



SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

What supports do P-Tech students with disabilities receive at the partner college?

At the elementary and secondary levels, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to identify and evaluate students with special needs. Special education staff at the school are responsible for writing an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and the school must provide the modifications and accommodations specified, to move students toward the identified educational goals. The overall objective of K-12 education is academic success. At the college level, students are covered by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) legislation, which shifts responsibility to the student to self-identify to the campus disabilities office. Students must demonstrate eligibility by providing appropriate documentation, and ask for the services they need. Some special education services provided to many students in high school, such as a co-teaching setting or modified assignments, are not offered in college. The college disabilities office does offer many services, such as note-taking, extended time and separate location for testing, according to students' needs. The key difference between high school and college for students with disabilities is that on a college campus, students must self-identify and self-advocate for the services they need.

To prepare students with disabilities for college courses, P-TECH 9-14 school staff should provide information and guidance about the accommodations and services available on the college campus, and the self-advocacy skills that students need to access services. The accommodations listed in a P-TECH 9-14 school student's IEP should take into account that the student will be taking college courses, and should be aligned with the supports that the student will receive on the college campus. For instance, a student might be in a co-teaching classroom (with two teachers, a general and special education teacher) for 10th grade math. If the student will be taking a college math course on the college campus in 11th grade, then co-teaching is not an option. It would be appropriate for the student's IEP to specify other services, for instance extra math instruction by high school special education staff, to support the student's success in the college course.

Federal law requires that beginning when a student is age 14 (or younger, if appropriate), the IEP must include a transition plan that outlines the steps the student will take to reach their goals for adult life. The transition plan must include input from the student and family, and is updated annually. The transition plan outlines the student's objectives in terms of education, employment and other aspects of adult living, and identifies the related services and community supports that the student will need. For P-TECH 9-14 school students, the transition plan should include the student's college course-taking, internships, and workplace learning, as well as a plan for after the student leaves the P-TECH 9-14 school.

(continued...)

The table below summarizes some of the differences that students with disabilities experience as they transition from high school to college courses. The central distinction is that for students with disabilities in college, the responsibility for identifying oneself, advocating for one's needs and communicating with those who can help, lies entirely with the student. P-TECH 9-14 schools can play a critical role in preparing students to take on that responsibility.

	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
What legislation applies to students with disabilities in high school and college?	Covered in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation, which supports student success	Covered by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legislation, which guarantees student access
Who is responsible for identifying the student? What is the role of the student's parents?	The school is responsible for identifying the student's disability and needs. The IEP is written with participation and sign-off by the student's parents.	The student is responsible for self-identification, self-advocacy and requesting accommodations. College students with disabilities choose whether to identify themselves to the campus office. The student's parents cannot see information without the student's permission.
Who is responsible for evaluating and documenting the disability and need for services?	The school provides evaluations at no cost to the student/family. The IEP is the legal documentation; it states a student's disability category, their strengths and challenges, and lists the accommodations and services the school must provide to the student.	The college requires students to provide (and pay for) up-to-date evaluations and documentation identifying functional limitations, and demonstrating the need for requested accommodations. IEP's are generally not acceptable documentation. However, by working with their campus partner, P-TECH schools can often arrange for the college to accept IEP's as documentation for P-TECH students.
What is the instructor's role?	Teachers are expected to be familiar with the IEP, the student's background and the IEP's specific requirements for services and accommodations.	Instructors can only get information directly from the student; however, if a student receives services from the campus disabilities office, instructors receive only information about specific, relevant accommodations.
How are assignments & materials presented?	Teachers may modify instructional materials and/or alter the pace of assignments.	Professors usually expect all students to use the syllabus, textbook, and class notes to keep up with course content, assignments and assessments.



(continued...)

	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Who identifies that a student needs extra help?	Teachers reach out to students they believe need assistance or extra help. Teachers are often available, before, during and after class.	Students must let their professors know if they need assistance. Professors expect (and want) students to seek help during scheduled office hours.
How does a student get extra help?	Teachers and/or parents often establish study routines, tutoring services, and reminders.	Students are responsible for scheduling their time. Tutoring may be available, but students must access it themselves.
How are assignments reviewed and graded?	Teachers check homework and remind students of incomplete work; many assignments are graded and returned during a marking period.	Instructors often do not check homework, and do not remind students of incomplete work. Some classes may have only a midterm and final.
How are assignments & materials presented?	The IEP may include modifications to the format of tests and/or grading. Teachers often schedule test dates to avoid conflict with other tests and events. Makeup tests are often available.	Accommodations may change how tests are given (e.g. extended time), but not the content of the tests or how they are graded. Instructors schedule tests without considering other course schedules or events. Makeup tests are seldom an option.

For more information about the P-TECH 9-14 model, please visit ptech.org