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Table of Contents

FEATURES

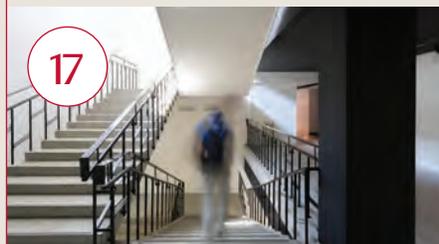
- 7** What IECs Need to Know Today about Student Mental Health
By Christopher Thurber
- 11** The Impact of Student Participation in High School Research Programs on College and Career
By Julie Raynor Gross
- 17** Navigating Leave of Absence and Withdraw Policies in College: Why We Need to Know
By Joanna Lilley and Adrienne N. Frumberg
- 21** Winter Break Tips for First-Year Students and Their Families
By Mya Andersen and Chuck Erickson
- 25** Four Easy Steps That Can Change a Young Person's Life
By Kristi Stoll
- 29** What Does a Therapeutic Independent Educational Consultant Do?
By Jesse Quam

PERSPECTIVES

- 4** President's Letter
- 36** IECA Foundation

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

- 33** Affinity Groups
- 37** Regional Groups
- 38** Introductions/In the News



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President's Letter

Deciding to Commit to Success

During a recent virtual event I noticed a sign on the wall behind a fellow attendee:

Decide.
Commit.
Succeed.

Those three words stuck in my head when the meeting ended. It almost felt serendipitous that 1) I'd even noticed this amongst the dozens of Brady Bunch-like squares on the screen and 2) that the message delivered so succinctly by that sign was exactly what I needed to see that day. It just so happened that that morning I had the crazy idea I should run a half marathon in late fall (come on, I know you all have crazy ideas like this, too!). However, I hadn't yet made a decision because I wasn't sure I could **commit** to the training involved and, to be honest, I didn't have the confidence that I would follow through with it.

It seemed like this literal sign was telling me that all I had to do to successfully

complete a half marathon would be to make the decision to do it and follow through on that **commitment**. Because the definition of success really depends on personal goals, I realized that just crossing the finish line after those 13.1 miles would be good enough for me, regardless of how long it might take. But, again, I really struggled with whether or not I could **commit** to the amount of training miles required to even be able to finish.

When I think of this "plan" in the context of our work as independent educational consultants, I'm reminded of the many IECA Summer Training Institute attendees I've met over the years who have told me that they applied to participate in STI because they decided they were ready to **commit** to joining this profession. For some this has meant changing careers completely, while others have transitioned from the other side of the desk at a school, college, or program. For most the decision of whether or not to make the move to IEC work was the easy part. **Committing** to



Kristina Dooley

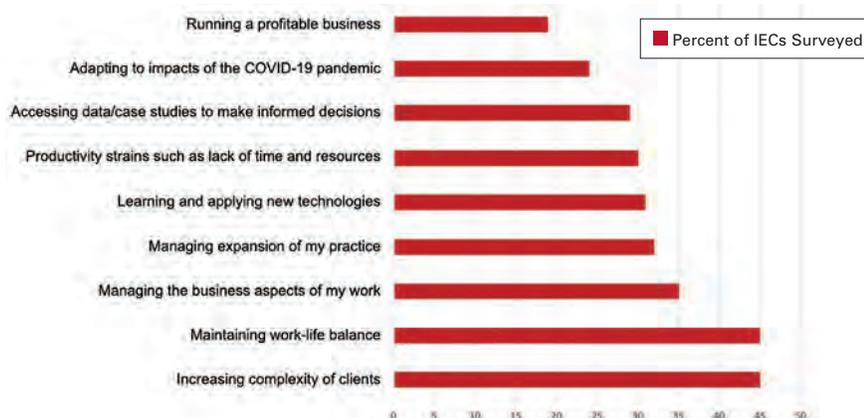
the training and professional development needed to get them up to speed in this realm is the hard part. Those who leave STI focused on a **commitment** to this work are the ones who find success on their new journey.

So often I hear from new IECA members that they are pleasantly surprised by how collaborative and giving our members are of their time and expertise to support others in becoming exceptional IECs. To me this **commitment** to bettering our profession should be something we all strive to do. In fact, I believe that if we were all to **commit** to helping just one new IECA member grow as an educational consultant, it would raise all of us as a united profession of experts. Here are just a few great examples of members who have been recognized for their leadership and **commitment** to serving others this year:

continued on page 8

In Focus

Snapshot from IECA's 2021 Strategic Plan Survey: Top Challenges IECs are Facing



Watch for additional survey results and more from the Strategic Planning Committee in the coming months.

Calendar

For the most up-to-date calendar of events and more details, visit the home page of the IECA Member Network: network.iecaonline.com

NOVEMBER

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 08 IECA 2021 Virtual Fall Conference (November 8–12) | 15 SE K-12 Schools Regional Group Meeting | 16 WI Regional Group Meeting | 17 European Regional Group Meeting |
| 18 Black IECs Affinity Group Meeting | 19 Associate & Students Members Virtual Roundtable
Professional Members Virtual Roundtable | 24 Global Gathering Open Forum | 25 IECA office closed (November 25–26) |

DECEMBER

- | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 08 Gateway to Graduate School Consulting | 09 Black IECs Affinity Group Meeting | 10 Business Roundtable | 14 WI Regional Group Meeting |
| 15 European Regional Group Meeting | 17 Associate & Students Members Virtual Roundtable
Professional Members Virtual Roundtable | 24 IECA office closed | 29 Global Gathering Open Forum |
| 31 IECA office closed | | | |

JANUARY

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 12 Gateway to Graduate School Consulting | 13 Black IECs Affinity Group Meeting | 15 Professional Members Virtual Roundtable | 19 European Regional Group Meeting |
| 20 IECA Virtual Professional Member Retreat (January 20-21) | 26 Global Gathering Open Forum
LD/ND Virtual Roundtable | | |

IECA 2021 Virtual Fall Conference November 8-12

This year's virtual Fall Conference features a record 88 educational breakouts and discussions as well as six pre-conference workshops that you can join live or recorded. All sessions will be available to registered participants until December 30, 2021. For more information, visit: link.iecaonline.com/conference-info

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What IECs Need to Know Today about Student Mental Health

By Christopher Thurber, PhD, Associate Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, Phillips Exeter Academy and Founder of Prep4School.com

Admiring a photograph of an expert climber flashing a frosty smile and waving a tiny flag on the summit of Mount Everest is radically different from actual Himalayan mountaineering. Similarly, admiring a school or college website, replete with carefully curated student profiles and teacher bios, impressive admissions statistics, majestic buildings, and lush lawns is radically different from the daily grind of studying.

Of course, marketing an experience and living that experience are never the same. Parents know that. Independent educational consultants (IECs) know that. But who is informing the kids? If students' increasingly severe social and emotional adjustment problems¹ are any sign, the answer is: no one.

Vibrant but Suffering

Many schools and colleges offer outstanding educational experiences. The facilities, faculty, staff,

and coaches provide wonderful instruction; the wholesome values and leadership opportunities promote sterling character; and, where it exists, the diversity of the student body challenges students' assumptions in healthy ways.

The vibrancy of these communities has kept me working in them for nearly three decades, but students' declining mental health suggests that vibrancy alone does not make students successful.

Many factors have contributed to modern students' mental health problems, such as family history; stress associated with racial or sexual minority status; poverty and limited access to mental health care; neighborhood violence; and unhealthy parental pressure. Unfortunately, IECs cannot change the past. But they can change the future.

continued on page 9



You can learn more about Christopher Thurber and contact him through his website: DrChrisThurber.com

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [2019] Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. Available at: www.cdc.gov/YRBSS (Note: Data from the 2020 YRBSS are not yet available, but the 10-year trend between 2009 and 2019 showed a steady increase in emotional distress among secondary school students.)

President's Letter, from page 4

- IECA members **Herbie Walker** (NV) and **Stacey Cunitz** (PA) have both been elected by their regional Associations for College Admission Counseling to the role of president-elect. We are thrilled that we will have IECA members leading WACAC and PACAC and demonstrating the **commitment** that IECs have to supporting students and colleagues in the higher education space!
- **Karen Mabie** (IL) was honored this year by Embark Behavioral Health with their Distinguished Service Award. Karen's **commitment** to helping both the families she supports and new therapeutic consultants is unmatched. She is truly a gem in our profession!
- During the annual conference of the National Association for College Admission Counseling this fall, IECA member **Yvonne Espinoza** (TX) was recognized for her **commitment** and dedication to serving historically underrepresented students on their postsecondary journeys with the NACAC Inclusion, Access, and Success Award. Yvonne's work in this space has truly contributed to the success of so many young people.

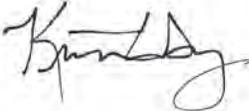
These few examples remind me of one of my favorite quotes from Howard Schultz, former CEO of Starbucks:

*When you're surrounded by people who share a passionate **commitment** around a common purpose, anything is possible.*

I truly believe that our collective decision to commit to supporting students, families, and one another means we are destined for success as both individuals and as an Association. Being surrounded by others who share that same "passionate commitment" to the good work that we do as educational consultants makes me proud to serve in my current role.

I truly believe that our collective decision to **commit** to supporting students, families, and one another means we are destined for success as both individuals and as an Association. Being surrounded by others who share that same "passionate **commitment**" to the good work that we do as educational consultants makes me proud to serve in my current role.

And that half marathon I signed up for? I'm on my way to checking off that last word.



Kristina Dooley, MA, CEP
IECA President



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Balancing the Message

The yawning gap between students' pre-matriculation fantasies and their post-matriculation reality creates predictable shockwaves in students' social and emotional adjustment. For example, schools' marketing materials never mention the massive homework load, the intense atmosphere of social conformity, the penetrating pressure to excel, or the self-discipline demands that students confront when they make the transition from their old school to one with competitive admissions.

We cannot expect all schools to balance their marketing messages with some sobering description of the hurdles students will face when they matriculate. However, a few forward-thinking schools do address mental health as soon as students accept their offer of admission. At some schools, for example, Counseling and Psychological Services and the school's Health Education teachers correspond with new families to help welcome and orient them. At other schools, the student leaders (proctors, prefects, student listeners, and team captains) receive training in conflict resolution, peer support, and how and when to make a referral to a professional provider.

These and other efforts to promote positive adjustment help prevent some serious mental health problems, but two roadblocks remain: (1) Not all schools are so forward-thinking; and (2) No schools offer objective information on their true demands. Fortunately, world-class IECs can remove both roadblocks and pave the way to student success.

Fortunately, world-class IECs can remove both roadblocks and pave the way to student success.

Win-Win Strategies

More than ever, IECs' success is measured by not only *placement* rates, but by *retention* rates and other indicators of students' well-being after they matriculate. Simply put, if they do well, you do well. Especially in these post-pandemic times, families are asking, "How do your students do socially and emotionally after they enroll?" If you want to provide an encouraging answer to this question, you will need to close the gap between a school's *advertised* experience and a client's *actual* experience.

Here are four win-win consulting strategies that boost student success:

1. **Match.** From the start of your relationship with a client family, emphasize goodness-of-fit as one of your guiding principles. When you are able to match a school's strengths with a student's strengths—in spirit, mind, and body—you are stacking the odds in everyone's favor. Of course, many parents and students will want to want to apply to some schools based solely on reputation. That is fine, as long as you also share your professional assessment about each school's goodness-of-fit for the student in question.
2. **Equip.** Just as successful mountaineers equip themselves with the right gear for a challenging new climb, your client families



need the right coping strategies to successfully navigate the transition to a rigorous school. There are healthy and unhealthy ways to cope with separation anxiety, academic pressure, packed schedules, and a complex social environment. Remember: Families who are equipped with adaptive skills and attitudes enjoy smooth transitions and fruitful school years.

3. **Practice.** Early in your relationship with a client family, caregivers and kids will tell you what they imagine they want. That, of course, is important data because it will help you begin finding schools that match those preferences. Equally important, at this early stage, is your recommending that caregivers and kids practice what it will take to be successful once they matriculate. For example, all students should take ownership over their schedules and homework, endeavoring to manage their time, sleep, homework, and family responsibilities *without any reminders from parents*. (This turns out to be as hard for parents as it is for students. Certainly, it is eye opening for both parties.) Forming healthy habits now, long before the transition to a new school, will help students get much more out of their first year.
4. **Support.** As an adult peer, you are in a uniquely influential position to coach parents on the healthiest ways to support their child. So, talk with them about how to listen, encourage, and assist with love. Remind them that their child's maturation will be gradual, uneven, and full of trial and error. Connect them with other families whose children have done well artistically, athletically, or academically and invite them to ask questions and share ideas. Follow up with parents after the first week or two of school to find out not only how their child is doing socially and emotionally, but how *they* are holding up as parents. Empathize with their hopes and fears and offer trusted resources and gentle advice. After all, happy parents are the best ambassadors for your services.

Taken together and customized to suit your professional style, these four strategies are powerful ways to bridge the gap that would otherwise exacerbate social and emotional problems for students—the gap between students' pre-matriculation fantasies and their post-matriculation reality. Schools are doing more to help these days—in terms of both prevention and intervention—but marketing concerns will always limit their effectiveness. Fortunately, this limitation is your opportunity, and the outcomes benefit everyone. 



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The Impact of Student Participation in High School Research Programs on College and Career

By Julie Raynor Gross, EdM, MBA, CEP (NY)

Since 1988, Gail Richmond has spent summers welcoming rising high school seniors to Michigan State University, where they devote seven weeks to conducting research while living on a college campus for the very first time. “It’s the kind of experience you have when you go to college, hopefully,” Richmond says of the Michigan State University High School Honors Science/Engineering/Mathematics Program, or HSHSP, the oldest, continuously running program of its kind. “I see it as a bit of a microcosm for college.”

Over the course of the summer, two dozen HSHSP students who have made it through a rigorous selection process engage in original research in science, engineering, or mathematics under the guidance of university mentors. They keep a weekly journal that Richmond reviews, write research proposals and a paper summarizing their work, and, in the last week of the program, give a conference-style talk. “We have sessions about, how do you read a scientific paper? How do you write a scientific argument? Why is an argument that you make in

an engineering paper different from one that you might make in a biology paper?” Richmond says. “Those are skills that they will build upon if they go into the STEM areas. But I also think they’re skills that are just broadly helpful as they become college students.” Beyond facilitating academic work and adding an impressive line to college applicants’ resumes, HSHSP gives soon-to-be college students a chance to practice living away from home, and leaves plenty of room for bonding; often, the most fruitful conversations happen after 5 p.m. or on the weekends. “There are other aspects of the program that are just as important as the research experience,” Richmond says.

What is High School Research?

HSHSP is one component of the broad network of high school research programs. Typically, students’ involvement starts in their own high schools, where they enroll in research programs that last anywhere from one to all four years. Some high

continued on page 13



Julie Raynor Gross, Collegiate Gateway LLC, can be reached at julie@collegiategateway.com

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schools have one overall program, combining students in science, math, engineering, and social science research, while others have separate programs; some high schools select only a percentage of student applicants, while others allow students to self-select in; some have a list of mentors with whom the students can work, while in others, students find their own research mentors, which can include attending university programs like HSHSP. Regardless of the projects students pursue, their research activities culminate in a concrete presentation of results and conclusions, which can range from oral presentations at science fairs to a 20-page scientific paper written according to a scientific protocol and submitted to national competitions like the prestigious Regeneron Science Talent Search, which students can compete in during their senior year. What unites research programs is their commitment to training students in the fundamentals of research, writing, presentation, and participation in an academic community.

At Ossining High School in New York, for example, students apply to the Science Research Program in their freshman year in order to participate sophomore through senior years. Angelo Piccirillo, who founded the program in 1998, and Valerie Holmes, who has been co-teaching it since 2004, accept about 35 students out of the 100 that usually apply each year. "We look for kids that are passionate about learning," Piccirillo says. Curiosity and a desire for a different experience than they've had before are more important than an aptitude for science in particular, he explains. Holmes adds: "We're looking for kids who want to be challenged beyond typical science curriculum."

Since 2001, Ossining's Science Research Program has had 83 students place as semifinalists, and six as finalists, in the national Science Talent Search competition, which select 300 semifinalists each year out of about 2000 entrants. "These things bring you notoriety, but it's just one dimension of the program," Piccirillo says. "We don't ignore the human factor. We don't ignore the fact that kids need emotional support." He and Holmes work hard to foster collaboration between students: each class has a mix of sophomores, juniors, and seniors, which "allows the students in the program to form friendships and bonds across grade levels," Holmes says, and to "see one or two years into the future so it's not so scary." As students pinpoint the nature of the research they want to do, seek mentors they've identified as experts through literature, work on independent projects, and present their findings, they turn to not only their teachers but also their classmates for advice and modeling. "The kids always describe it as a family," Holmes says. "They feel like no matter what happens, they have their team there to support them." This emotional support is vital as students try to meet the high standards the program sets for them ("We don't accept mediocrity, so the kids learn right away that just getting by is not good enough," Piccirillo says), and as they move through the frustrations that independent research inevitably engenders. Unlike in a science lab, out in the field, following instructions doesn't yield a "correct" answer, and unexpected hurdles often present themselves. "Science requires resilience," Holmes says. "Part of my effort in the classroom is to normalize the struggles that come with science and to make them realize that that's just part of the natural process."

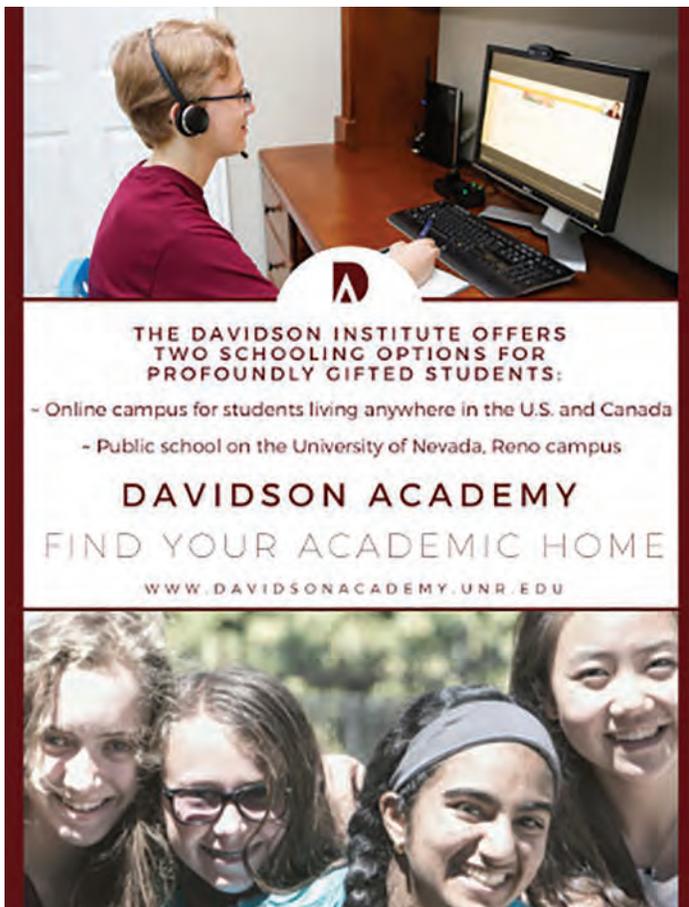
Unlike in a science lab, out in the field, following instructions doesn't yield a "correct" answer, and unexpected hurdles often present themselves.

Stephanie Greenwald, who directs the Dr. Robert Pavlica Authentic Science Research Program at Byram Hills High School, also in New York, places a high premium on emotional skill-building and community as well. Unlike Ossining's research program, her program is self-selective—anyone who wants to can join—but that "doesn't mean that anyone who wants to can make it through," she says. There is an intense application process, including submitting and revising essays multiple times, as well as giving a PowerPoint presentation in front of other students. "That kind of weeds kids out," Greenwald says; often, the program loses 10 to 20 percent of students per year. Those who remain, though, are interested in meeting the challenges of both doing and presenting research. Greenwald does everything she can to help them build the skills they need to get there, including fostering a strong sense of community between students. "I worked at summer camps for over 25 years," she says. "There's a lot of silly rituals that take place in my class that feel like camp." Her program, like Piccirillo and Holmes', has classes of mixed grades, "and our seniors set the tone," she says. They give daily announcements, role play phone calls with mentors, and even do some of the teaching. "The teachers are more coaches, and the students are learning from each other," Greenwald says.

Succeeding in the program, Greenwald says, requires passion for the topic being studied (though this *doesn't* mean feeling

continued on page 14

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passionate about it every day); the capacity to grasp knowledge, which takes time and patience to develop; and organizational and time management skills, which the program teaches them. “We really feel strongly that students can study anything they want,” Greenwald says. Students have recently studied infant laughter, sustainable fashion, and relationships that people have with television characters: “If you can measure it,” Greenwald says, “you can study it.”

Beyond what students gain from working with teachers and with each other, they often get a lot out of their relationships with research mentors at labs and universities, and through summer programs like HSHSP. Mentors volunteer to guide students through their work or incorporate students into their own original research projects, not for any compensation but out of generosity. “We really need to recognize the spirit of the researchers that are willing to help the kids in models like ours,” Piccirillo says. “I also would appeal for those that are considering it to really step forth, because we have so many kids that are willing to take the risk.”

Students’ Experiences in Research and Beyond

One of the biggest takeaways for the participants in research programs is often the necessity and capacity for persisting through challenges. Nicole Camilliere, who graduated from Ossining High School this past year, spent her time in the Science Research Program studying how salt pollution affects water and wildlife. Her project involved taking samples once or twice per month by

hand, plus relying on a secondary sensor. Unlike the hand samples, the sensor measured temperature in addition to conductivity, and provided minute-by-minute data. Camilliere faced a major challenge when, during a routine cleanup, the sensor was removed at one point, wiping out all the data. For that period of time, Camilliere had no choice but to rely on the hand samples alone. But, thanks to Piccirillo and Holmes’ teaching, she’d been alerted to the fact that challenges would arrive, and she was not discouraged: “When you stumble across a problem, you’re going to have to find a way to keep going.” Camilliere’s findings, which suggested that the overapplication of road salt surpassed drinking water standards and that the salt applied in winter stays put in summer, infiltrating streams year-round, won her a semifinalist title in the Regeneron Science Talent Search. Beyond this prize, she credits her experience in the program with helping her build presentation and communication skills; fostering perseverance; and instilling the value of working in community and as a team, something she imagines will help her in any job she has going forward. “Programs like this give you experiences you’re not going to get anywhere else,” she says. Holmes, who runs the program’s alumni group, can attest to that: “When you talk to the kids now, 10, 15, 20 years later, they’re still keeping track of how well we’re doing,” she says, which “means to me that we’re making a difference in the community.”

Nicole Meyers, who was a member of the Science Research Program at Schreiber High School, from which she graduated in 2010, did bench research at Columbia University that earned her a semifinalist award from the Intel Science Talent Search. “It was organic chemistry, which I had obviously never even been exposed

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to,” she says. Her first day, her research major gave her a huge stack of organic chemistry textbooks. Under her mentor, Meyers worked in a lab trying to optimize the conditions around the creation of the porphyrin molecule, which has many applications in biology and medicine but is “particularly challenging to create at high yield.”

One of the biggest takeaways for the participants in research programs is often the necessity and capacity for persisting through challenges.

Through this project and her participation in the program throughout high school, Meyers learned basic research methodology, which served her both in college at Cornell University and in medical school at NYU. (Meyers is now a pediatric resident at New York Presbyterian / Columbia Medical Center, so: she’s come full circle.) She also built presentation skills she’s relied on since, especially in the final year of the research program, during which she presented her work to both classmates and parents. “I was figuring out how to present it so that the layman could connect with this project in some way, and I feel like that’s a skill that has served me so well,” she says. Beyond these academic skills, she connected deeply with her small research program cohort. Among the 10 of them, “there was definitely a lot of camaraderie and a lot of teamwork,” Meyers says. “One of my best friends is still from the science research program.”

Many research program students, like Meyers, go on to study and work in STEM fields in college and beyond. As a high schooler in Melbourne, Florida, David Troner conducted research on the aerodynamic benefits of wing tip devices on airplanes, an extension of his personal passion for aviation and flying planes. He went on to pursue a dual major in aerospace and mechanical engineering at the University of Florida at Gainesville, where he also started a club to build a small airplane. At UF, Troner’s research explored flexible wing designs for small UAVs (Unmanned Air Vehicles). “I was always interested in the aerodynamic side. It seemed like black magic, how planes fly. And wings were the poster child of aerodynamics.”

After college, Troner continued to explore the inner workings of planes at Northrup Grumman, where he designed “fly by wire” software that links the pilot’s input with how the plane’s surfaces move. He then undertook a master’s in aerospace engineering at Stanford and made a significant pivot from his interest in aerodynamics to the design side, “the early stage of thinking about ideas, the classic sketching of ideas on the napkin. What if we tried this? What if we tried that?” Troner is now a conceptual design engineer in Hyundai’s relatively new division of Urban Air Mobility, designing air taxis.

Just like Meyers, Troner keeps learning and adding new skills in his chosen field. His next step is to attend Stanford’s Graduate School of Business so that he can learn how to build the infrastructure to support urban air mobility vehicles. “There’s a whole ecosystem on the business side that I want to transition to: figuring out the back-end of how to actually make this a service and bring it to a city near you.” Troner feels that his early research in high school “set the foundation for exploring different configurations and trying novel ideas.”

But other research program students build professional lives far afield of STEM work, as lawyers, novelists, teachers, and more. No matter what, their research experiences are likely to benefit them: “Learning how to read and write and think and talk in coherent and compelling ways are skills that everybody should master,” HSHSP’s Richmond says.

“We want their projects to be great, we want their projects to be meaningful, and even, perhaps, add to the knowledge base,” Piccirillo says. “But at end of day, what is it that we really want? We want to teach the kids how to be functional adults. So, what does that mean? I’m able to meet my challenges. I know I’m going to be stepping on some potholes. I need to get up. I need to keep moving.”

When I work with high students on research, I explain the potential benefits of participating in such programs at the personal, collegiate, and career levels. Once they’ve committed to pursuing research, we work together—through dialogue as well as personality and interest assessments—to identify where their interests lie. Do they gravitate toward science, math, engineering, or social science? For their senior year summer research project, would they prefer to participate in a university program, find a mentor locally, or design their own project? We then look for appropriate research opportunities that match their interests and their preferences. Finally, I guide students through incorporating their research experiences into their college applications through their essays, resumes, activity sheets, and interviews, and—most importantly—help them imagine how they can build on these experiences in their college years and beyond. 

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Navigating Leave of Absence and Withdraw Policies in College: Why We Need to Know

By Joanna Lilley, MA, NCC, IECA (MI) and Adrienne N. Frumberg, MA, IECA (CT)

Mason was thrilled to start an elite engineering program within a large university during the fall of 2020. His college made the decision to have students reside on campus and attend some courses online and some in person. Six weeks into the semester, Mason's mental health issues began to take a toll and interfere with his ability to complete his schoolwork. With his family, Mason made the difficult decision to withdraw from his five courses and return home.

During the past year and a half, greater numbers of undergraduate students have chosen to take a leave of absence from college. Students are more readily considering a leave, whether it is due to mental health reasons as a reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of virtual or hybrid learning models, or taking an interest in waiting until school returns to in-person learning. For some, this process can be anxiety-provoking and daunting. Being accurately informed in the leave of absence process or the retroactive withdrawal option is of critical importance.

What is a leave of absence, and why do students consider taking one?

A leave of absence is a prescribed amount of time when a student is no longer enrolled in classes at a college or university they are enrolled in as a matriculated student. While on a leave of absence a student maintains the intent to reenroll at their

college or university. The length of time for a leave of absence can vary from weeks, months, or even in some cases, years. Depending on the university, this break could be titled as Planned Leave, Planned Educational Leave, Planned Academic Leave, Personal Leave, Medical Leave, and Leave of Absence, just to name a few. For the sake of this article, we were referring to all leaves as "leave of absence."

Students can request a leave of absence for a variety of reasons. Reasons include, but are not limited to:

- Mental health issues and their treatment (anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, substance abuse)
- Medical diagnoses or illnesses (acute or chronic)
- Emergencies (family or otherwise)
- Accommodations not being met for a health condition

All of the above reasons for a leave of absence can be seen in a proactive light. The student acknowledged they needed a break and opted to leave before or during a semester. They are also alerting their university that they are taking time off to get the appropriate help needed and intend to return. Referencing student "Mason" from the beginning of this article, his example could have fallen within this category. It also could have been a university withdrawal.



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continued on page 19

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What is a university withdrawal, and why would a student do this?

Some students don't know about "leave" options and merely withdraw from their college or university. A university withdrawal is when a student withdraws from the entire semester's worth of classes, after the semester has begun. It negatively impacts a student's Student Academic Performance (SAP) which impacts their Financial Aid eligibility. With a university withdrawal, there is no indication to the college or university that the student will return the following semester, unless they are already registered.

What is a retroactive withdrawal, and how can a student obtain one if needed?

A retroactive withdrawal is the petitioned request for an undergraduate student to be removed from a prior semester, or in some cases, multiple semesters due to documented circumstances that inhibited the student from performing in their academic courses. A reason to pursue this would be if the student didn't complete a university withdrawal or take a leave of absence and was not able to academically succeed due to extenuating circumstances. Institutions of higher education do not advertise or market this appeal process for students. Additionally, some schools limit the number of semesters one can apply for or stipulate that if it's not completed one semester after the extenuating circumstances that they aren't eligible to apply. For anyone working with college students, it's imperative to direct families and students to these policies.

How to request a retroactive withdrawal:

1. Make contact with the student's academic advisor and share the concerns prompting the petition for retroactive withdrawal.
2. Find out what documentation or forms must be completed and who they should be submitted to within the university. Many colleges require a written statement about the circumstances leading you to submit the retroactive withdrawal request.
3. Request letters of support as supplemental documents for this application. A letter of support can be written by a mental health professional or medical professional. Supporting documentation could include a death certificate of a family member, hospital discharge, or treatment discharge paperwork. Whatever the extenuating circumstances, find documents that can support the personal statement submitted.
4. Review this statement with the academic advisor and ask for feedback. If the student is not close with their academic advisor, I would direct them towards a professional who works in and understands student affairs and can provide guidance. The most valuable advice for this is to be objective about the situation, and for the student to take accountability for their actions.

continued on page 20

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- 5. Submit the statement to the appropriate person or review board on campus. Sometimes this person may be called a director of student advocacy or affairs. Then wait to hear back from the committee on the results of your application. This can take up to four weeks and, if approved, may take another three weeks before the change is reflected on the transcript.

Tips IECs should provide to their families and clients who are considering a leave of absence, university withdrawal, or retroactive withdrawal:

- Research the specific college’s leave of absence, university withdrawal, and retroactive withdrawal policies. Each policy is different. Encourage the student to speak with their academic advisor, if possible, about the best course of action for their situation.
- Create a paper trail. Colleges require dated documentation from healthcare providers when requesting a medical leave of absence or retroactive withdrawal. It’s better to have this and not need it, than need it and not have it.
- Meet the prescribed deadlines set forth by the colleges and universities. You may have to dig for this, but once you find it, make sure the student and family understands what happens if they miss a deadline.
- Connect with the Office of Disability Services or Accessibility as needed to seek clarification on accommodations for a student’s return to campus. It would also be beneficial for a student to connect with the Case Management office to ensure that their return to campus includes being supported by professionals in other offices.
- Inquire about how a specific leave (leave of absence, university withdrawal, or retroactive withdrawal) will impact Student Academic Progress (SAP) and subsequently impact Financial Aid eligibility. Every decision made on campus has potential consequences. Be aware of how one type of withdrawal will impact a student’s status moving forward.
- Help a student and family understand that taking a leave of absence is okay! College will be there when the student is ready to return. It’s important to normalize how this may show up on their transcript (depending on the college or university), but it won’t impact their GPA (unless we’re talking about retroactive withdrawal). If a student isn’t balanced in all areas of well-being, it’s hard to be a healthy student.
- Try to connect the parent of this student with other parents who have “been there, done that.” It’s easy for parents of college students to truly feel isolated and alone in supporting their child. If the parent also has a support network, the student’s time away from school can potentially be less shaming. 

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Winter Break Tips for First-Year Students and Their Families

By Mya Andersen, College Achievement Coach at College Connectors, and Chuck Erickson, MEd (WI), College Achievement Coach at College Connectors

First-year students have settled in, and the fall semester will be over before students realize it. They are looking forward to celebrating the holidays, seeing friends, and avoiding homework. Parents are excited to welcome their students home and hear every detail about how the first semester has gone.

Holiday breaks can lead to expectations, and expectations can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication; this is why an IEC checking in with first-year students and their families in early November is a good idea. As an IEC, you have worked hard with these students, and their families, to find a great college fit. You have helped these students and their families navigate the college search, brainstorm essays, and complete applications, and congratulated the students when they were accepted. Before holiday breaks is the perfect time to follow up and ask how the students are doing, answer any questions, and offer encouragement to both the students and their families.

Here are some holiday break insights that IECs can share with both families and students to help them best prepare for the first long visit home.

- **Change.** Both the family at home and the student at college have changed, but it's easy not to mention it in phone calls or texts. Maybe the student's room has been converted into an office, or there's a new pet or even a new house. Remind families to let their student know this before they come home for the holidays and invite their student to share how they feel about it. Have a plan for the student to have a place to "land" and find the comforts of home they may have missed. Parents should be ready for a student with different clothes (probably dirty laundry), new life habits, and unique opinions.
- **Curiosity.** Families want to know *all* the things about their student, and the student may not be ready to share all the things. This is especially common over Thanksgiving break because it's usually right before finals, and families want to ensure that students are prepared and confident about their first round of college final exams. Be respectful of the student's boundaries and understand that these boundaries may have been part of a coping mechanism they used while living in a community space. Ask open-ended questions and give your student time to think and respond.

continued on page 23



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Chuck Erickson can be reached at chuck@collegeconnectors.com

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- **Reunions.** The student may want to spend all of their time with their friends from home; it doesn't mean they haven't missed their family. It's easy for misunderstandings to happen when everyone wants equal time, and equal time may not represent the same thing for everyone. Encourage students and families to talk about this *before* the break. Will the student have a curfew while home? What other house rules will stay the same or change?
- **Relationships, old and new.** If the student and their high school significant other have continued their relationship after going to different colleges, they will want to catch up on lost time. This is normal. The pattern of high school relationships is often a joyous reunion at Thanksgiving and then a breakup during the winter holidays (sometimes called "the Turkey Drop"). It is the evolution of high school relationships when two students are not attending the same college. Share with your families that this may happen and the student will need their support and care, even if they indicate otherwise. The student may have a new significant other that they are over the moon about and want to spend some of their winter break with that person. Remember that young adults live in the here and now. Remind families to be open to this request and communicate clearly, even if it wasn't their plan for winter break.

The student may be struggling academically and has not talked to their family about their struggles. They may be aloof when questioned about how school is going because they don't know how to share that they are worried or unsure. For families, this can be off-putting and frustrating. Don't assume the worst.

- **Academics.** The student may be struggling academically and has not talked to their family about their struggles. They may be aloof when questioned about how school is going because they don't know how to share that they are worried or unsure. For families, this can be off-putting and frustrating. Don't assume the worst. Ask if there is anything they learned after their first round of college finals. If the student is taking finals after being at home, send along a care package of goodies for them to power through to the end.
- **Positive support.** Encourage families to offer positive reinforcement and encouragement. The student may have decided on a different major, changed roommates, or colored their hair. This is a time when young college students are trying to find their identity and purpose in life. Remind parents to reassure their student that they love and care about them.
- **Asking for help.** Use this time together to evaluate whether additional help is needed, whether it's college-based resources, tutors, therapists, or a college achievement coach. A college achievement coach helps the student navigate their first year of college and offers insights to families on what they can do. 

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Four Easy Steps That Can Change a Young Person's Life

By Kristi Stoll, Founder, KidVisionaries.com

What is your dream? Do you still have one? Are you living it? Have you thought about it recently?

At a young age, kids are commonly asked questions about what they want to do when they grow up. And because they are young, most often times, they are encouraged and celebrated for those dreams no matter how imaginative they are.

What happens as kids get older? Are they still encouraged to dream “the impossible” and to follow their passions?

According to experts, toddlers hear the word “no” 400 times a day. If this is true, imagine how many times a child has heard “no” by the time you are working with them.

Unfortunately, if kids are not supported at an early age to be themselves and to follow their passions, they can end up feeling shut down, invisible, with no self-esteem and zero confidence to go after what they really want in life. Many kids/teens end up feeling unseen and unheard for who they really are. They have been criticized or told what to do and what not to do so many times, is it any wonder that they

get confused about what they want to do with their future? Or that anxiety, lack of confidence, and low self-esteem is at an all-time high amongst teens?

It is crucial for young people to have someone who is going to hear and see them for who they are and to encourage them to live a life they dream of. We all need that. Without it, we end up living a life that doesn't even feel like our own.

Because kid/teens are coming to you to help them plan their future, you have the unique opportunity to be that person—that voice that helps them find their true life path. You have the opportunity to change their lives in ways you can't imagine.

About 15 years ago, I traveled around the country with a friend interviewing kids and teens who had followed a dream and accomplished something magnificent: creating a successful business or peer group, becoming an inspirational speaker, selling out their first art gallery show, and more! The one common thread we found with each child was the support and encouragement they had to follow that dream.

continued on page 26



Kristi Stoll can be reached at kristi@kidvisionaries.com

Unfortunately, as we know, not every child has unlimited support and encouragement. By the time a young person is coming to you confused about what to do with their future, it could be because they have received mixed messages about what they are “supposed” to do with their life, instead of being encouraged to do what they want to do with their life.

Money might also be the issue for kids’ inability to follow a dream. Some parents simply can’t afford it and kids don’t have a lot of financial options on their own. Because of this, I created a safe online fundraising platform for ages 18 and under. It’s called The Virtual Lemonade Stand (*TheVirtualLemonadeStand.com*). It’s a place where young people can create fundraisers to have any dream supported and funded. My dream is to support any child who needs financial assistance to pursue their calling.

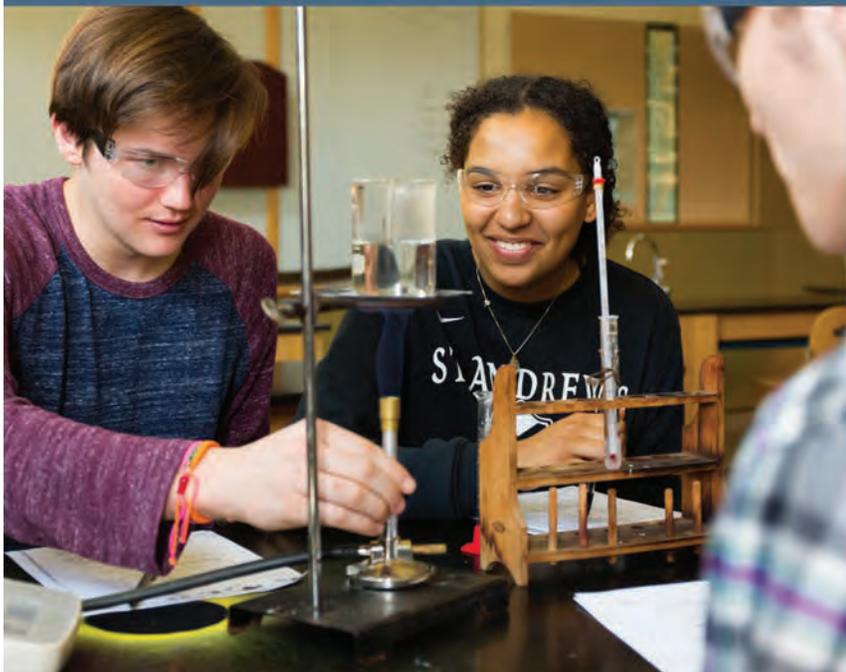
Middle and high school is the crucial time to encourage young people to discover their inner passions if they haven’t yet done so. Once they get through college and settle into a career, it becomes harder to change paths—especially if they don’t know what they would like to be doing instead and don’t have the inner strength and courage to switch directions.

Below are four steps to help guide and teach kids how to find their passion and realize their dreams. Along with your assessment tests, these are easy exercises you could use with your students to provide them with a safe place to uncover their dreams.

- 1) **Rediscover what passion and inspiration feels like.** Close your eyes and imagine seeing yourself doing something you REALLY love doing. It can be anything—laughing with friends, playing your favorite sport, doing something creative. Notice how you feel when you are envisioning this. Are you happy, excited, proud, energized, or all these feelings at once? It feels great, doesn’t it? This is also what inspiration and passion feel like!
- 2) **Find your dreams.** If there were no limits, what would you like to accomplish with your life? What is your dream? What would make you happy? What are you good at? How would you like to make a difference in the world? Create a list. Your life dreams can be anything; just let the ideas flow. Examples: Have you ever dreamed of being a singer or an artist? Working with animals, elderly people, or kids? Inventing something or starting a business? Cleaning up the environment or collecting toys or food for people? Exploring different cultures, learning different languages, or studying math, science, engineering, or different ancient histories? These are general ideas. Your dreams will be unique, more detailed and tailored for you, so don’t limit your ideas to these suggestions. And don’t be concerned about being right or wrong or if the dream is big or small. If it is a dream of yours, list it.
- 3) **Combine passion with dreams.** Look over your list of dreams. Using that feeling of inspiration, go down your list and focus on each dream for a minute or two. As you are focusing, imagine yourself in that dream. Really feel yourself in each dream. Are you getting that happy, excited feeling? (If not,

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that's okay.) Make a note next to the dreams that give you an inspired feeling.

Moving forward, you want to focus on the top dream(s) that give you the feeling of inspiration. That feeling is your guide. Your inspiration keeps you connected to the passion, excitement, and motivation you need to keep following a dream. If you don't feel inspired by a particular dream, it's probably not worth pursuing—at least for now. If you are ever in doubt about whether you are making the right decision, always check for this feeling. It is in your gut and it is your compass. That's why people call it a "gut feeling." It will always steer you in the right direction.

- 4) **Come up with a plan.** Now that you have more information about what your client's dreams are, you can combine those with their assessments and help them outline a life career and journey based not on what might look good on paper, but what your client can be excited about to accomplish in their life!

We all have inner gifts. Everyone. Those inner gifts are special attributes that are unique to only us. And they drive our passion, our life dreams, and our purpose.

I am incredibly passionate about encouraging young people to use their innate gifts and to follow their dreams. When any one person has the courage to live their passion, we all win. That person shares their journey, passion, and experiences with the world and it inspires countless other people to do the same. Imagine a world where we are all living our passion. Wouldn't we all live happier, healthier lives? And isn't this what we want for our young people? Isn't this what we want for ourselves?

Let's create a movement and change what we teach young people to value: themselves, their natural gifts, their own happiness, and a fulfilling life. In our movement, let's encourage the retirement of phrases like, "You aren't old enough," "You need to be realistic" or "Get a real job." Instead, let's ask them how they want to change the world or what their big life dream is, and then support them to get there. If they are serious about a path, let's help them understand the work and dedication their dream will take and assist them with steps for how to make it happen. No dream is ever too big when you have belief in yourself and the passion to make it happen.

You have an opportunity to inspire young people about their futures. To be that one person in a kid's life where they look back and think, "That person changed my life by listening to me, believing in me, and encouraging me to do what makes me most happy."

And then, make sure you are also doing that for yourself.

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What Does a Therapeutic Independent Educational Consultant Do?

By Jesse Quam, LCSW, ACSW (NC)

This title may seem like a silly question to ask in a journal for independent educational consultants (IECs). However, as we face impactful legislation and negative press, let's take a moment to look at the core elements of what therapeutic IECs offer for families.

We support. We gather relevant information into a coherent narrative. We aggregate the testing reporting, therapist notes, and each of the family members' viewpoints on the presenting client. This process can be time consuming and takes a very skilled listening ear. We show empathy and concern but also, when appropriate, try to move the family to decision points on treatment when not pursuing treatment could have dire consequences.

Some family systems can be supported with in-home services while others will need out-of-home treatment. Therapeutic IECs use our experience to help families make this decision.

We listen. We listen to the different family members and professionals involved in each case. We listen to the story behind the story. We ask ourselves what strengths and what vulnerabilities are in the family system. To get the full story from a family system you must have rapport with that family. It does not come easily at times, and we focus our attention on the words and the meaning behind the words. Mental health issues, substance abuse issues, and different parenting techniques can combine in a very complex system. The talented IEC listens in order to get the complete story.

We prioritize. When families are in crisis with a struggling child, the myriad of presenting issues can be overwhelming. As IECs, we can be dispassionate enough to help families what to focus on first, both in terms of care for the child and in figuring out how to heal the family system. While we honor the family's agency and choice,

continued on page 30



Jesse Quam, John Huie & Associates, can be reached at jesse@johnhuie.com

we help the family prioritize not only their strengths, but also their challenges. They may not recognize the full range of their abilities and shortcomings while in their time of crisis. As the IEC, in our place of stability, we can prioritize concerns among drug use, disordered eating, trauma, anxiety, and depression. Helping the family find a program that can properly treat the underlying mental health issues a big part of the job.

We offer options. IECs visit many, many programs each year, and also visit current clients at different programs. This helps us to get a good feel for how the programs work for specific people. We also collaborate with other consultants, sharing our collective knowledge to help each other. We keep our ears to the ground to know unique feature of each program. We work hard to suggest several programs that would suit each unique family.

We guide. Once the client starts in a treatment program, the job is far from done. Therapeutic IECs help the family navigate the treatment options for a full year or beyond. We talk to the program staff about our clients and we are on family phone calls with the program if the family desires. We monitor our client's progress

and help the family navigate the next steps, whether it is longer programming or developing healthy family contracts. We strongly encourage the family system to get the help they need—through family or individual therapy, webinars, or books—and pursue their own parallel process of growth.

We set healthy boundaries. We role model by creating and maintaining healthy emotional boundaries. At our best, we show the family the path to being balanced. While we may not share

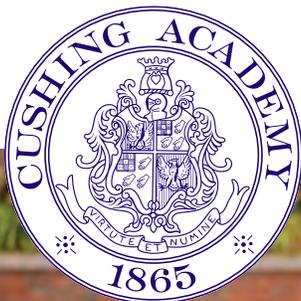
every detail of our personal life, we can share parts of our own journey with them. These insights, combined with other treatment success stories, can help families foster hope in the face of overwhelm. While we maintain confidentiality, the resiliency and strength

of our former clients often sustains us through the most difficult dark times when a client is in the ER or a psychiatric hospital for substance abuse, self-harm, or mental health issues.

While this is not an exhaustive list for what the therapeutic consultant does, here is a case study to help paint the picture:

We receive a call from a family with a child in college who is in the hospital for suicidal ideation and drug-induced psychosis.

We keep our ears to the ground to know unique feature of each program. We work hard to suggest several programs that would suit each unique family.



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Hopefully this article gives readers a better idea of how a therapeutic IEC can serve a family through some of their toughest times. We work with attorneys that are well versed in educational law, school administrators, and therapists. There's also an opportunity to work alongside a college IEC as the client prepares for those academic pursuits. I hope that in the future we can highlight more of these crossover options. Therapeutic IECs serve clients all around the country and we'd be happy to connect you to one in your area. [A](#)

If you have ideas or questions around this topic, please reach out to me at jesse@johnjuie.com or my Therapeutic Committee co-chair, Ruby Laufer, at ruby@comcast.net.

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Connect with Your Peers in an IECA Affinity Group

IECA Affinity Groups are run by IECA members with similar interests in a specific topic. These member-led groups provide an opportunity to connect with a smaller group of your IEC colleagues to share knowledge, ideas, and goals.

To join an existing group and see the steps required to form a new one, visit: link.iecaonline.com/affinity

You can also join in their discussions on the Member Network: network.iecaonline.com/communities/affinitygroups

New Affinity Groups include:

Educational Heterodoxy

This group provides a forum for civil discourse and open discussions about issues in education that reflect the diverse perspectives of IECs and the diverse group of students they serve. Contacts: Jason Robinovitz (jason@scoreatthetop.com) and Sheree Gravely (Sheree@GravelyGroupCA.com)

Gap Year Information & Resources

This group is for IECs working with students considering or taking a gap year and provides a forum to ask questions and share information about gap year opportunities, as well as to



share best practices, research, and other relevant resources. Contacts: Julia Rogers (enrouteconsulting@gmail.com) and Sandy Storer (sandy@agapaway.com)

Supporting Students Crossing Borders

This group is for IECA members who support students studying outside of their home country to discuss issues, collaborate, and connect by sharing inquiries, resources, experiences, and best practices. The group also serves as a space to seek referrals when a case exceeds your present level of expertise and experience. Contacts: Julia Gooding (julia@oneskyeducation.org) and Teo Salgado (teo.salgado@vervesmith.com)



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- Connect with IECA members in specific geographic regions by providing a presentation to one (or many) of our **Regional Groups**: www.iecaonline.com/ieca-regional-groups
- Attend our **Virtual Fall Conference**, participate in the Exhibit Hall, School Exchange, or College Fair, and become an event sponsor: link.iecaonline.com/upcoming-conference
- **Submit a proposal to present at an upcoming IECA conference or training workshop** on a topic related to admissions or student success: link.iecaonline.com/present
- **Invite IECA members to participate in announced in-person or virtual campus tours** and take part in consortia multi-day, multi-campus events [Contact: membership@IECAonline.com]
- **Advertise** in IECA's quarterly *Insights* journal or weekly 5 Minute News email for members: link.iecaonline.com/advertising
- Let IECA **help you find** a highly qualified, fully vetted professional educational consultant to work part-time in your organization's college counseling office: link.iecaonline.com/find-an-iec

For more information on how to connect with IECA members throughout the year, contact Jean Lockwood, manager of affiliate relations: Jean@IECAonline.com



IECA Associate members Alexandra Ince (CT) and Rebekah Jordan (CT) and Student member Kate Rutledge (IL), photographed here with Justina Trova and Margo Cardner of Buxton School and others, enjoyed a Tour of the Berkshires (Buxton School, Darrow School, Miss Hall's School, and Bard Academy/Bard College at Simon's Rock) in fall 2021.



Program Highlight: Trinity Academy of Hartford

"In September 2020, the IECA Foundation provided Trinity Academy with a \$5,000 grant to help fund our **Healthy Food Initiative Program**, which was started because of our belief in the need to develop the "whole" child. This program provides breakfast, lunch, and healthy snacks to all 40 of our students as well as our teachers daily—without any federal or state funding. Given our student demographic, 100 percent from under-resourced homes and from minority as well as refugee backgrounds, this program is a vital part of our school's mission. We have a full commercial kitchen with a part-time cook, which allows us to provide nutritious choices such as fruits and vegetables and whole grain breads. Without proper nutrition,



a student is not easily able to grow well academically, physically, and emotionally. Our students, given the proper resources, will hopefully go on to be successful students, finish college, and pursue financially rewarding and stable careers in the long term. This will allow them to become self-sufficient and self-sustaining members of society. During the current COVID-19 crisis, funding from this program has allowed us to continue to feed our students by providing grocery store gift cards to our students' families on a regular basis."



—Donna Colliton, Executive Director

Announcing our 2021 Grant Winners!

Congratulations to the following organizations who received a grant from the IECA Foundation in 2021:

- Mid-Columbia Reading Foundation
- Trinity Academy of Hartford
- Serviam Girls Academy
- The Leaders Readers Network
- Take Stock in Children
- The Bay Area Technology School
- Apparo Academy
- Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization
- FXB Climate Advocates
- Abramson Scholarship Foundation
- CITYarts
- Father's Purpose
- Home Works!
- Horizons at Sacred Heart University
- Kids On Point
- LivingWorks
- Missoula Writing Collaborative
- Rosat Leadership Academy
- Sisters Circle
- UpSpring

Regional Groups

Connect with your colleagues living in your geographic area! IECA's member-led Regional Groups offer collegiality, communication, and personal interaction among local professionals. We currently have over 40 Regional Groups and new members are always welcome!

To join an existing group, visit the Member Network: network.iecaonline.com/communities/regionalgroups

Don't see a Regional Group in your area? Start one today! Contact IECA Manager of Member Outreach and Engagement Trish Fratarcangelo: Trish@IECAonline.com

Broward/Palm Beach, Florida

This Regional Group had a Zoom get-together on September 28 to reconvene after the summer and share information and inspiration from the recent NACAC Conference. Contact: Susan Groden (sgrodenccs@gmail.com)

Connecticut

The CT Regional Group met virtually with Karen Kristof, assistant VP and dean of admission at Colorado College, on October 13. Contact: Stephanie Klein Wassink (skw@winningapplications.com)

Indiana

On September 15, the IN Regional Group met with the VP of enrollment management for Sweet Briar College. Typically, the group meets the second Tuesday of each month. Contact: Amy McVeigh (smartcollegeselection@gmail.com)

Massachusetts/New Hampshire/Maine

This group restarted its "Lunch and Learn" program with an October 10 session on understanding the differences between liberal arts colleges and career-focused colleges, featuring the New England admissions rep for Champlain College, Cody Campbell. The November 3 session will focus on theater, film, and dramatic writing programs with a presentation by Chris Andersson of Nothing But Drama. Contact Marie Lucca (marie@crimsoned.com) and Adela Penagos (apenagos@futuroenlightened.com)

New Jersey (Statewide)

The NJ Regional Group kicked off its fall season with the September 14 meeting, "One Great Idea to Prepare for the Application Season," and a September 30 session about Case Western Reserve University. Contact: Hilde Steiner (hildie@highfivecollegeprep.com) and Shari Powell (creatingcollegeoptions@gmail.com)

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Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members



Tracy Coffin (TX) has been an IEC for six years and was an Associate member. She specializes in helping neurodiverse students nationwide navigate the college admissions process.

Coffin graduated cum laude with a BA in journalism from Colorado Western State University and holds a College Admissions Counseling Certificate from UCLA Extension. An attendee of the 2016 IECA Summer Training Institute, Coffin is a member of LDA, IDA, CHADD, NACAC, and TACA. She has served as an SXSWEU Advisory Board member since 2018.

Tracy Coffin
504U
Austin, TX 78759
512-771-9534
tracy@504U.org
504U.org
Specialty: C+LD



Elizabeth (Liz) Cooper has been an IECA member since 2019, when she joined as an Associate member. She currently chairs the IECA LD/ND Committee and co-chairs MILD, a group of MA-based IECs focused on students with learning differences.

Cooper earned a JD from Boston University and a BA from Brandeis University as well as an IEC Certificate from UC Irvine Extension. She attended the 2019 IECA Summer Training Institute and is a former practicing bankruptcy attorney.

Elizabeth (Liz) Cooper, JD
College Consulting Collaborative
Lexington, MA 02421
781-249-3826
liz@collegeld.com
collegeld.com
Specialty: C+LD



Louise Franklin (WA) has been an IEC for six years and was an Associate member.

Franklin attended the 2015 IECA Summer Training Institute and has served on the IECA College Committee as chair of the Tours Subcommittee. She volunteers with the nonprofit organizations ScholarMatch and The Space Idaho.

Franklin is a member of the PNACAC and Seattle Area College Consultants (SACC). She holds a JD from Stanford University, a BA in human biology, and a Certificate in College Counseling from UCLA Extension.

Louise Franklin, JD
Confluence College Counseling
Seattle, WA 98109
206-849-3012
confluencecollegecounseling@gmail.com
confluencecollegecounseling.com
Specialty: C



Jenny Suyeon Han (Korea) has been an IEC for 11 years. Formerly she worked as the GVCS career/apptitude counselor at Yongin Foreign Language High School;

career planner at Incheon Metropolitan Office of Education; and career/apptitude consultant of ACT International Special Program at Hanyang University.

Han studied education as an undergraduate student and received a master's degree in counseling psychology.

Jenny Suyeon Han
Primestone Consulting
Seoul, Gangnam-gu 06026
South Korea
(+82) 10-6865-8318
jhan.primestone@gmail.com
primestone.co.kr
Specialty: C



Nancy Ikenberry (CO) has been an IEC for three years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked for ExxonMobil in Houston, TX and the global education

provider Campus Brasil.

Ikenberry earned an MBA and a BS in finance from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a Certificate in College Counseling, with distinction, from UCLA Extension. She attended the 2018 IECA Summer Training Institute and is a member of NACAC, RMACAC, and College Consultants of Colorado.

Nancy Ikenberry, MBA
Brightline Admissions
Boulder, CO 80301
720-328-8486
nancy@brightlineadmissions.com
brightlineadmissions.com
Specialty: C



Laura Ferdinandi Mahoney (CA) has been an IEC for 22 years and was an Associate member. During her career, she has worked as a speech and language pathologist, a

resource specialist, a credentialed teacher, and as a college professor.

Mahoney holds master's degrees in communicative disorders and special education as well as credentials in K-8, RSP, and Mild Moderate. She is a member of NASET, ACCA, ASCA, NACAC, and AASEP, and is president of the philanthropic Candlelight Guild.

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559-436-1233
laurafmahoneyslp@gmail.com
blueprint4college.com
Specialty: C+LD



David (Dave) Morris (WA), the founder of College Athletic Advisor, has been an IEC for two years and was an Associate member. He brings over two decades of experience coaching in NCAA Division I, II, and III as well as the NAIA and the NJCAA.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, with a master's degree from Frostburg (MD) State University, he has coached, taught, and served as an academic advisor and admissions recruiter for public colleges, private universities, and in nationally recognized high school and club programs.

*David Morris, MEd
College Athletic Advisor
Tumwater, WA 98512
719-248-7994
dave@collegeathleticadvisor.com
collegeathleticadvisor.com
Specialty: C*



Holly Ramsey (TX) has been an IEC for four years and was an Associate member. As a home educator for more than 20 years, she has led numerous local support groups and worked as an online writing teacher and mentor coach at Brave Writer.

An inaugural recipient of IECA's Making a Difference Award, Ramsey is the current chair of the IECA Homeschool Affinity Group. She served on the 2021 IECA Summer Training Institute faculty and is a member of TACAC.

*Holly Ramsey, MA
Thoughtful Homeschooling
San Antonio, TX 78258
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thoughtfulhomeschooling@gmail.com
thoughtfulhomeschooling.com
Specialty: C*



Lelaine Paik (IL) has been an IEC for seven years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked as senior recruiter for an information technology staffing company and as assistant and acting director of admission and financial aid at the Northwestern Prtizker School of Law.

Paik earned her JD and BA from Northwestern University and her Certificate in College Counseling from UCLA Extension. She is a member of NACAC and volunteers her college counseling and resume writing services to US military men and women, and veterans.

*Lelaine Paik, JD
LP Educational Consulting LLC
Winnetka, IL 60093
847-894-8475
lp@lelaine paik.com
lelaine paik.com
Specialty: C*



Katharine (Kate) Sonnenberg (NJ) has been an IEC for three years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked as an application reader at Princeton University; a law professor at the David A. Clarke School of Law; and an English instructor at the National University of Singapore.

Sonnenberg earned a JD from Columbia University and an AB from Princeton University. She attended the 2020 IECA Summer Training Institute, is a member of NACAC and NCAG, and chairs the Princeton Alumni Schools Committee of northern NJ.

*Katharine (Kate) Sonnenberg, JD
KS College Success
Montclair, NJ 07042
973-509-2356
kate@kscollegesuccess.com
kscollegesuccess.com
Specialty: C*



Carson Parker (IN) has been an IEC for two years and was an Associate member. She began her career as a case manager working with individuals and families affected by mental health and addiction issues. She moved on to become a clinical liaison with Aspen Education Group and then Midwest regional manager at American Addiction Centers before opening her IEC practice in 2019.

Parker is a member of the National Charity League and sits on the board of the Primary Care Psychiatry Foundation.

*Carson Parker
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Westfield, IN 46074
317-289-1784
carsonparkerconsult@gmail.com
carsonparkerconsulting.com
Specialty: T+LD*



Nancy Jou-Hua Wu (MA) has been an IEC for six years and was an Associate member. After working as an educational consultant at a larger institution for five years, she

decided to work independently in order to focus on a smaller number of families. She enjoys having more time to spend with her students to help them identify their best-fit schools, and to help them find and achieve their goals.

Wu holds an MBA in finance as well as a Certificate in College Counseling from UCLA Extension.

*Nancy Wu, MBA
Medford, MA 02155
626-756-0589
nancy.wu1023@outlook.com
Specialty: C, S*

In the News



◀ **Laurie Kopp Weingarten** (NJ) was featured on the fall 2021 issue cover of *Next Step U*, which included her article, “Dos and Don’t of Hiring Independent Counselors.” She was also quoted in “Should You Pay to Help Your Child Get Into an Elite College?” on Yahoo on August 10; “How to Get Into a Magnet School” in *US News & World Report* on September 21; “21 Places Worth Seeing on College Tours” in *US News & World Report* on July 8;

“Returning to School: Advice for Helping Teens Adjust to In-Person Learning” in *Your Teen* magazine; and “10 Ways to Calm Your Pre-College Nerves” on Her Campus.

Jeff Levy (CA) was quoted in “Will That College Degree Pay Off?” published in the *New York Times* on August 13 and subsequently in the *Seattle Times* on August 22. He was also quoted in “These college majors have the best return on investment, according to a new report,” on CNBC.com on August 19.

Kristina Dooley (OH) was quoted in “College Tuition Insurance Gains Attention in Pandemic” in the *New York Times* on August 6.

Jane Klemmer (NY) was quoted in “Should You Buy College Tuition Insurance?” in *Consumer Reports* on August 30.

Ethan Sawyer (CA) and **Stephanie Klein Wassink** (CT) were quoted in “How to Write a College Essay” in *US News & World Report* on August 3.

Anjanita Mahadoo (CA) was quoted in “How International Students Can Benefit From a Small-Town College” in *US News & World Report* on September 22.

Joan Koven (PA) was quoted in “The Delta Variant is Driving Up Demand for College Tuition Insurance” in *Money* on August 20.

Diana Blitz (DC), **Carolyn Pippen** (Associate, TN), and **Judi Robinovitz** (FL) were quoted in “Where Will Students Apply?” in *Inside Higher Ed* on August 9.

IECA was mentioned in “Getting Your Child Into the Right School: Should You Hire a College Admissions Counselor?” on Medscape on September 1.

Nagla Orlando (CA) was quoted in “Canceled college entrance exams create issues for students, families” on KSBY San Luis Obispo News online on July 26.

Rebekah Elmore (MA) was interviewed on the Podcast Business News Network on August 23. 🎧

Initiatives

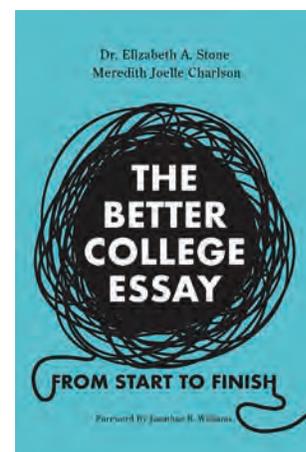
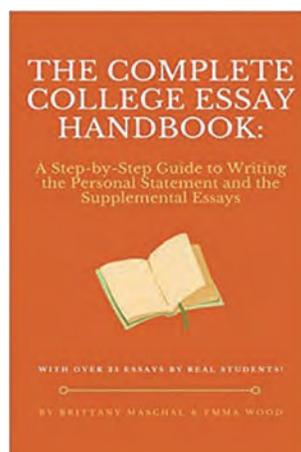
Yvonne Espinoza (TX) has been honored with NACAC’s 2021 Inclusion, Access, and Success Award. The award, which was established in 1984, honors individuals who have been instrumental in making postsecondary education opportunities available to historically underrepresented students.

For the third year in a row, **Terry Mady-Grove’s** (NY) practice, Charted University Consultants, LLC, was awarded the Best Women Owned Business on Long Island by *Long Island Business News*.

The College Parent Survival Network—an initiative led by **Joanna Lilley** (MI) and **Adrienne Frumberg** (CT)—is an online survival network for parents of college-bound, current, and former college students. This is a private community of parents seeking advice under the guise of discretion and looking for answers to better help their young adults navigate college-related and transition hurdles.

The Complete College Essay Handbook, written by **Brittany Maschal** (Associate, NY) and Emma Wood, was published in July 2021.

The Better College Essay: From Start to Finish (City Limits Publishing), written by **Elizabeth Stone** (CA) and Meredith Joelle Charlson, with a foreword by Jonathan B. Williams, was published in May 2021. ▼



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IECA's Career Center

Did you know there are more than **7,700 job listings** representing over **1,300 employers** on IECA's Career Center right now? Whether you are looking for a new opportunity for yourself or to find talent for your company, make the Career Center work for you.

An IECA member is selling their practice and would prefer to sell it to an IECA colleague. If you're interested in this opportunity, visit the Career Center and search "IEC" for more information: link.iecaonline.com/careers



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Company	Page	Website
Iolani School	41	iolani.org/admission/boarding
Annie Wright Schools	31	aw.org
Bard College at Simon's Rock	31	simons-rock.edu
Besant Hill School	43	besanthill.org
Boulder Creek Academy	Insert	bouldercreekacademy.org
Brandon Hall School	15	brandonhall.org
Christchurch School	2	christchurchschool.org
Compass Rose	41	compassroseacademy.org
CooperRiis Healing Community	20	cooperris.org
Cushing Academy	30	cushing.org
Darrow School	33	darrowschool.org
Davidson Academy	13	davidsonacademy.unr.edu
ERC and Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Centers	18	pathlightbh.com
Fay School	19	fayschool.org
Greenbrier Academy for Girls	27	greenbrieracademy.com
Idyllwild Arts Academy	10	idyllwildarts.org
Iona College	16	iona.edu
JRI Meadowridge Schools	12	jri.org/services/educational-and-residential
Kents Hill School	24	kentshill.org
Lake Tahoe Preparatory School	44	laketahoeprep.org
Lynn University	28	lynn.edu/visit
Marvelwood School, The	34	marvelwood.org
Meadows Behavioral Healthcare	22	meadowsbh.com
Oak Hill Academy	23	oak-hill.net
Rectory School, The	37	rectoryschool.org/learning-services
St. Andrew's School	26	standrews-ri.org
University of Nebraska High School	8	highschool.nebraska.edu/ieca
University of Toronto, International Programs	14	internationalprograms.utoronto.ca/online-learning
Verto Education	6	vertoeducation.org
Wasatch Academy	32	wasatchacademy.org



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