



Think Higher.
Think College.



**From Awareness to Access:
Supporting the Transition to College for
Students with Intellectual Disability**



Brighter Futures Conference
Susanna Miller-Raines & Maria Paiewonsky

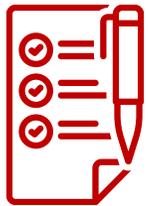
What is Think College?

Think College is a national technical assistance, research, training, and evaluation center dedicated to developing, expanding and improving higher education options for students with intellectual disability.

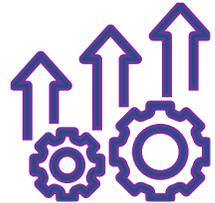
www.thinkcollege.net



At Think College, We help:



Develop college options for students with intellectual disability



Improve existing inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs



Assist students and families to prepare for college



College Course Enrollment



**Paid Jobs
(on/off campus)**



**Internships/
Work Study**



Living Independently



Campus Life/Organizations



What are Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Programs?



COLLEGE OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMS: 360



Think College

www.thinkcollege.net

LAST UPDATED: 12/8/25



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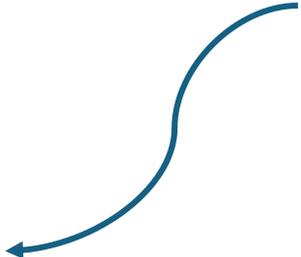
Public Awareness Campaign

Designed to build awareness and expand access to college for students with intellectual disability.

Our campaign goals are to:

- **Increase knowledge** of inclusive college options
- **Share information** about the benefits and outcomes of students with intellectual disability attending college
- Offer people ways to **spread the message**: “Think Higher. Think College.”

www.think**higher**ed.net



Home page



Videos



Audiences



Take Action



Events



Stats

Resources by Audience



Students & Families

Yes, your child with intellectual disability can go to college!

[Start Here!](#)



Educators/Transition/VR Professionals

Teachers, transition specialists, and Vocational Rehabilitation professionals can help guide students with intellectual disability to think college!

[Start Here!](#)



Higher Education Professionals

Students with intellectual disability belong on your campus. Click here to learn more.

[Start Here!](#)

RESOURCES FOR EVERYONE

Think College has created new products to share the **Think Higher. Think College.** message

INCLUDING:

- ✓ An IPSE resource guide
- ✓ Educational handouts, posters & postcards
- ✓ Social media & dissemination toolkit
- ✓ Easy-to-share social media content



[EXPLORE AND DOWNLOAD RESOURCES ON GOOGLE DRIVE](#)





Think Higher. Think College.

From Awareness to Access: Supporting the Transition
to College for Students with Intellectual Disability

Scan this QR code
to access the full list
of resources or visit
[https://tinyurl.com/2sxx
3hr](https://tinyurl.com/2sxx3hr)



website: thinkcollege.net
Need help?
thinkcollegeTA@umb.edu



Resource Hyperdoc



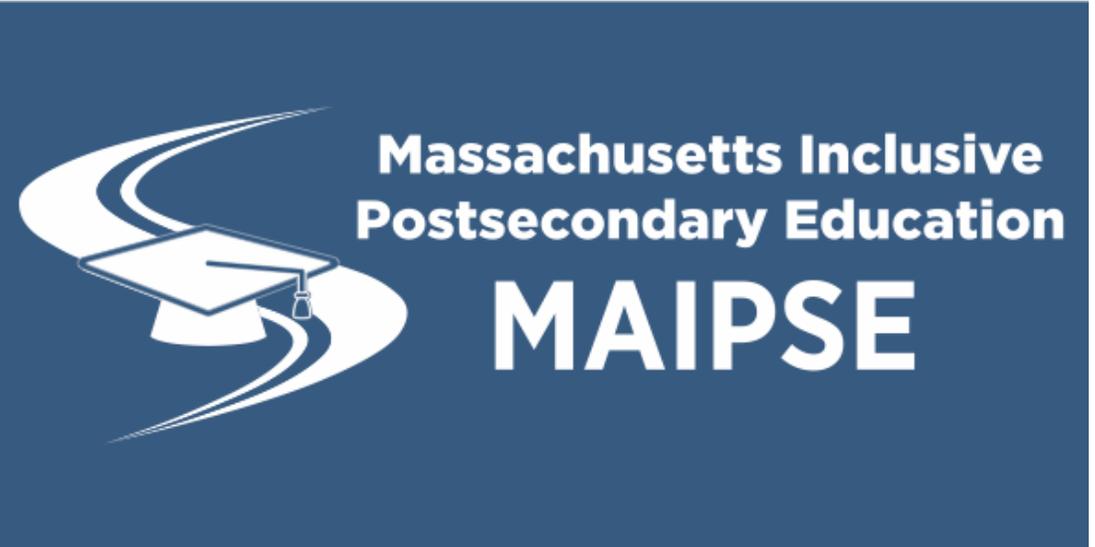


MASSACHUSETTS CENTER FOR
**INCLUSIVE HIGHER
EDUCATION & TRANSITION**

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

**TRANSITION
LEADERSHIP**

UMASS BOSTON





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Resource #1

New Educator THTC video (4:40 minutes)



How the video has been used

- Resource #1: New Educator THTC video
 - Parent Advisory Council meetings
 - Transition specialists use for IPSE recruitment; orientation



Resource #2



Transition to College: Educators Can Make it Happen!

<https://tinyurl.com/e6f9d7hv>

The infographic features a header with the logo 'Think Higher. Think College.' and the title 'Transition to College: Educators Can Make it Happen!'. It includes a callout box stating 'College is possible for students with intellectual disability!' with a checkmark icon. Below this, three sections are detailed: 'EXPLORE' (with a magnifying glass icon) for learning about college options, 'SHARE' (with a speech bubble icon) for conversations with students and families, and 'EXPAND' (with a four-way arrow icon) for building support. A final section titled 'QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED' provides prompts for asking administration and students.

Think Higher. Think College.
Transition to College: Educators Can Make it Happen!

College is possible for students with intellectual disability! ✓

Students with intellectual disability (ID) are making their dreams come true by enrolling in colleges and universities all over the country. Educators play a vital role in setting expectations and sharing resources with students and families who are interested in college. Here are some steps you can take to help students and their families to Think Higher. Think College!

EXPLORE
Learn about the different college options that are available for students with intellectual disability.

- Browse the College Search Tool at www.thinkcollege.net to get information on hundreds of programs across the country
- Reach out to programs to schedule a campus tour, in person or virtually or request recorded informational videos
- Invite staff from a local college program to talk to students about college options

SHARE
Start conversations about college with your students and families to explore options and share resources to help them successfully plan.

- Talk to students about their interest in college and how it can benefit them
- Share information with students, parents, and colleagues about college programs for students with ID
- Include college exploration and preparation in Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and transition planning discussions

EXPAND
Building support for college expectations requires a team approach. Expand yours!

- Start conversations with your school or district administration about college options for students with ID
- Include students with ID in existing college fair and college visit experiences
- Share information on college programs for students with ID with community partners at existing transition fairs

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

Ask administration: How can the district/school incorporate college as an option for students with ID in transition planning?

Ask students: When you think of going to college, what is important for you? What experiences would you like to have?





How these recommendations have been shared

- Resource #2: Transition to College: Educators Can Make it Happen
- MA IPSE: Orientation to school partners including sped admin and transition specialists (*i.e., family prep; student prep; CBTS team from college and school*)

College Fair Somerville, MA



Resource #3



Conducting a College Search

<https://tinyurl.com/4p9nu9kf>

HOW TO
ThinkCollege
Issue No. 1 (Updated 2023)

CONDUCTING A COLLEGE SEARCH: QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE PROGRAMS
By Cate Weir

Conducting a college search is a daunting task for every family and every potential college student. All students need to think about factors such as the size of the college, its location, and whether or not to live on campus or at home (see Figure 1).

For students with intellectual disability (ID), there are some additional aspects to consider beyond the details you can learn in Think College Search. This resource provides questions, suggested by parents and students who have been through the college search process.

These questions may be answered by closely reviewing the college program websites, attending an Open House, or calling the program director. A great place to identify possible options is Think College Search, a searchable database of college programs on the Think College website. There you will find basic information on over 270 college programs for students with intellectual disability. Learn more about it on page 2.

Figure 1. Sample College Features

Start by getting a list of basic college features that are important.

This guide shares questions about important aspects of the college program, and are offered to help students and families learn as much as they can about program operations so they can make an informed choice about which college is best for them. Several questions are suggested in each of the ten areas below.

Admission	Fees, Tuition, & Financial Aid	Inclusion with the Campus Community	Academics	Housing
Supports	Program Administration	Communication with Parents	Career Development	Program Outcomes

How College Search has been utilized

- Resource #3: Conducting a College Search.
 - Follow-up person –centered planning action plan
 - Course assignment in transition specialist training program



Resource #4



[Back to School:](#)

[Resources for Students and Families](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/5n6cyhjy>



**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) GOAL
IDEAS TO SUPPORT COLLEGE READINESS**

By Kathleen Becht, PhD

How this tool has been used



Resource #4: IEP Goal Ideas

- Transition assessment: college preparation
- Course assignment: Connecting college goal to assessment and IEP development
- Parent Advisory Council orientation to IPSE/IEP preparation



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Resource #5

What's on your mind? Let's look together!





What else is helpful

Resource #5

- Let's brainstorm!

Printable Resources

A Resource Guide for Inclusive Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disability

Exploring College for Students with Intellectual Disability: Families Make it Happen

College is for YOU!

Transition to College: Educators Can Make it Happen!

Higher Education Leaders Make College Possible for Students with Intellectual Disability

Social Media and Dissemination Toolkit

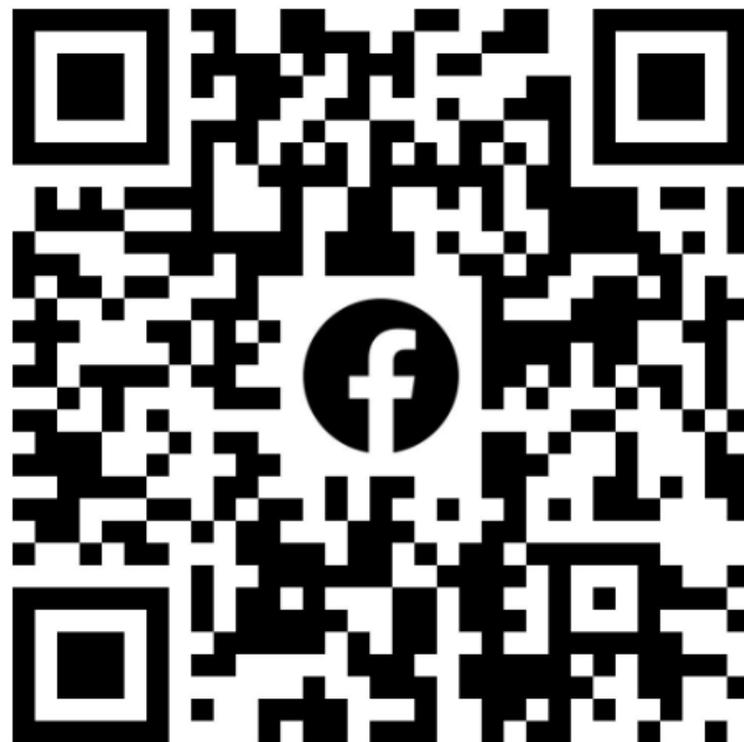


Have Questions? We have Answers!



ThinkCollegeTA@umb.edu

Think College Transition Professionals
Facebook Group



Take Action, Join the Campaign!

- **Download** & **Print** a few posters; Hang in your office or classroom, Share with colleagues at school
- **Share** our publications at state transition & VR conferences
- **Send** campaign materials out to families or educators
- **Share** at an upcoming transition or college fair
- **Share** during an IEP or person-centered planning meeting
- **Add links** from your website to ours



The screenshot shows the Think Higher. Think College. website. At the top, there is a logo with three wavy lines in blue, green, and orange, followed by the text "Think Higher. Think College." Below this, there are three small images: a person sitting in a library, a person walking outdoors, and a person sitting in a chair. The main heading is "Take Action at [www.ThinkHigherEd.net!](http://www.ThinkHigherEd.net)". Below this, there is a paragraph of text explaining the campaign's goal: "The 'Think Higher. Think College.' campaign is raising awareness of opportunities for students with intellectual disability to access higher education. The campaign video, website, and resources can help spark understanding, promote conversations, and encourage viewers to learn more and share the idea in their own communities that college is possible for students with intellectual disability." This is followed by another paragraph: "Here are some ways you can share these resources with your community, educators, schools, and families." There are two sections: "Online" and "In Person". The "Online" section lists four actions: downloading a social media kit, sharing the website on social media, including the campaign logo and link in newsletters, and using specific hashtags. The "In Person" section lists five actions: sharing at meetings, during transition fairs, with college staff, with current college students, and with their families. At the bottom, there is a QR code and a link to find resources: <https://thinkhighered.net/resources/>. The footer contains the Think College logo and the text "INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON".

What will you do?



Turn to your neighbor and share ONE way you plan to use the THTC resources.





Inclusive Postsecondary Education Association

www.ipseassociation.org

Who We Are

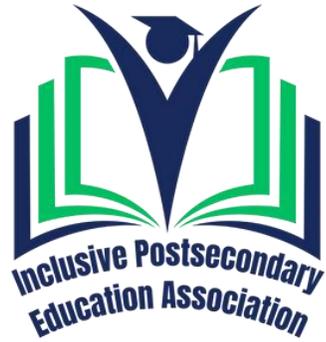
The IPSE Association is a membership organization of professionals and advocates committed to the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in postsecondary education.

www.ipseassociation.org

Our Mission

Our mission is to build a community of professionals and advocates that advances policy and practice to expand opportunities for inclusive postsecondary education for people with intellectual disability.



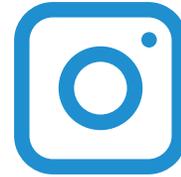


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**Scan this QR code to access
membership application.**



Make sure you are on our
MAILING LISTS!



SIGN UP TO STAY IN TOUCH!



Sign up for the Think College newsletter to receive monthly updates right to your inbox.

<https://thinkcollege.net/about/contact-us#newsletter>



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INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION, UMASS BOSTON

Thank you!!

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