

**LET'S TALK LD 2020 Fall College Planning and Transition Conference
for Learners who Are Neurodiverse**

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

Vimeo Livestream | Saturday, September 26, 2020 - Sunday, September 27, 2020
Speaker's Virtual Reception | Friday, September 25, 2020 | 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

KD Harris, Executive Director
Kevin J. Tyrrell, 2020 Annual Conference Co-Chair, Logistics and Operations
Erin Harris-Tyrrell, 2020 Annual Conference Co-Chair, Marketing and Outreach
Aidan Harris-Tyrrell, 2020 Annual Conference Co-Chair, UX/UI Design
Janet Barakat, Operations
Kimberley Harris-Phillips, Data Analytics
Keri Borzello, Student Programming
KD Harris, General Programming
Sandra Hall and Stacey Shinnick, Professional Development Programming

I. Conference Theme: Neurodiversity, Intersectionality and Social Change

Those of us working to advance social justice for people who are neurodiverse often consider what 'inclusive' educational settings and workplaces should look like. Kimberlé Crenshaw's consequential *Intersectionality Theory* challenges us to appreciate the critically important intersections of identity markers that not only comprise the whole of how a person considers themselves, but also the identity markers that influence how society views that person. 2020 has proven to be a consequential year for examining how systematic racism and bias have undermined the advancement of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). Clearly, racism and discrimination are not experienced in a vacuum. Understanding, honoring, and celebrating the lived experiences of marginalized people is an important step in advancing social justice and equity.

In 2004, the Institute for Higher Education Policy concluded:

'The inclusion of students with disabilities in elementary and secondary education has not automatically transferred to their inclusion in higher education. However, the inclusion of these students in elementary and secondary education has created three strong forces to include these students in higher education as well.

- First, inclusion of students with disabilities in elementary and secondary education is a clear precedent that creates an obvious expectation that they will be included at the next level of education.
- Second, in 1990, IDEA was amended explicitly to require that students with disabilities be provided with transition services to lead them to life beyond secondary school including higher education, independent living, and employment.

- Third, the inclusion of students with disabilities in elementary and secondary education has resulted in growing numbers of these students who have the appropriate secondary school diplomas and academic preparation to qualify for higher education" [Retrieved from [Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Disabilities: a Primer for Policymakers](#)].

However, according to the National Center for Learning Disabilities "Transitioning to Life After High School" Report (2017),

- Less than half of students 17 or older (41%) with SLD reported playing "at least an equal part" in developing goals for their transition plan and/or IEP.
- 29% had not met with school staff to develop a transition plan.
- About half (55%) had IEPs that identified the need for postsecondary education accommodations.
- 45% of parents of students with all types of disabilities reported that most goal-setting decisions were made by school staff.
- 32% of parents of students with SLD said they wanted more involvement.
- One-fourth (26%) of students with SLD had transition plans that involved schools contacting two- or four-year colleges or vocational schools on their behalf.
- Of the 1 in 9 undergraduates (11.1%) who disclosed any kind of disability to their college in 2011-2012, only 1 in 20 (4.8%) reported having learning disabilities even though it is the largest disability category for K-12 students [Retrieved from [Transitioning to Life After High School](#)].

We must consider how to develop meaningful and impactful college planning and transition "best practices" for learners who are neurodiverse. Those practices MUST be thoughtfully considered through the lens of intersectionality. It is only then that we can re-make the system in a way that allows us to fully appreciate the complexities of our challenge and, in a serious way, finally address the systemic inequities that have undermined our efforts to advance social justice for ALL people who are neurodiverse. As mentioned earlier, understanding the lived experiences of marginalized people is an important step in advancing social justice and equity. The postsecondary college planning and transition journey is already fraught for most students who are neurodiverse. For the BIPOC student who is neurodiverse, the challenges are compounded.

Consider the following:

- The United Negro College Fund (2015) reports, African American students are less likely than white students to have access to college-ready courses. In fact, in 2011-12, only 57 percent of black students had access to a full range of math and science courses necessary for college readiness, compared with 81 percent of Asian American students and 71 percent of white students [Retrieved from [K-12 Disparity Facts and Statistics](#)].

- The United Negro College Fund (2015) also reports, Even when Black students do have access to honors or advanced placement courses, they are vastly underrepresented in these courses. Black and Latino students represent 38 percent of students in schools that offer AP courses, but only 29 percent of students enrolled in at least one AP course. Black and Latino students also have less access to gifted and talented education programs than white students [Retrieved from [K-12 Disparity Facts and Statistics](#)].
- Gershenson, Holt, and Papageorge (2015) write, Research has shown evidence of systematic bias in teacher expectations for African American students and non-black teachers were found to have lower expectations of black students than black teachers [Retrieved from [Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations](#)].
- ACT and the United Negro College Fund (2015) report, African American students are less likely to be college-ready. In fact, 61 percent of ACT-tested black students in the 2015 high school graduating class met none of the four ACT college readiness benchmarks, nearly twice the 31 percent rate for all students [Retrieved from [The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015: African American Students](#)].

This year's Let's Talk LD 2020 College Planning and Transition Conference for Neurodiverse Learner has been reimagined. This year we have challenged our speakers and attendees to consider with great seriousness the kind of consciousness-raising that must occur, both within and outside of the neurodiverse ecosystem, to create actionable means of addressing complex issues of the injustice faced by learners who are neurodiverse as they journey from college student access, through college student success, to career success.

With that said, we also appreciate that our nation is once again at a crossroads. Many say that we are at an 'inflection point', a point where those in positions of power must once again engage in critical self-reflection and accept responsibility for policies that have perpetuated systemic inequities. As stakeholders in the Special Education ecosystem, we too must engage in critical self-reflection and consider the role that we play in impeding the advancement of learners who are neurodiverse. If we are to consider fully the impact of these inequities, we must also consider how we might work collaboratively to identify and remedy educational and social injustices that undermine the college access, college success, and career success that neurodiverse BIPOC students and other adversely impacted students of color face.

II. About the Let's Talk LD 2020 College Planning and Transition Conference for Neurodiverse Learners | General Information and Policies

- **LET'S TALK LD 2020 Fall College Planning and Transition Conference for Learners who are Neurodiverse, Saturday, September 26, 2020 - Sunday, September 27, 2020, via Vimeo Livestream | Speakers' Virtual Reception to include the Beacon Award Ceremony | Friday, September 25, 2020 | 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.**
- The 2020 College Planning and Transition Conference is a two-day Conference with full days of programming occurring both days (Saturday, September 26 and Sunday, September 27). A Speakers' Reception (Virtual) will take place on Friday, September 25 between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., during which the Beacon Award Ceremony will be hosted. There are 20 General Sessions, we hope to offer 12 Professional Sessions (CEU unit eligible), and 4 Student Sessions planned for the Conference on Saturday, September 26. The Morning Keynote is 60-minutes in duration, the Afternoon Keynote 75-minutes in duration, and four Issue Sessions are 55-minutes in duration. On Sunday, all attendees will convene as an All-Conference body for an exciting day of special programming. The day will include four 55-minute Issue Sessions, a 60-minute Morning Keynote Address, and a 75-Minute Afternoon Keynote Address.
- Our College Planning and Transition Conference for Neurodiverse Learners is one of only a few full-day college conferences in the nation that is designed and produced specifically for learners who are neurodiverse (and the family members, allies, and transition professionals who support them) who have an interest in postsecondary educational pursuits. During our Conference, topics, and discussions include but are not limited to:
 - the college search and college admissions application planning;
 - college application and admissions advice;
 - Evaluating available academic support and college success; services in relation to need;
 - assessing a good college fit;
 - assistive technology and learning strategies to improve academic success;
 - accessing accommodations in college;
 - accessing public, private, and community services to support college transition;
 - college transition best practices at both the K-12 and the Post-Secondary Education (PSE) level;
 - addressing issues relating to a student's psychosocial readiness for the college transition;
 - discovering what can be learned from current college students who are neurodiverse and their families.
- This year's Let's Talk LD 2020 College Planning and Transition Conference for Neurodiverse Learner has been reimagined. This year we have also challenged our speakers and attendees to consider with great seriousness the kind of consciousness-raising that must occur, both within and outside of the neurodiverse ecosystem, to create actionable means of addressing complex issues of the injustice faced by learners who are neurodiverse as they journey from college student access, through college student success, to career success. As stakeholders

in the college transition and/or Special Education ecosystem, we too must engage in critical self-reflection and consider the role that we play in impeding the advancement of learners who are neurodiverse. If we are to consider fully the impact of these inequities, we must also consider how we might work collaboratively to identify and remedy educational and social injustices that undermine the college access, college success, and career success that neurodiverse BIPOC students and other adversely impacted students of color face.

- For general questions regarding the Conference, contact our Conference Planning Team at LTLDCollegeConference2020@Let'sTalkLD.org or 626.644.0740.

III. Submission Procedures and Policies

Please review the following policies and procedures very carefully. Failure to follow these policies will result in session submissions being removed from consideration.

- **Submissions are open to special education advocates (all types), admission, transition, and independent education consulting professionals, and educational, clinical, and therapeutic professionals.** All submitters need to manage their Submission through our Sessionize™ Portal.
- **Submissions are accepted online** through our portal located at [https:// sessionize.com / lets-talk-ld-2020-college-planning-and-7285/](https://sessionize.com/lets-talk-ld-2020-college-planning-and-7285/)
- The **Submission system will open** at 12:00 a.m. on July 1, 2020.
- **Submissions will be accepted** between July 1, 2020, and July 31, 2020.
- **Submissions must arrive by the deadline** on July 31, 2020, at 11:59 p.m.
- Let's Talk LD accepts **fully planned sessions consisting of one of the following formats:** demonstration; symposium; working group roundtable; panel discussion; or workshop.
- **All accepted presenters, chairs, and discussants are expected to register for and attend the conference and be present at the scheduled sessions for which you are registered.** The initial schedule should be released by August 9, 2020.; presenters must register by September 4, 2020, to be retained as a Conference speaker.
- Those submitting sessions acknowledge that **Let's Talk LD may record, photograph, or otherwise broadcast sessions, activities, or events related to the Conference.**

IV. Session Requirements

- **A session submission is a fully planned session consisting of one of the following formats:** lecture; demonstration/performance; symposium; working group roundtable; panel discussion; or workshop.
 - A lecture is an oral presentation intended to convey information or educate an audience about a particular subject or topic.
 - A demonstration/performance includes using, showing, or illustrating a particular technique, tool, or method to convey the value of an approach, technique, methodology, research, or finding.
 - A symposium creates an opportunity for a small-group interaction or interactive discussion among presenter(s) and discussants occur. This could include a town hall

meeting or any other format designed to offer key points and stimulate vigorous conversation. Symposium presenters are expected to prepare a paper or commentary paper. There must be a minimum of four and no more than six participants. The symposium must be facilitated by a Chair and must include audience participation.

- A working group roundtable is designed to bring individual researchers or practitioners together for discussions where there is a potential for new substantive gains and/or cooperation. The participants in the Symposium must be from different academic institutions or across different professional fields but working on a common set of issues, problems, or themes.
- A workshop provides the presenter with an opportunity to share information or to discuss a problem, project, or shared interest. Presentations should allow sufficient time for discussion and interaction with the audience.
- The Session Title should not exceed 20 words.
- A Session Abstract should be provided and should not exceed 150 words.
- A Session Summary should be provided that does not exceed 500 words. Please include the session objectives, an overview of the presentation, why you believe your session is of significance, and insights about the structure of the session.

Should you have any issues or questions regarding the submission process, please email us at 2020callforpresenters@letstalkld.org.

Thank you. We look forward to reviewing your submission.

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