ePolicyWorks
Partners in Disability & Employment

Connecting with Families National Online Dialogue:
Supporting Postsecondary Success of Young Adults with Disabilities

January 22 – February 11, 2015
Participation Metrics

Table of Contents

Introduction:

The following report provides detailed metrics for the "*Connecting with Families: Supporting Postsecondary Success of Young Adults with Disabilities"* online dialogue hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and its youth technical assistance center, the National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth (NCWD). This virtual event was held from Thursday, January 22 through Wednesday, February 11, 2015. The dialogue invited families of young adults in postsecondary education, training or other programs to contribute to a virtual conversation in an effort to inform ODEP and NCWD's development of technical assistance to help postsecondary intuitions better assist families in supporting their youth/young adult. The dialogue posed the following two questions:

1. How can postsecondary institutions better assist families like yours in supporting young adult children's education and career development?

2. What type of information or supports would be most useful to you, and other families, in assisting students with disabilities to make their own decisions and become self-determined adults?

In addition to answering the above questions, the dialogue asked participants to share their ideas on what postsecondary institutions and other providers could do to better assist families in supporting young adult's educational and employment success. As part of the registration process, registrants were asked to answer a series of questions including their relationship to the student, and the student's postsecondary program type, age, length of enrollment in their postsecondary program, credential pursued, work preparation, and type of disability.

This report contains the unedited verbatim ideas from commenters that were rated as the most popular. The posts fall under two main areas: "Most Popular Ideas Overall Across all Topic Areas" and "Most Popular Ideas by Topic Area." Ideas posted to the online dialogue were organized into the following the topics: Postsecondary Academics, Preparing for Employment, Physical and Emotional Well-Being, Access, Equity & Accommodations, Using Technology and Building Self- Determination. In addition to posting ideas to the dialogue, participants were given an opportunity to "vote" on each idea and submit comments. Included in this preliminary report are the top posts contributed by and voted on by participants. An archive of the complete dialogue is available for viewing at ConnectingFamiliesPost2ndSuccess.ePolicyWorks.org.

The comments provided by participants during the *Connecting with Families* online dialogue were greatly appreciated by ODEP and NCWD/Y and will inform their development of technical assistance materials to help postsecondary intuitions better assist families in supporting their youth/young adult's education and employment success.

Participation Summary:

- Dialogue opened on Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 8:00 am EST

- Dialogue closed on Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at 11:59 pm EST

- Total Ideas: 94

- Total Comments: 405

- Total Votes: 557

- Unique Visitors: 1,834

    - Total Registrations: 430 (23.4% of unique visitors)

    - Active Registrants: 104 (24.2% of total registrants)

Connecting Families Dialogue Registrant Participation

Active Registrants (posted ideas, commented or voted) 24.2%
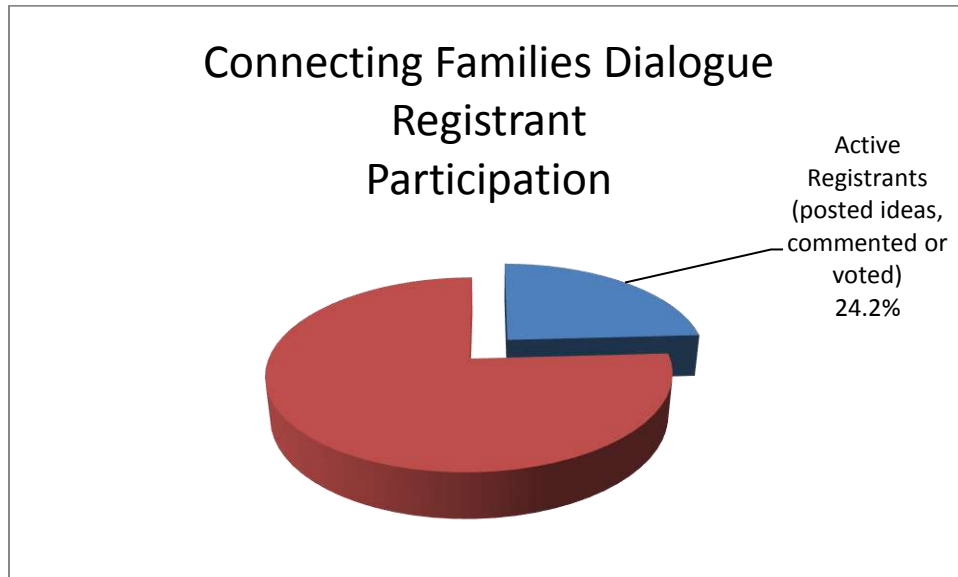
Campaign Summary:

- Idea breakdown by topic:

    - **Postsecondary Academics**: 26 ideas (116 comments and 173 votes)

    - **Preparing for Employment**: 21 ideas (58 comments and 91 votes)

    - **Physical and Emotional Well-Being**: 11 ideas (58 comments and 82 votes)

    - **Access, Equity & Accommodations:** 19 ideas (77 comments and 121 votes)

    - **Using Technology**: 7 ideas (39 comments and 27 votes)

    - **Building Self-Determination:** 10 ideas (57 comments and 63 votes)

    - **Additional Input**: 4 ideas

Registration Metrics:

Total registrants: 430
Total number that completed the registration questions: 419
Following is a breakdown of self-reported affiliations:

Your relationship to student:

- Sibling: 1%
- Parent: 63%
- Grandparent: 1%
- Other: 35%

Your relationship to student

Sibling 1%
Other 35%
Grandparent 1%
Parent 63%
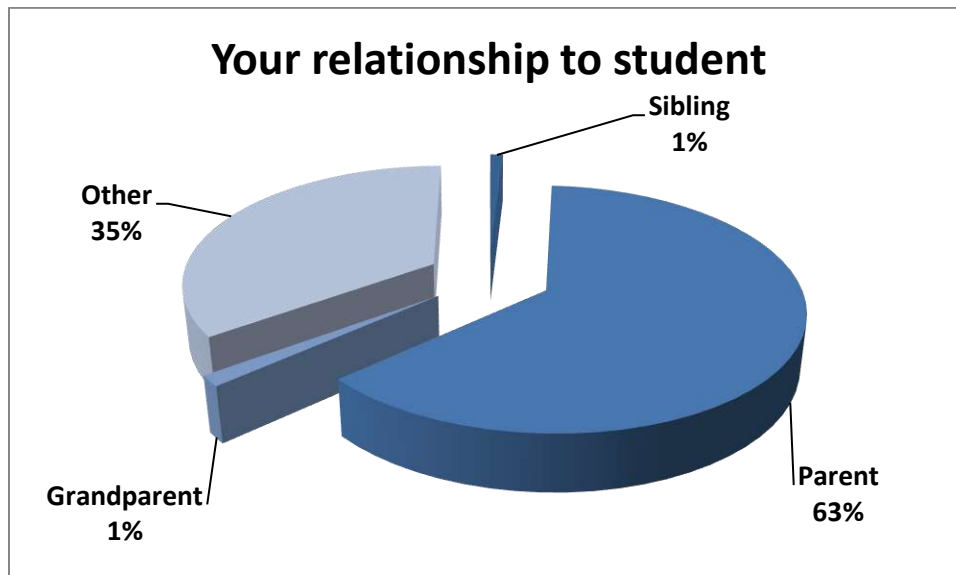
Your student's postsecondary program type (could answer more than one):

- Community College: 130
- Vocational/Technical School: 68
- Military Training: 12

- University: 15
- Other Education Program: 190

Postsecondary Program Type

Number of Respondants

200
150
100
50
0

Community College, Vocational & Technical School, Military Training, University, Other education program
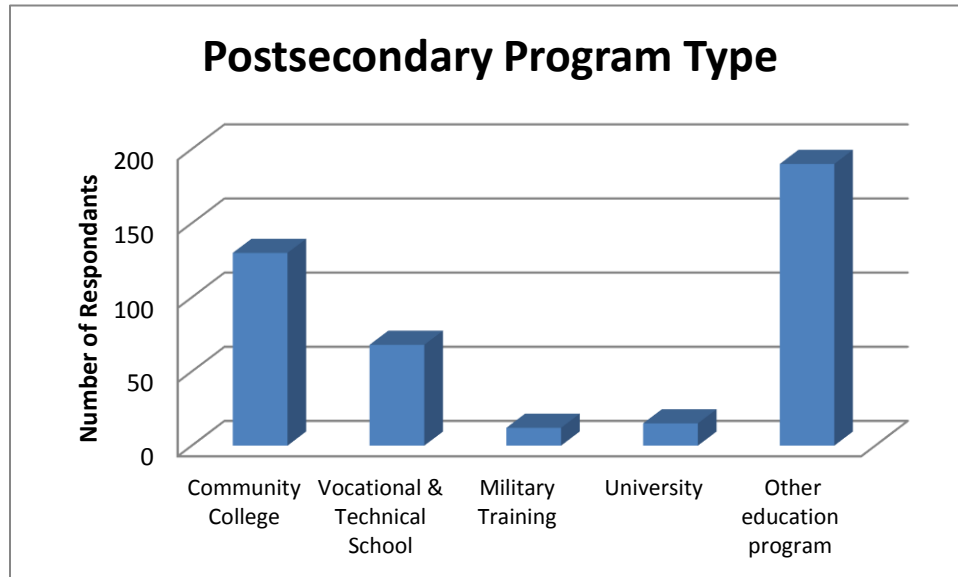
Age of your student:

- 16 or younger: 55 (13%)
- 17-18: 50 (12%)
- 19-20: 100 (24%)
- 21-22: 65 (16%)

- 23-25: 67 (16%)
- 26-29: 34 (8%)
- 30 or older: 46 (11%)

Age of your student

30 or older 11%
26 - 29 8%
23 - 25 16%
21 - 22 16%
16 or younger 13%
17 - 18 12%
19 - 20 24%
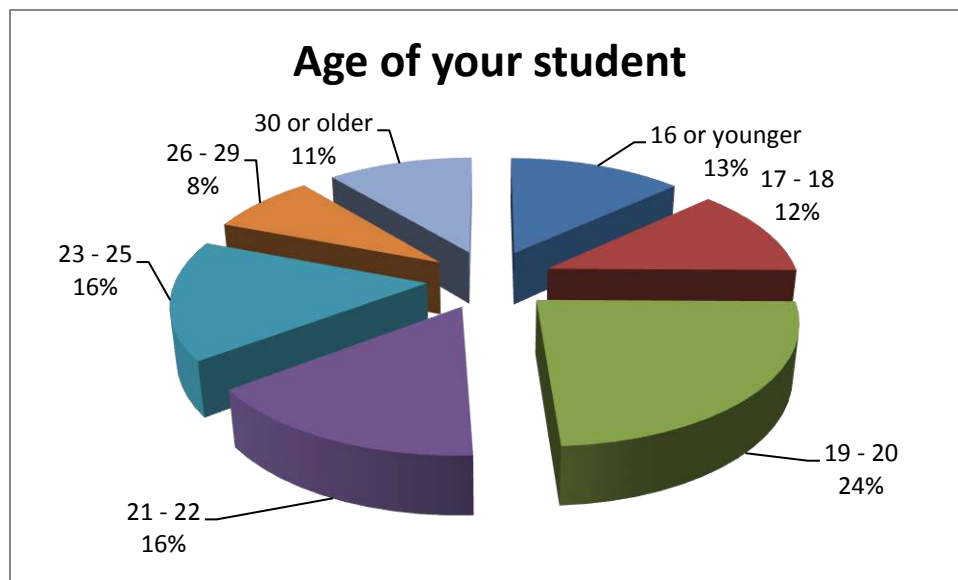
Your student's length of time in their postsecondary program:

- Not enrolled: 165 (39%)
- 1 month to a year: 48 (11%)
- 1-2 years: 94 (22%)
- 3-4 years: 58 (14%)
- 5-6 years: 22 (5%)
- 7-8 years: 11 (3%)
- 9 or more: 21 (5%)

Your student's length of time in his or her postsecondary program

Category	Percent
9 or more	5%
7-8 years	3%
5-6 years	5%
3-4 years	14%
1-2 years	22%
Not enrolled	39%
1 month to a year	12%
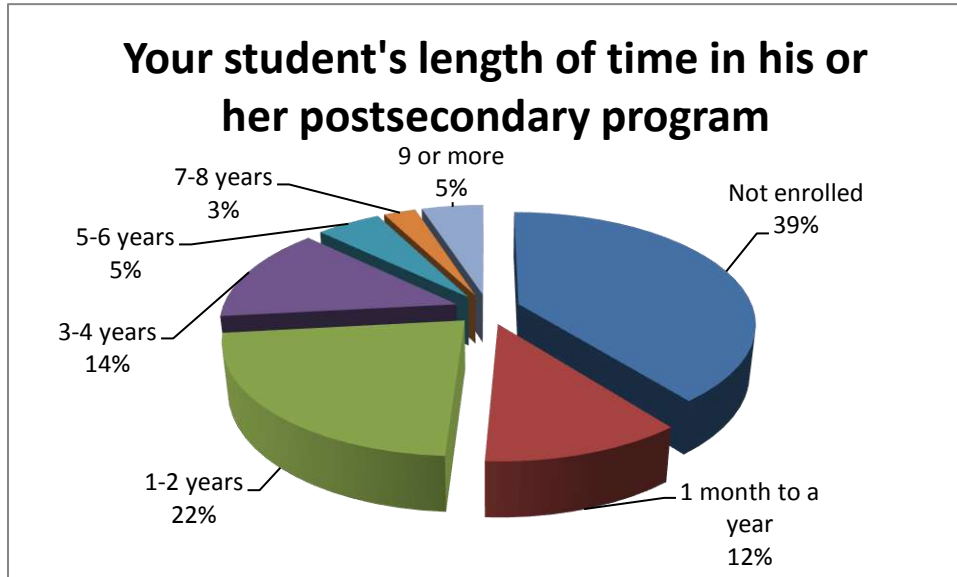
Your student's work preparation (could answer more than one):

- Full-time work: 76
- Part-time work: 141
- Volunteering: 110
- Apprenticeship: 19
- Internship: 56
- Work-Study: 33
- Other: 153

Your student's work preparation:
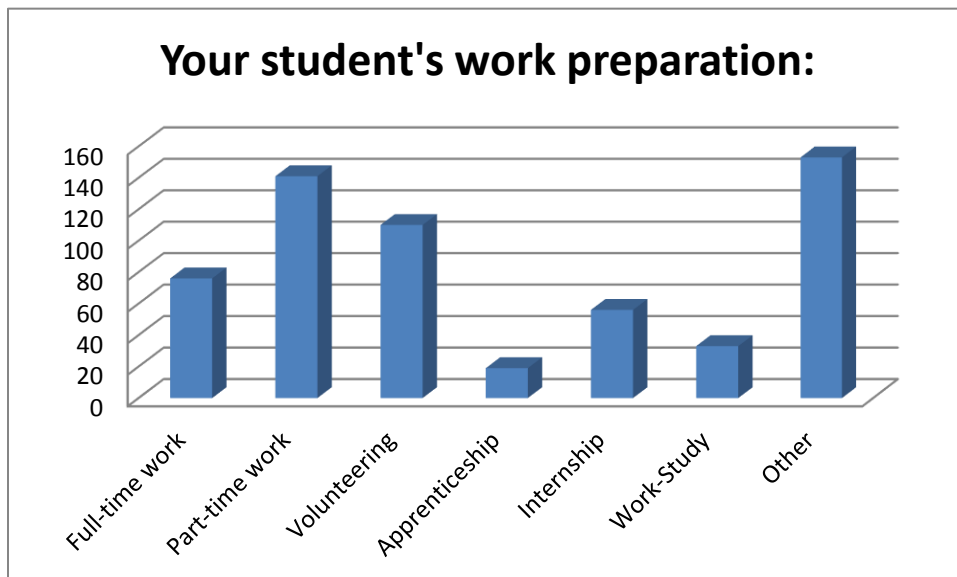
Your student's current credential or degree (could answer more than one):

- Certification requiring 6-12 months of study: 7
- Certification requiring 12-23 months of study: 8
- 2 year Associates degree: 14
- 4 year BA or BS degree: 16

- Graduate degree: 6
- Professional degree (law, medicine, etc.): 2
- Doctorate degree: 2
- Other: 136

Your student's current credential or degree:

Category	Value
Certification- 6-12 months of study	7
Certification -12-23 months of study	6
2 year Associates degree	6
4 year BA or BS degree	16
Graduate degree	6
Professional degree	2
Doctorate degree	2
Other	136
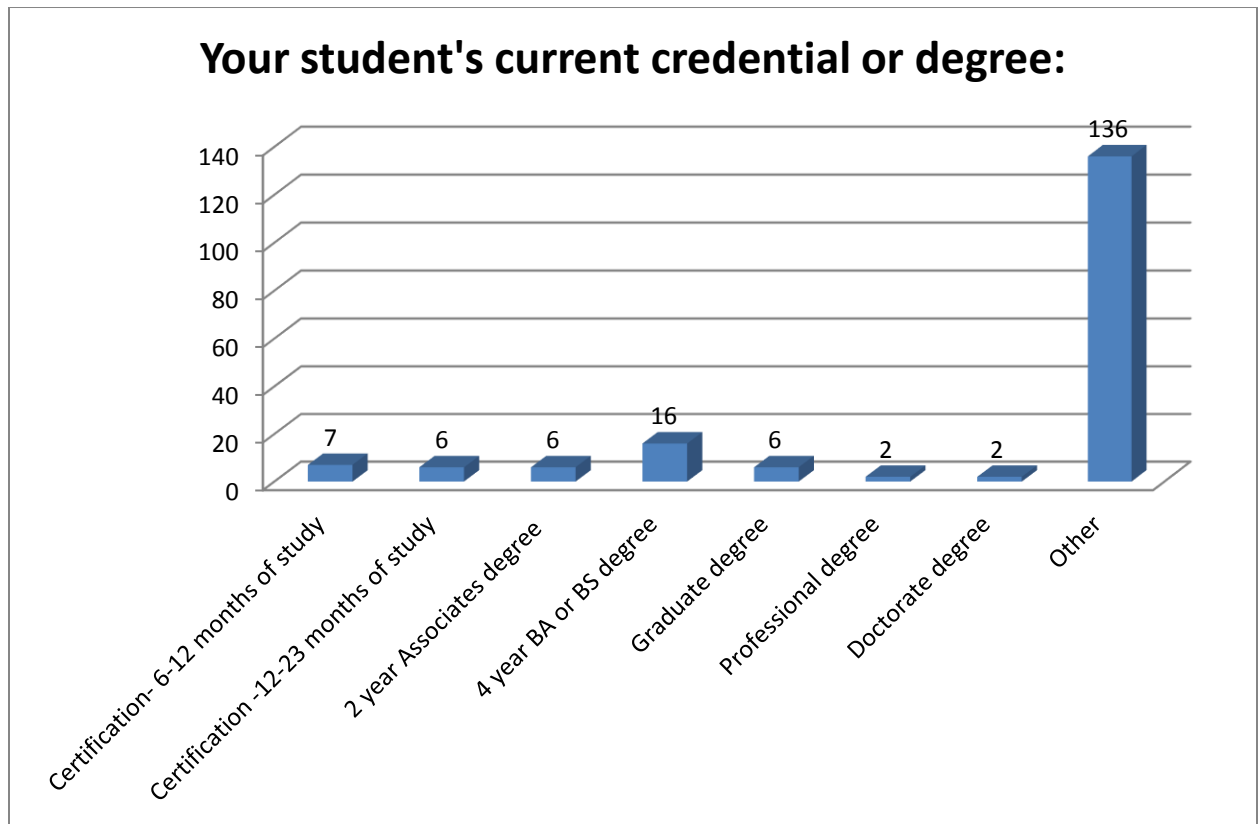
Generally speaking your student is....

- On track with his or her schedule for completion of the education program: 125 (30%)
- Behind where she or he wants to be in the education program: 162 (39%)
- Ahead of where he or she needs to be for completion of the program: 10 (2%)
- I don't know: 122 (29%)

Generally speaking your student is....

I don't know
29%

On track with his or her schedule for completion of the education program
30%

Ahead of where he or she needs to be for completion of the program
2%

Behind where she or he wants to be in the education program
39%
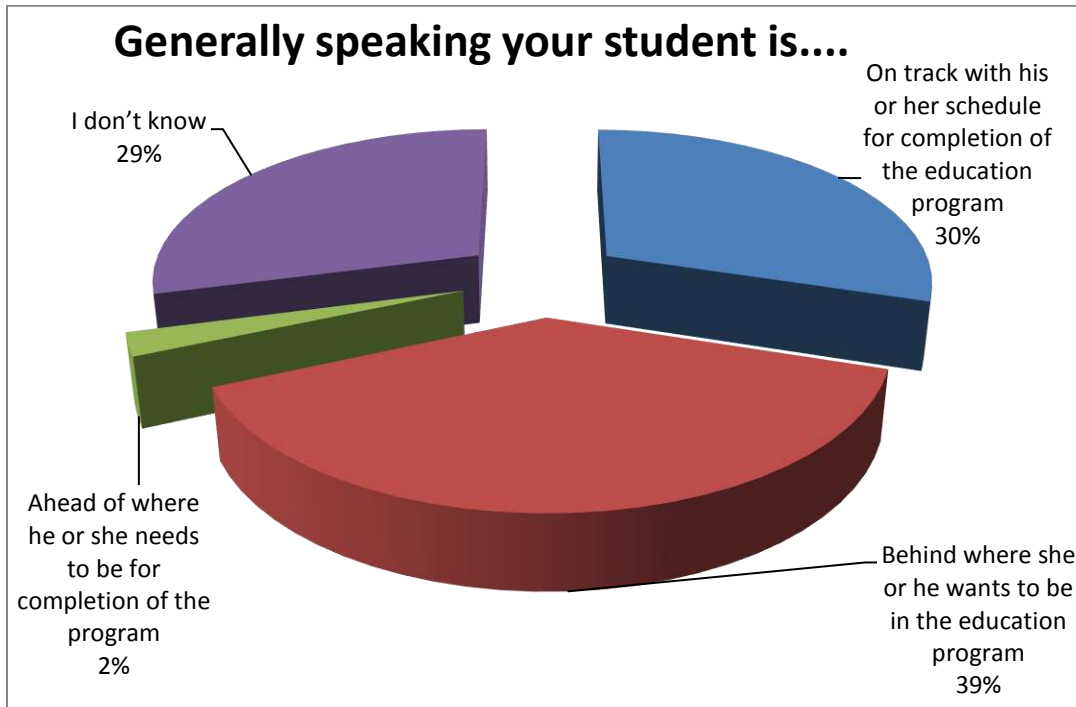
Please note the type of disability (or disabilities) your family member has (could answer more than one):

- Autism: 137
- Deafness: 16
- Visual impairment including blindness: 28
- Emotional disturbance: 56
- Hearing impairment: 21
- Intellectual disability: 139

- Orthopedic impairment: 46
- Specific learning disability: 138
- Speech or language: 50
- Traumatic brain injury: 25
- Other health impairment: 95
- Choose not to disclose: 66

Please note the type of disability (or disabilities) your family member has
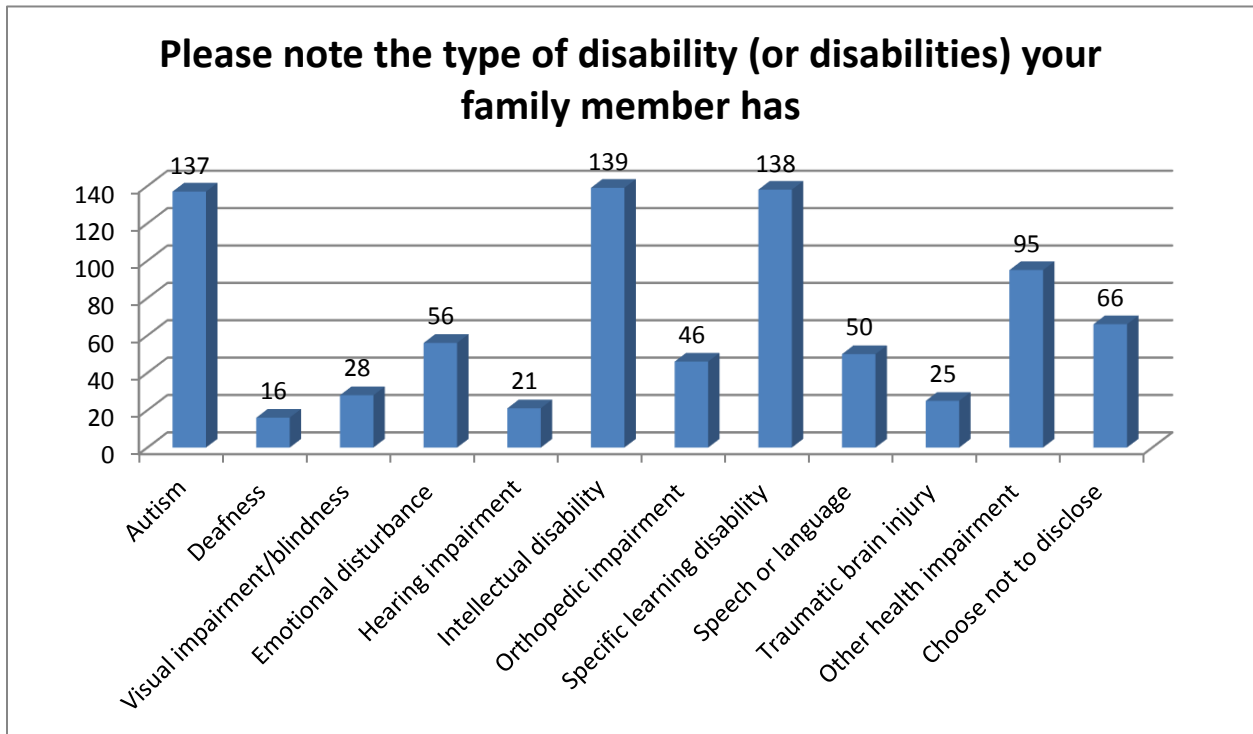
Dialogue Analytics (1/22/15 – 2/11/15):

- Total visits during the live dialogue: 2,997
- Total unique visitors: 1,834
- Total page views: 21,754
- Average pages per visit: 7.26
- Average visit duration: 7:12
- Returning visitors: 61.13%
- Bounce rate (percentage of participants who leave after viewing the first page of the dialogue): 6.54%

Traffic Sources:

- Direct Link to the Dialogue: 60.9%
- Referrals from other Sources: 24.2%
- Social Media Referrals: 14.7%
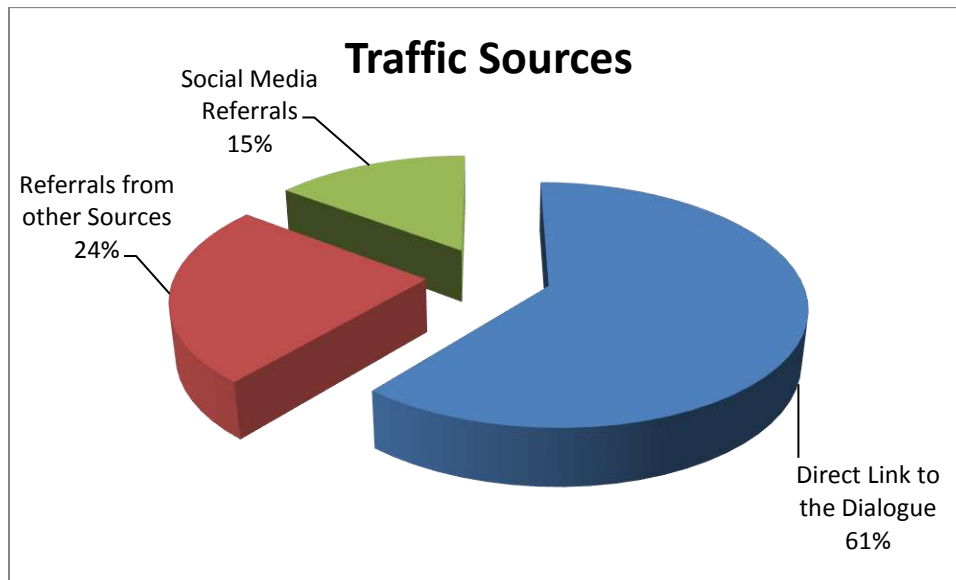
Referral from Other Sources:

DOL emails: 248 (34%)

DOL.gov website: 72 (9.93%)

SpanAdvocacy.org: 72 (9.93%)

ParentCenterHub.org: 71 (9.79%)

NCWD-Youth.info: 29 (4%)

ePolicyWorks emails: 21 (2.9%)

Blog.dol.gov: 16 (2.21%)

YTPOregon.org: 16 (2.21%)

UCP.org: 12 (1.66%)

Pacer.org: 8 (1.10%)

Other Referral Sources (less than 1%):

- PeakParent.org
- MyChildWithoutLimits.org
- MultiCulturalFamilies.org
- EpilespyNewEngland.org
- TransitionCoalition.org
- K12.pa.us
- K12.va.us
- FifthFreedom.org
- FV-Ncfpp.org
- PADisabilityNews.com
- PTI-Nebraska.org

Social Media Referrals:

- Facebook: 336 Sessions, 1,384 Page Views (76%)
- Twitter: 96 Sessions, 331 Page Views (22%)
- Other Social Media Sources (Weebly, LinkedIn and BigTent): 10 Sessions, 69 Page Views (2%)
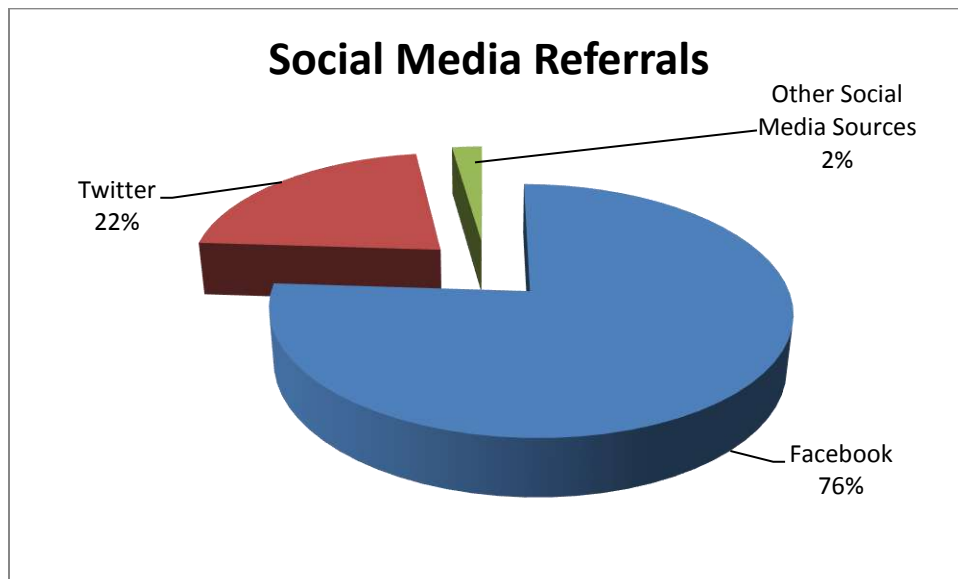
Device Used to Access the Dialogue:

- Desktop: 2,376 Sessions (79%)
- Mobile Devices: 462 Sessions (16%)
- Tablet: 159 Sessions (5%)

Devices Used to Access the Dialouge

Tablet 5%

Mobile 16%

Desktop 79%
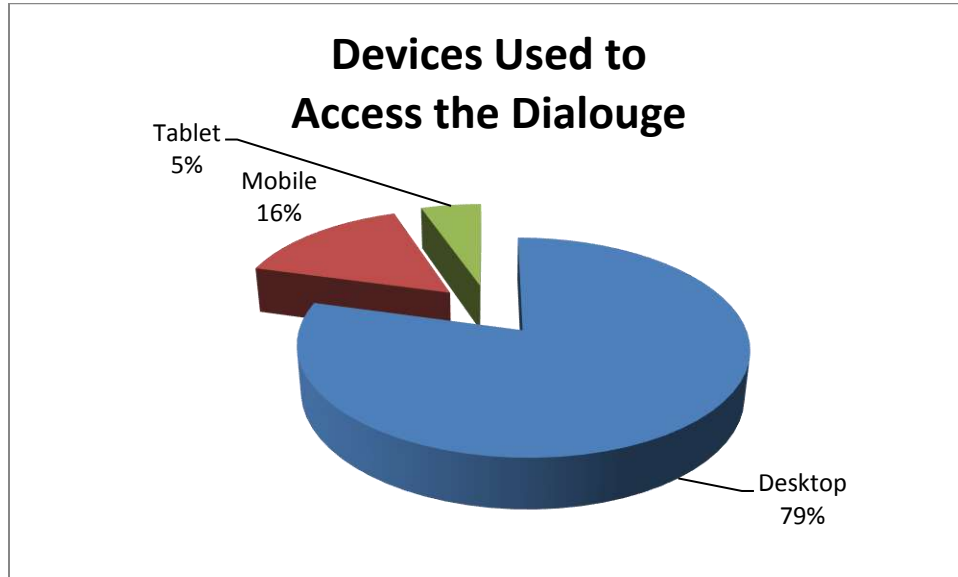
Map of Demographics of United States Visits:

1   310
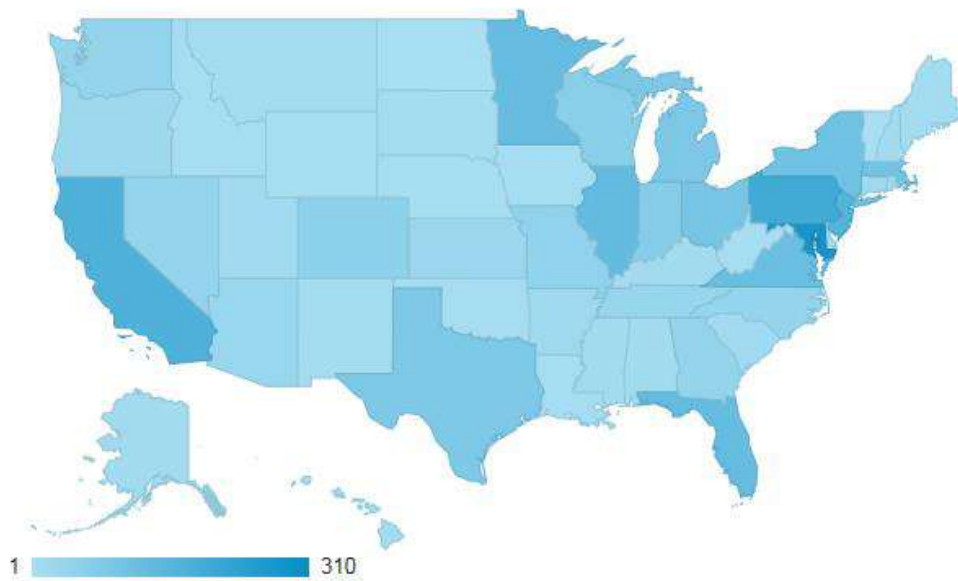
Breakdown of Visits by State:

State	Visits
District of Columbia	310
Maryland	277
Pennsylvania	195
California	169
New Jersey	164
Illinois	132
Florida	130
Minnesota	129
Virginia	121
New York	111
Massachusetts	105
Ohio	94
Michigan	86
Texas	84
Indiana	70
Wisconsin	63
Colorado	55
Missouri	48
Nevada	42
Georgia	41
Washington	41
North Carolina	39
Tennessee	34
Arizona	33
Kansas	31

State	Visits
Oregon	26
Delaware	25
Arkansas	22
Connecticut	20
Rhode Island	16
South Carolina	16
Utah	16
Kentucky	15
Alaska	14
Alabama	14
Mississippi	14
New Hampshire	14
New Mexico	13
Hawaii	12
Maine	12
Montana	12
South Dakota	11
Iowa	9
Louisiana	9
Idaho	8
Oklahoma	7
Nebraska	6
West Virginia	5
Wyoming	5
Vermont	3
North Dakota	2

Note: The ideas listed in the following sections include minor typographical errors as they are transcribed in this report exactly as they were posted by the dialogue participant.

Most Popular Ideas Overall Across all Topic Areas

Idea #1: Stop Shutting Families Out of the Process (Postsecondary Academics)
20 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 20 Net Votes

Students don't suddenly become able to communicate and plan well just because they turn 18, or just because they finish high school. Postsecondary schools need to find a path through the legal jungle to allow parents (or other advocates) to participate in planning courses, registering, planning and implementing accommodations, asking questions, etc. It is always said that the college student who needs disability services should advocate for him/herself, but what if there is a specific disability with communication/social skills and a deficit in executive function? Banning the parent from the process is a dangerous idea and often places roadblocks in the student's way that didn't need to be there. These students have enough to overcome already. I have heard of a nearby community college that does invite students to allow parents to participate, and treats those parents as respected advisors. Why can't that happen at every school?

Idea #2: Understand the Disability (Access, Equity and Accommodations)
16 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 16 Net Votes

Young people with mental illnesses such as anxiety may not be capable of going to disability services to ask for help because of the very nature of their disability. Requiring these young people to advocate for themselves when they are not capable of doing so is like asking a young person in a wheelchair to climb the stairs to get to the disability services office.

Idea #3: Disability Service support for Social & Independent Living Skill (Physical and Emotional Well Being)
15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes

A specific idea- College Disability Services working with students to manage and support in the area of independent living and social skills. I found that a majority support in classroom and academic areas as they expect the student to be well prepared when entering college in the independent living areas of their life.

Idea #4: Peer Mentors (Physical and Emotional Well Being)
15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes

Peer mentoring for college experience sounds great! As other Parents have stated, loneliness is a major factor with disabled students. How does one acquire a peer mentor? Through the disability services office? What are their qualifications? How much do you pay them?

Idea #5: Better Coordination (Postsecondary Academics)
14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes

Coordinate better with high schools as students transition from high school to post-secondary education

Idea #6: Transportation (Access, Equity and Accommodations)
14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes

My husband and I provide transportation to and from the university for my son, who is unable to drive because of his disability. He is limited to taking classes on specific days and during a few short hours due to our work schedules. If the university or social service agencies were to assist with transportation in some way, it would enable my son to have more flexibility in his class schedules, and possibly allow him to have a part time job, as well as broaden his social life. We are in a semi-rural area, so mass transit is not an option. There are bus systems, but the transportation provided is extremely limited and would necessitate a super-long ride with prolonged layovers, which would adversely affect my son's ability to perform in school. I would like to see a car pool/ride share system which encourages/includes disabled students like my son. He does not require an adaptive van, so a "regular" vehicle could transport him just as well, and we would be more than happy to pay for gas. I am sure that there must be students traveling in our area back and forth who would not mind giving my son a ride in exchange for gas money.

Most Popular Postsecondary Academics Ideas:

Idea #1: Stop Shutting Families Out of the Process
20 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 20 Net Votes

Students don't suddenly become able to communicate and plan well just because they turn 18, or just because they finish high school. Postsecondary schools need to find a path through the legal jungle to allow parents (or other advocates) to participate in planning courses, registering, planning and implementing accommodations, asking questions, etc. It is always said that the college student who needs disability services should advocate for him/herself, but what if there is a specific disability with communication/social skills and a deficit in executive function? Banning the parent from the process is a dangerous idea and often places roadblocks in the student's way that didn't need to be there. These students have enough to overcome already. I have heard of a nearby community college that does invite students to allow parents to participate, and treats those parents as respected advisors. Why can't that happen at every school?

Idea #2: Better Coordination
14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes

Coordinate better with high schools as students transition from high school to post-secondary education.

Idea #3: Transition
10 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 10 Net Votes

The best way to support these parents is to create long term post sec transition programs where life skills AND academics are balanced in the day. The students should remain in school until 21 and the academics reduced so life skills training can be implemented. Many academically capable, but still substantially disabled students are pushed out at 18 before the life skills can happen. Or they are provided LS AFTER academics allowing for regression. It must be simultaneous. One program provided the 18-21 programming on a community college campus, still IDEA funded and staffed. That is ideal.

Idea #4: Ongoing parent workshops or information sessions?
10 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 10 Net Votes

Many families would like to play an active role in supporting their student with a disability in postsecondary education. However, families may not know how to best support their youth's academic and social/emotional success in a way that is appropriate for the college setting or that still promotes self-determination. Would ongoing parent information sessions held by the college be useful? If so, what would this look like?

Idea #5: Flipped Classrooms

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

I'm intrigued by the flipped classroom model. From what I've read, flipped instruction involves having students watch a video lecture or module BEFORE class. They can rewind or replay specific sections and can better focus on concepts they need to know without having to process what the instructor is saying in a lecture while they're taking notes or coping with a sensory onslaught. Class time is then spent on projects, collaborative discussion, or one-on-one support. I'd like to see some pilot projects and research on how well this works for college students with disabilities. Here's some basic info: https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7081.pdf\

Idea #6: Bridge Programs for Access to College

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

I would like to propose an early entry into community college programs as a dual enrollment option while students with I/DD are still in HS. There was no transition program for our son who has autism/communication difficulties/and I/DD. He has been very able however in college, but it's unsupported and often accommodations have not been possible. I would like to see programs, like the Think College programs, but for ... college credit. Our son has been able to obtain an Associate's Degree however he did not obtain needed supports.

Idea #7: Train Instructors in the Use of Universal Design

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

It would be extremely helpful to families if instructors would back up changes they make to their assignments or course calendar with a note to the class on the online learning management system (our college uses Blackboard). Case in point: Tonight my son announced that he has a psychology quiz on Wednesday. What will that cover? Does that take the place of the test the class is supposed to take on Monday? Should he take it in the testing center, or will it be a short multiple choice quiz (meaning he can take it with the class)? My son has no idea (and I'll be he's not the only one). For all I know this could be a third of his grade. We're constantly facing this kind of partial communication. Once he showed up at the testing center a week early for a mid-term exam, because the professor failed to inform the class of the change. A greater awareness of UDL techniques would be much appreciated.

Idea #8: Deans, Administration and Professors

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

Cultural Sensitivity and Competence Training for Deans, Administration, and Professors regarding students with disability, especially addressing when an accommodation is not fair to the other students. It is highly insensitive when this response is communicated to the student with disabilities. This is a theme that gets carried from K-12 into higher education. Also, need to address the history and civil rights movement of the disabled and help with understanding the community culture of the disabled.

Most Popular Preparing for Employment Ideas:

Idea #1: Job Supports While in College
11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes

Currently, VR clients must choose between an employment or postsecondary "track." In Indiana that means that students on the postsecondary track are not allowed career development or job coaching or other supports because it would be considered double dipping. It's essential that postsecondary students with disabilities have the opportunity to explore employment in part-time jobs, other work experiences or internships while they're in college. Without those experiences, too many of our students are graduating or leaving colleges and are then unable to get work. I would like to see VR services for postsecondary clients restructured so that they have access to disability service-provided supports, just as employment clients do.

Idea #2: Post graduation planning is critical
10 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 10 Net Votes

Helping students better understand the resources that may be available to help them with career exploration, future salaries and potential supports is important. Many students with disabilities live in fear that after they finish college they will lose critical benefits that help, such as Medicaid and Mediwaviers, but typically many colleges don't have experience or systems in place to help the students and their families make informed decisions. I have worked with our local state college, formerly a jr. college, as part of a grant to help student work through understanding their options and resource once they go to work.

Idea #3: Business Community Apprenticeships & Internships and Employment
7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

I would like to see the business community more involved in supporting people with disabilities by providing apprenticeships and interning opportunities. Insurance is always a barrier. I think this is a huge gap that needs to be overcome - are there any incentives to the business world. Project Search is a great example and I hope to see some offsprings of this concept that would work in more rural areas. Would also like to see community involvement in the customized employment concept as demonstrated through U of MT rural research. It's interesting that VR can't support coaching for part-time work while in college - seems discriminatory since any other person has that option and services should work to level the playing field instead of casting double dipping shadows on efforts that progress the goal of employment.

Idea #4: Employment for those not able to become self-determing
6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

Most of the discussion has been about students who can make decisions for themselves. There are many, like my son, who is not self-determining in the way this conversation means, that would like to work. Recently the Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction put out numbers that 92% of the individuals who receive long-term care support are unemployed. We need schools and the community agencies to step up and participate in IEPs think of solutions that fit the individual not the masses. Parents rely on what information is given to them not knowing that the information is filtered by the provider. We need an uncensored, unabridged resource of information from an unbiased third-party for parents and students. We also need schools to held accountable. I fought for over five years to get more vocational education and training for my son from the school only to be told his program was sufficient. Unfortunately when he graduated VR determined he did not have enough skills to qualify for their services.

Idea #5: Autism Spectrum transition from post-secondary to Work
5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

Community Colleges & Universities could use work-study programs to help transition to work. Often, these programs are financially need-based only. Could also set up program through Disability Services/Special Population Offices to actively assist job search & job acquisition skills prior to graduation, as well as partnering with certain companies to hire graduates with disabilities.

Most Popular Physical and Emotional Well-Being Ideas:

Idea #1: Disability Service support for Social & Independent Living Skill
15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes

A specific idea- College Disability Services working with students to manage and support in the area of independent living and social skills. I found that a majority support in classroom and academic areas as they expect the student to be well prepared when entering college in the independent living areas of their life.

Idea #2: Peer Mentors
15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes

Peer mentoring for college experience sounds great! As other Parents have stated, loneliness is a major factor with disabled students. How does one acquire a peer mentor? Through the disability services office? What are their qualifications? How much do you pay them?

Idea #3: Disability Support in College - a proactive role
5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

It would be helpful if disability support services would include an inclusion specialist whose role would be to proactively plan and coordinate activities for all students with an emphasis on ensuring students with disabilities participate.
Include training on 'inclusive practices' for resident assistants and residential staff.

Idea #4: Proactive Behavioral Intervention
5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

Provide positive behavioral support to set up the student for success rather than failure. This would also include de-escalating techniques for students with challenging behaviors, whether it's autism or mental health.

Idea #5: Medication Delivery
5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

Medications for many of our students are essential. Our daughter's refill system fell apart her first semester at her university. She has both OCD and Asperger's. The pharmacy failed to fill her prescription when she called. In addition, prescriptions had to be picked up at the student health center, which was about a mile from her dorm. By the time we figured out what was happening, she had not been on her meds for 3 weeks, was severely depressed, and had to drop out. There has to be a better way. Student health centers must recognize the importance of medications for our children (because our kids don't

always realize it themselves).and there should be a system established to ensure auto refills and delivery to their dorms.

Idea #6: Drop Out Prevention
5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

Use drop-out preventions techniques to increase graduation rates. This is particularly true for students with behavioral health issues. Half of students with mental health issues drop out of high school so this group should be targeted for intervention in post-secondary education.

Most Popular Access, Equity & Accommodations Ideas:

Idea #1: Understand the disability
16 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 16 Net Votes

Young people with mental illnesses such as anxiety may not be capable of going to disability services to ask for help because of the very nature of their disability. Requiring these young people to advocate for themselves when they are not capable of doing so is like asking a young person in a wheelchair to climb the stairs to get to the disability services office.

Idea #2: Transportation
14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes

My husband and I provide transportation to and from the university for my son, who is unable to drive because of his disability. He is limited to taking classes on specific days and during a few short hours due to our work schedules. If the university or social service agencies were to assist with transportation in some way, it would enable my son to have more flexibility in his class schedules, and possibly allow him to have a part time job, as well as broaden his social life. We are in a semi-rural area, so mass transit is not an option. There are bus systems, but the transportation provided is extremely limited and would necessitate a super-long ride with prolonged layovers, which would adversely affect my son's ability to perform in school. I would like to see a car pool/ride share system which encourages/includes disabled students like my son. He does not require an adaptive van, so a "regular" vehicle could transport him just as well, and we would be more than happy to pay for gas. I am sure that there must be students traveling in our area back and forth who would not mind giving my son a ride in exchange for gas money.

Idea #3: Scholarships for Part-time Students
13 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 13 Net Votes

Neither of our children is eligible for scholarships because they cannot take classes full time. Our son takes two classes a semester. If he were to take more, I would need to quit my job to provide additional transportation and support, plus we'd need to hire additional tutors. My daughter just tries to do too much and becomes overloaded. Many students with disabilities like ours have to take lighter loads, I'd like a national scholarship program for students with disabilities that recognize the challenges these students face and rewards them for their efforts.

Idea #4: Campus Housing
12 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 12 Net Votes

My son attends a non-residential community college. He was crushed when he realized that he would not have the opportunity to live in a dorm. While I'm not sure dorm life would be possible for him, I would love to see him be able to learn some independent living skills while on campus for a summer

program. Maybe for 3-4 weeks? I'd like to see universities (that may have empty dorms or apartments) offer short-term, supported stays for college students with disabilities. Something like the College Internship Program offers but without the $$$$$ fees.

Idea #5: Changing Instructors' Attitudes
8 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 8 Net Votes

In this part I focus on trainers/instructors of teachers. One of the reasons why education systems is still failing many students with disabilities (those who either drop out of school or fail to transition to higher levels despite their competence and potential) is because of the beliefs that disability is a deficit. Some instructors have failed to outgrow their deficit orientations which harms possibilities of nurturing reciprocal relationships between them and their students (with disabilities). Often these instructors consciously or unconsciously role model their poor relationships with students with disabilities to other students they are training thus creating a cyclic culture of intolerance towards those perceived as stigmatized group. I understand that it is hard for an old dog to learn new tricks; but it is not fair either for instructors to gamble with students' life because university education is becoming expensive and is one's lifetime opportunity. As an instructor and doctoral student with disability (as an insider and outsider), I have had great opportunities to interact with supportive and highly qualified instructors, very exemplary in their fields. On the other hand, I have interacted with awful instructors who could be considered "academic terrorists"—very insensitive and out of touch with reality and changes. They are not only immersed in deficit beliefs to the extent that they overtly express their disdains through their micro-aggressions and other body language (I guess what puts on check their macro-aggressions is the universities' anti-discriminations policies) but also role model wrong behaviors to the professionals they train. The sad thing though is that some of these instructors train our future professionals such as teachers and doctors who get inundated with contradictory messages and therefore find themselves in limbo when in the field. Such professionals when faced with persons with disabilities, turn to their role models, the reflections, the only mirrors they that trained them (their instructors). No wonder some awful teachers at preK12 to universities cannot reconcile their teaching practices and their moral and ethical orientations to be both loco parentis and professionals for all students.

Focusing on teachers at preK12, from my experiences, may not be the way forward, because current teacher programs exposes teacher candidates to varied topics on diversity and inclusion, technology in education, legal aspects in education, etc. No doubt the current teacher education curricula are the most comprehensive in the history of teacher education. That leaves us with the deliverer of the content—instructors. In fact I am convinced that when your kid cannot learn, do not blame the teacher (at pre-K12) but the instructor.

As an instructor, I would be failing if I can only pinpoint the problems without suggesting possible solutions. However these solutions need top-down approach. Some of the ways by which teacher education can be enhanced is by:

1) Retraining current university instructors in disability laws and positive disability cultures. This should occur at institutional level rather than at state or national level.

2) Incorporating cultural courses in all instructors' syllabi teachers (be they art, science, social, technology, or business oriented)

3) increasing monitoring processes and creating strong advisory body in which instructors can be required to address students with disabilities' concerns (some of the institutions have these departments; however lack of initiatives or awareness hampers their supervisory or reconciliatory function.

(A lot has been achieved; but there is still a long way to go to make life for persons with disabilities better.)

Idea #6: Recruit Students with Disabilities
7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

Wouldn't it be nice if colleges and universities actually recruited students with disabilities just as they do now for athletes? I know, you're all smiling at that one, but seriously: Not only are athletes pursued by multiple colleges, they receive special scholarships, and colleges are sometimes willing to go to great lengths to create supports for them. If postsecondary institutions had an incentive, were rewarded in some way (possibly at the federal level), for outcomes--for successfully bringing a student with a disability through their program and then sending them off with a degree and a job--our students would be welcomed and colleges would be overhauling their supports systems and even competing with one another to get our students in the door. Let's turn the system on its head!

Idea #7: Peer Ride Sharing
7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

Transportation is a challenge for many of us. In some areas public transportation is non-existent, and in places where there are buses, it might take three buses and two transfers (and long waits) to get from home to the community college. I'd like to see colleges put together peer ride sharing programs. Not only would it help with getting back and forth, it might also help with social connections.

Most Popular Using Technology Ideas:

Idea #1: Technology in Higher Education
5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

Use of technology in higher education, the challenges and family roles. (compilation of responses)

*Opportunitie*s: IPhone is invaluable for learning and, calendar and reminders Postsecondary program courses can teach student how to use a variety of softwar3 and hardware.

Challenges Some professors do not allow access to laptops or IPads in class. Intensive training using and applying technology is needed, ongoing support is not always available

Family Roles Tech Savvy family helps, but being around other students in HS and college and seeing how the use the technology inspires and motivates student to learn how to do the same.

Idea #2: Invest the Use of Assistive Technology to build Self-direction
3 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 3 Net Votes

The years of work, starting in Pre-K, through elementary, middle and high school, required much more time than today. The reason is after all those years my 23 year old daughter has gained a great deal of independence and self-direction. My point is the technology may require years of effort but the outcomes can be wonderful. Thank goodness for all the assistive technology that helped create all these opportunities. Certainly the iPhone, iPad and apps has been a true game changers.

Idea #3: Student's Use Computers in class; Share Skills with Instructors
2 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

Computers are very helpful especially if you add apps like zoomtext or word prediction. However a number of teachers are not competent in some of these technologies. Some who are willing always learn from their students but some who are resistant often become barriers refusing students to take notes on their computers for example.

Idea #4: Think College TPSID webinars for student with special needs
2 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

The Think College website has information about college-based programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

Idea #5: Technology and post-secondary settings
2 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

Our daughter attends a local community college. Almost all information - admin and course work - is web based. Thankfully she has always had an interest in computers and technology, so has been motivated to learn through these venues. She started with one course, "Strategies for Success in College" - which provided instruction for using the college's website, and utilizing other services (tutoring, etc.) at the college. It was a terrific course, taught by an excellent, inclusive by nature professor. An experience and opportunity every college student should have.

Most Popular Building Self-Determination Ideas:

Idea #1: Start in high school

11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes

Secondary educators need to maintain the same high expectations for students with disabilities as they have for other students. This is not happening.

Idea #2: Self-determination supports should start in HS

10 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 10 Net Votes

I thought that my son's father and I had done a good job of fostering independence in our son with an intellectual disability. However, I found when he started his post-secondary program at University of Delaware that we had unwittingly been making many decisions FOR him rather than WITH him. I would love to see more self-determination efforts built into IDEA and IEPs to provide more guidance to both schools and parents on how they can help their student engage in self-determination. By adding this into the existing transition process, there would be a "practice" period prior to HS graduation. Perhaps this is the intent of "transition", but it isn't executed that way. More details of "how to" and examples of what self-determination "looks" like would be very helpful to all involved. However, so much of the self-determination is learning by doing - which includes learning from one's mistakes. We as parents need to allow our children with disabilities the same space to make mistakes -- and learn from them -- as we do for our typically developing children. The supports need to be as much for the parents as for the youth. We as parents need support in learning to let go as our young adults enter the world. We've spent a lifetime watching and protecting, and we're pretty good at that. So we parents need support and coaching in how to shift to a different parenting model - one of coach or counselor - as our children mature.

Idea #3: Classes to foster Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

Self-determination is something that should be fostered as soon as children start making decisions. Being involved in one's IEPs, PCPs, as well as IPOSs not only empowers choices, but enables an individual opportunity to express their wishes. It would be wonderful for courses to be designed to do so, and with inclusive supports so that peers can be a part of an individual's natural support process.

Idea #4: Failing with Success

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

Youth with disabilities have the right to fail just like their peers without disabilities. Failing with success means that youth with disabilities are provided with the opportunity to problem-solve the failure, identify next steps, and follow-through on next steps. Finally, there is an evaluation on progress. This is one critical aspect of self-determination. Our failures count, but our responses to our failures weigh heavier than our failures.

Idea #5: Early Transition
5 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 5 Net Votes

The time for transition starts early. The earlier the better. I don't think that concept is conveyed to parents early enough. If your child is in kindergarten, you're preparing them for the end goal-to be an independent adult within the community. Happy, fulfilled and engaged. Sometimes parents are relying on schools to help start the process and that doesn't always happen. Beginning transition planning at the onset sets the stage for success.

Conclusion

ODEP and its youth technical assistance center, NCWD/Y, hosted the National Online Dialogue, *"Connecting with Families: Supporting Postsecondary Success of Young Adults with Disabilities."* The goal of the dialogue was to engage families and guardians of students with disabilities who are currently or recently enrolled in a postsecondary program (e.g., certificate, apprenticeship, community college, college or university and other post high school education and training) in discussing ideas to improve service delivery in postsecondary settings for youth and their families. With the use of the ePolicyWorks crowdsourcing tool, these hosts were able to involve over 1,800 unique users, of which 431 registered and actively participated posting 94 unique ideas, 405 comments and 557 votes. This metrics report summarizes the online dialogue's user data and key ideas. The full range of inputs and responses of the participants, which are now being analyzed by ODEP and NCWD, will inform the development of technical assistance to help postsecondary intuitions to better assist families in supporting their youth/young adult in program completion and in successfully entering into competitive integrated employment.