Rethinking High School: Gathering Our Voices to Create a National Vision for Adolescents with ASD
Our Plan

1. Get connected on TodaysMeet
2. Purpose of this meeting & intro to CSESA
3. Share best & hardest parts of High School
4. Small Group Discussions
   (information on topic, small group discussion, share with large group)
   - Social relationships & friendships
   - Personal responsibility & independence
   - Technology
5. Final thoughts
Add one favorite thing about Pittsburgh

*Examples*

Place to eat, visit, hear music, exercise...
Purpose

• To better understand high school experiences
• In order to better support students with ASD
• Resulting in better outcomes for students and better supports for educators and families

Your thoughts will be:
  – Shared on CSESA website
  – Shared with
    Autism Society of America
  – Included in publications
  – Use to shape the development of CSESA
Who We Are

• Sam Odom
• Kara Hume
• Suzanne Kucharczyk
• Kate Szidon
• Susan Hedges

From The Watson Institute

• Marilyn Hoyson
• Marcia Laus

CSESA Purpose

“To conduct a program of research to develop & evaluate a comprehensive, school-based intervention program for secondary students with ASD. The ultimate objective of the Center is to improve the cognitive, communicative, academic, social, behavioral, functional, or transition outcomes of secondary students with ASD.”
WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF HIGH SCHOOL?

WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART OF HIGH SCHOOL?
On the **GREEN** paper write one thing that is the **BEST** about high school

On the **YELLOW** paper write one thing that is the **HARDEST** about high school

Make “snowballs” from the paper

Move to one side of the room or the other

Wait … 3, 2, 1 … THROW both pieces of paper!

Pick up a **GREEN** and **YELLOW** snowball and read them to the group.
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
Small Group Discussion Plan

Discussion 1
Personal Responsibility & Independence
Social Relationships & Friendships

1. Introduction to Topic
2. Questions to Consider
3. Group Discussion
   a. Personal Responsibility & Independence
   b. Social Relationships & Friendships
4. Share in Large Group

Discussion 2
Technology

1. Introduction to Topic
2. Questions to Consider
3. Group Discussion
4. Share in Large Group
Personal Responsibility & Independence

• What is it?
  – Ability to complete tasks or activities without close proximity, guidance, prompting, support, or advice from others
    • Activities that are self-selected or required

• Why is it important?
  – Skills play an important role in success during and after high school
    • Employment/College
    • Daily Living Skills
    • Leisure
    • Housing options
Questions to Consider

• Why do you think independence is challenging for individuals on the autism spectrum?
• What strategies have you used (high school students) or put in place (staff & caregivers) that have helped to increase independence?
• How can school staff, caregivers, and other service providers better support the development of independence for adolescents with ASD?
  – When?
  – Where?
  – How to extend beyond school setting?
Social Relationships & Friendships

• What is it?
  – Building connections/interactions with peers
    • Often around common interests, experiences

• Why is it important?
  – Positive relationships with peers are related to positive outcomes in other areas (e.g. academics, mental health, acceptance, employment success). Adolescents with ASD often report feeling lonely and may struggle in building peer relationships.
Questions to Consider

• What do “social relationships and friendships” look like to you in the high school setting?
• What strategies have you used (high school students) or put in place (staff & caregivers) that have helped to build social relationships and friendships?
• How can schools, school staff, caregivers, and other service providers better support the development of social relationships for adolescents with ASD?
  – When?
  – Where?
  – How to extend beyond school setting?
Small Group - Ground Rules

Participants

• Give each other time to share
• Agree to disagree – do not criticize other’s ideas
• Participate as you wish (in group discussion, today’s meet...)

Facilitator

• Allow for everyone to have opportunity to participate
• Record group thoughts
• Keep group on task
• Keep time
Which Group Do You Want to Join?
Social Relationships & Friendships
or
Personal Responsibility & Independence
Share in Large Group

Social Relationships & Friendships
• What do these look like to you in high school?
• What strategies work?
• How can schools and their staff better support adolescents with ASD?
  – When?
  – Where?
  – How to extend beyond school?

Personal Responsibility & Independence
• Why is independence challenging?
• What strategies have you used or put in place?
• How can schools and their staff better support adolescents with ASD?
  – When?
  – Where?
  – How to extend beyond school?
Small Group Discussion

Technology
Technology

• What is it?
  – Electronic item/equipment, application, or virtual network that is used to support daily living, work, recreation, leisure skills of adolescents with ASD

• Why is it important?
  – Technology is used widely by/with individuals with ASD. There is much to learn about the types of technology that are most used and most helpful.
    • Questions remain about the use of technology “with abandon”
Questions to Consider

• What types of technology (tablets, phone, computers, apps, social media, etc.) do you (or high school students with ASD that you know) use in high school?

• Are there some types of technology that are more helpful than others?

• Have you encountered problems or challenges using technology in your school? Any solutions?

• How did you learn to use the technology that you use?
Small Group - Ground Rules

Participants
• Give each other time to share
• Agree to disagree – do not criticize other’s ideas
• Participate as you wish (in group discussion, today’s meet...)

Facilitator
• Allow for everyone to have opportunity to participate
• Record group thoughts
• Keep group on task
• Keep time
What types of technology (tablets, phone, computers, apps, social media, etc.) do you (or high school students with ASD that you know) use in high school?

Are there some types of technology that are more helpful than others?

Have you encountered problems or challenges using technology in your school? Any solutions?

How did you learn to use the technology that you use?
Next Steps & Thank You

Your thoughts will be:

– Shared on CSESA website
– Shared with Autism Society of America
– Included in publications
– Used to shape the development of CSESA
The Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (CSESA) is a research and development project funded by the U.S. Department of Education that focuses on developing, adapting, and studying a comprehensive school-based and community-based education program for high school students on the autism spectrum.

CSESA is a five year project that brings together experts in autism, secondary education, adolescence, and implementation to work in collaboration with high schools, families, adolescents with ASD, and community members.

http://cseса.fpg.unc.edu/