



Calendar

April 3-8
IECA Therapeutic Tours, New England

April 12
Webinar: Test Prep for Students
With Learning Differences

May 2-4
Pre-Conference Campus Tours
Massachusetts

May 4-7
IECA Spring Conference, Boston, MA

May 7-8
IECA Board of Directors Meeting
Boston, MA

May 9-11
IECA Arts Colleges Tour, New York City

May 10
Webinar: Disabilities & University
Accommodations

May 30
Memorial Day, Office Closed

June 1-3
IECA at WACAC Conference
Los Angeles

June 9
IECA Regional College Symposium
Los Angeles

June 10
Conference Planning Committee
Denver, CO

July 4
Independence Day, Office Closed

July 5-9
Summer Training Institute West
Claremont, CA

July 26-30
Summer Training Institute East
Swarthmore, PA

Membership Survey Reveals Staggering Extent of Volunteerism

In a survey completed late in 2015, more than 9 in 10 IECA members indicated that they do pro bono work. Surpassing the most optimistic expectations, some 97% of IECA members say that they either provide pro bono consulting within their own practice or provide advising and related efforts through community-based organizations.

In a joint project, the IECA Foundation and the Association will gather the details of those efforts. The collected data will be available to members who are looking for a way to support underserved students in the community.

Initial evidence suggests that much of the reported community-based volunteer work is focused on supporting underrepresented minorities, students who are economically distressed, young women exploring STEM careers, and first-generation students. Such efforts are often focused on the high school to college transition, but also include students who would be best served in a boarding school,

who may need therapeutic placement, or who are struggling with learning disabilities.

The information and resources provided by this effort will help members recruit others to the organizations they volunteer with as well as explore the various ways that members provide reduced-price or free



Marilyn Emerson (NY) and Ann Rossbach (NJ) with students from The Possibility Project

advising in their practices. The hope is that by sharing this information, others may find ways of providing similar support in their own practices or in their own communities.

Anyone with ideas or suggestions is invited to contact **Marilyn Emerson** (NY), who is heading up the volunteerism project, at mgse@emersonec.com.

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President's Letter

It Has Been a Privilege to Serve

In May I will pass my gavel to my friend and respected professional colleague **Ann Rossbach** (NJ). As president of IECA, I have had the privilege and the opportunity to collaborate with a broad range of dedicated educational professionals who are working to promote our association's professional standards and core values and to help guide the students and families we serve.

My introduction to IECA began with **Steve Antonoff's** (CO) course "Counseling the College Bound Student" in the UCLA college counseling program. Steve's class was my first online class; I took most of my certificate classes on the UCLA campus before the program switched to

an online curriculum. I was impressed by Steve's professionalism and by his depth of knowledge about working with students and families during the high school to college transition process.

Having worked as a psychotherapist for 20 years and having worked in major teaching hospitals, I quickly recognized that I wanted to affiliate myself with others like Steve. I soon found my professional home at IECA, where I sought ways to engage in educational opportunities and committee work. **Diane Geller** (CA) served as my mentor, generously supporting my transition into independent educational consulting. Intelligent, thoughtful, and with



Gail Meyer

a fabulous sense of humor, Diane taught me the practical aspects of the business of consulting. Together we developed the first regional group in Los Angeles, which has grown into two groups serving two geographic areas. I remain grateful for Diane's kindness and am inspired by her sharp intellect.

I have derived enormous value from belonging to our community. Witnessing the commitment of members who volunteer tirelessly to help IECA become

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IECA⁺ INSIGHTS

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3251 Old Lee Highway, Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Phone: 703-591-4850

Fax: 703-591-4860

www.IECAonline.com

e-mail: info@IECAonline.com

President: Gail Meyer

Chief Executive Officer:
Mark H. Sklarow

Deputy Executive Director:
Sue S. DePra

Editor: Sarah S. Brachman

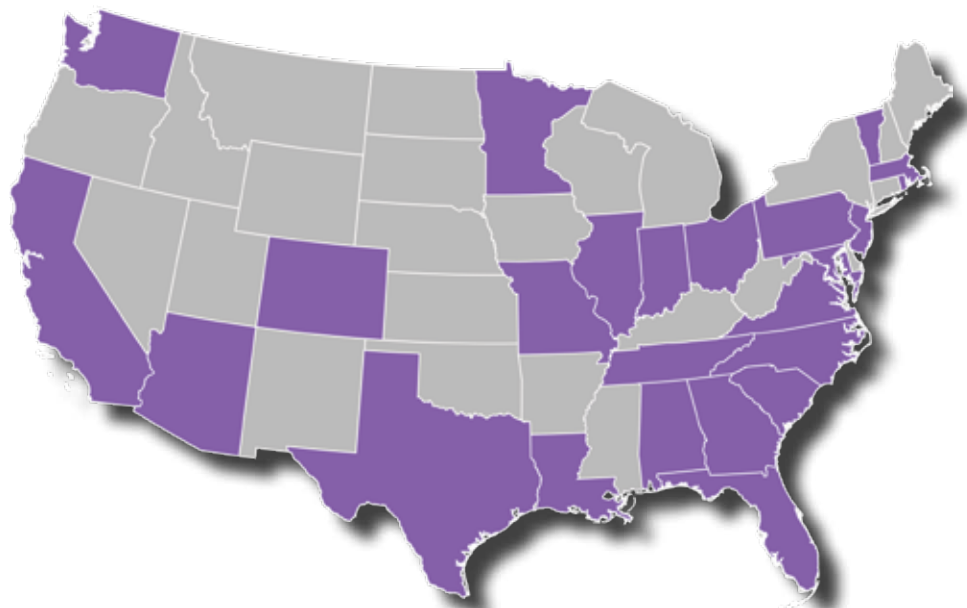
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and Twitter (@IECA).

In Focus

IECA Conference Locations: 1993–2016



States where IECA conferences have been held

(includes spring & fall conferences and winter retreats)

IECA's Summer Training Institute: Where You Need to Be

Are you in the early years of your IEC practice and looking to learn more about managing and promoting your business? Do you need solutions to challenges working with clients and families as you get your practice off the ground? Are you anticipating launching a practice in the next year? If you answered yes to any of those questions, then you definitely should attend one of IECA's Summer Training Institutes (STIs), four-day learning experiences designed specifically for newer independent educational consultants (IECs). In a professional, friendly environment, you'll learn from experienced faculty members and from your peers in large- and small-group sessions, activities, and discussions.

Among the many benefits included in STIs are insights into admission office practices, guidelines and tips for campus visits, and resources for working with students with varied needs. You'll learn proven business procedures and marketing strategies; network with other IECs; and even receive sample forms, documents, and other related materials that you can adapt to your own practice. Plus, you can earn up to 16 continuing education hours at no additional cost.

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2016 Summer Training Institute Dates and Locations

West: July 5–July 9, 2016, at Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, CA (50 miles east of Los Angeles)

The West STI is exclusively for those interested in college consulting. The program starts at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 5, and ends at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, July 8. Housing on Friday night and Saturday breakfast is included for all those staying in the residence hall. All residence hall rooms are single occupancy and air-conditioned.

East: July 26–July 30, 2016 at Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, PA (suburb of Philadelphia)

The East STI will offer training for those interested in college, school, and therapeutic/at-risk consulting. The program starts at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 26, and ends at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, July 29. Housing on Friday night and Saturday breakfast is included for all those staying in the residence hall. All residence hall rooms are single occupancy and air conditioned.

For more information, go to www.iecaonline.com/sti.html.

Nearly 500 IECs Will Set Record Attendance at Spring Conference

Over IECA's 40 years, when attendees have been asked what they most look forward to at an IECA conference, the steadfast answer has been "to network and learn from my peers." With record-setting numbers of independent educational consultants (IECs) registered, the upcoming gathering in Boston will again provide those opportunities for members and admission officials.

At press time, in late March, 460 IECs had registered—a major milestone because such a significant number means that members from all specialties, all experience levels, and all regions of the United States and the world will be well-represented, leading to more sharing on both macro and micro levels. "Everyone will be able to find a cohort to maximize their time with us," said IECA CEO Mark Sklarow.

Such a significant gathering of IECs is more than can be found at any other state, regional, or national conference focused on school, college, program, gap year, or university admissions. And



those numbers make IECA gatherings a crucial piece of admission representatives' outreach, education, and recruitment efforts. "Increasingly, admission leaders see participation in IECA as essential to their efforts," Sklarow added. "Many who attend IECA for their first time become loyalists once they see how serious, ethical, and committed our members are."

the leading voice in independent educational consulting has had an immense effect on me. Our members, who represent a vast array of backgrounds, bring insights and expertise that enrich and advance our educational and organizational efforts. Through my involvement in IECA, I have developed lasting friendships with colleagues from all over the world, fostering opportunities to work together for the benefit of our members while strengthening our organization. I am pleased to note that IECA has grown to more than 1,500 members, and we now have a more diverse membership than ever before.

As we enter our 40th anniversary year, we can take pride in our role in advancing the profession of independent educational consulting so that it has become a familiar term among admissions officers in the world of school, college, and therapeutic admissions. Although there will always be challenges, the future of our profession and IECA is bright. Our organization, as well as its board, is filled with intelligent, creative people and reflects a richness of thought that has helped develop strong and ethical policies.

None of the accomplishments of IECA would have been possible without your collaborative spirit, your interesting ideas, and your hard work. To each and every one of you, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart. It has been an honor to serve as president.



Gail Meyer
IECA President

IECA Welcomes New Membership Associate

Caitlin Myers joined the national office staff in March as our new membership associate. She will work alongside **Amanda Fogler**, manager of Member Outreach & Engagement, to assist those seeking membership, advise members about benefits and services, and plan new benefits. Caitlin has worked in membership at the National Association of Counties, among other organizations. Says Caitlin, "I am so thrilled to be a part of the IECA team and I can't wait to dive in and help make our organization the best it can be!" And we're delighted to welcome her to our team! She can be reached at caitlin@IECAonline.com or 703-591-4850, extension 6974. Be sure to introduce yourself to her at the Spring Conference in Boston.



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If you are just starting your practice, you'll gain valuable insights in the business and marketing aspects of being an IEC. "I found STI to be most valuable in starting our new practice," said associate member **Elina Minkoff** (TX). "The sessions not only gave us the insight into the business of consulting, but also gave us the tools and the confidence in getting the business started from the ground up."

As associate member **Joyce Wong** (CA) attests: "STI brought together a group of passionate professionals who all wanted to better serve students and their families. Discussing topics and trends related to financial aid, dealing with difficult parents, marketing, and operational aspects of a business were all sources of information that I was able to apply to my own business."

Steven Mercer, IECA (CA), an experienced faculty member, sums the value up well, "There is no comparison to the learning that happens at STI. It's intense, it's smart, and it's the most remarkable foundation that any independent educational consultant can lay for a successful, ethical practice. It's one of the most inspiring programs that I've had the honor to be a part of." 🤖

Harvard to Participate at IECA Conference

Noting that IECA has "lots of great members" and the association does "great work," Harvard's admissions office has created two opportunities for IECs in Boston.

- On Wednesday morning before the opening session, a representative from Harvard's admissions office will host an information session on campus. Following the presentation, participants will have the opportunity to explore the campus with Campus Sherpa guides before returning in time to get lunch before the conference opens.
- On Thursday afternoon at 5:00 p.m., CEO Mark Sklarow will moderate a community forum with William Fitzsimmons, Harvard's dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, who will discuss the state of college admissions, the impact of the Coalition for Access and Affordability, and more.

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An Opportunity and a Gift: Teaching Students With LD to Write Essays

by Joan Wittan, MA, IECA (MD) and Kyle Kane, JD, IECA (MD)

Most students with learning challenges struggle with writing. It is often the last academic skill to be acquired because it builds on developmental skills, such as reading, spelling, and sequencing. In addition, writing is mostly a planning and organizing task, so those students with executive function challenges are especially vulnerable.



Joan Wittan

As independent educational consultants (IECs) who specialize in students with learning differences, we spend a lot of time with our students on essay writing, but we have chosen not to get pulled into over-involvement with writing the actual essays. Instead, we help students improve their writing skills, adding value and improving efficiency with explicit instruction. This strategy is a win-win because our students often become more independent writers, ultimately saving us the agony of approaching each essay anew. We also develop common language for the process, enhance metacognition, and bolster executive functioning. Because college work is writing intensive, it's an opportunity to significantly improve our students' college-readiness skills.

College essays provide an ideal vehicle for writing instruction. Students with learning disabilities are frequently ready to learn to write by high school, but may have missed the explicit instruction of writing mechanics that were taught in elementary and middle school because they simply were not developmentally ready to learn it. With focused instruction, students are finally able to make sense of some aspects of writing as they draft their college essays. Although essays are much less intimidating than writing a research paper, the writing process is very similar. As we progress through the essay tasks, we are really bolstering students' abilities to write many types of papers. Students are required to write about themselves and their experiences; there are no bibliographies or annotations, so we can focus on the writing process while still insisting on evidence and support for ideas.



Kyle Kane

Advertisement

The advertisement features a collage of images: a person in a hard hat, a hand in a green and black glove, and a group of children. Below the images is the text "Talisman's ADHD and autism school." and "Over 35 years of exceptional programs for exceptional kids." The background is a light blue gradient.

Talisman's ADHD and autism school.

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The logo for Talisman Semesters features a circular emblem with a stylized 'S' and a mountain range. Below the logo is the text "Talisman Semesters" and "Zirconia, NC". At the bottom, there is a silhouette of a person hiking on a trail. The contact information "855.558.8254" and "talismanprograms.com" is displayed at the bottom.

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The Process

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continued on page 9

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Write Essays, from page 7

WRITING

The writing approach we used is ACE4, which is adapted from our local public school system and stands for the follow writing tasks:

- **Answer** the question. We ask the student to paraphrase the question to ensure that he or she fully understands it. We then brainstorm possible answers. Depending on the student's needs and preferences, we might introduce a webbing model, such as Inspiration. The ground rules are that there are no stupid ideas and all thoughts are welcome. We continually go back to the question to clarify and delve deeper. Some students benefit from dictation software that allows them to capture their ideas quickly without the mechanical challenge of handwriting or typing and spelling. In some cases, we may even take dictation for the student.
- **Cite** the evidence. Students must look for evidentiary sources in their personal lives, reading, studies, work, or travel. We discuss what that evidence will look like for a research paper and might introduce Noodle Tools or other assistive technology that captures and organizes notes and sources for more complicated papers.
- **Explain, expand, end, and edit.** We address the first three sequentially with the student as we add new ideas to the essay—reading it over and over as if the student has never heard it before—and brainstorm a novel and insightful conclusion.

EDITING

To edit, we use concepts from 6+1 Trait Writing, which was developed by Education Northwest. We explain to students that there are three phases to editing: global, qualitative, and mechanical.

- The **global edit** focuses on ideas, content, and organization. We always begin by rereading the prompt and reflecting for a moment. Next, students read the essay aloud (often we do the reading) because everyone's eyes too easily skip over mistakes when they read. We want the student to listen as if he or she had never heard the content before and answer the following questions: Does the essay answer the prompt question? Is it organized logically? Are the ideas interesting? Do the paragraphs need to be reordered to improve the logic or add drama?
- The **qualitative edit** addresses the quality of the writing, and we read paragraph by paragraph to focus on voice, word choice, and sentence fluency:
 - The essay should be the student's authentic voice, not sound like a parent or a teacher.
 - Precise language rather than using big words is the goal. For example, the overused *awesome* is meaningless; similarly, there are better choices than *said* for dialogue.
 - Students often gravitate to long sentences. We show them that a mixture of short, medium, and long sentences gives the writing more texture and flow.
- The **mechanical edit** is what students usually think of as editing until we introduce the three-step process. We read aloud, line by line, to review conventions/mechanics. Often students can identify parts that don't sound right even if they don't know the rule. We can't make up for years of lost instruction, but we can correct a few common grammar issues, for example, *its* versus *it's* and noun/pronoun or verb tense agreement can be difficult for our

students. We offer students a simple writing guide and often add information about items that trip them up. 6+1 Trait Writing also includes presentation as part of the mechanical edit, but we don't spend much time on that.

Wrapping Up

The process wraps up with reflection and self-assessment to improve metacognition. We might ask, What worked well? What did you learn about writing? Is there anything you want to try differently next time? Items that need to be addressed at the next session are recorded. Finally, we recognize progress and end on a positive note. The essay is undoubtedly better than it was and the student is an improved writer and editor.

This approach to writing college essays has become a hallmark of our work with students. Although our practice focuses solely on students with learning challenges, this approach can help all students become more proficient writers. It is a common lament among college professors that students are not sufficiently prepared to tackle college-level writing. We feel fortunate to have the opportunity to bolster our students in this important way. The glow of satisfaction from a well-written essay is rewarding, but the skill to write another is a precious gift. 🎁

Joan Wittan, *The College Consulting Collaborative*, can be reached at joan@collegeLD.com.

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

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CREATIVE THOUGHT MATTERS



The Tired Parent and the Disorganized Teenager

by Carol A. Kinlan, MEd, MBA, IECA (MA)



A mother looks at me. Her expression conveys deep frustration. We are sitting in my office, and I have just asked her, "How does your 16-year-old son go about completing his homework during the school week?"

"I hate evenings," she says. We sit silently.

To further drive home her point, she adds "I just hate school nights."

This client's teenage son, Jake, is a junior at a large, well-respected public school in Massachusetts. Jake is starting the college process. He has a GPA of 2.6 and received a 23 on a recent practice ACT. Those numbers are in contrast to a recent neuropsychological test that indicated that Jake has a very high IQ. Jake struggles with inattention and very poor planning skills. His mom is discouraged and wants to send him to boarding school. She is tired of "screaming and chasing him around" each school night.

I ask her to explain what school nights with Jake look like from the time he comes home. She says, "He comes in the back door. I ask

him how much homework he has. He always tells me he's 'done a lot at school.' He goes to his room and, I don't know, he might be texting or using his laptop. We start arguing about the homework. Sometimes he's good; he sits in his room and types out his papers. But most of the time we argue, and then he's wandering around again, distracted."



She looks tired, worn down. As an independent educational consultant (IEC) who works primarily with children with learning disorders, I find that parents of students with inattention and executive function issues often have this world-weary look. Unlike students who struggle with dyslexia, dysgraphia, or other disorders, students with attention and planning weaknesses can't be as easily relegated to a tutor for direct support services during school hours. Students with executive function weaknesses have a less-than-efficient approach to making use of unstructured time. Parents observe that and feel saddled with the burden of helping their teenager complete each night's schoolwork. As a result, they resort most nights to "bad parenting guerilla tactics," as one mom put it. I tell parents it's hard to have the life experience and mature brain of a 40- or 50-year-old and watch their teenager struggle with nightly homework. I also describe how the homework expectations for teenagers have changed dramatically over the last 20 years, but their brains have remained the same.

To help this mother or any other parent, I want to know which aspect of executive function is hardest. I ask her to rate on a five-point scale (5 = easily done and 1 = real nightmare) the following behaviors:

How difficult is it for your student to:

- Start a project, assignment, or homework?

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Tired Parent, from page 11

- Transition from one assignment to another?
- Focus or attend to a particular assignment for at least 30 minutes?
- Self-regulate during the evening without getting angry, being highly inattentive, or complaining to a worrying degree?
- Complete and turn in all homework assignments?

Using these questions with a rating system helps parents and IECs obtain a better understanding of the student's executive function profile. As we know, parents feel overwhelmed; inquiring specifically about possible symptoms can be therapeutic for parents. They feel understood and realize that in some cases, only one behavior is causing all the trouble each night.

What can be done? Assuming that the student has no other neurocognitive issues (e.g., with reading comprehension, writing fluency, or poor rote memory), I've found it's extremely helpful to break each night into 30-minute segments. Like the skier staring down at a double diamond hill and turning back instead of taking the hill in shorter segments, many teenagers are overwhelmed by their nightly homework and don't appreciate what can be done in 30 minutes.

Parents or a tutor or teacher can help the student by breaking down each night starting from the point the student walks in the door. For example:

Tuesday:

- 4:15 snack, play basketball outside (breaks and exercise are important!)
- 4:45 algebra homework
- 5:15 start English, chapter reading
- 5:45 break for dinner
- 6:15 downtime
- 6:45 English, chapter reading
- 7:15 start outline for writing assignment
- 7:45 French homework
- 8:15 practice French vocabulary with mom (or alone)

Even when students must start homework at 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. because of other commitments, they still need to make use of 30-minute segments when they come home or during study time at school. Students who read slowly should time themselves to see how long it takes them to read 5–10 pages and plan accordingly. Most students think they read and comprehend material much faster than they really do. Again, an outside tutor or teacher can help with this system. Small rewards or praise delivered in a timely way can encourage a student to feel pleased with meaningful progress.

I find that many students are truly surprised when they discover how much time they actually have to get homework done before bed. Teenagers can easily fritter all that time away unless they get support. The goal is to help them realize that they have control over each half hour and that a great deal can be accomplished by a focused effort. Teens need to know that time can be defined as something *available to them* and that to be successful in life, they need to take control of it.

The mother who came to me tired and frustrated realizes that transitions between assignments are hardest for her son. We talk about how to give him a short break between tasks. We also discuss boarding schools, where those organizational skills can be better developed because teachers tend to their students 24/7 and offer extra help. We sit quietly for a while. The mom is sitting up straighter. Maybe she feels more organized herself, maybe more in control. I'm not sure; however, it feels good to be helping her. Before she leaves, she smiles and raises her hand in an imaginary toast, "Here's to better nights at home!" I toast her back. 🍷

Carol A. Kinlan, McMillan, Howland, & Spence, can be reached at carol@mcmillaneducation.com.

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Resolving Issues of Learning Disabilities, ADHD, and Therapeutic Education

by Sanford Shapiro, Director, Bend Learning Center



Arguably one of the most important developments in therapeutic programming is the growing appreciation for the impact of learning disabilities on other areas of cognitive functioning, particularly those related to emotional and social development. As Mr. Shapiro highlights, the impact of deficits in one domain is rarely, if ever, without impact on others. Whether you are a line staff or a consultant, these issues are critical to understanding a student's needs.

—Michelle Grappo, IECA Associate (CO)

Integrating knowledge from mental and behavioral health with best practices culled from cognitive science is crucial to understanding how therapeutic programs can improve outcomes. Knowing how learning disabilities and the neuro-developmental conditions of ADHD/executive functions deficits and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affect behavior and mental health should be a current and ongoing goal for the therapeutic community. According to experts, upward of 60% of adolescents in residential treatment centers for

substance abuse have learning disabilities (National Center 2000). Enrollment data from all types of therapeutic programs indicate that students with ASD and ADHD contribute to and even add to those numbers. Consequently, it's imperative that programs and schools become better informed about what science and clinical practice tell us about those conditions and how they affect mental health.

Self-Esteem

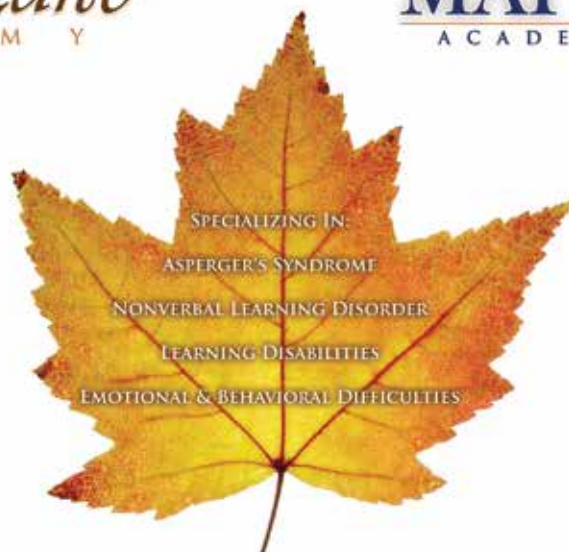
Historically there has been a clear and continued awareness of the burdening effect and weakening of self-esteem in students with a history of learning disabilities and related conditions. Schools and programs have been relatively quick to recognize the negative effects that stem from unspoken student thoughts, such as "I'm not good enough" and "I'm not smart." Going further down that path, however, perhaps the most damaging aspect is the mindset of reduced *self-efficacy*, or belief in the effectiveness of one's own efforts. The Frostig Center's landmark study (Goldberg et al. 2000) was one of the early ones to signal this. Students with LD, ADHD, and executive function deficits suffer from a limiting belief that their

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Therapeutic Education, from page 15

efforts don't have much to do with the results they see in their lives. This is the real meaning of "learned helplessness." Further, such students perceive that most interventions, regardless of intention or potential effectiveness, are done to them. Partnership becomes much more difficult to achieve.

Processing

When I am involved in faculty training, one of the most common misunderstandings I run into involves issues related to processing. The ways in which information (verbal and nonverbal) is processed have huge effects on how and whether such students process therapy as well as classroom instruction. When a student who struggles to effectively organize spoken language (and even bright dyslexic students can struggle with this), too much talk therapy is, well, too much talk. This is no trivial matter. I remember the moment when my own stepson advocated for himself by telling us that when he calls home, he doesn't want his mom and I on separate phones talking with him at the same time. He gets overwhelmed with the amount and density of language. Now imagine a high-powered and emotionally charged group therapy session.

Some students need appropriate setup and an effective debrief. Some may also benefit from some version of what's called *skeletal outlining* during such a session. It's important to ask a student

even during an *individual* therapy session to recap the main issues and possible solutions that were covered. In addition, we know from science and practice that creating schematic visual representations—picture a flow chart or decision tree, for example—helps support weaker language processing and short-term and working memory. Lastly, students who have such language-based learning disabilities, including dyslexia, may also struggle to effectively produce precise language on demand. In a therapeutic context this can look like a teenager who is withholding or even dishonest unless one looks under the hood, cognitively speaking.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Although it's outside the scope of this article to discuss all the complexities of students with an Asperger's presentation, here are a few important paradigms and observations that are based in part on my time as an executive director of a school where 60% of students had Asperger's Syndrome or nonverbal learning disabilities. Much of the literature discusses weaknesses in reading the social and nonverbal cues of others. Most programs are at least partially familiar with these issues. What gets less or little attention is the flip side of this, namely weaknesses resulting in underrecognition of their own nonverbal signals. As a result, stress management becomes infinitely more complicated. Literature indicates that the neurobiology of autism spectrum involves right hemisphere weakness, an underperforming insula and an overactive amygdala.

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Such neurological characteristics help us understand why some students fail to recognize their own signs of distress, why hygiene is an on-going issue, and why relatively neutral interactions can seem so threatening. One of the main jobs of the insula is to register and move sensory information from the body and emotional (limbic) centers to the thinking and metacognitive parts of the brain. We have to wrestle with this, to explicitly work on these areas when treatment planning. In general, students with these types of deficits may benefit from somatic therapies, aspects of mindfulness, and visual-spatial supports.

Resource Pool Depletion

Barkley (2012), one of the world's most respected authorities on ADHD and executive function deficits, outlined the concept of resource pool depletion. In essence, every time someone with executive function deficits engages in a task that demands these self-regulation skills, their execution function fuel tank is depleted further. Research helps us recognize what to do and how to build up these resources as well as avoid unnecessary depletion. I find that front line staffs of therapeutic programs are hungry for more knowledge in this area.

One of the longstanding and often helpful operating paradigms in therapeutic programs is “natural and logical consequences.” Learning through the experience of mistakes and their consequences feels intuitive and seemingly bulletproof from criticism; however, it’s important to recognize its limitations in terms of what research tells us. Addicts often defy that logic, for example. We know that the powerful forces of addiction often disobey that type of learning from mistakes. These conditions all contain a common denominator: powerful chemical, neurological undercurrents. Consequently, simply waiting for the light bulb to go on for those with significant ADHD and executive function deficits is often an exercise in futility. They don’t suffer from a lack of knowing what to do. They suffer with issues of performance. Without knowing how to offer the right types of supports at the points of performance, teachers and therapists are left to repeatedly apply consequences. It can be a vicious cycle that engenders repeated failure.

Final Thoughts

Not all therapeutic program providers need to become experts in ADHD, ASD, and executive function disorders, but learning how to apply awareness of these special needs will help all students. This is referred to as a universal design approach. Building sidewalk ramps for folks in wheelchairs helps people with sprained ankles, skateboarders, and parents with strollers and carts. Similarly, employing best practices in reading instruction helps able readers to become advanced readers. This is my hope for integration between disciplines. 🙏

Sanford Shapiro can be reached at sanfordshapiro@me.com.

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Pros and Cons of the New SAT for Students With LD

by Andrew Peterson, Director of Education, Method Test Prep



As the number of college applicants grows each year, the importance of standardized test performance for college admission follows suit. This harsh reality has been further magnified this academic year with the College Board's redesign of the SAT. Students still face the decades-old decision of whether

to take the SAT or ACT, but that decision now requires additional consideration given the changing landscape of the SAT.

Structural Changes

To say that the test has changed on a structural level is an understatement. The entire format and presentation has been completely overhauled. To get a better idea of how this new test will affect high school students with learning disabilities in the years to come, consider the following changes and implications for students.

Elimination of the guessing penalty. Put simply, the old test actively took additional points away from students when they gave an

incorrect answer. As a result, it was not always a good idea to answer every question on the old test because leaving a question blank could produce a better score for a given student. With this scoring element now defunct, students must try to answer every question on the new test. The elimination of the guessing penalty should be welcome to students with learning disabilities because they will not have to assess whether they should answer given questions but instead be encouraged to attempt every question that is put in front of them.

Elimination of the fifth answer choice. A long standing difference between most sections on the ACT and all sections of the SAT, the fifth answer choice has been removed from the SAT. The test now has four answer choices per question on all sections of the test, with the noted exception of the short answer or "grid-in" portion of the math sections.

Consolidation of content. Possibly the biggest advantage of the new test is that students will not have to alternate subject matter

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New SAT, from page 19

over short periods of time. The College Board has grouped all content-specific material, a methodology that the ACT has been using for years. Previously, the SAT contained three math sections, three critical reading sections, three writing sections (including the essay), and an experimental section. The new SAT contains single sections of reading, writing and language, no calculator math, calculator math, and the essay. Further, those sections will always appear in the order listed above instead of a random order as before. This change is especially advantageous to students with learning disabilities because it allows them to focus intently over an extended period of time, knowing that they have to give that subject matter their attention only once during the test.



Timing. The redesigned SAT will offer a slight timing advantage, a reality that many detail-oriented and methodically inclined students will greatly appreciate. Compared to both its older version as well

as the ACT, the new SAT offers students more time to work through problems. This clearly allows for students to engage in deeper analytical thought, which is a necessity for the SAT.

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New SAT, from page 21

The total duration of the test, however, is longer than the old test and the ACT. For all students, regardless of learning disability, the sheer length of this exam will weigh heavily, producing a weaker result toward the end of the test as endurance becomes a greater issue. This test duration is only magnified further for those students who will receive extra time to take the test.

Content Changes

Writing and Language. Of the changes in the three core-content areas, the changes to the writing and language section appear to be the least extreme. The vast majority of the grammatical concepts have been carried over into the new format, but the new test exclusively uses passage-based grammar questions. Those questions not only require students to maintain the same knowledge of agreement and mechanics but also force them to tackle concepts such as relevance and redundancy with much higher frequency. Similar to the ACT, the test will also occasionally incorporate graphical elements (e.g., figures, tables, and charts) in the writing and language section.

Reading. The reading section is a shell of its former self after being stripped of its upper-tier vocabulary questions and short passages. The new reading passages are more standardized, containing either 10 or 11 questions across the board. The reading test maintains its higher incidence of inference-based questions compared to the ACT and puts a higher premium on such questions by asking students to prove those inferences by citing lines from the passage, a task that the ACT does not currently include. The continuation of inference-based questions as well as the full-passage basis for questions in the writing and language section will pose a challenge to students with learning disabilities because of the nuances of individualized reading passages and the subject-specific relevance.

The lack of higher-tier vocabulary questions is mostly beneficial to students with processing delays or memorization issues. Student can comfortably put away the flash cards and focus on meaning in a broader context. Although the vocabulary component may still be a challenge to students with learning disabilities, students will have several markers in a passage to answer a given question rather than be graded on knowing a single term.

Math. The math section redesign has both structural and content-based changes. The most staggering change, especially in the eyes of students, is the no calculator section. The new



SAT ramps up its math component by including many higher level mathematical concepts that it previously excluded. Students will encounter problems stemming from trigonometry and algebra II, while they juggle an increased emphasis on algebra and mathematical interpretation across the board.

Unlike the ACT, the SAT gives mathematical formulas at the beginning of each math section and the College Board has included additional formulas, mostly volume formulas for complex geometric shapes, in the new test. This again will limit the amount of memorization any given student will have to do before the test, which will allow all students, including those with learning disabilities, to focus intently on the process of the test as a whole rather than on smaller, seemingly separate and unrelated elements.

Although the math formulas are provided, the reality is that they are rarely helpful. Compared to the old version of the SAT, the new version sparingly includes questions that require the given formulas. This not only degrades the value of the formulas but also means that students will need to have a much deeper understanding of what the math in any given question means. This presents a big

issue for students dealing with learning disabilities as it requires them to step outside of their trusted formulaic approach to mathematics.

The math challenges are compounded by the no calculator section as well. Not only will students have to compute without their calculators for a significant portion of the math component, but the section that allows the use of a calculator is written in a way that essentially mitigates the effectiveness of the calculator.

A Choice

In conclusion, as the quest for success in standardized testing continues, it is very important to consider the relative benefits of the ACT. It is a substantially more straightforward and formulaic test and, therefore, confers a direct benefit to those with learning disabilities. The only real challenge of the ACT for students with learning disabilities is the timing. However, if a student with a learning disability can receive extra time on both the SAT and the ACT, the ACT will almost definitely be the better test to take. 🏃

Andrew Peterson can be reached at apeterson@methodtestprep.com.

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So, why do I belong to IECA? Where do I begin? First, attending the Summer Training Institute (STI) in 2012 confirmed my decision to become an IEC. Having relocated from Rhode Island to North Carolina left me unsure of my career path for the first time since the age of 12. STI was glorious! I had found my people! Meredith Grey of *Grey's Anatomy* once said, "This is life. Bad things happen. It's hard. You find your people. You find your person, and you lean on



them." Among the 106 participants at STI 2012, I knew I had found my people. We talked the same language, we wanted the same things for our students, and we were all willing to learn. It didn't matter that we came at this profession from different avenues; some of us were educators, lawyers, business people, or career changers from other fields. Some of us were new to the profession and others were further along in their journey. The point is IECA gave me a place to find my people.

Once I found my people, it was important to continue to grow as an IEC. Beyond STI, I have met some wonderful colleagues who are willing to share ideas and experiences that help me move forward. The webinars, tours, resources, conferences, TalkList, and social media outlets provided by IECA are essential components of my professional growth—my students will benefit from the work I do with them. Patricia Martin, a former assistant vice president at College Board once remarked, "Students are either advantaged or disadvantaged by what you do." IECA gives me the tools to ensure that my students are advantaged by what I do and that's why I belong.

—Belinda Wilkerson, EdD, IECA (NC)

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In the News

Nancy Griesemer (VA) was quoted in the *Washington Post* article, "What Your Child Needs to Know Before Taking the SAT and ACT" on January 21.

Jeff Levy (CA) contributed to NPR's *All Things Considered* story "Financial Aid 101: Earlier FAFSA Provides More Time to Line Up Tuition," which aired on February 27.

Janet Rosier (CT) was quoted in the *Hartford Courant* article "Parents & Teens: Consider Visiting College Campuses During Spring Break" on February 26 and also in the *Connecticut Post* in "Students Set for Test Drive of New SAT" on February 27. She also wrote "Finding The Right Fit: Types of Colleges and Universities" for Blueprint Signature Summer Programs.

Stephanie Klein Wassink (CT) published "What Really Goes On in a College Admissions Office?" in *Money* magazine on February 18.

"Will Taking a Gap Year Hurt My Daughter's College Chances?" by **Lora Block** (VT) appeared in *Money* magazine's College Planner section on March 7.

Betsy Woolf (NY) was quoted in a February 10 article about how to score athletic scholarships in *Money* magazine's College Planner newsletter.

The *Intelligencer* and *Courier Times* interviewed **Sue Luse** (MN) for the February 18 article "Central Bucks, Council Rock Tops in SAT Scores."

Katherine Cohen (NY) coauthored the article "Students: Why You Should Start Thinking About Your Summer Internship Now," which was published in the College Game Plan section of NBCNews.com on February 24.

Connie Pollack (PA) was quoted in "Education Planning Guide 2016: Follow Important Steps in Choosing the Right College" in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on February 12.

A Q&A with **Jamie Dickenson** (WV) was recently featured on MoneyGeek.com in the article "Financial Aid for Online Colleges: Where to Find Grants & Loans to Advance Your Education."

Mandee Heller Adler (FL) was featured in "International College Counselor Weighs in on Harvard's Push to Rethink College Admissions" on PRWEB on January 22.

Nancy Cadwallader (LA) and CEO **Mark Sklarow** were quoted in the January 20 *Greater Baton Rouge Business Report* article "Independent college consultants for hire help Baton Rouge families navigate the admissions process."

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Initiatives

Todd Johnson (MN) published a new edition of *BS/MD Programs—The Complete Guide: Getting into Medical School From High School*, which is now available in the IECA bookstore.

Becky Grappo (CO) and Associate member **Michelle Grappo** (CO) presented at the International School Counselors Association in Lisbon.

Marilyn Emerson (NY) and **Ann Rossbach** (NJ) visited Siena College with a group from The Possibility Project. (See photo on page 1.)

Kristina Dooley (OH) and her husband were the featured speakers for the Hiram College Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship February Fireside Chat where they spoke with students and faculty about their entrepreneurial journey.

Associate member **Brooke Shuman** presented “Putting a Face on the Independent Educational Consultant (IEC) in TACAC” at the TACAC Conference on April 4.

Janet Rosier (CT) recently announced the opening of her new office in Westport in the *Daily Voice*.

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Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

Leah Beasley-Wojick (MI) has been an IEC for eight years. Previously, she was an educational consultant for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC), where



she created statewide brochures and informational videos regarding high school, college admissions, and financial aid. She also served as an assistant dean of college counseling at Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School in Bloomfield Hills, MI; as a research assistant and a college consultant for the Michigan State University College Ambition Program, where she created a college counseling program for six low-income public high schools; and as a records supervisor for Harvard College Undergraduate Admissions Office. While at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, she held positions as an admissions counselor in the undergraduate admissions office, a graduate instructor in Women's Studies; and a program assistant for the mentorship program.

Beasley-Wojick has a PhD in higher, adult, and lifelong education from Michigan State University, an MA in higher education from the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, and a BA in sociology from Tufts University. She attended IECA's 2011 Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC. In her practice, she provides pro bono services to one-third of her clients.

Leah Beasley-Wojick, PhD
Beasley College Consulting LLC
200 Elm Street, Suite 200
Birmingham, MI 48009
734-717-2135
leah@beasleycollegeconsulting.com
www.beasleycollegeconsulting.com
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Vicki Boudin (CT), an IEC for 4 years and an associate member of IECA since 2015, is a clinical psychologist who has been in private practice for more than 30 years. She has worked with a wide



range of clients in individual, couples, and family therapy. For the past 28 years, she has also worked at the University School, an individualized high school program for regular and special education students in Connecticut. She has coordinated with staff from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and Boston Regional Job Corps.

Boudin received her BA in psychology from the University of California at Berkeley, her MA in psychology from the New School for Social Research in New York City, and an MA and PsyD in clinical psychology from Yeshiva University's Ferkauf Graduate School in New York.

Boudin and her husband, Basil, have two sons in their 20s. Alex earned a BA in government and history from Wesleyan University, an MA from the University of Maryland in political science, and is currently working on a PhD. Jason recently graduated from George Washington University with a degree in political science and a focus on American studies. He is planning to become involved in local politics.

Vicki Boudin, PsyD
College Docs
400 Stillson Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
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collegedocsmail@gmail.com
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Colleen Ganjian (VA) has been an IEC for six years. She worked in the admissions offices of Washington University in St. Louis and Stevens Institute of Technology and spent two years as a college counselor at Oak Knoll School and six years as the director of college counseling at Oakcrest School.



Ganjian holds a BA in English from Washington University in St. Louis and an MST from Fordham University as a NYC Teaching Fellow. She attended IECA's 2015 Summer Training Institute and is a member of PCACAC and NACAC, where she presented at the national conference in San Diego.

She has been featured in local and national media, including *Forbes*, *U.S. News & World Report*, the *Washington Post*, *Seventeen* magazine, and *Good Day DC* (Fox 5).

Her volunteer activities include college coach for the College Summit organization in Washington, DC, sustaining member of the Junior League of Washington, and member of the Washington University in St. Louis Alumni Parent Admission Program.

Ganjian and her husband, a vice president with Wells Fargo Private Bank, live in Vienna, VA, with their preschool-aged daughter. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, reading, and entertaining.

Colleen Sheehan Ganjian, MS
DC College Counseling LLC
133 Park Street NE, Suite 3B
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continued on page 39



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Terry Hurley-Maciulewicz (NV) has been an



IEC for four and a half years and an associate member of IECA since 2013. Her previous professional positions included director of new student programs

at American University in Washington, DC; admissions representative at the University of Rhode Island; assistant director of student activities at Johnson and Wales University; and the director of student programs at the Boston Conservatory.

Hurley-Maciulewicz, a first generation college student, holds an MS in human development and family studies from the University of Rhode Island and a BA in psychology from Eastern Connecticut State University; she also completed UC Irvine Extension's IEC certificate program. Her memberships include NACAC, IACAC, and WACAC.

An active volunteer, she contributes to Boys Town of Nevada, the Salvation Army, and the Faith Lutheran College Bootcamp.

Originally from Connecticut, Hurley-Maciulewicz has lived in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Virginia, Ohio, and Illinois in addition to her current residence in Las Vegas, Nevada. She is married with two teenage sons and is an active yogi who enjoys reading, traveling, hiking, and spending time with Brady, her 11-year-old yellow lab.

*Terry Hurley-Maciulewicz, MS
Compass College Consulting LLC
2122 Country Cove Court
Las Vegas NV 89135
630-362-1913
terry@compasscollegeconsulting.com
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Ginny Johnson (PA) was a public school



college and career counselor for 15 years before she became an IEC. She holds a BSN in nursing from the University of Cincinnati and started her career

as an RN, specializing in oncology, before she went back to school to obtain her MS in counseling and human relations from Villanova University.

A past president of PACAC, she served on numerous committees for that organization, including leadership development, access, and strategic planning. She has also served as a member of the President's Council of NACAC and currently sits on the NACAC National Committee for Inclusion, Access, and Success.

For 10 years, Johnson has provided pro bono college counseling to students who are underrepresented and in need of services. She has been married to her husband, Mark, for 33 years and has two grown daughters, Diane and Kristen. A standard schnauzer, Deacon, and her daughters' dogs, Jasper and Ruxin, round out the family. She and her family love to travel and have a trip to Prague planned for this fall. She loves to read and is a member of a decade-old book club, and she is very involved in her church community, where she is a leader for a program called Stephen's Ministries.

*Ginny Johnson, MS
Pathways to Admission LLC
417 Cassatt Road
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610-766-1643
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Stacy La Duke (CA), an educator in public



schools for over 20 years and a former associate member of IECA, began her work as an IEC in 2006. She received a BA in film studies from the University

of California, Santa Barbara, and a pupil personnel services credential and MA in school counseling from Loyola Marymount University. She received the Outstanding Graduate award from LMU's School of Education, Human Resources Division. Currently, she is on the board of directors for Loyola Marymount University's School of Education Alumni Association. She attended IECA's Summer Training Institute in 2007.

A native of Santa Monica, La Duke returned to work at two of her alma maters: John Adams Middle School, where she is in her sixth year as a counselor, and Santa Monica High School, where she worked as a guidance counselor for three years and the lead college counselor for three years. Before that, she worked at three different high schools in the San Jose area over the course of nine years.

La Duke is a member of NACAC, WACAC, College Board, ASCA, and CSCA, and is a CEP.

*Stacy La Duke, MA
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Meghan Lahey (CT) has been an IEC for



eight years and was an associate member of IECA for three years. Previously she spent nine years at Mamaroneck High School as a

school counselor, where she designed a multi-session program and handbook for college-bound students and their parents; gave numerous presentations on navigating high school successfully, college readiness, and finding the right fit; and ran two comprehensive school leadership programs: Caprice Advisors and Peer Leaders, which helped scores of students develop their talents and abilities. She also coached lacrosse, soccer, cross country, and indoor track.

A certified school counselor, Lahey holds an EdM and an MA in counseling psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, and an AB in psychology from Smith College. She also holds certificates in conflict resolution and peer mediation and is a member of NACAC and NATSAP.

Lahey has appeared as an educational expert on both radio shows and financial planning webinars, and has been a featured presenter at professional conferences. As a longtime member of the Screen Actors Guild and a classically trained dancer, she is particularly attuned to the needs of the student-artist.

*Meghan Lahey, EdM, MA
Steinbrecher & Partners
225 Main Street, Suite 203
Westport, CT 06880
203-227-3190
meglahey@steinbrecherconsulting.com
www.steinbrecherconsulting.com
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Daniel Dongjin Lee has been an IEC for



13 years and an associate member of IECA since 2014. His previous positions include project manager for E-Resolutions, data analyst for DND

International, and adjunct professor for mathematics and statistics at Bloomfield College. Currently working on a graduate program in project management at Brandeis University, he also has an MS in statistics from Stevens Institute of Technology.

For the past three years, Lee has been part of a program called Deliver Hope to Vietnam, which delivers clean drinking water to the people of Vietnam by providing supplies and purchasing equipment for the local communities. In the first year, the organization supplied one community with portable water filters that have a long life span. In the second and third year, it raised enough money to construct a well for the same community.

In his free time, Lee enjoys golfing and socializing in the community. His son will enter 9th grade in the fall of 2016. He, his wife, and his son try to do a family activity once a week and recently took a hike at Bear Mountain.

*Dongjin "Daniel" Lee, MS
Newton Education Consulting Inc.
474 Livingston Street, 2nd Floor
Norwood, NJ 07648
201-564-7610
djoylee@yahoo.com
www.mynewtonedu.com
Specialties: S,C*

Laurie Macgregor (MN) has worked as an



IEC for three years and has been an associate member of IECA since 2014. She has also been a college counselor at the International

School of Minnesota; an academic advisor at Minneapolis Community and Technical College; and an employment counselor for HIREd, a nonprofit workforce development organization.

Macgregor holds an MEd in school counseling from the University of Wisconsin–River Falls and a BS from the University of Minnesota. She is a member of NACAC and MACAC.

Macgregor has shared her expertise as a mentor for College Possible; as a volunteer for the high school, college, and career center ACCESS program for postsecondary guidance; and as a scholarship reader for the Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund.

She is married with two sons, who are recent college graduates now working for Target and living in Minneapolis. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time at the family's cabin, skiing, hiking, and playing with her new golden retriever puppy, Archie.

*Laurie Macgregor, M.Ed.
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Regional Groups



Five admission representatives chatted with the IECA **New York City** group at their meeting on January 21. From left to right: Craig Broccoli, Binghamton University; Brandi Miller, Indiana University; Jessica Kowalewski-Dietrich, Ithaca College; Davin Sweeney, University of Rochester; Peter McKay, Lewis and Clark College.



The IECA **Twin Cities** group met on February 18, with the Twin Cities regional admission representatives. Jenny Buyens and Vita Cohen presented "Who or What Is an IEC and What Do They Do?" Each of the 15 college representatives shared one-page fact sheets and a brief overview of their college. IECs and admission reps exchanged business cards and had a chance to meet face-to-face. Future plans include collaboration on parent workshops and partnerships to reach more students. IECA members in attendance were Jenny Buyens, Vita Cohen, Susan Hoff, Kate Malczewski, Lisa Knudson, Ryan Luse, Laurie Macgregor, Toni Marie O'Daniel, Abby Power, Garth Robertson, and Lisa Thomas.



A **Washington, DC area group of IECs (ACCESS)** meets monthly to explore trends and issues important to the profession. In March, 17 members of the group met at the IECA office where they heard from Mark Sklarow during the first hour of their meeting.



The IECA **New Jersey** group met with St. Bonaventure University assistant director of admissions, Michael Murray, in February at their favorite restaurant, Boulevard 572 in Kenilworth, NJ. Left to right, first row: Michael Murray, St. Bonaventure University; Diana Towle; Amy Hallock; Anne Weisholtz; Alice Fuscaldo.

Second row: Laurie Weingarten, Traecy Hobson, Eileen Nolan, and Carolyn Mulligan. Lynne Rosenfeld also attended but is not pictured.

The IECA **South Asia/Middle East** group met in early March. Peter Kaufman from Arbor Bridge put together an online presentation about recent changes to the SAT and the ACT and the implications for international students. Jan Merchant, IECA Associate (Sri Lanka), noted that thanks to great technology, Peter was able to present live from the United States while the participating IECA members were in India, Dubai, and Sri Lanka! It was an informative session full of insight on the recent changes and some helpful recommendations about testing for students. Peter is happy to share a copy of the presentation with other IECA members; if you'd like a copy, send him an email at peter@arborbridge.com.

The Back Page

Parents of Students with Learning Disabilities Are Anxious

35% of parents of a child with LD have serious concerns about their own ability to cope

More than a third of such parents indicate feelings of isolation, stress and worry

45% of parents say their child with LD has been bullied

37% feel their child's school does not effectively test for LD

64% of parents say their schools do not provide adequate information about LD

96% of parents believe that with the proper teaching, students can make up for their learning disability

19% of high school students with LD drop out before graduation

Only 24% of those with LD inform their postsecondary institution; 17% get accommodations

The college graduation rate for those with LD is 11% lower than those without (41% vs. 52%)

66% of all students diagnosed with LD are boys

Source: www.understood.org