



Charting the Cs
Conference 2025:

*To Literacy and
Beyond*

Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

Transitioning Students from K-12 to Higher Education: Accommodations, Advocacy, and Actions Required by Special Educators and Support Staff

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ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY

About Me

- Education
 - Bachelor's: Elementary Education, Academic Behavioral Strategist (MN State, Moorhead)
 - Masters: Physical Health Disabilities (MN State, Moorhead)
- Experience
 - Elementary Special Education Teacher for Moorhead Public Schools for 6 years and Middle School Special Education Teacher for 1 year
 - Associate Director for SAS at SCSU- almost 2 years



About Me, Continued

- MN Licenses
 - Elementary Education, ABS, Physical/Health Disabilities
- Hobbies
 - Running, watching hockey, hikes/walks with our dog Rosie, reading, and Netflix binging



Today's Objectives

- Understand the Difference between IEP/504 plans at the K-12 Level and Accommodations/ Supports at the Higher Education level and how to support students and families with the transition.
- Understand the Process of Requesting Accommodations at Post-Secondary Institutions to support transitioning K-12 Students.
- Have a brief understanding of the new RISE Act legislation and how it impacts student transitioning from K-12 to Post Secondary Options.

Agenda

- Differences between K-12 and Colleges/Universities
- Requesting Accommodations at a Higher Education Level
- Supporting Students/families with the Transition
- Questions/Comments

K-12 Special Education vs College/University Disability/Accessibility services

High School

- Individual's with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Section 504
- Goals/objectives, accommodations/modifications all aimed at student success
- District/team is responsible for identifying, determining eligibility, and implementing supports and services

K-12 Special Education vs College/University Disability/Accessibility services (cont.)

College/University

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Section 504
- Reasonable accommodations for equal access "Fundamental Alteration"
- Must meet course technical standards without accommodation
- Students must disclose disability, apply for services, complete interactive process, and self-monitor

More about Post Secondary Accommodation

- Definition of Accommodations- an alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks"
- Cannot "fundamentally alter" expectation of the course (outcomes/technical standards)- Alterations/Modifications
- Must be reasonable, necessary, and provide equal access

Examples of Accommodation vs. Alterations/Modifications

Common Accommodations

- Alternate testing locations
- Extended testing time
- Accessible materials/textbook
- Audio recording lectures
- Assistive technology
- Adjustment to policies when necessary

Alterations (not accommodations)

- Notes on tests
- Reduced choice tests
- Reduced homework or assignment alterations
- Unlimited testing time
- No due dates
- Waived course requirements

How do we Support Students and Families with this big change?

- Stay tuned :)

Disability in College

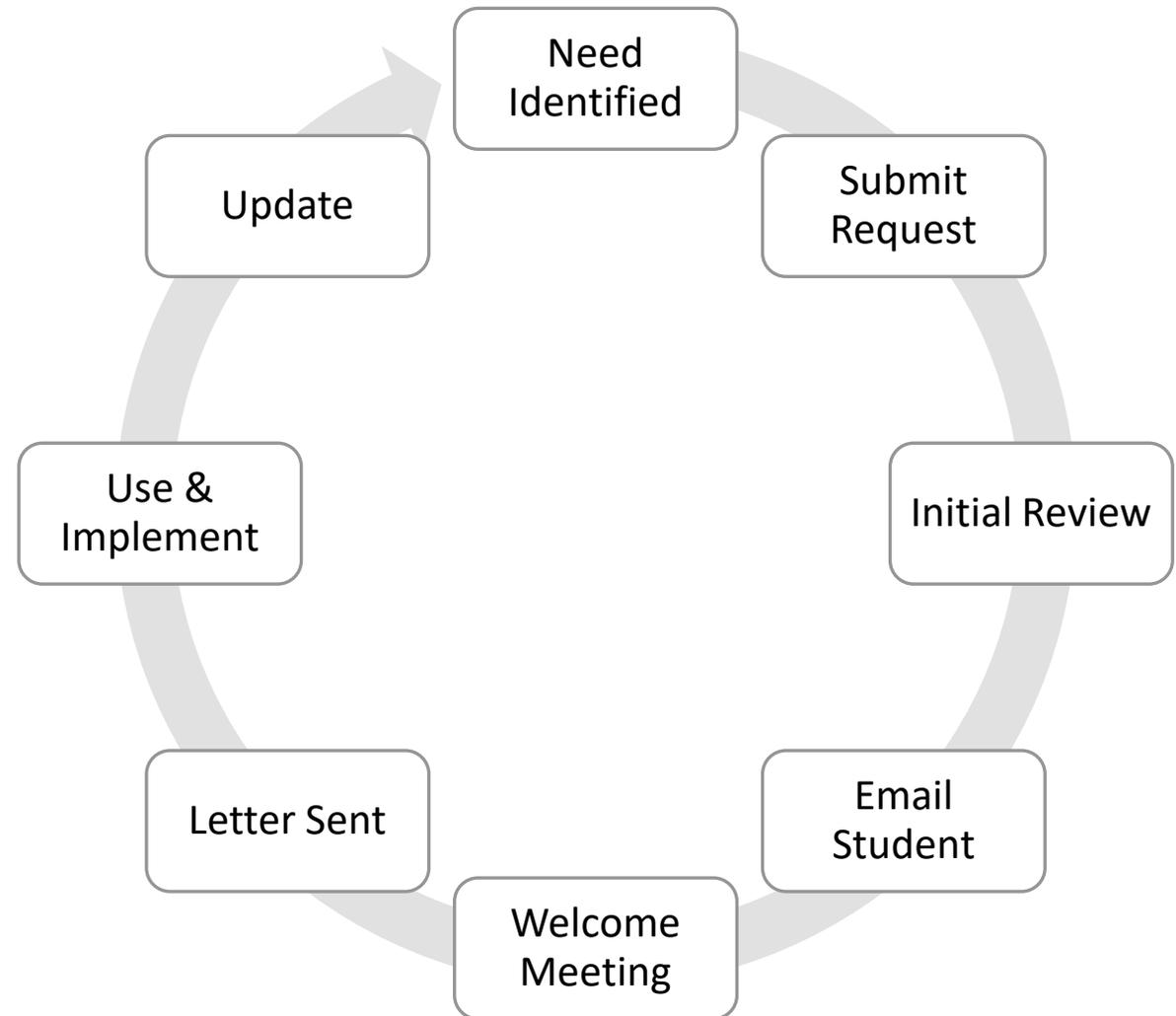
- Any higher education institution that receives government funding must provide disability/accessibility supports
- 22% of college students identify a disability
- Only 37% (about 1/3) of students with disabilities inform the college
- Less than 40% of students who had support in high school, ever use accommodations
- Let's be the change!

Common Conditions of Students who Access Accommodations

- Mental Health- anxiety, depression, bipolar, PTSD, etc.
- Neurodiverse- ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, dyslexia, etc.
- Chronic Health- migraine, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.
- Physical Health- arthritis, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, etc.
- Sensory- Deaf, hard of hearing, blindness, vision loss, sensory processing, etc.
- Any condition that impacts access to education can be considered disabling

Accommodation Request and Use Process

1. Be an admitted SCSU Student
2. Complete the Accommodation Request Form at www.stcloudstate.edu/sas
3. Complete a Welcome Meeting with SAS
4. Accommodation Letter Sent
5. Must be updated every semester



Additional Supports Offered by Disability/Accessibility Office

- Coaching
- Tutoring (TRIO)
- Advising
- Study Workshops
- Executive Functioning Trainings
- Campus Events

How do we support students and families with this transition?

- Educate students and families on the higher ed accommodations process
- Educate students on their IEP/Disability Impact

Educate families and students on higher education process

- Have conversations early in the transition process about the differences between special education and higher education accommodations.
- Encourage families to meet with disabilities/accessibilities offices when visiting colleges/higher education institutions.
- When possible, have students meet with disability/accessibility staff as part of their transition plan

Educate students on their IEP/Disability Impact

- Students who understand/remember what supports they used in High School get the supports they need much quicker than those who do not know
- Encourage students to keep a copy of their last IEP/Evaluation report post-graduation
- Give students opportunities to practice advocating for themselves and their needs

The Minnesota RISE ACT Information

In 2024, the Minnesota legislature passed the Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act, effective January 1, 2025, as part of the Minnesota Higher Education Act. This act strengthens the process for students requesting disability-related accommodations.

- Clear policies and resources to support students with disabilities in "Plain Language"
- Self-Disclosure: The RISE Act defines self-disclosure as the point of contact when a student informs the University that they identify as disabled and intend to request accommodations. This self-disclosure is sufficient to initiate the interactive process.
- Disability Resources Support: Each state and federally funded campus must have a dedicated Disability Resources unit that works with students with disabilities to facilitate access and coordinate accommodations.

Time for Questions/Comments



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