

# Work-Based Learning For All

## Interagency Core Teams' Virtual Event

Keynote Address

Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher, State Director of Special Education

October 13, 2020

# Today

- **AOE Special Education Vision**

*Our team, together with all stakeholders, ensures access, opportunity, and equity by providing solution-based oversight, leadership and support to build capacity and improve student outcomes.*

**Topic of Keynote:**

Expect the Unexpected...Think Outside of the Box: Considering post-secondary educational opportunities for students with disabilities – lessons learned and lived.

# State Director Role

- The State Director of Special Education is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of federal and state statutes and regulations governing the education of students with disabilities, to ensure they meet their post-secondary goals to live, learn, work, and participate in their communities. Primary objectives:
  - Increased graduation rates
  - Closing achievement gap
  - Decreased disproportionality
  - Increased capacity and a qualified workforce at state and local levels

# Responsibilities (Accountabilities) for a State Director

- Creates, maintains and leverages strong partnerships with authentic stakeholders and effectively communicates between political entities
- Uses appropriate data to make decisions and evaluate results
- Targets technical assistance & professional development to identified needs
- Creates policies aimed at results, equity, and compliance
- Ensures state-level integration with general education
- Manages fiscal processes and budget alignment with programs
- Ensures effective results-driven monitoring
- Ensures effective system of dispute resolution
- Manages the State's General Supervision System (8 Characteristics)

# Kelleher Background: How Did I Get Here??? Not the Plan -

- K-12 Experience
- Life after high school...
- Can I go to college?
- Unanticipated outcomes!!!



# Equality versus Equity

## EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

- Realizing the vision...

# Frogs in a Bucket

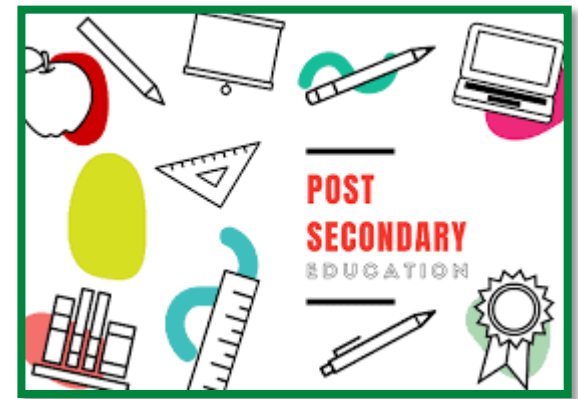


# Visions of Hope: A Personal Share





# Preparing Youth with Disabilities for Post-Secondary Education



- Passion project
- Experience as a professor for 21 years

# Why talk about this today?

- Equity, opportunity, access
- Historically marginalized – Raise the expectations!
- You are in an especially valuable position to help students with disabilities achieve their highest potential by understanding the situations of students as they encounter barriers in college unique to this population.



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# Why talk about this today?

- Continued education after high school often leads youth and young adults with disabilities to greater success in entering a career. Educational opportunities range from universities, community college, trade and technical schools, and training programs.
- Think ahead: It is important to know the entrance criteria, disability documentation requirements to qualify for accommodations, range of disability support services, and financial aid.

# Challenges



- It is important to note that although IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) are no longer applicable after high school, all colleges must follow the non-discrimination mandates under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

# Challenges

- Professors and staff are not prepared/faculty attitudes - University lacks professional development
- Peer attitudes
- Accommodations/Modifications
- Student lacks “college” Behaviors/Skills (including Social)
- Student Support Services/lack of social support within the university environment

# Challenges

- ## Campus Climate

- Disclosure of hidden disabilities, such as learning disabilities, other health impairments like ADHD or psychiatric disabilities pose unique implications for students with disabilities, often involving labels which carry significant stereotypes and societal stigmatization.
- Self-advocacy related to disability documentation and disclosure is often a major issue for many students.
- Negative attitudes from others, physical barriers on campus, a lack of appropriate services and programs, and funding to improve those services and programs

# Solutions

- What goals can we generate, or action plans can we put in place to address these challenges? How are we involving families? The student?
- Advocacy with Disability Coordinators/Student Support Services
- Begin planning early...like what?



# Solutions

- Attend and be involved in IEP meetings with parents, teachers and special education personnel.
- Meet with guidance counselors about courses required for college or postsecondary school (i.e., Foreign Language, Math, English, Science, etc).
- Discuss plans and goals with parents (What will I do after high school?). Discuss the costs related to plans and goals.
- Meet with guidance counselors about future plans. Obtain postsecondary school and college brochures available in the guidance office.
- Search Web sites for colleges and postsecondary schools to learn more about course requirements, potential majors, costs, services for students with disabilities, living arrangements, activities, student life, etc.



# Solutions

- Use academic adjustment letters for most or all courses, and self-advocate for academic adjustments in courses. For example, if extended time is needed for exams, the student should present a letter from the Special Education Department for extended time (50% or 100%) to the teacher, and discuss the logistics related to the academic adjustment (i.e., date, location of exam). The academic adjustments should be similar to those used in postsecondary schools and colleges.
- The student identifies how the condition impacts them in the classroom, at work, and in social settings. Students should be able to discuss their condition and its impact with the IEP team.

# Solutions

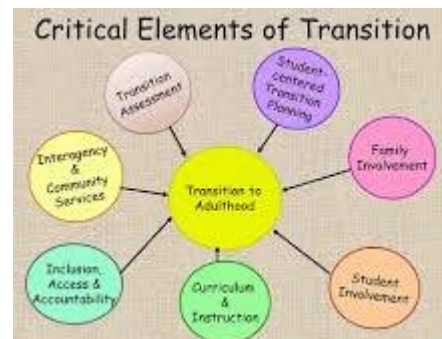
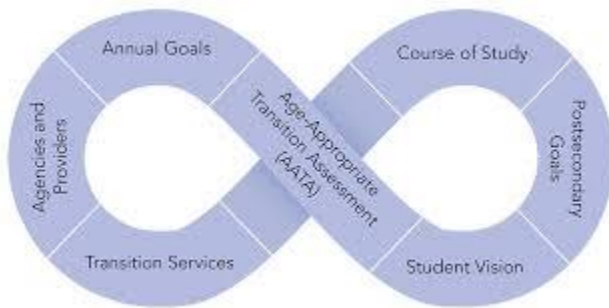
- Learn more about the differences between academic adjustments in college and high school. For example, unlimited time may be provided in high school, whereas 50% or 100% more time may be provided in college. Begin to try out academic adjustments that are more in line with what is used in college (i.e., if student is using unlimited time on exams, switch to 50% or 100% more time).
- Contact the disability services office for a face-to-face meeting with a disability service provider. Learn more about the academic adjustments offered. Services and academic adjustments received in high school may not be appropriate or realistic for college.

# Solutions

- Early on in final year of high school: Submit documentation to the disability services office at the postsecondary schools or colleges that chosen. Ask the disability services office to review documentation to determine if it meets the guidelines.

# Transition Planning and Preparation

- Ideas to consider if a student interest aligns with post-secondary education



# Transition Planning and Preparation

- Considerations...let's focus on Student Behaviors/Skills
  - Communication skills
  - Social skills and class participation
    - Identify and address social needs and navigate challenging situations
  - Sensory Differences
  - Motor Skills: gross and fine motor
  - Learning style
  - Coping skills
  - Physical appearance: etiquette, networking, attire, etc.

# Transition Planning and Preparation

- Considerations...let's focus on Student Behaviors/Skills
  - Develop strategies for self-advocacy, organization, time management, planning and prioritizing, studying, goal-setting, problem-solving, self-monitoring, decision-making, negotiation, stress management, and self-awareness.
  - Identify tools and strategies to address obstacles in facilities
  - Provide strategies for becoming active members of the campus community (club involvement, inter-murals, service learning placements, etc.)

# Conclusion and Offer of Support



- Don't forget the AOE is in your corner...

# Roles and Responsibilities

- State Director of Special Education: [Jacqueline Kelleher, MA, Ph.D.](#)
- Special Education Programs Manager: [Chris Kane](#)
- Coordinator for Behavioral Supports: [Tracy Harris](#)
- Inclusive Systems Coordinator: [Betty Roy](#)
- Inclusion and Accessibility Coordinator: [Ana Kolbach](#)
- Coordinator of Instructional Strategies, [Katy Langevin](#)
- Post-Secondary Transition Coordinator: [John Spinney](#)
- Special Education Technical Assistance Provider: [Ernie Wheeler](#)
- Special Ed Monitoring Program Manager: [Tonya Rutkowski](#)
- Special Ed Monitoring Coordinator, [Simona Kragh](#)
- Special Ed Monitoring Program Technician: [Rebecca Gile](#)
- Early Childhood Special Ed/IDEA 619 Coordinator: [Katie McCarthy](#)
- IDEA Part B Data Managers: [Cassidy Canzani](#) and [Brandon Dall](#)
- For questions on Legal, please contact [Clare O'Shaughnessy](#)
- For Finance questions, [Brad James](#) or [Jennifer Perry](#)



# Technical Assistance

- Special Education Technical Assistance is available 24 hours/day through the general email and voicemail system. These methods of communication are monitored regularly during business hours and a response is generally provided within 24-48 hours.
- Please contact our team at (802) 828-1256 or at [AOE.SpecialEd@vermont.gov](mailto:AOE.SpecialEd@vermont.gov).
- Special Ed Team revised website: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education>
- AOE COVID Guidance: <https://education.vermont.gov/news/covid-19-guidance-vermont-schools>