

# To Parents of Students With Disabilities About to Enter College

Dear Parents,

**Thank you** for being involved in the educational programming and planning for your child up to this point!

\* In the past you *wanted* to be involved, but you also *needed* to be involved since, by law, the school could not do anything for, to, or with your child regarding their disability without your permission.

\* Now your role will change. There are things about your son/daughter's disability and how it impacts their functioning that you know and that the disability services provider needs to know. There is no doubt that you can explain those things more fully than your son or daughter. However, now THEY have to be the one to convey all this crucial information (not YOU), for a number of reasons.

## **Here is some information that will be helpful to you in your planning for Fall 2020:**

**First** - colleges and universities provide services and support to SWD (Student With Disability) under very different laws than those that governed services in the K-12 system. As a parent, you have **no** rights under Section 504/ADA in speaking for your SWD who is in college. Therefore, the college may require that your student give written permission for you to speak with anyone at the college, even with your student present.

**Second** - even though the college has to provide accommodations for student with a disability, they are under **no** obligation to continue the services given in high school or to adhere to the recommendations of an outside diagnostician. The college will make its own determination of what services and support to offer, based on the documentation of disability and their interview with your SWD.

**Third** - this is your SWD's first chance to convey information all by himself/herself. The service provider is anxious to find out whether your SWD is mature enough to handle the responsibilities and independence of college life in order to get a feel for how knowledgeable and confident the student is in sharing information about past services, what works and doesn't work, and what accommodations they hope to have at the college level.

PLEASE prepare your student to advocate for their needs by letting them be in control of the situation whenever possible. Focus your visual attention on your son/daughter instead of trying to make eye contact with other adults. If you look to your SWD, so will the professional. Take notes during the conversation so that if you disagree with something said between school personnel and your student, you can correct it at the end of the conversation.

**Please know *students* with disabilities survive and thrive on college campuses across the country.**