SECONDARY TRANSITION in NORTH DAKOTA

Meeting Minutes – October 21, 2026

Welcome and review of ND CoP Mission: Jen welcomed everyone to the meeting and played a video for Autism Awareness Month, "We are all limited editions." The members looked over the previous meeting minutes. One correction was brought to light, to include North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) as the program Morgan is working with to develop TBI Guidance. Eli motioned to accept the minutes including that change, Rikki seconded the motion, all in favor and none opposed, the former Meeting Minutes were accepted. Jen went over the schedule for the day, along with breakfast, lunch, snack, and facility rundown. Jen then went over the following:

Mission: To work towards building, supporting, and sustaining community partnerships and systems that promote and improve the scope, opportunity, and quality for youth with disabilities to adequately prepare for life and career beyond high school with the individualized necessary supports identified and in place before graduation/exit.

- CoP continues the Advisory Council as a state team and adds a new and ongoing connections to regional teams.
- The membership on this council is actively involved in sharing practices and working on transition issues for students with disabilities with those in other agencies and family members across the state.

Goals: Increase interagency collaboration by establishing Regional CoPs in each 8 regions that hold regular meetings, and by cross training across agencies.
Goal Update: Region VII CoP held two meetings and will continue holding monthly meetings. Region III has a lead volunteer from VR. Cross training is occurring at the VR counselors conference taking place this week.

Minutes from 4/21/2026 approved: Moved to approve by Eli, second by Colette. None opposed. Minutes were approved.

Adult Education and Dropout Survey Data: Sara Mitzel, NDDPI Adult Education State Director/Manager presented the data and themes that arose from the survey results.

NDDPI Update: Jenifer Updike provided NDDPI updates and went over Indicator 14 Target Setting. The CoP members were asked to vote on targets. VR is holding their annual conference and not in attendance today.

Membership Updates and Sharing:

In Person:

Jenifer Updike, NDDPI Office of Special Education: Updates provided in the NDDPI updates.

Lea Kugel, NDDPI Office of Special Education: No first order updates.

Morgan Edmundson, NDDPI: No first order updates.

Rikki Tragerton, Community Living in Fargo: We are busy providing Pre-ETS services to students as the new school year begins. My team is busy meeting students, attending meetings, teaching skills, providing work based learning, and helping students explore job opportunities.

Cody Puhr, Community Living in Fargo: No additional first order updates.

Kayla Stastney, ND DHHS Behavioral Health Division: Parents Lead has resources related to Bullying Prevention and Red Ribbon Week, focusing on prevention as yearlong activities. Also a reminder we have discharge planning documents and crisis safety plans. Everything can be found to print or order at parentslead.org.

Janna Marman, Morton-Sioux Special Education Unit Transition Coordinator: New VR rep, implementing and improving our 18-21 program

Eliason Bullock, YCC: Working closely with Morton-Sioux Special Education Unit and learning infinite Campus.

Colette Fleck, Standing Rock: Had another successful community fair, continue with the radio show and now looking to get the podcast going. The radio show continues to bring students and community together. Continue collaborating with a variety of agencies and going on outings. Recently had an art studio in Bismarck do an event with the students. Many more fun events coming up.

Ruth Lacher, ND Job Service: Provided update that pending legislation's approproval, Job Service will be moving from HHS to new Department of Workforce Devleopment with Adult Ed, Voc Rehab, and a couple others.

Micah Olson, Protection and Advocacy (P&A): Focus areas this year are Abuse, Neglect, & Exploitation, Community Inclusion, and Criminal Justice. They can be found here: Focus Areas | Protection Advocacy Project, North Dakota

Tracey Olson, ASTEP and IMPCCT Projects: Provided update on programs.

Online:

Kasi Kautz, Council for Developmental Disabilities: Continuing to provide a variety of trainings for people with disabilities as well as their families. Ranging from Guardianship, Financial Planning, Emergency Preparedness, First Aid & CPR, planning another Peer to Peer conference - this year it will be in Fargo. Assisting with Mock Interviews and voting training and partnering with the schools in the Bismarck/Mandan area. In conjunction with the transition fair, I am also hoping to plan fairs for birth-3, ages 3-14 and then the aging population.

Kendra Vanderwall, Designer Genes: Continuing to support both individuals and families navigating this transition. Finding a future that feels successful and fully representative of individuals leaving high school.

Kerrie Oster, Minot Public Schools: Almost through the 1st quarter, which has been busy with many new students and Infinite Campus. There are a couple special education positions open in Minot. If anyone is interested, please reach out.

K**iara Crosby, Director of Northern Plains SEU:** Continuing Transition Group- building capacity with new teachers, mentors and leaders of the group, meeting in the mornings now due to some early outs for schools, and it's working. The collaboration with MSU nursing students is a great addition, hoping to take the group to Medora for the Teddy Roosevelt museum this spring. Absorbing all things IC. Learning all the new requirements for PreEts, Working on relationship building for students/families and VR, as there has been turnover with VR counselors. GED option at the library now in Crosby, ND with collaboration with Williston State and the local library is exciting news.

Jeff Anderson, Arc of Cass County: We just closed our classroom grants for the fall, and a total of 43 requests were funded! Teachers used the money to purchase everything from snacks and fidgets to driving lessons. We just hosted a legislative training event where 115 people attended to meet with local and state representatives and to learn how to provide written or in-person testimony! We received excellent feedback from the event! Our voucher program has been extended to area schools which offers another resource to help students and their families with clothing needs.

Donene Feist, Family Voices: Held our Parent Leadership Institute, will be doing transition trainings this fall and winter

Kaycee Johnson, NDHHS, DD: Continue to meet and work with VR to discuss/strengthen our partnership, engage with school districts to explore employment opportunities while in school, and how to best support/serve rural areas. DD/VR will be rolling out more training on Avail software which is a virtual support application for individuals to use on the job to supplement job coaching and support individuals to reduce job coaching by having virtual prompting/checklists/videos etc. accessible on their phone or ipad. DD section is rolling out a new training platform (LMS learning management system) for DD provider agencies as well as a new licensing portal. We continue to have an influx of agencies going through the licensing process to become licensed DD providers, so we have been busy meeting with them, training, reviewing settings and policies, etc. We are open to work with districts/schools to explore transition options, discuss services and work together to support students and their families.

Julianne Horntvedt, DD Council: We have new grants on our website schools may want under our grants tab: www.nd.gov/scdd

Katie McNamara, Federation of Families: Upcoming event: The First Lady is hosting with Mental Health America of ND the Celebration of Lights on November 30th in Bismarck at the Governor's Residence.

Others in attendance online with no first order updates: Jen Smart, DDPM; Kirsten Dvorak, The Arc of North Dakota; Michael Netzloff, CTE; Richelle McGregor, Fargo VTC; Jana Carson; Jodi Scheeler; Magen Stieg, Wilmac Special Education Unit; Rachele Krebsbach; Linda Ehlers; Leah Hamann; Janel Uhlich; Teal Thomas, Pathfinder; Matthew McCleary, Federation of Families; Marcia Schneider; Rachel Tabler, NDDPI; Richelle McGregor, Fargo Vocational Training Center (VTC); Angie Johnson, Grand Forks SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator

Regional Community of Practice Updates:
Region I: Northwest Region (Williston): No update
Region II: Northcentral Region (Minot): No update
Region III: (Devils Lake): A volunteer leader has been found.
Region IV: Northeast Region (Grand Forks): No update
Region V: (Fargo)**:** Region V continues to meet monthly. Recently hosted a movie night for students and Day Hab participants. Planning a Peer-to-Peer conference in April with Kasi from DDCouncil.
Region VI: (Jamestown). No update
Region VII: Southcentral (Bismarck): Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month virtually. Hosting a Transition Fair in February for students and families. The idea is to have many different organizations and agencies there so families can go to whatever booths they want to get information from. Hoping to have a parent panel to be able to give other parents real life examples/experiences.
Region VIII: Southwest Region (Dickinson): Still searching for a lead.

Transition Issues and Concerns: Navigating transition can be complicated, and agency assistance is often necessary for families and individuals to navigate the systems and to find the future that helps the individual feel successful. Struggles with districts not making VR referrals. VR counselor turnover leading to family distrust of VR in one region. Infinite campus difficulties and frustrations. Collaboration among agencies continues to be a struggle in some areas.

Grad701, Lea Kugel, NDDPI: Lea provided an overview of Grad701 and provided updates as well. Trainings on Evidence Based Practices are occurring. Parent/family resources and webinars will be coming soon, along with a Chatbot, which can help schools, students, agencies, and families.

Durable Skills and RuReadyND: Jenifer provided an overview of Durable Skills, along with a website that offers free Durable Skills lesson ideas. Laura provided insight into what RuReady has to offer for free assessments to students in ND, focusing on AchieveWORKS, which is a durable skills assessment.

Next Meetings:

January 20, 2027, Room B, Heritage Center
April 21, 2027, Room B, Heritage Center