page 41

Lynne Scheurer-Foster (NY) has been an IEC for 25 years, part-time during her career as a school counselor at Fordham Preparatory School, John Jay High School, and Greenwich High School and full-time since 2010.

Scheurer-Foster holds an MS from Long Island University in education-counseling/development and a BA in Spanish and international relations and an MA in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania. She is member of ASCA, ACA, and NACAC.

She conducts speaking engagements in the community on topics pertaining to all aspects of the college admission process and provides pro bono consulting for an underserved student each cycle. She has participated in the Dalton School Diversity Conference for the past seven years. Gradually, 90% of her practice has developed into virtual consulting (Skype and Facetime).

Scheurer-Foster has three grown children and loves to travel, go to movies and museums, and meditate. She lives in New York City with her husband, Peter, and they are gardeners in The Lotus Garden, a hidden oasis in Manhattan. She is fluent in Spanish and French.

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Specialty: C

Lee Styles (VA) has been an IEC for six years. Before becoming an IEC, she had a career in human resources management. Styles earned a BA in psychology from the University of North Carolina–Charlotte and an Independent Educational Consultant Certificate from UC Irvine. She attended IECA's 2011 Summer Training Institute. She is a member of PCACAC.

Styles took time off from her career to raise her children and spent time volunteering in their schools and in a variety of community organizations, including a local PK–8 independent school where she served on the board of directors and was president of the Parents Association. She is currently vice president of her homeowners association and has also served as past president. As a charter member of 100 Women Strong, she supports the philanthropic organization's mission of improving life for residents of Loudoun County.

Styles has been married to her husband, Keith, for almost 28 years and they have two sons: Nick, a law student, and Drew, in his third year of college. She enjoys reading (the book club she cofounded in 1997 is still going strong), travel, and photography.

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Specialty: C

Brenda Ward (WI) has been an IEC for five years, three years as an Associate member. Previously, she was a career consultant at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, College of Education, Office of Electronic Portfolios & Educational Services and a counselor and advanced placement coordinator at Verona (WI) Area High School.

Ward earned a BS in journalism from the University of Illinois, Champaign–Urbana and an MS in counselor education from the University of Wisconsin–Platteville. She attended IECA's 2013 IECA Summer Training Institute. Her memberships include NACAC, WACAC, and WSCA.

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Specialties: C+LD +I, T+LD+I

Why I Belong

Sitting in a Cracker Barrel in rural Ohio doesn't seem like a moment to commemorate, but it was the moment I went from being just a member of IECA to really feeling like I belonged. I'm not a joiner by nature. As a matter a fact, the independent nature of educational consulting was an appealing aspect of the work for me. So when I joined IECA in 2008, I had two primary goals: I wanted a place to continue to expand my knowledge on college consulting and I wanted to be a part of an organization that would offer me additional credibility as I opened my practice. Beyond that, I really didn't have any grand expectations.

For the first few years, I paid my dues, read the TalkList religiously, and attended conferences. I appreciated the role of IECA primarily as my educational resource, and it was truly a lifeline as I built my practice in the early days. Unlike most IECA members, I didn't attend the summer institute, so my tribe was primarily the TalkList and conferences—I really would not have made it those first few years without those resources.

My engagement deepened when I met a couple of fellow IECs from Austin at a conference in San Diego. Back at home, I started meeting with them regularly to share resources and encourage one another. These connections fundamentally changed how I practiced and pushed me to set higher goals for my practice. I felt energized. I also realized that I was going to have to get my introverted self out of my comfort zone and connect with other people to really take advantage of what the organization offered. Over time, I became an active member of the Austin consulting community and the larger IECA community.

It was through those connections that I found myself sitting down for a late dinner at a Cracker Barrel in rural Ohio, the only restaurant for miles. Fourteen of us had bundled up in every possible layer of clothing to visit LD programs at colleges across the state. Touring each snowy campus with great interest, we peppered admissions staff with questions: *Do you allow foreign language waivers? Can students receive assistance with executive functioning issues?* After the tours and over fried chicken and biscuits, we reviewed what we had just heard and discussed our impressions. We kept digging in deeper, talking about crossover schools in our respective regions. The exchange of ideas flowed, and we all felt bonded by our dedication to helping students with learning differences.

Despite the bitter cold and lackluster food, I would have stayed an additional week or two if it had been an option. I discovered an amazing group of smart individuals who were deeply committed to our profession and the families they serve. They taught me better ways to ask questions, they shared their best resources, and they were just downright fun.

IECA has become so much more than an educational resource to me—it's become a community. It's a group of people I can call on when I don't know the answer to a question or when I question myself and feel discouraged. It is also a space that allows me to share my expertise and give back to a community that has been at the cornerstone of developing my practice. Truly belonging to IECA—not just being a member—has been an unexpected gift. I never really expected I'd come to so treasure a meal at Cracker Barrel.

—**Lisa Bain Carlton**, IECA (TX)

ADHD by the Numbers

Centers for Disease Control estimates that **11%** of children 4–17 years old will be diagnosed with ADHD; just over half of these will be treated with medicine.

Studies show that **13.2%** of boys and **5.6%** of girls will be diagnosed with ADHD. The fastest growing cohort since 2010 has been older teens: current estimate is **3–5%** of teens now have an ADHD diagnosis.

Estimates are that half of all cases will never be diagnosed.
In 2011, **12%** of US children and teens were diagnosed with ADHD, a **43%** increase from 2003.

Source: Centers for Disease Control *www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/data.html*

Frequency of Coexisting Conditions

33% of children with ADHD have 1 coexisting condition; **16%** have 2, **18%** have 3 or more.

	Children with ADHD	Children without ADHD
• Learning Disabilities	45%	5%
• Conduct Disorders	27%	2%
• Anxiety	18%	2%
• Depression	15%	1%
• Speech problems	12%	3%

Source: CHADD, The National Resource Center on ADHD
www.chadd.org/Understanding-ADHD/About-ADHD/Data-and-Statistics/Co-occurring-Conditions.aspx