Neurodiversity: Reframing College Access for First-Generation Students with Learning Disabilities

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Who Are We?

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Our Mission

*Downtown College Prep prepares first-generation students for college success. We believe every student has the potential to succeed.*

1707 Students in grades 5-12  
4 MS and HS Campuses  
85% Low-Income Matriculate to college  
96%
Agenda

- Defining Neurodiversity
- The Similarities and Differences Between IEP vs. 504
- Our College Success Program
- The Journey To-Through
  - Preparation
  - Connection
  - Post Secondary Support
- Key Takeaways
What Is Neurodiversity?

The basic premise of neurodiversity is that there is no “typical” mental capacity—no “normal” brain to which all other brains are compared. There are just different brains and different ways in which they function.

It is what we at DCP believe our students are not special education students, but are Neurodiverse.
Neurodiversity Means Considering the specific brain needs of ALL students

**ELL and Bilingual Students**
Research shows being bilingual causes the brain to work more efficiently and may help promote brain health as people age. How are we supporting our ELs in becoming bilingual and creating stronger brain architecture for themselves?

**Homeless and Foster Youth**
Maslow’s hierarchy of needs places physiological needs and safety needs at the first two levels. Students who are homeless or in foster situation may struggle with having these needs met. How can you create a classroom space that helps meet these needs, freeing up their brains to learn?

**ALL Students**
The more you understand about adolescent brain development, the better you can differentiate in ways that positively support positive brain development. How can you not only integrate what you are learning this week, but continue to grow in this area as you grow in your teaching practice?

**First Gen College Going Students**
As we learned yesterday, the cognitive load students hold and can impact how our students’ brains manage multiple priorities. How are we helping grow their natural ability to hold multiple needs as priorities?
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)- A written legal document that maps out the needs and supports for students who qualify for supports under IDEA, an educational law. This plan supports access AND achievement.

- 504 Plan - A written legal plan that maps out the needs and supports of students (or parents) with a disability that impacts their access. Qualifications are based on Americans with Disabilities Act.
# Understanding the Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IEP vs 504</th>
<th>Individualized Education Plan (IEP)</th>
<th>Section 504 Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of law</strong></td>
<td>Special Education - Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)</td>
<td>Civil Rights - Rehabilitation Act of 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
<td>Office of Civil Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Requirements for eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Has a disability that: a) meets criteria under IDEA, b) significantly impacts educational performance, and c) requires specialized services</td>
<td>Has a disability that significantly impacts a major life function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is included?</strong></td>
<td>Specialized education services, accommodations, related services.</td>
<td>Accommodations, modifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age limits</strong></td>
<td>IEP offered through 12th grade.</td>
<td>No age limits with a 504 plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where is the plan used?</strong></td>
<td>Educationally, through the 12th grade. Does not transfer to college.</td>
<td>School, work, and college. 504 Plans will transfer to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline</strong></td>
<td>A Manifestation Determination meeting must be held to determine if the offense is a manifestation of the disability by the 10th day of suspension. Services are required during long-term suspension.</td>
<td>A Manifestation Determination meeting must be held to determine if the offense is a manifestation of the disability by the 10th day of suspension. May require reevaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Students

DCP serves about a 10% Neurodiverse population in our schools.
Downtown College Prep is a fully inclusive program that offers a range of supports to meet the students’ needs. All students enrolled at DCP are in general education for all or most of the time. Students are predominately serviced academically and/or behaviorally in a push-in modality so that they don’t miss classroom instruction.

However, we provide support dependent on the needs of the student.
## Neurodiverse Student’s Graduation Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/Clase</th>
<th>El Primero High School</th>
<th>La Prepa El Primero</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students w/ 504 Estudiantes con 504</td>
<td>Students w/ IEPs Estudiantes con IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Neurodiverse Student’s Graduation Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class / Clase</th>
<th>Alum Rock High School</th>
<th>Students w/ 504 Estudiantes con 504</th>
<th>La prepa Alum Rock (Primera generación)</th>
<th>Students w/ IEPs Estudiantes con IEP</th>
<th>Total # of Graduates Total de Graduados</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
College Persistence as of Winter 2018-19

College Outcomes Comparison for DCP Graduates with IEP/504 and all Graduates (2013-2017 Classes)

- College Matriculation: 98% (Graduates with IEP/504), 96% (All Graduates)
- College Persisted: 81% (Graduates with IEP/504), 83% (All Graduates)
- Currently Enrolled: 74% (Graduates with IEP/504), 69% (All Graduates)
Journey To-Through

There are many pieces to this puzzle!

We have categorized our student’s journey into three phases

**Preparation**
Generally 10th-12th Grade

**Connection**
12th Grade

**Post Secondary**
Beyond 12th Grade
Dear Teacher

- College and Career Readiness Program (CCR)
- College Tours
- Building Self Awareness and Advocacy
- Student Led IEPs
- Transitional Assessments
Connection

- College Trips (Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Year)

- Casemanagers Support with Communication Between Student and College Disability Support Program

- Trips to local DSP to start registration process.
Post-Secondary Support

Alumni Success Counselor
- College Education Plans (transfer and grad planning)
- Access accommodations
- Financial Aid Support and Scholarships
- Fall Campus Visits
- Office Hours with Alumni Peer Mentors
- Career and Graduate School Advising
Key Take-Aways

- Neurodiversity is a term used to celebrate the diversity in how are brains function. The term suggest that there is no “typical” mental capacity—no “normal” brain to which all other brains are compared. There are just different brains and different ways in which they function.

- **COLLEGE IS POSSIBLE FOR NEURODIVERSE STUDENTS**

- Preparing students with Neurodiversities happens long before their 12th grade year of high school.

- IEPs expire once the student graduates with a high school diploma (or ages out); however 504 Plans can be transferred to post-secondary institutions and the workplace.

- There are programs at the post-secondary level to support Neurodiverse students with access to college curriculum.

- Each college’s Disability Resource Support is different, and students should be supported with registration.

- Student’s require continued support throughout post-secondary education experience.
Resources

- 7 Things to Know About College Disability Services for Parents
- Types of College Accommodations and Services
- A College Student’s Guide to Disability Accommodations
- ADA Guide to Disability Rights Law
- Department of Ed Site for Students with Disabilities in PostSecondary

“Which Is Better, a 504 Plan or an IEP?” *School Psychologist Files*, 7 Sept. 2016, schoolpsychologistfiles.com/which-is-better-a-504-plan-or-an-iep/.
Questions
Additional Resources:

https://dcp.org/wacac/

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