Dual Enrollment & High School Students with Disabilities

Dual Enrollment is the term used for programs or courses for which students are concurrently enrolled in and receiving credits* from both a high school and a college. This can include transcripted credit programs, other educational services provided by contract between a school district and a technical college, as well as Start College Now. For Dual Enrollment opportunities, the technical colleges and the K-12 school districts both have legal obligations to ensure that services in accordance with federal and state legislation are provided to eligible students with disabilities. The technical college and K-12 school district can meet these obligations by determining, through local negotiations, how a student's services will best be provided. Services can be provided in the following three (3) ways or any combination thereof:

1. Technical college staff providing services;
2. K-12 school district staff providing services at the technical college;
3. Contracting for the services through a qualified vendor, such as a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA).

*For the purposes of this document, students being served by a s.118.15 contract to earn their HSED would also be included.

Students with disabilities enrolled at a technical college for a dual enrollment opportunity are held to the same financial obligations, academic performance expectations, and consequences, for both success and failure, as all other technical college students. A dual enrollment program for students with disabilities should include a discussion of the accommodations, services, and supports that a student would need in a particular program. These factors require advanced planning and documentation; therefore, early conversations and decisions are critical in order to ensure that services are in place prior to the first day of class.

Any contract for dual enrollment should have written local processes and procedures related to students with disabilities and ADA/504 accommodations. The high school special education staff, along with the technical college Disability Services Coordinators/Staff, shall follow the processes and procedures to provide mutually agreed-upon services that address the accommodation needs of the student.

Self-Advocacy

Many postsecondary disability service providers indicate that the most important skill that a

student with disabilities can learn is self-advocacy. A strong self-advocate is a student who knows of his/her educational needs and requests support services as needed. Dual enrollment opens the door to greater learning opportunities for motivated students considering a technical career, wishing to begin college early, or preparing themselves to enter the workforce immediately after high school graduation.

Accommodations

The process for obtaining accommodations in dual enrollment courses taught on WTCS campuses or with WTCS instructors include the following:

1. As soon as the possibility exists that a student with a disability may apply to a dual enrollment program, the K-12 school district should contact the technical college's Disability Support Services office in order to begin a preliminary discussion about the potential services that a student will receive. Some services take time to implement; therefore, contact should be initiated with the disability support services office in anticipation that the student may ultimately enroll in a program. Prior to disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student record, the K-12 school district must secure written consent from a parent, guardian or adult student.

2. When a student is accepted into a dual enrollment program provided by the college (taught by college faculty or located on campus), **the student, in collaboration with the K-12 school district,** must contact the technical college's disability support services office in order to formally request services and provide the necessary disability-related documentation. When a student is accepted into a dual enrollment program provided by the high school, the student is not required to contact the technical college's disability support services office, but they are encouraged to do so.

Colleges will not provide modifications if the modifications would substantially alter the essential elements of a course. It is possible that accommodations available to a student in the high school setting will not be allowed in college level courses. College credits earned through a dual enrollment option become part of a student's college transcript and may be transferable to other colleges. For that reason, a course taken for college credit must maintain the integrity and fidelity of college level work.

Interpreter Services

For high school students participating in a Dual Enrollment program who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and use an interpreter to access their education, the interpreter providing the services shall be licensed as an interpreter by the state of Wisconsin. Two state agencies have the authority to license interpreters: the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS). On an individual basis, the technical college's Disability Services office, with input from the K-12 school district, will determine if the interpreter providing services at the technical college will hold the DPI license, the DSPS license or both.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What role does the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team have in determining accommodations for the student while attending a Wisconsin Technical College?

A student's IEP team plays a key role in the process of identifying and requesting services for the student while attending a technical college. The technical college, through the Disability Services Coordinators/Staff, determines the type, level, and duration of ADA/504 accommodations. This is accomplished through discussions and mutual agreement with the K-12 School District. The technical college is not legally obligated to provide all the services in a student's IEP.

2. Do the accommodations listed in the student's IEP automatically apply to college classes?

No. The IEP does not continue to college or the workplace. Some accommodations provided at the high school may be appropriate at the college level; however, the college's Disability Resource staff member will review a student's accommodation request and disability-related documentation to determine if the requested accommodation is reasonable for the dual enrollment course in which the student is currently enrolled at the college.

3. Is a student with a disability held to the same grade and behavior requirements as other students?

Yes. All high school students taking classes at any of the technical colleges are to follow the Student Handbook, including the Student Code of Conduct and other pertinent policies and procedures.

4. How soon should the student or K-12 School District contact the technical college where the student will be attending as part of a dual enrollment program?

Immediately. As soon as a high school student with a disability considers a dual enrollment program, it would be beneficial to have an initial conversation with the technical college's Disability Support Services office. This initial discussion ensures that the student and the K-12 school district have the necessary information about disability support services at the postsecondary level.

5. What is the difference between Transcripted Credit, Advanced Standing, and Start College Now?

Please refer to the College Credit in High School page on the Wisconsin Technical College System website for information on dual enrollment definitions.

Case Example

George is a junior in high school who would like to use Start College Now to enroll in a course that is offered at the local technical college. George has been identified with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) affecting his reading and writing skills and experiences anxiety attacks when faced with large or complex reading and writing tasks.

During George's IEP meeting, the IEP team worked with George to help him complete the necessary paperwork to enroll in the course through Start College Now. After the meeting, the Special Education Teacher helped George contact the Disability Support Services office at the technical college to request the appropriate accommodations that George needed and sent his disability-related documentation to the office. As part of the process of requesting accommodations, George also met with the Disability Support Services office to better understand his responsibilities for informing his instructor at the technical college about his accommodations for the course. Once the Disability Services Coordinator approved George for the reasonable accommodations he requested, which was the use of a note taker and to be allowed to take his tests in the testing center with assistive technology, George was ready to begin the course with confidence because he would have the necessary accommodations in place for his dual enrollment course.

Sources:

Colorado Department of Education. (2010). Exceptional student leadership unit: Dual enrollment options and students with disabilities.

Georgia Department of Education. (2015). Move on when ready, Georgia's dual enrollment program: MOWR transition planning and guidance for students with disabilities.