Hi my name is Lakshmi Mahadevan and I am program coordinator for Career and Technical Special Population’s (CTSP) Training and Resource Education Center at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Welcome to this webcast on IEP Meetings. In our conversations with CTE Teachers who work with special Populations in Texas, we have found that the questions that occur have to do with attending IEP meetings

- Providing input in these meetings,
- Ensuring the success of students with disabilities in CTE classrooms through accommodation and modification, and
- Addressing concerns with English Language Learners (ELLs).

In this webcast we will outline for you some key concepts and practices that can help address these concerns. Everyone who attends an IEP meeting or has a student who is eligible for special education in their classroom has an “educational need to know” about that student. This implies that they have the right to ask and receive answers to all pertinent questions about the student’s academic and functional performance, behavior, and diagnosis related information.

Often I find when I travel and work with teachers across the state that an IEP is simply not a packet that is given to them, but rather a portion of the packet that you get. I make it my duty to tell everyone who has a student in their classroom with an “educational need to know,” that they can access anything that pertains to that students IEP, and not just their accommodations and modifications sheet.

In order to effectively prepare ahead of time and/or to collaborate with fellow team members it is important that the IEP committee receive adequate notice of when the meeting will be held. One of the best things to do is get into a shared google calendar or shared list-serve so that everyone is aware that an ARD meeting is happening. We can then make arrangements to be there, or that if someone is there that they can be ready for attending and representing us adequately.

Collaboration with CTE colleagues is particularly helpful in helping determine accommodations, modifications, and suggestions for curriculum adaptation. Collaborating with CTE Colleges – there is nothing more valuable than talking to each other and asking “hey did you have this student in the classroom, what did you do?” or “I have this kind of student in a classroom, what advice would you give?” If you are going on a trip and having students interact with the public ask “what advice would you give me with students who have communications concerns or are not as verbal how can they still participate even with these constraints?”

Identifying and collaborating with other personnel who can help, such as a student’s special education teacher and counselor, is key to ensuring that the best interest of the student are met and the law is complied with.

All the special education colleges are very valuable, because they really know their stuff and have worked on it. They really know their students, the system, and have insightful observations on how these students can fit into the classroom and how to make the classroom fit the students.
This is why it is so important to have special education teachers on the table. Counselors are also critical because they can be schedulers and know more about the electives to put everything in place, and the more we go into the academies they have a better understanding which often teachers and parents may not. What courses are we putting together so that the students receive the ongoing support.