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New program helps high school students with disabilities prepare for college

FAIRHOPE – Baldwin County high school graduates with disabilities are getting ready for their post-secondary education with a two-week workshop on college life.

The program, called College Prep, is sponsored by the Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), and will be held at the University of South Alabama, Baldwin County Campus in Fairhope from July 7 to July 18, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

It is the first year that Baldwin County has conducted the College Prep program.

“We’ve had College Prep in Mobile County for years, and we are excited about expanding the program into Baldwin County,” said Becky Fields, College Prep program director.

Students will learn a range of skills to prepare them for technical school, two-year college or a four-year university. They will learn note-taking skills, time management, organizational skills, self-advocacy, how to register for class, how to get the accommodations they need and how to talk to professors.

“This program empowers students with disabilities so that they feel more confident about asking for what they need to be successful at the post-secondary level,” said Beth Hanks, a vocational rehabilitation counselor with ADRS .

In addition to the other activities, students will participate in a scavenger hunt, learn about their specific disabilities, and hone their note-taking skills by sitting in on a lecture by a USA professor.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama’s children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.