

“THE ROAD TO COLLEGE”

Tips from SEPTA in partnership with Mamaroneck School District Guidance Dept November 2, 2011

- **Accommodations-** extra time, reading of instructions, use of computer, etc..- work with your guidance counselor to apply for accommodations to the College Board (PSAT's, SAT's, SATII's and AP exams) and/or ACT
 - Requests should be filed as early as possible for the SAT's, preferably freshman year, in order to ensure they are in place for the June SATII in Bio or fall PSAT's which some students take in the fall of sophomore year.
 - ACT requests can only be made *in the year* your child will be taking the test
 - Accommodations your child receives in high school are *not guaranteed*.....the testing services have their own criteria for disabilities and accommodations.
 - Applying early affords you the time to challenge the testing services if your child is denied accommodations
 - Go to www.collegeboard.com or www.act.org and click on the link for students with disabilities. Look at the descriptions of disabilities/accommodations and necessary testing/documentation. The documentation is submitted *by the school* and parents fill out certain portions
 - Sometimes additional testing beyond what the school has done may be required in the documentation of a disability
- **Tests-** ACT or SAT
 - Research whether the ACT or SAT is more appropriate for your child. According to parents, the ACT is a more straightforward test, and is subject based(math, English, reading, science, combined English/writing), and students are not penalized for wrong answers. Many schools will accept the ACT w/writing *in place of* SAT II's. It has been said that being granted the accommodation by the ACT Board is more difficult than the College Board.
 - Only a limited number of colleges require the SATII's (subject tests), so it is important to check that your child really needs them before he or she devotes the time and effort to prepare for the taking of the SATII's. You should consult with the college websites to determine if they are required
- **Foreign language-** requirements
 - Many schools require a minimum of 3 years of foreign language instruction, and many specify that these be sequential.

- Many schools accept the high school's graduation requirements (which is 1 year of foreign language)
- Most important thing to understand is to check with each school's specific requirements.
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- **The Search**
 - The CIC, guidance department, and special ed offices have several books which are geared towards LD kids. That being said, many parents and students recommend finding the colleges/universities your child is interested in *first*, and then looking to see what programs and/or support services the school(s) offer.
 - Available books:
 - Princeton Review/K&W Guide to Colleges for students with LD or ADD
 - College and Career Success for Students with LD
 - Survival Guide for College Students with ADHD or LD
 - Learning How to Learn When you Have a Learning Disability
 - In addition to the above books specific to kids with LD/ADHD, recommended books are:
 - Colleges that Change Lives, Fiske, Princeton Review, Kaplan, Harvard Schmarvard
 - Once you've identified schools, ask if they have an office of Student Support, Center for Learning Disabilities, Learning Center.....they are called different things at different schools, AND the level of services varies by school. Find out where the office of disabilities is located....it's location can speak volumes
 - Questions to ask the Learning Center:
 - Have they had experience with students who have your child's type of disability?
 - How do they notify professors?
 - What services/support do they offer?
 - What documentation is required, if any? (your child's IEP does NOT follow them from high school to college)
 - Does the student need to apply for the program? If so, each year? Each semester/trimester?
 - Are there additional fees for the programs/services beyond the regular tuition?
 - Remember the importance of self advocacy! It's hard to let go, but remember, your child really needs to take charge of their "role" in college. They most likely will need to approach the professors directly and will need to seek out the learning centers/support services. By this point your child should know what supports they need and be ready to advocate for help.

- A few tips from a director of the Academic Support Center at Gordon College:
 - The student should understand his/her own disability and how it affects him/her.
 - Each student should work on learning to understand and articulate their disability and accommodation needs and how to advocate for themselves.
 - Students and parents should understand how disability laws are different at the postsecondary level.
 - Colleges generally work on strategies, not remediation. There is no special education at the college level unless you go to a college that specializes in disabilities.
 - Students and their parents should be prepared to be flexible about how to meet their goal of a college education. Students may need to take a lighter load, take courses in the summer, take an extra year etc to reach their goal. It can definitely be done but be open to alternate ways of getting there if necessary.
 - Find out if there is reading that can be done ahead over the summer.
 - When appropriate, (if you haven't already done it) try out recorded books, Dragon, and any other technology that may be appropriate to see if it will be helpful.
 - When appropriate, become a member of RFB and D and Bookshare. Before you buy a laptop, check with your college about what would best fit the student's accommodation needs.
- **Helpful links**
 - <http://mamkschoolspta.org/septa/>
 - www.ldonline.org/
 - http://www.college-scholarships.com/learning_disabilities.htm
 - a great list of schools with programs for LD kids
 - simply google "college for kids with learning disabilities" and you will have no shortage of reading material!

