# School Counselor and Transition Specialist Partnerships to Support Youth

NTACT: C WEBINAR SERIES

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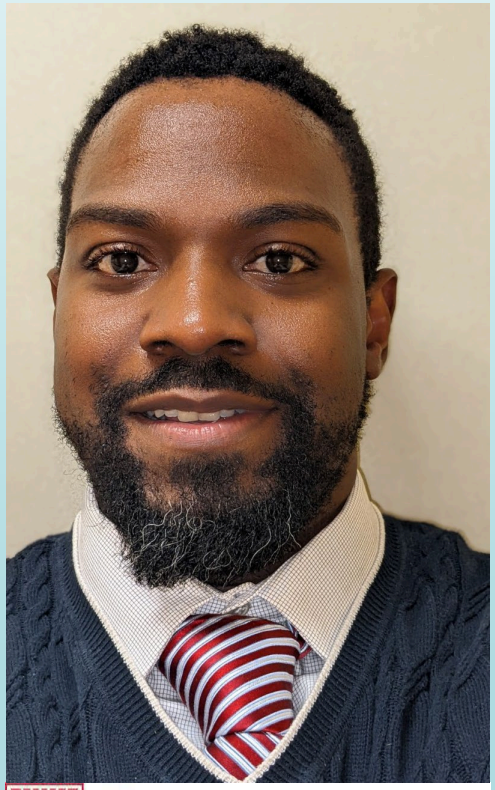
# Who are we?

## DR. CLEWISTON CHALLENGER, PHD



RUTGERS
Graduate School of Education

**Professional Experience**

- Associate Professor or Professional Practice at Rutgers University
- School Counseling Program
- Former school counselor (7+ years)
- Urban school counselor

**Research Interests**

- School adjustment
- Self-Efficacy
- Sense of belonging and inclusion
- Academic buoyancy
- Academic motivation
- Boys of color
- Student—athletes
- Mental health, Diversity and Equity

## DR. ALLISON LOMBARDI, PHD

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**Professional Experience**

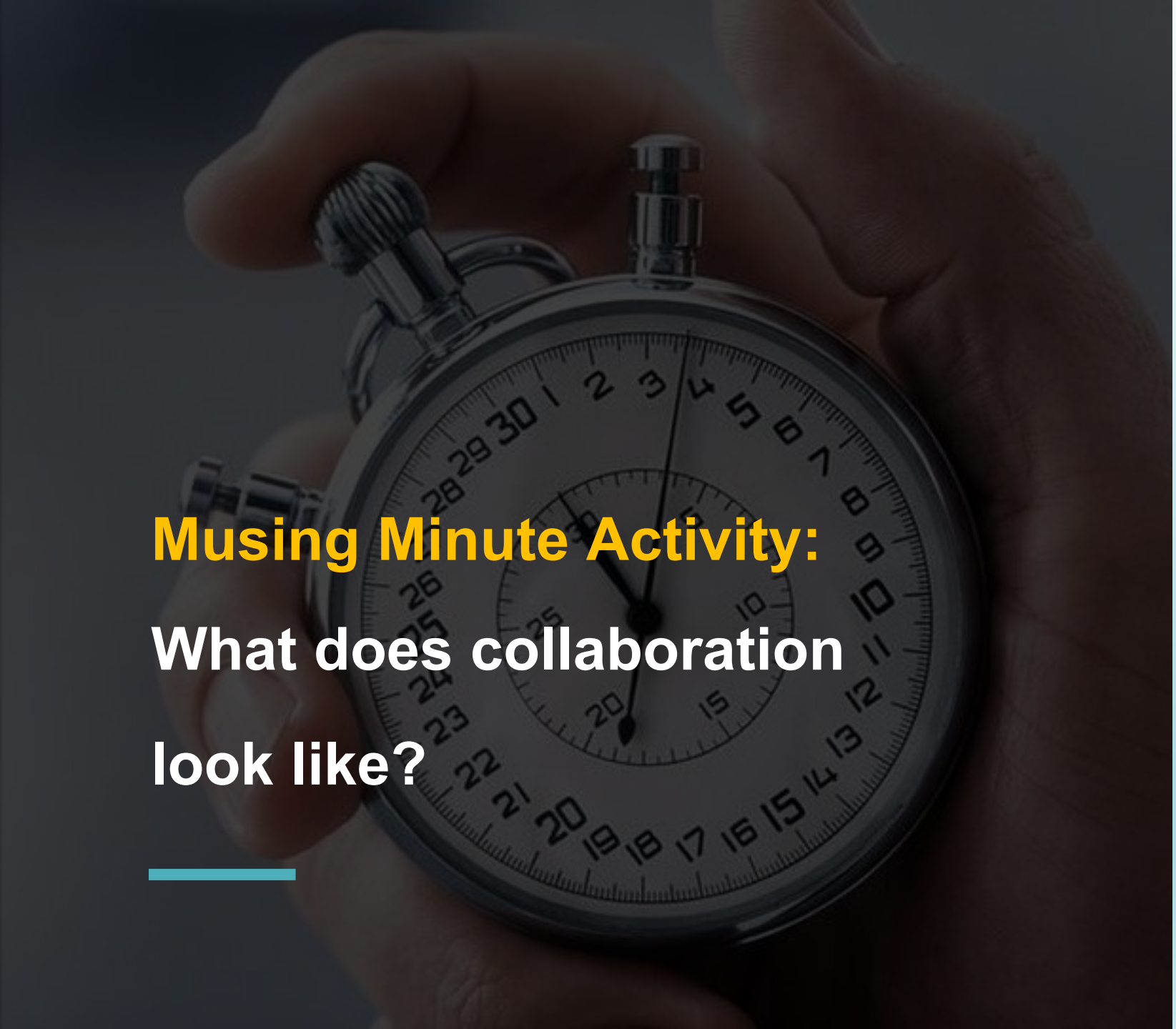
- Associate Professor of Education
- UConn Neag School of Education—Special Education Program

**Research Interests**

- College and career readiness
- Adolescents with disabilities
- Transition services
- Transition educators
- Systems and structures that foster collaboration

# Agenda

- The school counselor's role in educational settings
- Recent research that exemplifies school counselor and transition specialist partnerships
- Practical strategies that foster collaboration
- Key Takeaways
- Implications for your practice
- Q & A



## Musing Minute Activity:

## What does collaboration look like?

**Turn-and-Talk Activity (3 mins)**

1. Discuss your role in your educational setting?
2. Discuss the ways you interact with the school counseling department?
3. To what extent do you interact with a school counselor?

# School Counselors (1):

## What we are called to do

# School Counselors (2):

## What we are called to do

"School counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student outcomes. They lead, advocate and collaborate to promote equity and access ***for all students*** by connecting their school counseling program to the school's academic mission and school improvement plan."

**~American School Counselor Association (ASCA)**

Source: https://www.schoolcounselor.org

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

# School Counselors (3):

## What we are called to do

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Note: Outline the role of school counselors | Academic, Personal, Social-Emotional (ASCA) | Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) | College and Career Readiness |
| Mental Health | Individual and Group Counseling | Postsecondary planning | School culture and climate |
| Support school staff | Conduct Interdisciplinary work with other in-school professionals | Work collaboratively with community-based organizations | |

# Do we really?... Work with *all* students.

- **Are we truly working with *all* students effectively?**
- **Or do some of us work with students we prefer to work with?**
- **As I tell my students, we usually see *"The worse, first!"***
- **Our time is often spent running around "putting out fires", doing unrelated duties, or in meetings.**
- **Rarely do we get to execute a comprehensive school counseling curriculum?**
- **What does that mean for our College and Career Readiness (CCR) initiatives?**

# Working in Silos Instead of in Collaboration

- Traditionally, school counselors often work independently when it comes to CCR initiatives
- We do not often seek to collaborate with other disciplines when implementing CCR programming.
- School counselors particularly have ***weak professional relationships*** with **Special Education teachers** and **Transition Specialists** in that department, therefore leading to less contact with these students around CCR planning.

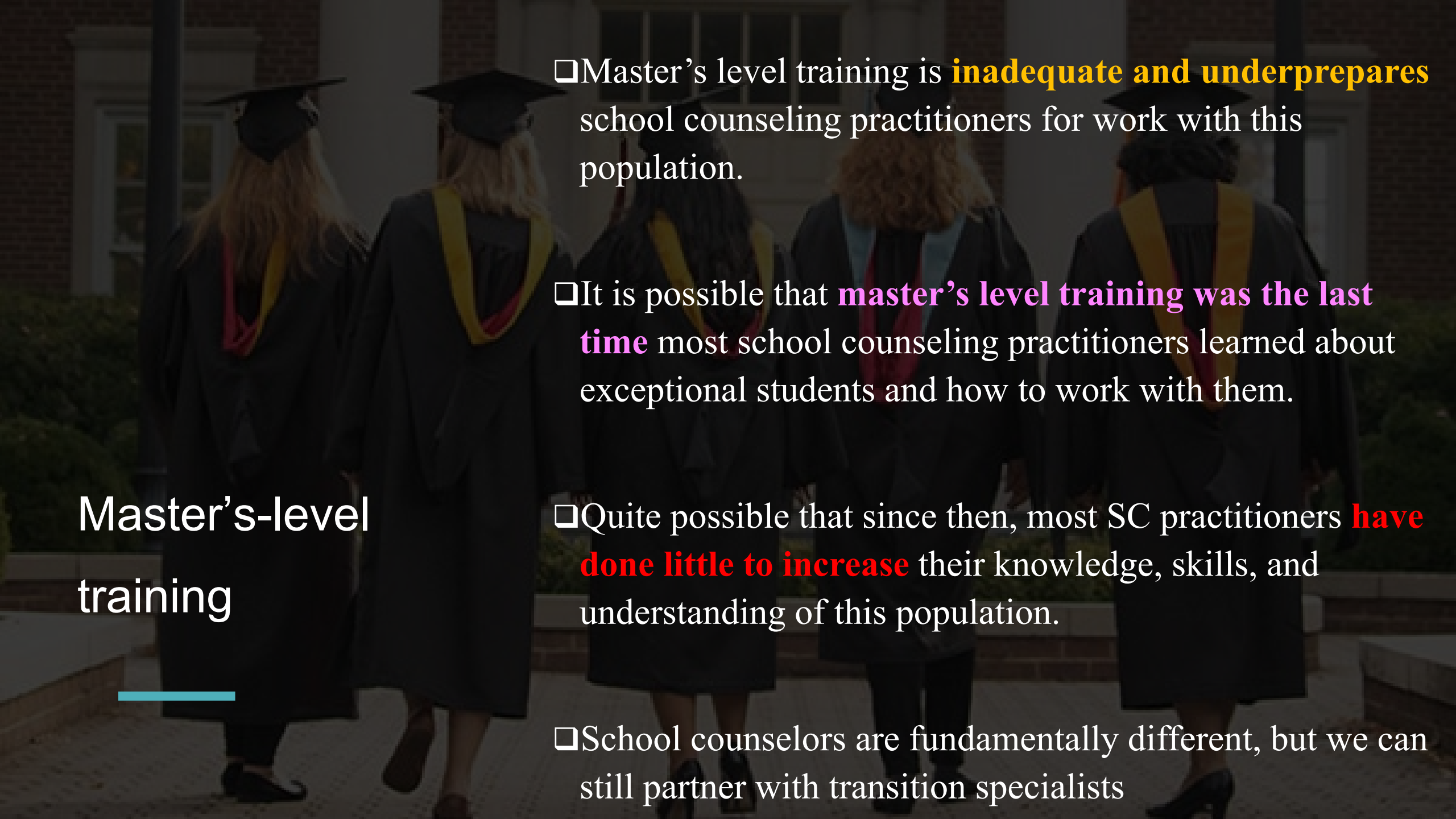
# Do SCs support Students with Disabilities?

- **Students with disabilities are often overlooked in the area of CCR and postsecondary planning in relation to counseling services in general.**
- **Usually if it is due to coordinating an IEP, 504, or Behavioral plan.**
- **School counselors often relinquish those services (i.e., counseling and postsecondary planning, transition services) to the special education department.**

- **The needs of students with disabilities differ from those without disabilities.**
- **Therefore, counseling skills should be adjusted to work effectively with this population.**

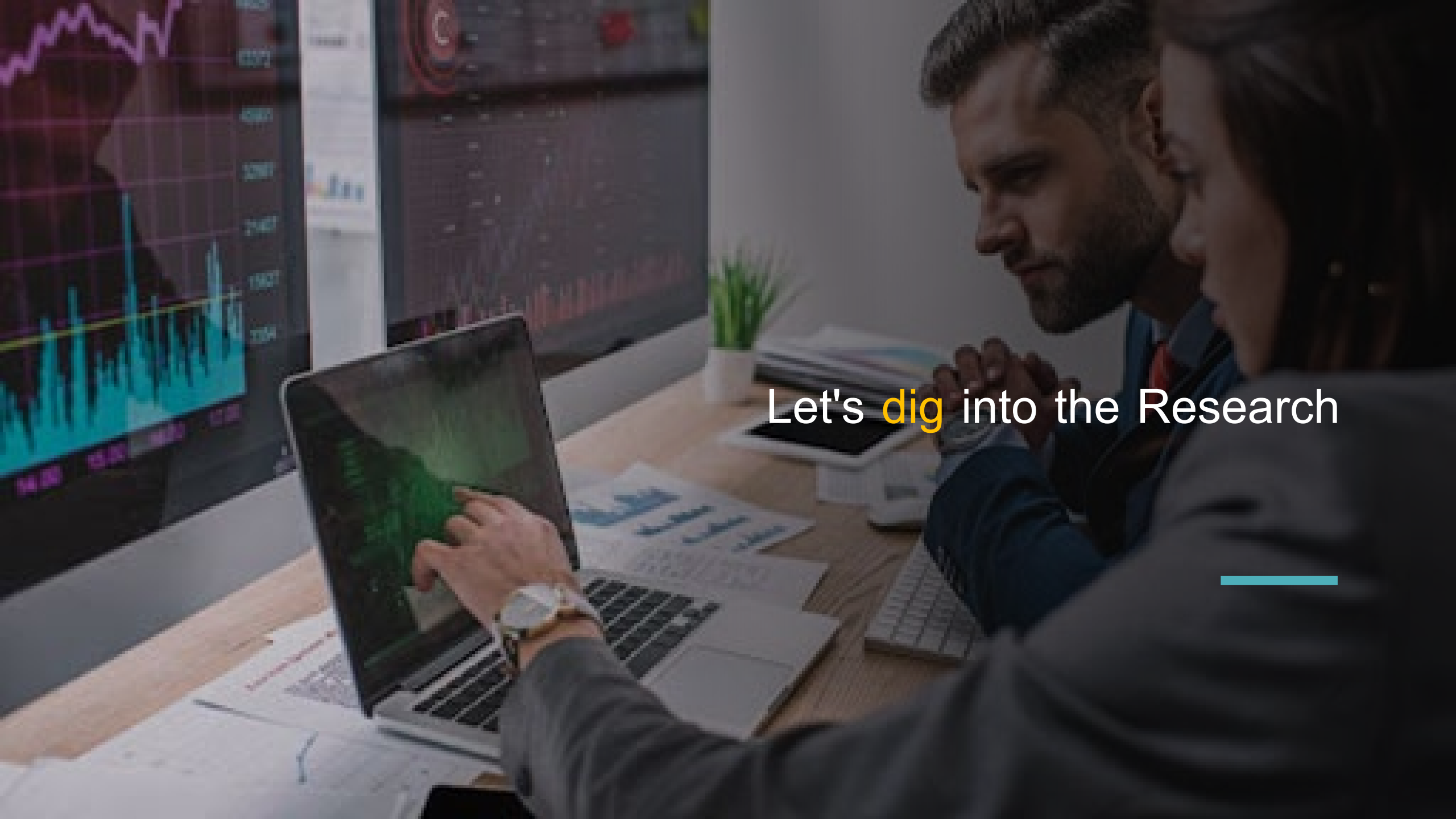
# Postsecondary Planning for Students with Disabilities

- Students with disabilities, like students without disabilities, will not be in school forever.
- These individuals will transition out of the K-12 school system.
- Each student must have a postsecondary plan.
- Each student, and their families, must be presented with options and resources to aide in transition out of high school.



# Master's-level training

- Master's level training is **inadequate and underprepares** school counseling practitioners for work with this population.
- It is possible that **master's level training was the last time** most school counseling practitioners learned about exceptional students and how to work with them.
- Quite possible that since then, most SC practitioners **have done little to increase** their knowledge, skills, and understanding of this population.
- School counselors are fundamentally different, but we can still partner with transition specialists


Let's dig into the Research

# National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) 2012

## What is the NLTS you may ask?...

- **NLTS 2012** is the third iteration of data collection (NLTS, NLTS2)

- Comprehensive, nationally representative sample of youth with and without disabilities:
  - *No disability*
  - *504 plans*
  - *Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) served across 13 IDEA categories*

- Parent and Youth surveys collected in 2013-14

- More info about NLTS: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/nlts/

IES Institute of Education Sciences

# School Counselor Supports

- Help completing college applications
- Help reviewing college entrance test results
- Guidance about courses and credits
- Arranging college visits

Disability Status

X

Race and Ethnicity

X

Household Income

IES Institute of Education Sciences

# School Counselor Supports (continued)

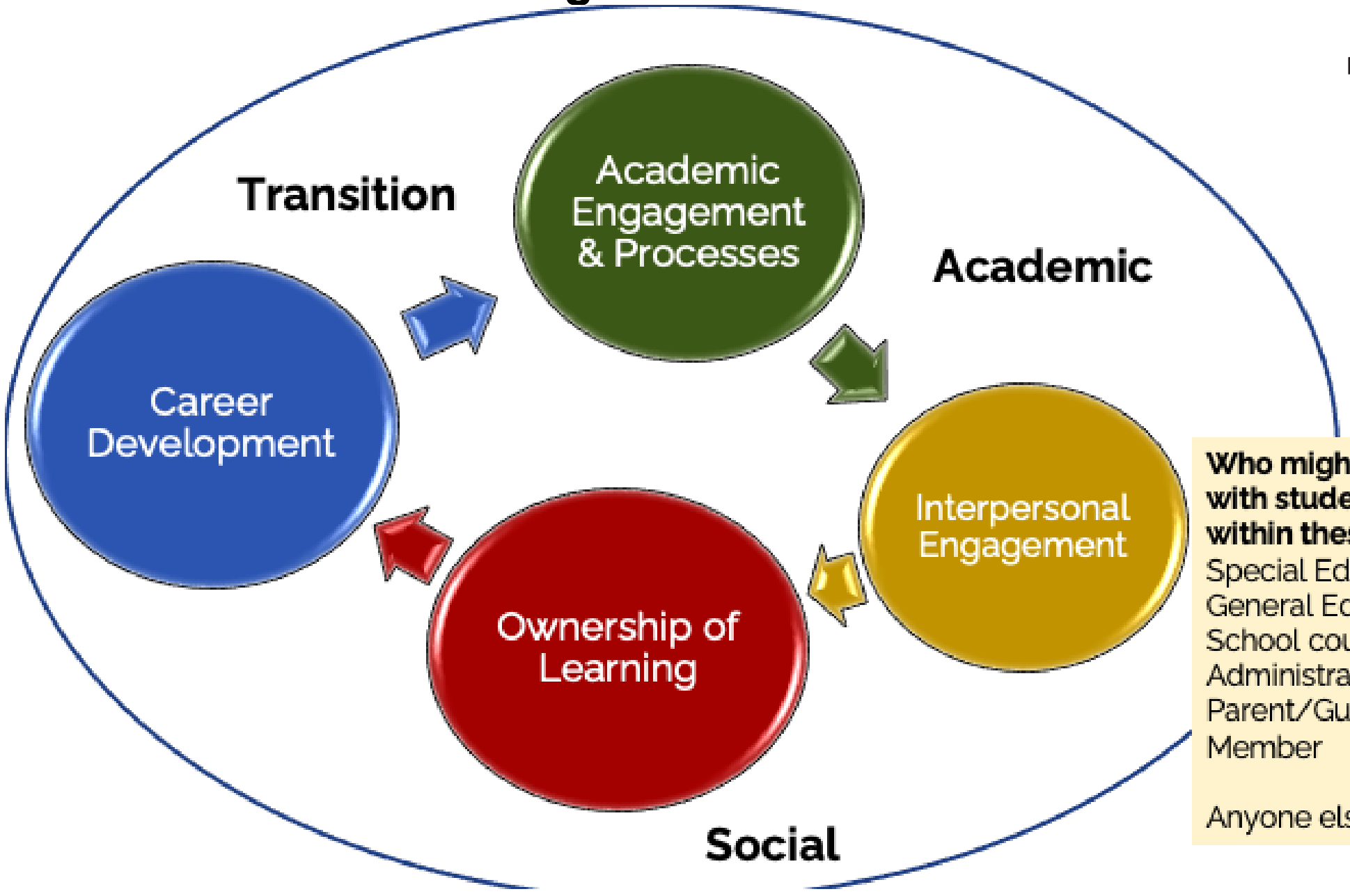
- Black students **without** disabilities from low-income households were 2x more likely than white students without disabilities from high-income households to receive:
  - *Help with college applications and reviewing college admissions exam scores*

- Youth of color (Black, Hispanic) **with** disabilities were less likely to receive any of the supports

- Black students **with** intellectual disability from low-income households  least likely to receive help with the college process.

# Four Domains of College and Career Readiness

CCR4T
College and Career Readiness for Transition




**Who might be involved with student support within these domains?**
Special Educators, General Educators, School counselors, Administrators, Students, Parent/Guardian/Family Member

Anyone else?

# CCR4T Domain Score Comparisons

| Disability label | AE | CD | IE | OL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Autism | 3.6 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 4.2 |
| Emotional Disturbance | 3.6 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 4.1 |
| Intellectual Disability | 3.8 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| Other Health Impairment | 3.4 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 4.0 |
| Specific Learning Disability | 3.7 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 4.2 |
| No IEP | 3.9 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 4.5 |

Key: AE=Academic Engagement and Processes, CD=Career Development, IE=Interpersonal Engagement, OL=Ownership of Learning

Scale: 1 - Totally not like me | 2 – Mostly not like me | 3 – Not like me | 4 – Like me | 5 – Mostly like me | 6 – Totally like me

- Two field-tests occurred across 19 high schools in 8 states
  - Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Idaho, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah

CCR4T College and Career Readiness for Transition

# CCR4T Data Reports

- Program Evaluation
- Teacher Planning
- Student Proficiency

**College & Career Readiness 4 Transition (CCR4T)**

**Field Testing Report**
**January 2021**

## Demographics

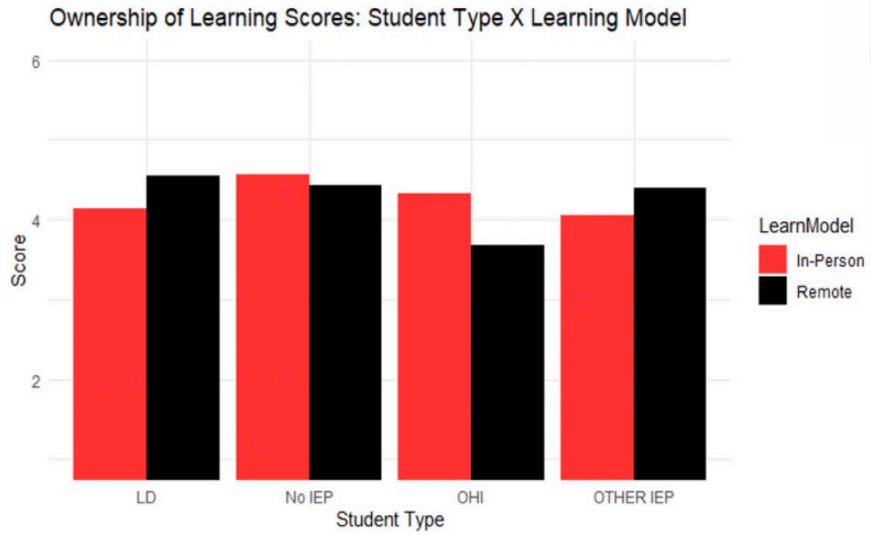
| | Number of respondents |
|---|---|
| Total respondents | 641 |
| Gave Assent | 629 |
| Gender | |
| Male | 286 |
| Female | 343 |
| Race/Ethnicity | |
| African American | 103 |
| Asian | 17 |
| Hispanic | 307 |
| Native American | * |
| White | 152 |
| Other/Multi | 50 |
| Grade | |
| 9th | 172 |
| 10th | 174 |
| 11th | 163 |
| 12th | 120 |
| Students with IEPs | 108 |
| Method of Instruction | |
| In-Person | 417 |
| Remote | 212 |
| Disability | |
| OHI (ADD/ADHD) | 21 |
| Learning Disability | 49 |
| Emotional Disturbance | 17 |
| Other/Multiple Disabilities | 21 |
| Free/Reduced Lunch | 496 |
| English Language Learners | 66 |

*Indicated fewer than 10 respondents and will not be rep

*Note: this measure has not been officially validated and these are preliminary re*

**Student Type by Learning Model:**

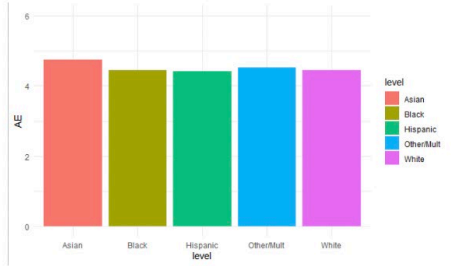
*Student type corresponds to 4 groups: Students without an IEP, Students with LD, Students with OHI, and Other IEP (e.g., ED, Autism, Intellectual Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, or Multiple Disabilities)*



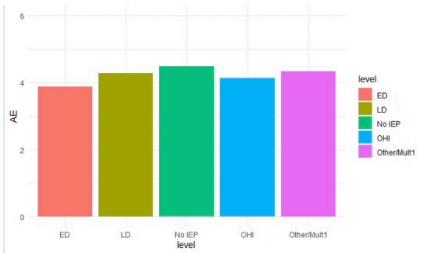

**Information by CCR4T Domain: Academic Engagement**

Acquisition of academic content through interacting and engaging with the material, including cognitive and behavioral skills that students need to successfully engage with academics. These skills may include attendance, homework completion, active participation in class and less observable skills like making connections between content in different courses.

**Race:**




**Disability Category:**

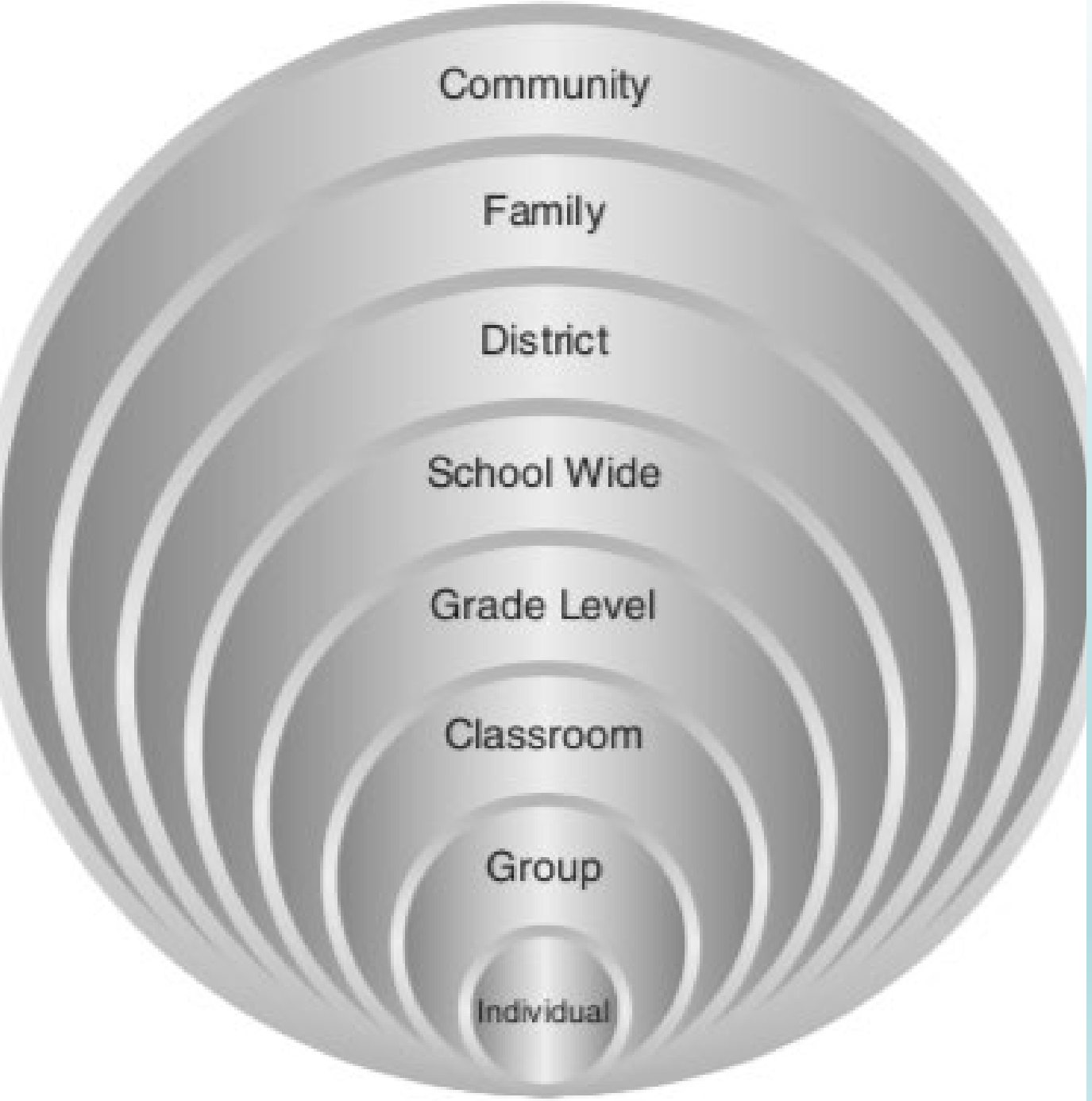


# How we work together: School Counselors *and* Special Education Professionals

- Typical Professionals: *Transition Specialist, Special Education Teacher, Case Manager*
- Transition Planning via Individualized Education Program (IEP)
  - ***Transition Assessment***
  - ***IEP postsecondary education and employment goals***
  - ***IEP Meeting***

- **Student input is critical !**

See NTACT: The Collaborative for more:
https://transitionta.org/topics/secondary-education/transition-planning/




# A Multi-Tiered Approach to CCR

"*A systemic focus is achieved by* ***placing the individual at the center of the system*** *and examining the relations between, and expectations of, larger subsystems that impact the individual (e.g., school, family, community)*" (Erford, 2019).

# Suggested Approaches for Collaboration

## INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- **Regular Meetings with Each Discipline:**
  - School Counselors having regular meetings with Transition Specialist around students' IEP, 504, and other supports designated to the individual.
- **Use of Technology:**
  - School counselors working with students on how to use the learning management system (e.g., Naviance, PowerSchool, etc.) to gather data on postsecondary interests.
- **Data Analysis and Postsecondary Planning:**
  - Collaborate with Transition Specialist to analyze data; create a postsecondary plan for student.

## GROUP LEVEL

- **Group and Curriculum Design, Development, Implementation, and Leadership:**
  - School Counselors collaborate with Transition Specialist in the designing and development of groups and with the group curriculum for students with disabilities as it pertains to CCR and postsecondary planning.
  - School Counselors co-lead groups and classroom guidance lessons with Transition Specialist on topics of CCR/postsecondary planning.
- **Specialized Group Offerings**:
  - Offer inclusive groups for students with disabilities in addition to offering groups solely for students with disabilities.

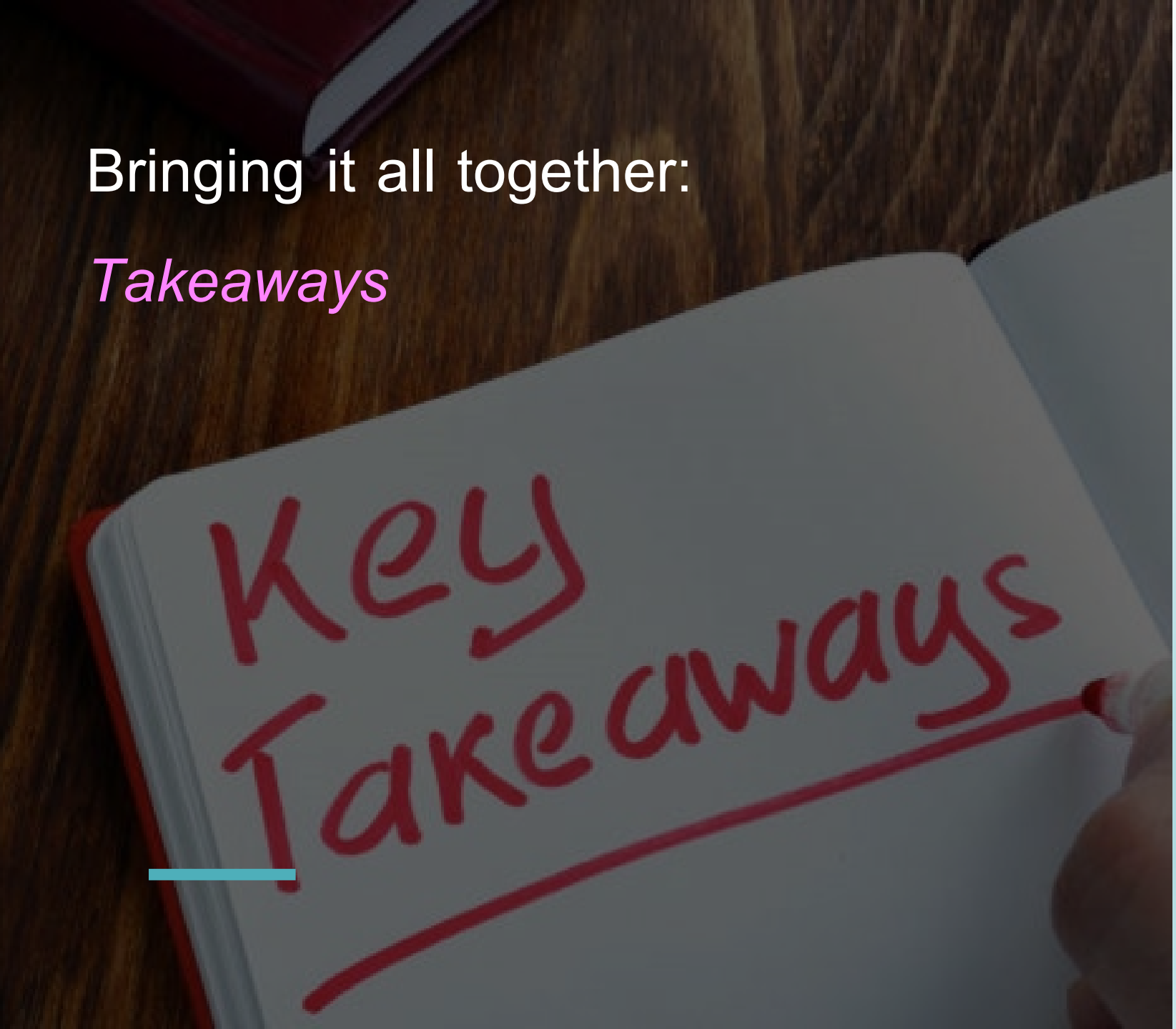
# Suggested Approaches for Collaboration (continued)

## SCHOOLWIDE/UNIVERSAL/ DISTRICT LEVELS

- **Development of a Comprehensive CCR Curriculum:**
  - Work collaboratively to design a comprehensive CCR curriculum that can be applied at a schoolwide/universal, or district level.
  - Inform students of professions that are welcoming to students with certain disabilities
- **Classroom Guidance Lesson Plans**
- **College Fairs:** Offer more inclusive fairs that invite institutions who service students with disabilities.
- **Career Fairs:** Invite careers and employers who employ students with disabilities.
- **Use of Assistive Technology to Deliver CCR Content**

## COMMUNITY LEVEL

- **Partnerships with Community Businesses:**
  - Create partnerships with community businesses so that they can offer internship, volunteer, and employment opportunities.
- **Partnerships with Local Community Colleges and Other Educational Settings:**
  - Form partnerships and relationships with local community colleges and other certificate-offering programs to create a pipeline for admission




# Bringing it all together:

## *Takeaways*

1. Gaps in how we offer counseling services to students with disabilities (e.g., cherry pickers)

2. Work being done in silos; more need for collaboration.

3. Disability-related training in school counselor education programs is very limited.

4. Research findings show CCR supports typically offered by a SC are not reaching youth with disabilities

5. CCR4T—Four Domains – Scores can be used as a schoolwide assessment (Tier 1) and as an age-appropriate transition assessment

## Bringing it all together (continued):

*Takeaways*

- *School Counselors* **and** *Transition Specialist* should partner to implement a Multi-Tiered CCR approach into their school counseling **and** transitional planning curriculums.

# Implications for School Counseling Professionals: Next Steps

1. School counselors should work collaboratively with special educators and transition specialist.

2. School counselors should include students with disabilities in their core curriculum design.

3. School counselors **should find effective ways** to work with students with disabilities as it pertains to CCR and postsecondary planning.

4. School counselors are encouraged to **continue their professional development** to learn effective ways to work with students with disabilities and other diverse populations.

5. School counselors are encouraged to work collaboratively and partner with transition specialist to work effectively with all students.

6. School counselors should understand how **students of color** are impacted by service delivery.

7. **Counselor educators** with their course design are encouraged to place more emphasis on training master's students to work with students with disabilities and postsecondary transition, along with collaborating with other disciplines with CCR initiatives.

# Questions

# Thank you!


## Allison Lombardi, PhD

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College and Career Readiness for Transition

**College and Career Readiness for Transition (CCR4T) Website:**
http://ccr4t.education.uconn.edu


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