

Ms. LeGrand's Perspective



A different perspective

Ms. LeGrand, a high school transition specialist, has also worked with students like this before. Juan struggles academically, but given the right supports and opportunities, she knows that he can succeed in high school and continue his education in college afterward.

Before Juan's IEP meeting, Ms. LeGrand meets with Juan and asks him about what his goals are for after high school. Juan says he'd like to build or fix things like his uncle, but doesn't think his grades are good enough for him to go to a technology school.

At his IEP meeting, Ms. LeGrand describes a few different paths that Juan could take to get into a vocational and technical college. She knows that Juan would be the first member of his family to attend college, so she makes sure to explain the different kinds of programs available and the types of financial assistance they could access.

College visits and a college fair are listed as activities in Juan's IEP for this year. Ms. LeGrand plans to hold an informational evening session for families to explain the support available to students with disabilities in college. She works with Juan's school counselor to help Juan enroll in a career academy course in HVAC, and plans to talk with him about getting an internship in his senior year with a local business.

In her advisory period, Ms. LeGrand creates lessons, group work, and projects that allow students with and without disabilities to explore what college looks like and identify things that they can do today to prepare for college. She expects that Juan may take a little longer to be prepared to go to college, but knows that given the right supports, he can do it.

Ms. LeGrand provides opportunities for her students to learn about college students with differing disabilities. She also invites recent graduates, with and without disabilities, to share how they began their college journeys.

Grigal, M. (2020). Creating the vision. Building college expectations for students with disabilities. Presentation at the 2020 Council for Exceptional Children Conference. Portland, OR. February.

From: Grigal, M., Madaus, J., Dukes III, L., & Hart, D. (2018). Navigating the Transition from High School to College for Students with Disabilities, Routledge: New York, NY.

Mr. DiMaria's Perspective



One teacher's perspective

Mr. DiMaria, a secondary special educator who teaches a learning support class, has had students like Juan before. He finds them challenging in terms of both behavior and learning, and he expects that this student will not go to college after high school. He's not even sure Juan will graduate from high school.

At Juan's IEP meeting, Mr. DiMaria describes Juan's academic deficits and behavior problems, and when discussing his transition plan, informs Juan's family that there are services available for students like their son. Mr. DiMaria then shares some forms related to vocational rehabilitation eligibility, along with a transition checklist document, and tells the family about an upcoming transition resource fair. He states that this is where all of the local service providers that support sheltered work and day habilitation (Goodwill Industries, the Arc) describe their services.

Juan is placed into a segregated life skills class, where he learns how to make change, assemble kits in a makeshift assembly line, and engage in "functional academics." He is not exposed to the general curricula, and his IEP goals are related to connecting him with service providers and exposing him to career exploration experiences. In-school jobs, such as cleaning the cafeteria tables and making copies in the office, are a part of his vocational training.

The expectation for Juan is that he will leave high school in seven years with a high school certificate, and possibly have a part-time job after leaving high school.

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