

Special Education Guidance

Information to help students advocate for themselves

important information and tips to help navigate the special education system
created by a student who has had an IEP for all four years of high school

Your IEP:	IEP stands for Individualized Education Plan. As a student with an IEP in high school, you are a student who receives specialized instruction to help you; most students with IEPs also have accommodations that they receive in their classes.
It's the law:	Your IEP is a legal document that is federally mandated so your teachers are required by law to follow what is in your document
How it's made:	To receive an IEP there must be some testing and documentation that demonstrates that you qualify to have one. After you have been identified and qualify for an IEP there will be a CSE meeting (Committee on Special Education) which you as a student are allowed to attend. The CSE meeting is where parents, teachers, counselors and other people are invited to review and update/create your IEP which will help you be successful.
Who can help YOU:	• You have a case manager who is supposed to help guide you and solve any issues with your IEP. • Your parents are also a great resource if there are any issues at school or teachers have questions. • Your counselor and your teachers have access to your IEP so you can ask them for help. If they do not know how to answer some of your questions, they can still direct you to someone who can.
What can YOU do?:	It can be best to go early to class or stay after class in the first or second week of school to introduce yourself and make sure your teachers are aware of the accommodations you should received in their class. It is especially important to check in with your teachers before your first test so you can be sure you have all of your required accommodations. Going to your CSE meeting is also a good way to know what your IEP has on it and how your education plan is set up. If you haven't attended a CSE meeting yet you can ask your parents. Scroll down for more information and tips!

Your Case Manager

What are Case Managers?

The summer before freshman year or when you get an IEP you will be assigned a case manager, but may change year to year. They are there to oversee you in school and help relay

details about your IEP to your teachers. They may even be one of your teachers in a resource room. If you are having any issues with your IEP or need help figuring it out you should email your case manager or find a time to meet with them.

CSE Meetings

Your case manager is supposed to help represent your voice in your CSE meeting so they typically meet with you a week or two before your meeting to ask you some questions about school and your goals. If you have any concerns about your upcoming meeting they are great person to talk to. You can also talk to your parents before your CSE meeting.

Case Managers and Counselor Emails

Case Managers

- Mr. Eick- jeick@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Pfeiffer- kpeiffer@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Martin - LMartin@amherstschools.org
- Mr. Tanner- stanner@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Bialecki- DBialecki-Baker@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Wittmeyer- cwittmeyer@amherstschools.org
- Mr. Reich- areich@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Franciosa- HFranciosa@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Baczkiewicz- MBaczkiewicz@amherstschools.org
- Mr. Dubiel- ddubiel@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Penasack- LPenasack@amherstschools.org

Counselors

- Ms. LeGoff- LLeGoff@amherstschools.org
- Mr. Benton- DBenton@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Scalzo- KScalzo@amherstschools.org
- Ms. Ciurczak - SCiurczak@amherstschools.org

Tips

Talking to Teachers

- ☐ It's best to approach teachers early in the school year to talk to your teachers about the accommodation you will be receiving in their class
 - ☐ you can go before or after class
 - ☐ sending an email is also a great alternative
- ☐ It's best to start with introducing yourself if it's within the first week or two of classes
- ☐ If there is an issue and some of your accommodations aren't being met it is good to talk to your teacher to see if maybe it was just an oversight. Here's an example!

- ☐ Hi Mr./Ms. Teacher! I take my test in the testing center and these past few weeks my tests haven't been placed in the testing center. I would appreciate it if from now on you would start placing my test in the testing center before my test so it's more conducive to maximizing my time.
- ☐ If the issue is still not resolved after this you should contact your case manager about the issue and they should help handle it.
- ☐ Your accommodations may vary depending on class and the teacher-- this is okay as long as you still feel supported.
- ☐ Remember, some general education teachers may not have in-depth backgrounds in special education. If you are having trouble or need more support, contact your case manager or guidance counselor.

Common Accommodations

- Everyone has very different IEP's so if you don't see all of your accommodations here don't worry! you can always ask your case manager or leave your question at the bottom of this page and someone will help you
- **Distraction reduced environment** - The high school has a designated Testing Center to provide this accommodation. If you need help finding this location, ask your counselor or case manager.
- **Extra time on test** - This is usually provided through the Testing Center
- **Notes provided**- You will be assigned an adult note taker (they may not always be in the class you are taking but another class period of that same class). The person will take notes and send you emails or provide you with copies of the notes afterwards.
- **Access to Note**- This is not the same as getting a completed copy. Access to Notes means you can view a master copy of notes (usually in a Resource Room) to fill in anything you have missed.
- **Frequent breaks**- Talk to your teacher about creating a system of how you will leave class when you need a break.
- **Preferential seating**- For this accommodation it is also best to speak to your teacher to inform them of your need to be close to instruction or otherwise be seated so as to support your specific needs.
- **Tests read** - If you have tests read, a special education teacher or other staff member will take you to a separate location to take your test and have it read to you.
- **Access to word processors**- You can do this on a computer in the designated Testing Center at the high school.

If you have any more questions that weren't answered please feel free email your case manager or counselor.

Prepared by:

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