



# **Report on Access to Higher Education for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

**(Senate Bill 1017, 86th Texas Legislature  
Regular Session)**

**October 2020**

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## Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board



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### Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through *60x30TX*, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

### Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

### Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The THECB's core values are:

**Accountability:** We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

**Efficiency:** We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

**Collaboration:** We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

**Excellence:** We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

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## Executive Summary

The Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 61.06641, authorized through the passage of Senate Bill 1017, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to periodically review the policies and practices that increase access to higher education opportunities, distribute educational outreach marketing materials, and establish an advisory council on postsecondary education for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). According to the statute, the report should include historic and current higher education data and recommendations for changes to support success and achievement for persons with IDD in accessing higher education (TEC, Section 61.06641(k)). Reports are to be submitted to the governor and members of the Legislature by December 1 of each even-numbered year.

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The council would like to thank the staff of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for their administrative support during this process. A special thanks to Dakota Doman for convening this council and to Waylon Metoyer for his continuing leadership and guidance as the council completed this report. Additional technical assistance was provided by Kendra Horn and Diana Foose.

## Summary of Recommendations

- 1) Replace the term “IDD” with “neurodevelopmental disorders” to clarify the targeted population. Data need to be collected and focused on the four main neurodevelopmental disorders, according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)*:
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
  - Intellectual Disabilities
  - Specific Learning Disorders
- 2) Increase the number of students with neurodevelopmental disorders who attend postsecondary education programs for certifications or degrees that lead to meaningful employment and careers.
- 3) Require school districts to include Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) at the beginning of transition planning for a student with neurodevelopmental disorders.
- 4) Require every public institution of higher education in Texas to provide TWS-VRS counselors with office space inside its student disability services department to coordinate services and supports for students with neurodevelopmental disabilities.
- 5) Identify college readiness goals that should be documented in kindergarten-12th grade school transition plans using the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Summary of Performance.
- 6) Special education programs in Texas public schools and TWS-VRS counselors should identify and coordinate to provide a final and full evaluation during students’ final year of high school that documents the academic levels, emotional/behavioral needs, strengths, and specific disability category for students with neurodevelopmental disorders in order for them to apply to postsecondary education programs.
- 7) Provide training and educational resources for postsecondary institution faculty and staff, including those in the school’s career and employer services department, on how to support postsecondary students with neurodevelopmental disorders to earn a degree or certification that will lead to employment upon graduation.
- 8) Require institutions of higher education to identify and provide students with neurodevelopmental disabilities the same opportunities that neurotypical college students have to obtain employment experiences through internships or paid employment in college to increase post-graduation employment rates.
- 9) Consider providing funding to promote research and offer grant funds to further develop and study the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students with neurodevelopmental disorders from institutions of higher education.
- 10) Leverage partnerships to provide grants to allow institutions of higher education to develop postsecondary educational programs on their college campuses or training schools that develop supports and services for students with neurodevelopmental disorders, especially in rural communities.

- 11) Identify how many students with neurodevelopmental disorders from the foster care system are receiving financial support from the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program.
- 12) Texas high schools should coordinate with TWS-VRS regarding policies governing the evaluation of high school graduating seniors with disabilities to provide current academic and psychological evaluations for easier application to college and college student disability services.
- 13) Have the THECB sponsor, or co-sponsor with other entities, a state conference that focuses on best practice models for postsecondary education models for students with neurodevelopmental disorders; that is, models that have successfully served students through degree or certification attainment and successful transition into the workforce.
- 14) Consider providing funding and administrative support for the dissemination of information about the state of postsecondary education in Texas for students with neurodevelopmental disorders, including the work of the THECB and this Advisory Council.
- 15) Consider providing funding to support summer college preparation programs similar to the Red Raider Academy at Texas Tech University, Bridge to Career at Texas A&M University, or College Wise Summer Program at the University of North Texas.



## **Introduction**

The goal of this report is to provide a summary of the state of postsecondary education in Texas for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders and recommendations for how to make postsecondary education more accessible to this population. As can be seen from the membership of the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (Advisory Council) displayed below, one of the major strengths of this report is that it reflects the perspectives of a diverse group of Texans: students with neurodevelopmental disorders (self-advocates), parents of individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders, state agencies, and higher education personnel who serve college-age students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Report on Access to Higher Education for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 61.06641, authorized through the passage of Senate Bill 1017, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to periodically review the policies and practices that increase access to higher education opportunities, distribute educational outreach marketing materials, and establish an advisory council on postsecondary education for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). According to the statute, the report should include historic and current higher education data and recommendations for changes to support success and achievement for persons with IDD in accessing higher education (TEC, Section 61.06641(k)). Reports are to be submitted to the governor and members of the Legislature by December 1 of each even-numbered year.

This report reflects the most current scientific standard in which developmental and intellectual delays are categorized, as recognized by the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*. This resource provides the criteria for all mental disorders, and in May of 2013, the latest version was released, the DSM-V. In this version, a new category was established, "neurodevelopmental disorders." The following disorders were placed under this category umbrella: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Specific Learning Disorder, and Intellectual Disabilities.

A neurodevelopmental disorder is a group of conditions with onset in the developmental period. Current diagnostic criteria define this as before the age of 22. A person who experiences the onset of a disability *after* the age of 22 may have similar functional limitations but does *not* have a neurodevelopmental disorder. Neurodevelopmental disorders produce impairments of personal, social, academic, or occupational functioning and persist for a lifetime.

The charge to the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (Advisory Council) is to address the population of individuals with Intellectual *and* Developmental Disabilities, including autism. The interpretation of this charge is not to limit efforts to the definition of "intellectual disability" found in the Texas Health and Safety Code, but to use the broader definition of developmental disability, the industry-accepted term of "neurodevelopmental disorders."<sup>1</sup> Addressing the four most commonly diagnosed and most easily documented neurodevelopmental disorders is recommended as a first step in this first report; the THECB should consider expanding the charge to include all categories of neurodevelopmental disorders in the future.

The Advisory Council recognizes that this approach does omit individuals in the broader category of developmental disabilities who may have physical impairments. As students, these individuals should already be served by the Office of Student Disabilities on higher education campuses under the Americans with Disabilities Act. While the evaluation of those services is highly recommended, such evaluation was beyond the scope of this report. System changes made as a result of the recommendations included in this report are intended to improve access to, retention in, and graduation from a postsecondary education institution for all students with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> "Intellectual disability" means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning that is concurrent with deficits in adaptive behavior and originates during the developmental period. <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.591.htm>

Additional barriers to increasing enrollment in postsecondary education for students with neurodevelopmental disorders are identified in the Areas of Consideration section of this report as Appendix A. These considerations will be further studied over the course of the next year by the Advisory Council for future recommendations.

## Accessibility to Postsecondary Education

Less than a quarter (24.39%) of 2015 Texas high school graduates who were receiving special education services when they left high school enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This is the lowest rate of higher education attainment among all demographic subgroups.

**Recommendation 1.** Replace the term “IDD” with “neurodevelopmental disorders” to clarify the targeted population. Data need to be collected and focused on the four main neurodevelopmental disorders according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)*:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)
- Intellectual Disabilities (ID)
- Specific Learning Disorders (SLD)

This will allow the THECB to identify the total number of individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders being served in higher education postsecondary programs across the state.

After the Advisory Council’s Data & Workforce Workgroup reviewed the data available on students with neurodevelopmental disorders, it became apparent that although Texas has a large number of individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders in K-12 public schools, few students in this population participated in a postsecondary education program (Tables 1-3).

**Table 1. Number of Students by Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ages 3-21) for the 2019-2020 School Year**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>
Autism	83,238
Intellectual Disability	62,968
Other Health Impairment*	82,239
Specific Learning Disability	183,181
<b>Total</b>	<b>411,626</b>

Source: TEA

\* Note: TEA codes AD/HD within Other Health Impairment (OHI); however, OHI is a broad category that includes short-term physical disabilities (such as a broken arm) and medical issues (such as asthma).

**Table 2. Percentage of Students with a Neurodevelopmental Disorder Who Exited Special Education with Subsequent College Enrollment for School Years 2015-2016 through 2017-2018**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Specific Learning Disability	56%
*Other Health Impairment	16%
Autism	11%
Intellectual Disability	2%

Source: TEA

Note: TEA codes AD/HD within OHI; however, OHI is a broad category that includes short-term physical disabilities (such as a broken arm) and medical issues (such as asthma).

**Table 3. Percentage of Students with a Neurodevelopmental Disorder Who Participated in a Postsecondary Program and exited Special Education with Subsequent College Enrollment for School Years 2015-2016 through 2017-2018**

<b>Students with Autism and Intellectual Disability</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Student never participated in a postsecondary program	98.83%
Student participated in a postsecondary program	0.11%
Unknown if student participated in a postsecondary program	1.06%

Source: TEA

**Recommendation 2.** Increase the number of students with neurodevelopmental disorders who attend postsecondary education programs for certifications or degrees that lead to meaningful employment and careers.

The Advisory Council recommends the following initial requirements to help the THECB accurately report the number of students with neurodevelopmental disorders who are receiving a postsecondary education:

1. Require every public institution of higher education in Texas to add the following four indicators to their CBM report: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Intellectual Disabilities, and Specific Learning Disorders.
2. Require every public institution of higher education in Texas to identify how many students with neurodevelopmental disorders, who also are or have been in foster care, attend postsecondary education.
3. Require every public institution of higher education in Texas to designate a point of contact responsible for ensuring data are collected across all departments and programs. The data collected should include the four neurodevelopmental disorders, including all credit and non-credit bearing students (including students that are not currently required to report, such as those in a specialized program or continuing education classes).

The Advisory Council’s Data and Workforce Workgroup also reported the number of students who were sponsored by the Texas Workforce Commission—Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services program in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020 for postsecondary programs (Table 4). Once again, the numbers reveal that few students who receive special education services for having a neurodevelopmental disorder actually go on to receive a postsecondary education.

**Table 4. Number of Students TWC Sponsored in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020 within 11 Specialized Postsecondary Programs for IDD**

<b>Postsecondary Programs for IDD</b>	<b>FY2019</b>	<b>FY2020</b>
Total number of students	154	189

*Source: Texas Workforce Commission*

**Recommendation 3.** Require school districts to include Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) at the beginning of transition planning for a student with neurodevelopmental disorders.

TWS-VRS counselors should be more visible and involved with transition planning meetings of the Admissions, Review, and Dismissal team for students with neurodevelopmental disabilities, especially those intending to enroll in postsecondary education. This will help ensure that vocational rehabilitation services are available and coordinated to prepare and assist these students when they transition from high school to college.

**Recommendation 4.** Require every public institution of higher education in Texas to provide TWS-VRS counselors with office space inside its student disability services department to coordinate services and supports for students with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

This will increase referrals to TWC-VRS from higher education and increase the number of students with neurodevelopmental disorders who receive TWS-VRS Pre-Employment Transition Services and employment services. These pre-employment services can provide training, internships, job coaching, possible financial supports, and other services that campus disability services are generally unable to provide for students who are eligible for these services.

## **College Readiness**

**Recommendation 5.** Identify college readiness goals that should be documented in kindergarten-12th grade school (K-12) transition plans using the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Summary of Performance (Richter & Mazzotti, 2011).

The Advisory Council’s Neurodevelopmental Disorders Policy Workgroup reviewed current policies for various systems that support students with neurodevelopmental disabilities and made several recommendations on how to improve access, admission, enrollment, and retention for postsecondary education. For example, students applying to college and their families are often confused about how to prepare for postsecondary education. Many decisions have to be made when selecting a college and applying to a degree or certification program that is a good fit for a student. This can be especially complicated for students with neurodevelopmental disorders who, due to their disability, often do not have the college readiness skills to successfully enroll and complete a postsecondary education. This becomes a challenge for families and professionals wanting to help students enroll and be successful in postsecondary education.

The following story is from one of the students/self-advocates and a member of the Advisory Council. His story reflects the impact and significance of a postsecondary education for the people of Texas with neurodevelopmental disorders and their families.

“When DJ Puente from Mission, Texas, thought about what he wanted to do after high school, this son of two university graduates came up with the same answer many his age come up with: go to college. Unfortunately, because of his autism

diagnosis, DJ was fearful of communicating with others, so he and his family did not think college was much of an option.

Luckily, DJ was able to get the level of support necessary to help him successfully transition from high school into South Texas College with accommodations and specific services tailored to his individual needs. DJ was able to receive individualized services such as person-centered planning, educational coaches, social skills training, and business mentoring opportunities, which helped DJ build the social and organizational skills needed to succeed in college.

'I appreciate all the help I got to help me pass all my classes with A's and B's,' Puente said. 'The internship at the International Museum of Arts and Sciences using my job coach really helped me get excited about graphic design and motivated me to be successful,' he added. This year, DJ will be graduating with his Associate Degree in Graphic Design from South Texas College, and he is ready to start working in the field using the work experience he has already gained through college."

## **Admissions**

**Recommendation 6.** Special education programs in Texas public schools and TWS-VRS counselors should identify and coordinate to provide a final and full evaluation during students' final year of high school that documents the academic levels, emotional/behavioral needs, strengths, and specific disability category for students with neurodevelopmental disorders in order for them to apply to postsecondary education programs.

During the senior year of high school, the Admissions, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) team meets to document that students with disabilities are graduating and leaving the school district. It is recommended that the ARD team include a TWS-VRS counselor to help identify transition services for students moving on to attend college or enter the workforce. This would help students with neurodevelopmental disorders and their families to navigate the transition and admission process to postsecondary education.

Before high school graduation, to apply to a postsecondary educational program, students with neurodevelopmental disorders need a full evaluation that documents their academic levels, emotional/behavioral needs, strengths, and disabilities. Additional documentation of modifications and accommodations students received in high school is also helpful to identify an appropriate postsecondary educational program. This information will assist campus student disability services and other campus resources to provide guidance to a student with neurodevelopmental disorders and their family to successfully apply to a postsecondary educational program that is a good fit for the student's abilities and interests.

## **Workforce and Employment**

**Recommendation 7.** Provide training and educational resources for postsecondary institution faculty and staff, including those in the school's career and employer services department, on how to support postsecondary students with neurodevelopmental disorders to earn a degree or certification that will lead to employment upon graduation.

The staff in the career and employer services department could work with student disability services staff and TWS-VRS counselors to provide individualized services, such as

person-centered planning services, to help each student develop their own individualized career plans to identify and achieve their own employment goals. An individualized career development plan helps the student choose an appropriate employment goal based on information from their completed assessments, plus the student's interests, strengths, abilities, and support needs. This plan will provide the employment services staff with key information about which businesses to approach, what attributes to feature in securing employment for a student, and the level of support that will be needed for each student to obtain and maintain employment.

**Recommendation 8.** Require institutions of higher education to identify and provide students with neurodevelopmental disabilities the same opportunities that neurotypical college students have to obtain employment experiences through internships or paid employment in college to increase post-graduation employment rates.

Many disciplines and college departments are requiring internships as a part of a student's degree plan. This is a significant component for college students to experience working in their field of choice, much like student teaching is for pre-service teachers. It also provides opportunities for college students to make connections for recommendation letters, job opportunities post-graduation, and further exploration and work experience in their chosen career field. It is especially critical for students with neurodevelopmental disorders and other disabilities to have these types of hands-on experiences before transitioning to the workforce.

College career and employer services programs offer some support in this area, but if they partnered with student disability services offices and the Texas Workforce Solutions—Vocational Rehabilitation Services program, students with disabilities would have not only more opportunities for internships or paid employment opportunities, but also the support to make such opportunities meaningful for bolstering their chances of employment after graduation.

Additional suggestions to address barriers for students with neurodevelopmental disorders regarding workforce and employment are identified in Appendix C. These training and skill development suggestions would increase the chances of students with neurodevelopmental disorders being successful in gaining competitive employment and future careers.

## **Funding**

The Advisory Council applauded other initiatives that the THECB has implemented, such as the autism services program through institutions of higher education. It was suggested that the THECB use a similar approach to engage state and local agencies and organizations to provide resources to further develop postsecondary education programs for students with neurodevelopmental disorders.

**Recommendation 9.** Consider providing funding to promote research and offer grant funds to further develop and study the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students with neurodevelopmental disorders from institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Senate Bill (SB) 37, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, now codified as Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 61.0664(c), requires the THECB to conduct an ongoing study on the college recruitment of persons with IDD. According to the statute, the study is to "identify previously made recruitment efforts, limitations on recruitment and possible methods for recruitment" for this population (TEC, Section 61.0664(c)). In addition to the study on recruitment, the TEC requires that the THECB collect administrative data on students with IDD enrolled in public IHEs. Through collaboration with stakeholders, a rule was drafted and

approved by the board of the THECB (Texas Administrative Code, Section 4.12) that requires all IHEs to indicate whether an enrolled student is identified as having an IDD, which allows the agency to track their academic success.

It is important to continue to follow up with institutions that have not yet reported on the collection of information concerning students with IDD and to provide more in-depth information about specific postsecondary programs that serve students with neurodevelopmental disabilities. The following tables were prepared for this report by the Advisory Council’s Policy Workgroup.

**Table 5. Findings from THECB’s Annual Report on the Recruitment of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at Texas Public Institutions of Higher Education**

Year	Number of IHEs that responded to survey	Number of IHEs Engaged in a Recruitment Activity	Number of Students with IDD Recruited to a Special Program	Number of Students with IDD Recruited into General Academic Population	Number of Students with IDD Recruited to Special Program and General Academic Population
2020	84	24	11	17	4
2019	81	22	11	15	4
2018	81	21	11	14	4
2016	68	17	8	12	“Some”

Source: Survey of Recruitment of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at Public Institutions of Higher Education in Texas, distributed 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020.

Note: Numbers reflect those institutions that have responded collectively since its inception in 2016.

**Table 6. Students with an IDD Enrolled in Credit-Bearing Courses**

Academic Year	Total Reported Students	Students Reported as Enrolled in a Program for Students with IDD
Academic Year 2017-2018	3,594	145
Academic Year 2018-2019	4,150	52
Fall 2019*	3,202	31

Source: CBM001

Note: Numbers are unduplicated across semesters within an academic year and across institutions.

\*Data from the full Academic Year 2019-2020 are not certified at time of this report.

**Table 7. Students with an IDD Enrolled in State-Funded Continuing Education Courses**

Academic Year	Total Reported Students	Students Reported as Enrolled in a Program for Students with IDD
Academic Year 2017-2018	196	89
Academic Year 2018-2019	174	100
Fall 2019*	167	143

Source: CBM00A

Note: Numbers are unduplicated across semesters within an academic year and across institutions.

\*Data from the full Academic Year 2019-2020 are not certified at time of this report.



**Recommendation 10.** Leverage partnerships to provide grants to allow institutions of higher education to develop postsecondary educational programs on their college campuses or training schools that develop supports and services for students with neurodevelopmental disorders, especially in rural communities.

Developing these postsecondary programs in community colleges will better prepare students with neurodevelopmental disorders to enter the workforce and live more independently. This is especially critical for rural areas of Texas, which are often located closer to community colleges than to larger universities.

**Recommendation 11.** Identify how many students with neurodevelopmental disorders from the foster care system are receiving financial support from the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program.

These funds can apply toward fees associated with college programs that support students with disabilities and who are or were in foster care. The Advisory Council recommends requiring every public institution of higher education in Texas to identify how many students with neurodevelopmental disorders who are or were in foster care are attending college, and whether they are utilizing the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program.

**Recommendation 12.** Texas high schools should coordinate with TWS-VRS regarding policies governing the evaluation of high school graduating seniors with disabilities to provide current academic and psychological evaluations.

Most colleges require students with disabilities to arrive with current evaluations to enroll in support programs from the campus office of student disabilities services, yet high schools only re-evaluate in areas of delay during a student's senior year of high school. This sometimes requires college students with neurodevelopmental disabilities to purchase expensive academic and psychological evaluations. This barrier can be overcome by having high schools provide more complete evaluation information on students in their senior year of high school before graduation, or by requesting that TWC-VRS pay for a full evaluation for students enrolled in vocational services who seek a postsecondary education.

## **Outreach and Education Materials**

**Recommendation 13.** Have the THECB sponsor, or co-sponsor with other entities, a state conference that focuses on best practice models for postsecondary education for students with neurodevelopmental disorders; that is, models that have successfully served students through degree or certification attainment and successful transition into the workforce.

Current best practices would be shared from other nationally recognized postsecondary education programs that could enhance the development and implementation of policies and practices to improve outcomes for students with neurodevelopmental disorders in Texas. Another important aspect of this type of outreach and educational opportunity would be to help reduce the duplication of services and identify gaps in Texas institutions of higher education and other systems that serve this population; for example, ascertaining how these programs collaborate with campus Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) offices to provide students with neurodevelopmental disorders appropriate academic or vocational class supports, housing, financial aid, social supports, transportation, and technology.

This would potentially save the state's financial resources, because successful models would help students become employed and less dependent of systemic funding supports. This

becomes particularly significant once family supports cease to exist for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders. Members of the Advisory Council identified informational resources that can help students with disabilities and their families navigate how to research programs and best practices for enrolling in a postsecondary education program that addresses the needs of individuals who have neurodevelopmental disabilities (Appendix B).

**Recommendation 14.** Consider providing funding and administrative support for the dissemination of information about the state of postsecondary education in Texas for students with neurodevelopmental disorders, including the work of the THECB and this Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council recommends sharing the following information:

- recommendations from the THECB and the Advisory Council to key stakeholders, including, but not limited to, self-advocates/students, families, high school teachers and counselors, public school administrators, higher education faculty and staff, and state agencies and community organizations through social media, presentations at workshops, conferences, or other informative meetings and events; and
- information to stakeholders on funding resources such as Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs; Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts; federal financial aid; private, regional, or campus-based scholarships and grants; and Texas Workforce Commission-Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

**Recommendation 15.** Consider providing funding to support summer college preparation programs similar to the Red Raider Academy at Texas Tech University, Bridge to Career at Texas A&M University, or College Wise Summer Program at the University of North Texas.

According to the "Postsecondary Programs and Services for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities" inventory, only 16 higher education institutions have programs for students with neurodevelopmental disorders (THECB, 2020). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not known how many of these programs are still functioning and serving students. The Advisory Council's Neurodevelopmental Disorders Programs Workgroup researched websites and called institutions of higher education throughout the state and developed a list of current programs that specifically serve this student population, as highlighted in Appendix D.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to provide information on how to increase access to higher education opportunities for persons with neurodevelopmental disorders. The report was developed by the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Advisory Council's report draws upon the expertise and experiences of families, self-advocates, and professionals to promote the blending of perspectives, best practices, and practical suggestions and guidelines to: (1) study the accessibility of higher education for persons with IDD; (2) provide advice regarding resolving barriers to accessing higher education for persons with IDD; (3) identify, evaluate, and develop recommendations to address specific barriers to accessing higher education for persons with IDD who are or have been in the foster care system; and (4) consider any related data collection concerns.

The work of this Advisory Council has just begun. In spite of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the council has started the important work of helping to increase opportunities for Texas citizens with neurodevelopmental disabilities, their families, and those who work to serve and support them. By providing postsecondary educational opportunities for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders, Texas will see more of its citizens successfully included in the communities where they choose to live and work.

## References

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## **Appendix A:**

### **Areas of Consideration for the Advisory Council's Work Next Year**

The Advisory Council has highlighted the following considerations to continue studying the landscape and identifying barriers for persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities for future recommendations:

- Coordinate the work and recommendations of this council with existing efforts to meet the goals of the state's higher education strategic plan, *60x30TX*.
- Consider if Texas needs to examine other states' vocational programs. Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Hawaii, California, and Washington work closely with strong state vocational rehabilitation partnerships to achieve the goal of competitive integrated employment before exit from the program.<sup>2</sup>
- Research and identify private and public entities that provide scholarships or grants for students with neurodevelopmental disorders. Minnesota has established a grant program for students with neurodevelopmental disorders. Could Texas do the same?<sup>3</sup>
- Review existing Medicaid resources in Texas to identify if there are resources there to support students with neurodevelopmental disorders in postsecondary educational programs.
- Provide incentives for higher education institutions to ensure that college personnel have been trained on how to support students with neurodevelopmental disorders on their campus (from transportation, housing, faculty, etc.).
- Explore incentives for postsecondary education, such as scholarships for direct support providers and attendants for students with neurodevelopmental disorders, if appropriate for meeting the requirement of the ADA.
- Provide time for the Advisory Council and the THECB to research how students with neurodevelopmental disorders and their families can learn about and be encouraged and/or supported in enrolling for credit-earning courses not specifically designed for students with neurodevelopmental disorders so students can earn a certificate or degree.
- Examine the possibility of a vocational rehabilitation ombudsman at TWC-VRS, similar to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission IDD Ombudsman, to troubleshoot when there are discrepancies in how vocational rehabilitation services are provided across the state to individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders.
- Identify travel training resources from TWC-VRS or the Texas Education Agency for students with neurodevelopmental disorders who need to utilize public transportation to attend postsecondary educational programs.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD\\_Progress\\_Report\\_508\\_0.pdf\\_page\\_57](https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Progress_Report_508_0.pdf_page_57)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2295>

- Require postsecondary education programs to maintain accessible information that is highlighted for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders and their families to locate programs that support them to attend college.
- Identify and replicate best practices on how the state can help ensure that students who complete postsecondary programs for people with neurodevelopmental disorders earn meaningful credentials that support their individual goals, needs, and preferences.
- Identify to what extent occupational skills training programs are accessible and available to students with neurodevelopmental disorders and how students can access these services and potential programs of study.<sup>4</sup>
- Identify school districts that offer dual-credit/concurrent enrollment opportunities for students and/or offer science, technology, engineering, and mathematics classes/programs to students receiving special education services.
- Recommend that each student receives additional training from postsecondary institutions in other areas to help ensure successful employment, such as social and advocacy skills, transportation training, and information regarding how employment income can affect Social Security and medical benefits. This training can come from the postsecondary institution or from other agency/ community partners.
- Prioritize efforts to increase referrals for children with neurodevelopmental disorders to waiver programs earlier in life because these programs include services that provide employment supports after the individual starts employment. For example, the lessening of paid working hours and management turnover at the employer site can be post-employment barriers for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders. Services provided by waiver programs, such as job coaching and supported employment services, can help address these barriers and help individuals maintain their employment.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/reports-presentations/2018/sb-2027-training-employment-ops-iid-dec-2018.pdf>

## **Appendix B:**

# **College Application and Admission Support for Students with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities and their Families**

Families need support to prepare applications and find colleges that are a good fit for students, especially students with neurodevelopmental disorders who may have executive functioning deficits or communication issues. College applications and admission procedures are more complex and detailed than ever before, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in more and more campus personnel working remotely.

The Advisory Council recommends providing access to the following information resources on college transitions to assist students with neurodevelopmental disorders as they apply for college admission:

- The Texas Education Agency’s Texas Transition and Employment Guide <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/parent-and-family-resources/texas-transition-and-employment-guide>
- The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities Higher Education Resource Guide (English & Spanish) <https://tcdd.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Higher-Ed-Guide-Remediated-EN.pdf>  
<https://tcdd.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Higher-Ed-Guide-Remediated-ES.pdf>
- The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities The Next Step: Video and Discussion Guide (English & Spanish) <https://tcdd.texas.gov/resources/publications/the-next-step-video-and-discussion-guide/>
- Common Application for College <https://www.commonapp.org/>
- College Board (assessments for entry to college) <https://www.collegeboard.org/>
- Accuplacer on the College Board website <https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/prepare-for-accuplacer/tsia-texas-success-initiative-assessment>
- Winning in College: A Guide for Students with Disabilities <https://www.edsmart.org/students-with-disabilities-college-guide/>
- National Center for College Students with Disabilities <http://www.nccsdonline.org/>
- Seven Things to Know About College Disability Services <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/leaving-high-school/7-things-to-know-about-college-disability-services>
- Think College <https://thinkcollege.net/>

## **Appendix C: Supporting Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders in the Workforce**

Students with neurodevelopmental disorders who plan to pursue employment after postsecondary training should be provided with services related to the following topics to help increase their chance of success in competitive employment:

1. Understanding Social Security Benefits<sup>5</sup>
2. Understanding Disability and the ADA<sup>6</sup>
3. Selecting an Employment Goal
  - a. Assessments
    - i. Interest Inventory
    - ii. Skills Assessment
    - iii. Work Values
  - b. Vocational Assessment, specific to disabilities and abilities
  - c. Informational interviews, mentoring days, and job shadowing, which can help students learn about different careers and work environments
  - d. Occupational Outlook
4. Real-World Work Experiences During Education
  - a. Volunteering (unpaid work) and/or internships (paid or unpaid) can help students experience real-world work during their education before permanent employment. Both volunteering and internships help students build confidence, job readiness skills, work-related history, and contacts for professional references.
5. Disclosing Your Disability
6. Social Skills
7. Transportation Training
8. Job Seeking Assistance<sup>7</sup>
  - a. Job Search
  - b. Creating a Resume
  - c. Completing an Application
  - d. Interview Preparation Skills
9. Employment Supports<sup>8</sup>
  - a. Accommodations and Modifications
  - b. Co-Worker Mentoring
  - c. Job Coaching

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<sup>5</sup> [https://choosework.ssa.gov/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://choosework.ssa.gov/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

<sup>6</sup> <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/intellectual-or-developmental-disabilities-idd-long-term-care>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/default.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <https://vcurrtc.org/training/webcourses/ce.cfm>



- d. Assistive Technology
  - e. Social Security Work Incentives
10. Connection to Free Resources:
- a. Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - b. Local Workforce Solution Centers
  - c. Workforce Professionals<sup>9</sup>
  - d. Research<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.careeronestop.org/ResourcesFor/CareerAdvisor/career-advisor.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Meg\\_Grigal/publication/265274027\\_Employment\\_Activities\\_and\\_Outcomes\\_of\\_College-Based\\_Transition\\_Programs\\_for\\_Students\\_with\\_Intellectual\\_Disabilities/links/5492f7540cf2213b86cbab3d/Employment-Activities-and-Outcomes-of-College-Based-Transition-Programs-for-Students-with-Intellectual-Disabilities.pdf?origin=publication\\_detail](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Meg_Grigal/publication/265274027_Employment_Activities_and_Outcomes_of_College-Based_Transition_Programs_for_Students_with_Intellectual_Disabilities/links/5492f7540cf2213b86cbab3d/Employment-Activities-and-Outcomes-of-College-Based-Transition-Programs-for-Students-with-Intellectual-Disabilities.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

## **Appendix D: Postsecondary Programs for Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Texas**

### **Alamo Community College - Palo Alto College**

Address: 1400 West Villaret Boulevard, San Antonio, TX 78224

Program Name: **Project Access**

Program Description: Palo Alto College's Project Access is a program offered to individuals with documented intellectual disabilities. It is designed to support students to access postsecondary education and develop skills for gainful employment by earning a General Office Level 1 Certificate. The certificate is the first level of training for working in the Administrative Support field and can lead to an Associate of Applied Science degree in Administrative Assistant. The Project Access program prepares students to gain comprehensive skills and assume responsibilities in the workplace. Students receive advanced training with computer technology to prepare for the constantly changing and increasingly automated business environment. This is a cohort-based program with a limited number of seats available per semester.

Website: [www.alamo.edu/pac/dss](http://www.alamo.edu/pac/dss)

### **Alvin Community College**

Address: 3110 Mustang Road, Alvin, TX 77511

Program Name: **STRIVE**

Program Description: A two-year college experience and vocational training for adults with intellectual disabilities. Individuals will work on resume building skills, interview skills, life skills for independence, involvement in local communities, and job skills.

Website: [www.alvincollege.edu/CEWD/Vocational-Training](http://www.alvincollege.edu/CEWD/Vocational-Training)

### **Austin Community College (ACC)**

Address: 5930 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, TX 78752

Program Name: **STEPS**

Program Description: ACC's STEPS program is an up-to-two-year program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities interested in gaining skills to enter the workforce or continue to develop their education. STEPS provides support to help adults achieve their individualized goals. Working with agencies and schools, STEPS provides comprehensive support through a student's entire two years leading toward increased independence and employability. STEPS offers many levels of support, choices, and plans for students.

Website: <http://continue.austincc.edu/steps>

### **Dallas County Community College - El Centro College**

Address: 801 Main Street, Dallas, TX 75202

Program Name: **Moving On/Next Step**

Program Description: The Moving On/Next Step Program for Special Populations is specifically designed for students with certain types of learning disabilities. Courses are intended to prepare students for the workplace by teaching them interpersonal skills and basic work-related academic and computer skills along with the essential career awareness and job search skills needed for them to become independent, proactive, and productive members of their community. The classes span from two to four semesters, based on individual needs and scheduling requirements. Student eligibility is determined by an interview/assessment

conducted by the program coordinator. To ensure individual success and educational effectiveness, enrollment is limited to 14 students per class.

Website: n/a

### **Dallas County Community College - Richland College**

Address: 12800 Abrams Road, Dallas, TX 75243-2199

Name: **RISD Transition Program**

Program Description: Richland College has a partnership with Richardson Independent School District (RISD). Students with IDD have the option to transition to college while still receiving support from the school district. Students attend classes on Tuesday and Thursday on the college campus. Students take two to three classes and receive tutoring. RISD also has the Total Re-Integration program that was designed for students with traumatic brain injuries. RISD allows students with IDD to take some of these courses, too.

Website: n/a

### **El Paso Community College (EPCC) District**

Address: P.O. Box 20500, El Paso, TX 79998

Program Name: **Project HIGHER**

Program Description: Project HIGHER is a program that assists individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ages 18-25) in El Paso County to complete a level-one certificate at EPCC and find employment in their area of study. Project HIGHER is a supported educational model based upon supported employment models that includes collaboration between EPCC, Center for Students with Disabilities, the Master of Rehabilitation Counseling Program at the University of Texas at El Paso, the Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Volar Center for Independent Living, Education Service Center-Region 19, and other community partners to help participants succeed in postsecondary education and, ultimately, achieve employment. The program uses an educational coach, who works one-on-one with a student in and out of the classroom and gradually reduces the time spent with the student as they become better adjusted and more independent.

Website: n/a

### **Houston Community College System**

Address: 3100 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

Program Name: **VAST Academy**

Program Description: VAST Academy provides postsecondary transition programs and comprehensive support services, which lead to meaningful credentials, employment, and independence for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Opportunities include vocational certificates, pre-college and freshman success bridge courses, career readiness credentials, internships, and employment assistance offered through an inclusive, relevant, and affordable avenue.

Website: [www.vast.hccs.edu](http://www.vast.hccs.edu)

### **Lee College**

Address: 200 Lee Drive, Baytown, TX 77520-4703

Program #1 Name: **Access Center**

Description: Lee College serves a general population of students with disabilities including those with IDD and autism. The student populations that the Access Center serves includes: 1) students who seek college certificates or degrees in preparation for a career or university

transfer, 2) dual-enrollment students, 3) students enrolled community education and non-credit workforce programs.

Website: <http://www.lee.edu/disabilities/>

**Program #2 Name: Life Skills for Intellectually Disabled Students**

Description: This program at Lee College is designed for developmentally disabled adults to enrich and enhance adult life. This program provides students with a wide variety of skills, including functional skills in computer technology, basic math and reading, and leisure time activities. Students must be 21 years of age or older and NOT enrolled in public school. Beginners and/or returning students are welcome. Pre-registration with Lee College Center for Workforce & Community Development is required before attending class.

Website: [www.lee.edu/workforce/ce/enrichment-rec-fitness/](http://www.lee.edu/workforce/ce/enrichment-rec-fitness/)

**Program #3 Name: Adult Community Education Services Transition Program**

Description: This program at Lee College was launched in August 2016. The program, in collaboration with Goose Creek Independent School District, is for students aged 18 and older who are either IDD or on the autism spectrum. The community serves as the classroom for this adult transition program. The program is designed to increase independence of adult students with disabilities and maximize their potential to become active members of their community. Through individualized and supported training, meaningful relationships, and community partnerships, student skill development focuses on employment/job training, postsecondary education, volunteering/service learning, travel training, social settings, recreation, leisure, and independent living.

Website: [www.lee.edu/workforce/ce/enrichment-rec-fitness/](http://www.lee.edu/workforce/ce/enrichment-rec-fitness/)

**Lone Star College System District**

Address: 5000 Research Forest Drive, The Woodlands, TX 77381-4399

Program #1 Name: **lifePATH™**

Description: Lone Star College-Tomball's lifePATH® program AND Lone Star College-Montgomery's lifePATH® program provide postsecondary opportunities for adult students to learn social and skill expectations needed in the business world, the academic world, and personal relationships. Students who have disabilities that affect executive functioning can earn various Lone Star College certificates in Occupational Studies, ACT® WorkKeys® Assessments, the ACT® National Career Readiness Certification, and can choose to earn college credit in general Lone Star College credit courses. They can also earn a level-1 credit certificate in Business Operations. Students can exit lifePATH after two years, receiving a Lone Star College Certificate in Foundational Occupational Studies. All students who choose a four-year lifePATH® option participate in a community-based internship during their fourth year. Students are selected as part of a cohort.

Website: [www.lonestar.edu/lifepath](http://www.lonestar.edu/lifepath)

**Navarro College**

Address: 3200 West 7th Avenue, Corsicana, TX 75110

Program Name: **Elevate**

Program Description: The Elevate Program serves students with cognitive and learning disabilities, ages 18-21 and who are enrolled in local K-12 schools. They spend half a day attending classes at Navarro College and half a day on a job site (all or part of a week). During their time on campus at Navarro College, they take courses that focus on improving

work-related reading and communication skills. They also learn basic computer skills and develop employment and job search skills. Students also are enrolled in a physical activity course. Upon completion of all courses, a Continuing Education Certificate of Completion for Marketable Skills is awarded.

Website: n/a

### **Tarrant County College District**

Address: 1500 Houston Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102

Program #1 Name: **A Step Above & A Step Beyond**

Description: This program at Tarrant County College is a transitional program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Website: <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/cee/preparatory-education/transitional-skills/a-step-above/>

Program #2 Name: **STEPS: Skills, Training & Enrichment for Promoting**

Description: This program at Tarrant County College has courses for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program's courses are designed to enhance academic, vocational, social, and self-sufficiency skills for meeting life's goals.

Website: <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/cee/preparatory-education/transitional-skills/steps/>

Program #3 Name: **Autism Spectrum Disorder Program**

Description: Tarrant County College has designed this program to assist students with autism to navigate college by focusing on self-sufficiency and study skills.

Website: <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/cee/preparatory-education/transitional-skills/autism-spectrum-disorder-program/>

Program #4 Name: **First Choice**

Description: The goal of this Tarrant County College program is to improve the quality of life for individuals with special needs. The First Choice Program on Southeast Campus empowers students with the tools they need to confront challenges as they transition from dependency to independent living. Tarrant County College also provides specialized training and education for students who want to enhance their livelihood without taking standard college courses.

Website: <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/cee/preparatory-education/transitional-skills/first-choice/>

Program #5 Name: **STAR (Students Trained and Ready)**

Description: This program at Tarrant County College is designed to polish the life and work skills of postsecondary students with mild to moderate disabilities by concentrated instruction in the actual skills they need to be successful in life. Most skills are taught or reinforced in community settings.

Website: <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/cee/preparatory-education/transitional-skills/star/>

### **The University of Texas at Austin**

Address: University Station, Austin, TX 78712

Program #1 Name: **UT Informal Classes**

Description: The UT Informal Classes program offers a subset of 16 continuing education courses on academic subjects and employment skills to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities alongside UT Austin student volunteers. Adults with IDD's can take general continuing education courses with the assistance of a UT Austin student buddy.

Website: <http://informal.utexas.edu/>

Program #2 Name: **E4Texas: Educate. Empower. Employ. Excel.**

Description: E4Texas is for people who are 18 years and older and have graduated from high school, or have a GED, and want to be a Personal Care Attendant. The E4Texas experience combines classroom instruction with practical career building experiences in addition to independent living skills and self-determination. E4Texas has four goals:

1. Empower Texans to become self-determined & independent.
2. Educate Texans to gain employment skills, as well as professional and independent living skills.
3. Employ Texans in the area of Personal Care Attendants and related fields.
4. Give Texans the tools they need to excel in life.

E4Texas is a tuition-based program. Students who are current customers with the Texas Workforce Commission may qualify for assistance with tuition.

Website: <https://disabilitystudies.utexas.edu/e4texas>

Program #3 Name: **Longhorn TIES**

Program Description: Longhorn TIES seeks to enhance the student experience for students who identify as being on the autism spectrum through advocacy, connections, and training, starting with the new student orientation process and continuing throughout the student's academic career. Influenced by the strategic goals set forth by the Division of Student Affairs, Longhorn TIES was started as New Student Services initiative in October 2019 and focuses on impacting the overall student experience. The strategic goals for this initiative address improving and impacting the student experience through advocacy, connections, and training.

Website: <https://orientation.utexas.edu/content/about-longhorn-ties>

### **Trinity Valley Community College**

Address: 100 Cardinal Drive, Athens, TX 75751

Program Name: **Cardinal Success Center**

Program Description: The Cardinal Success Center (CSC) is a component of Student Success Services that provides students with resources to maximize learning and overcome barriers in the pursuit of furthering their education at Trinity Valley Community College (TVCC). CSC offers a spacious Lab & Study Center, tutoring services, and also houses the Disability Services Office. CSC is located on the Athens Campus, but any currently enrolled academic student from any campus with a valid TVCC-issued ID card is welcome to use CSC services.

Website: [www.tvcc.edu/Cardinal-Success-Center/](http://www.tvcc.edu/Cardinal-Success-Center/)

## **Texas Tech University**

Address: Texas Tech University Burkhart Center for Autism Education & Research, Box 41071  
Lubbock, TX 79409

Program#1 Name: **CASE: Connections for Academic Success and Employment**

Program Description: The CASE program offers a college support program for students diagnosed with autism and other developmental disabilities pursuing an academic degree or certification at Texas Tech University or South Plains College in West Texas. With the support of the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research, the CASE program provides research-based, customized supports for students to facilitate their successful transition to college and the entrance into competitive employment after graduation.

Website: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/burkhartcenter/case/index.php>

Program #2 Name: **Burkhart Center Transition Academy**

Program Description: The Transition Academy works to fill the needs of young adults 18 to 30 years of age who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and aspire to be competitively employed. The Transition Academy is a non-residential program that emphasizes job and social skills that lead to productive, dignified employment as well as life skills that enrich the overall life experience.

Website: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/burkhartcenter/services/transition-academy.php>

## **University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL)**

Address: 2700 Bay Area Blvd, Box 245 Houston, TX 77058-1002

Program Name: **Connecting to College**

Program Description: The Connecting to College (CtC) program provides additional support for UHCL students with autism spectrum disorder and related needs to facilitate students' retention and success at the university. The program is part of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities and partners with the Student Success Center, Disability Services, Counseling Services, and Career Services to provide a team-based approach to supporting students enrolled in the Connecting to College program.

Connecting to College provides three different levels of support to students based on student need and program resources: Level 1 – General Student Support, Level 2 – Social and Behavioral Support, and Level 3 – Crisis Support. These services are provided at no cost to students or families. CtC also provides trainings and consultations for the wider UHCL community.

Website: <https://www.uhcl.edu/autism-center/connecting-to-college/>

## **University of North Texas (UNT)**

Address: 1155 Union Circle #311070, Denton, Texas 76201

Program Name: **UNT ENGAGE**

Program Description: UNT ENGAGE assists neurodivergent students enrolled at UNT with reaching their academic and vocational goals through person-centered planning and individualized services. Students participate in assessment and planning meetings to identify personal, academic, and vocational goals.

UNT ENGAGE staff support and guide students to reach those goals through weekly meetings, workshops, and referrals. UNT ENGAGE is dedicated to helping UNT's neurodivergent students adjust to university life and turn their degrees into careers.

Website: <https://neurodiversity.unt.edu/unt-engage>

## **Texas A&M University**

Address: 4225 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4225

Program #1 Name: **PATHS Certificate Program**

Description: The PATHS Certificate Program works in collaboration with the Institute on Person-Centered Practices and Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living. The institute is a partnership between the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M and the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

The PATHS Certificate Program provides a path to a successful career as a:

- direct support professional working with people with disabilities,
- para-professional working with schools, or
- child care professional working with children.

This two-semester certificate program prepares graduates for employment in a career serving people with disabilities or working with children.

Website: <https://paths.tamu.edu/>

Program #2 Name: **Aggie ACHIEVE**

Description: Aggie ACHIEVE (Academic Courses in Higher Inclusive Education and Vocational Experiences) is a certificate-based inclusive higher education opportunity for young adults with disabilities to expand their interests and prepare them for employment. While the students involved in Aggie ACHIEVE will not receive a degree from Texas A&M University, they will graduate with a certificate, acknowledging their successful completion.

Website: <https://education.tamu.edu/aggie-achieve/>





This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website:  
<http://highered.texas.gov>.

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