



SECONDARY TRANSITION in NORTH DAKOTA

Meeting Minutes – April 15, 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: Jen thanked everyone who submitted goal ideas and provided an overview of goal ideas. Ultimately, the group decided to focus on Increasing Interagency Collaboration by establishing Regional CoPs throughout the 8 regions and focusing on holding regular meetings. Rikki provided insight that once this is established, the other goals can easily follow, but we need strong interagency collaboration throughout the state first.

NDDPI Updates and Indicator 13 and 14: Jen provided updates and went over the 2025 Indicator 13 and 14 data. The Drop Out Survey will be moved to another time.

VR Annual Report: Darrel went over the Annual VR Report and provided information on the budget, and numbers reached in Pre-ETS this year. He provided updates on some fun things VR is putting on in collaboration with North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton including a 4-day Culinary Intensive, Health Career Day, and a Mechanics Day. VR is also working with Lake Region State College on apprenticeships.

DD Annual Report: Kaycee provided statewide numbers for those receiving DD services. She shared some creative solutions that some throughout the state are using in the rural areas.

Membership Updates and Sharing:

In Person:

Jenifer Updike, NDDPI Office of Specially Designed Services: Gearing up for Ind 13 and 14 this summer. Has received many phone calls regarding 18-21 programming. Nationwide desire for more specific guidance. Working

with NTACT:C on possible guidance documents to assist with programming. For now, she is happy to provide technical assistance to any school/unit with questions.

Morgan Edmundson, NDDPI Office of Specially Designed Services: No major updates

Rikki Tragerton, Community Living in Fargo: Rikki's team is collaborating with West Fargo Public Schools to assist with Project Search.

Tracey Olson, ASTEP and IMPCCT Projects: IMPCCT Consortium, is working on a statewide survey of special education teachers, students, and parents. We will be sending out reminders to complete this survey. Thank you to those who have filled it out. ASTEP, TAP, and Viking will be developing a "Day in a Life" video for students and families to gain a new perspective on life in college for students in an inclusive postsecondary program. We are working on preparing for the next legislative session. ASTEP and Viking Pathway Programs are still taking referrals. If there is interest in TAP, give them a call as they may have their fall applicants set. ASTEP is in 15th Year! There are 3 graduates this year. Again, we are accepting referrals through May for fall 2026.

Mistie Clementich, Pathfinder Services ND: Business as usual. Youth are working on Adulting 101

Holden Bouilly, Pathfinder Services ND: Leading the Youth Point of View (Youth POV) at Pathfinder. Has 2 new youth participating. Currently Youth POV completed two projects, one on Invisible Disabilities.

Micah Olson, Protection and Advocacy (P&A): CAP and PABSS programs. Attended Wachter Middle School conferences to share information about CAP and P&A.

Eliason Bullock, YCC: Schedule has shifted a bit to allow him more time at YCC working with youth. Individuals continue to obtain their GED. Working with Goalbook and with Morton-Sioux unit.

Jackie Teskey, WILMAC: We are continuing to work on getting the Regional CoP going. Hoping to tag it on to the Community Coalition for Mental health as many partners attend the coalition.

Kayla Stastney, ND DHHS Behavioral Health Division: Parents Lead - New resources related to encouraging a growth mindset, social host laws, fake ID's, etc. Our Mental Health Directory is currently undergoing some changes to become the Behavioral Health Directory, which will include Substance Use Disorder providers. The last 4 years, our department has had a System of Care Grant from SAMHSA to support regions 3 and 7 in efforts related to systems and support for youth 0-21 with SED and their families. We are now applying for another 4-year grant to focus on Regions 2 and 6. Here is the link for our xcart where anyone in ND can order behavioral health or parents lead resources and we ship it for free. <https://predprod-behavioralhealth.x-shops.com/>

Sarah Duven, Anne Carlsen Center: Connection with Bruce at BSC for field trip to the VR immersive room, rec/leisure buckets for graduates and those transitioning from program (adapted games with visuals, switches, adapted dice, card holders, etc., visual menus for favorite restaurants, sensory items, books, any other special interest items, also beginning transition binders for the 26-27 school year

Rachel Tabler, NDDPI : No major updates

Online:

Darrel Hannum, ND Vocational Rehabilitation Director:

Jen Smart, DDPM: There is a new Office of Guardianship that will be taking over Guardianship Establishment Funds as well as Catholic Charities corporate guardianship. We are working to get kids transitioned from high school into Day Habilitations.

Kasi Kautz, Council for Developmental Disabilities: Held a Peer to Peer Conference in Bismarck in February, which was a huge success of around 365 participants.

Kendra Vanderwall, Designer Genes: Designer Genes is excited to kick off our spring statewide meetups. If you have families in the Jamestown, Dickinson, Minot, and Bismarck area please share with your families. The meetups provide an opportunity to meet families with individuals with Down Syndrome in the area and learn more how we can support families. Our G.R.O.W. Program is about to kick off for the summer and we are looking for gardeners to join us. The program is for individuals 18 years and up learn how to tend to a garden throughout the summer. Our G.R.O.W. Kickoff event is April 28. We have a visual supports opportunity on May 19 in Bismarck. We also did just celebrate our Bikers 4 Bikers event last weekend. This is to support the iCan Bike camp summer 2027. Tentatively scheduled for July 26-30, 2027. If you have individuals 8 years and older interested, please share.

Kerrie Oster, Minot Public Schools: One of our special education teachers has completed student led IEPs this year, the students do introductions, talk about their strengths and challenges, and discuss their goals for the year ahead. We continue to have students participating in work experiences in the school setting and out in the community, working on transportation training, and getting exposure to some community activities (Public Library, YMCA, etc.).

Kiara Crosby, Director of Northern Plains SEU: Transition group going strong - getting ready for spring field trip to the zoo and bowling/pizza. Collaboration with general education and work study credit earning opportunities are blooming across all districts, leading to employment post-secondary. The unit is excited to see options for CTE courses growing, and the benefits for students with disabilities to have quality access to hands on programming in the general education setting, with special services supports.

Richelle McGregor, Fargo Vocational Training Center (VTC): Just working with region 5 on the transition fair. Also participating in an inclusion fair at Horace High School next week.

Jeff Anderson, Arc of Cass County: The Arc of Cass County has been busy with many advocacy calls, and working with CLS on our work experience program. Have received many calls from parents of children in transition age who need guidance. There is a lot of misinformation that parents receive. Transition is very confusing and there is a need to help educate families. One of our community voucher programs, which provides clothing and other necessities for people in need has donated thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise year to date- to homeless shelters and individual people and families in need. There is a high community need. Our student scholarships are rolling in, and we will be choosing the winners after April 30th when the application period closes. Audit is coming up in early June so that will consume much of my time between now and then.

Tom Ross, Burdick Job Corps Center, Minot: Continuing to share updates on the status of the Campus and reaching out to partners, and getting our Center Director Dr. Dave Post out to meet you all. Campus is always willing to host meetings and tours to learn more about how we can help partners achieve their goals.

Tia Chays, Independence, Inc.: This is my first meeting I've been able to attend I do Pre-ets in the schools , I am one out of the two transition counselors at independence inc. I am finishing up my schools for this year , (I was out for two months on maternity leave and just got back on Monday) we have been struggling getting youth to join our empower group / want to be apart of leadership.

Donene Feist, Family Voices: Planning Parent Leadership retreat, Family Voices ND (FVND) has a transition curriculum that we would like to share with this group, just completed presentations on guardianships, working on a new website, all presentations will be on the website.

Amanda Mattson, Bismarck Public Schools: Hosted the 3rd annual Neurodiversity Palooza. Life Education program has been hosting various agencies for students and families to learn about community resources. BPS hosts a community collaboration meeting monthly with agencies around the community (PYB, DJS, PHP, Social Services, West Central, Juvenile court, Systems of Care, Behavioral Health); Started a functional program at one high school- focus is on vocation, career exploration, CTE opportunities, and academics.

Torie Post, Souris Valley SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator: No major updates

Angie Johnson, Grand Forks SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator: No major updates

Tami Ternes, ND Assistive: 1) AT Awareness Day is April 22. We will be celebrating this day by recognizing and thanking assistive technology specialists, program coordinators, professionals, etc who work to connect people with AT for their individual needs. ND Assistive appreciate all who dedicate their time to help people with disabilities live more independent and have more opportunities. 2) Partnering with XR for VR Grant to help connect and identify XR for VR participants with AT that can help support them in manufacturing and other interested jobs. 3) I would like to explore how ND Assistive can participate in all 8 Regional CoP groups. AT is so crucial for secondary transition students to help with independence, continue to enhance their academic performance, and bridge the gap after leaving high school to their next post-secondary environments. Collaboration with all Regions to help keep AT education and resources available to help people in all aspects of their lives in education, employment, and other daily living activities (self-care, cooking, etc.). Currently, I have only been attending the Bismarck Region meetings.

Kaycee Johnson, NDHHS, DD: I presented on DD services, eligibility, and transition to the Secondary Transition Talks group in March. Kristen VanderVorst and I also presented via Zoom to Special Education Directors again on DD services, eligibility, and transition to adult services. DD is working to strengthen collaboration with DPI, Special Ed units, Teachers, and VR to work together for students and families transitioning to adult services. We are exploring ways to strengthen and expand competitive integrated employment for our participants, transitions from Pre-Voc services to competitive employment, and finding meaningful employment. Supporting regions with transition for students and families and trying to find creative solutions for students in rural areas. The DD Section is working on some strategic plans to develop more guidance for DDPM's related to transition for homeschooled individuals, those that may have shortened school days and how DD can support, etc. Looking for ways to expand and support students/families through the IEP process, transition, and beyond. DD Section met with DPI and NDACP (ND association of Community Providers) (3 providers had representation) to discuss transitions, issues and solutions. Common issue is students being sent home or out of school suspension due to behavior, etc. DD providers do not have staff scheduled during school hours in that setting or group home and/or families do not have on-call in-home support staff to support their students, so parents are taking leave from work to take students home. Continue to hear struggles with transition in rural areas, meeting graduation requirements but not getting those work experiences/independent living pieces—students maybe not being a good “fit” for their transition programs (i.e. lower functioning, behavioral concerns, etc.) Some solutions reported: Schools contract with DD provider to “share staff” Group home staff are hired as a para at the school to provide support, Open Door staff noted that they have provided day hab services as the ESY in the summer and the school paid them. DDPM worked with school district/special ed unit for a student to access a career lab at another school, worked out issues with transportation/payment, etc.

Heather Kapella, NDHHS: We are working on year 2 for our activities of medical home. In year 2 we plan to make toolkits for providers and school staff. Will send those out once completed in the fall

Kirsten Dvorak, The Arc of North Dakota: The Arc of ND has a brand-new website, arcofnd.org

Jamie Hardt, Independence Inc.: Continue to provide Pre-ETS services to Northern Plains, Souris Valley, and Peace Garden special education units. Collaborating with NDCPD. Looking to get Region II's CoP back up and running.

Michael Netzloff, CTE: The CTE Teacher Conference will take place in August.

Regional Community of Practice Updates:

Region I: Northwest Region (Williston): Still looking to get meetings up and running for Region I. Hoping to connect it with their Community Coalition for Mental Health, as many agencies will already be together for the Coalition.

Region II: Northcentral Region (Minot): Jamie Hardt and Tia Chays from Independence Inc. are looking to get this back up and running.

Region III: (Devils Lake): Looking for a lead.

Region IV: Northeast Region (Grand Forks): Region IV continues to develop their Secondary Transition Guidance document that will be distributed to schools and be available to those in the region.

Region V: (Fargo): Region V continues to meet monthly. The CoP will be hosting a Secondary Transition Fair April 28th.

Region VI: (Jamestown). No update

Region VII: Southcentral (Bismarck): No meetings have occurred this year. However, Heather is willing to take lead, and Jen is willing to assist and be a part of getting Region VII going again.

Region VIII: Southwest Region (Dickinson): Still searching for a lead.

Transition Issues and Concerns: 18-21 programming questions and concerns surrounding behaviors. Continued needs within the rural areas. Building relationships among the agencies to bridge transition gap and do what's best for young people with disabilities.

Benefits Training, Amy Bergan, Rehab Services, Inc.: Amy spoke with the CoP in person and provided insight to the CoP on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Child's benefits, and Childhood Disability Benefits (CDB)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and the importance of turning 18. Amy provided the members with handouts on Comparison of Social Security Benefits Transition Age Youth May Receive, Transition Age Youth & SS Benefits, Teacher Guide on Documenting Student Functioning for SSA. If there are any questions, Rehab Services, Inc. in Minot is happy to assist and guide parents/families/individuals through the process or answer questions as teachers are filling out forms.

FamilyFirst Presentation, Tracy Miller, NDHHS: Tracy provided the CoP with an overview of what FamilyFirst is, and went over the different services available throughout the state. She showed the CoP the website, which has a FamilyFirst Services Toolkit.

Next Meetings:

October 21, 2026, Pioneer Room, State Capitol

January 20, 2027, Room B, Heritage Center

April 21, 2027, Room B, Heritage Center