Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2025

Welcome and review of ND CoP Mission: Jen welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Mission Statement and schedule for the day were reviewed.

> **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.

Membership Updates and Sharing:

In Person:

Jenifer Updike, NDDPI Office of Specially Designed Services: DPI Updates regarding resources on the website, Grad 701 advisory committee application and BARR grant application on the website, resources provided for a variety of agencies, updates from the DCDT Secondary Transition Conference in Denver including interagency collaboration, goal setting for the CoP, and bridging the "secondary transition cliff" from high school to post high school

Morgan Edmundson, NDDPI Office of Specially Designed Services: Reminder that Emotional Disturbance is still used in IDEA; therefore, even though ND changed from Emotional Disability, Emotional Disturbance will be used when referring to federal guidance.

Jen Withers, DPI, Office of Education Improvement and Support, Homelessness

Kacy Kautz, Council for Developmental Disabilities: New Director of Innovative Programs, Peer to Peer, working on projects surrounding guardianship and secondary transition and mock interviews.

Kendra Vanderwall, Designer Genes: Partnering with DD Council and mock interviews.

Tracey Olson, ASTEP and IMPCCT Projects: Provided update on programs and number of students in attendance.

Jessica Pankow, Upper Valley Special Education Unit: Community is struggling with rural DD options and work based options.

Kerrie Oster, Minot Public Schools: Unit is focusing on new initiatives including training paraprofessionals, transportation training with students (how to ride the bus), 18-21 programs busy with work experience and businesses.

Jackie Teskey, WILMAC: Have been conducting education with new staff and administration, advocates have been collaborating with the school

Heidi Budeau, Director of Jamestown and James River SEU: Region 6 Career Fair, November 6th. Conducted every other year.

Nick Murphy, Protection and Advocacy, Grand Forks: Client Assistance Program (CAP) removing barriers for employment and CIL.

Kayla Stastney, DHHS: Provided reminders on available resources: Education Initiatives, Parents Lead, October Prevention, Substance Use for October. Suicide Prevention Toolkit for schools was put out last month. Provided updated and reminder on 988 and 1st link, and Conference in Bismarck next week in Bismarck. Fee to register

Loretta Benedict, Career Navigator, RADaR and XR VR in Bismarck State: Provided an overview of XR for VR and RADaR. XR for VR includes a virtual room to look at careers. RADaR program for those incarcerated to take college courses. Invited us to Bismarck State College for the next CoP meeting in January to see the new XR for VR room and presentation.

Atiana Beck, Project director for RADaR at Registered Apprenticeships Done Right: Provided further overview of RADaR-grant awarded in 2021 and in last year of grant. Apprenticeship comes from Dept of Labor. Trying to establish apprenticeships in community of ND, focusing on manufacturing, health care, robotics, and automotives. Focused on underserved populations, prison education…

Colette Fleck, Standing Rock Community Schools: Provided an overview of all the secondary transition activities occurring within Standing Rock. The radio station still continues, students have started small gardening project, collaborations with outside agencies continue and are strong. Community Fair coming up 10/23 and many more exciting things for students!

Jen Smart, DDPM: Reiterated difficulties in finding staffing within rural communities and attempts to problem solve ideas to think outside the box for customized employment within rural communities.

Rikki Tragerton, Community Living in Fargo: CLS provides services to people from birth to death. They provide employment opportunities and can work with students still in high school. CLS also works with individuals on independent living in order to remain in their home. CLS tries to "bridge that cliff" to get people employed, and make it easier and more manageable. Knowledgeable on CILs as well.

Micah Olson, Attorney at P&A: Program for SSI and SSDI,

<u>Online:</u>

Penny Nygaard, Federation of Families : No updates

Kaycee Johnson, ND DHHS, DD Division: Conversations for rural differential. Creating host homes. Working with home schooled and school requirements. Provided update on the secondary transition services guide, medical exemptions, guardianship.

Richelle McGregor, Fargo VTC: DD provider agency that has a variety of DD programs. Working with West Fargo School district with their PreEts program providing job coaching and job development.

Jeff Anderson, Arc of Cass County: Arc Cass County provide services in Cass County and all of South Eastern ND. Provided classroom grants for special educators within Cass County area for curriculum, materials, etc.. Also works on advocacy work

Ruth Lacher, Job Service ND:

Kiara Crosby, Director of Northern Plains SEU: Continue to support the Transition Social Group. Have interagency collaboration including (Minot State- nursing program, church for building use, Independence Inc, Vocational Rehab, Teachers/paras, districts for transportation, etc) Spoke highly of the committed community that work together to support students and programming.

Heather Kapella, HHS: Stated the new priorities for children and youth with special health care needs is medical home, but we will continue to work on transition from pediatric to adult health care. The new adolescent health priority is mental health. We are working wtih CREA to spread the word on the Check and Connect program and try to get it into more schools. We continue to work with UND FMC in Bismarck to provide well child visits in Standing Rock and Towner schools and provide telehealth mental health visits to the students as needed.

Mistie Boully, Pathfinder ND:

Julie Horntvedt, DD Council: Hosting a virtual training program for students ages 13+ through the Parent Training Center of Utah about healthy relationships, boundaries, and IDD sex education. The training is 7 weeks (not holidays) and is free, contact Julie for more information. The NDDAC (North Dakota Disability Advocacy Consortium) is working on an advocacy letter.

Matthew McCleary, ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health and Mental Health America of ND-MHAND continues to provide mental health service navigation to anyone who calls our helpline (701) 255-3692. ND Federation of Families can assist with Mental Health services through the system of care grant. They have two coordinators available for family peer support with raising children with mental health challenges. For family-driven navigation, support, and advocacy call (701)222-3310

Katie McNamara, Federation of Families:

Jodi Scheeler:

Torie Post, Souris Valley SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator:

Katelyn Vilmo, Freedom Resource Center: New co-lead for Region V

Angie Johnson, Grand Forks SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator:

Rachele Krebsbach, Northern Plains SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator:

Tami Ternes, ND Assistive:

Linda Ehlers, ND School for the Deaf Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

<u>Supported Decision Making and Guardianship Presentation, Micah Olson, P&A:</u>

Micah presented on guardianship, alternatives to guardianship, and the process for guardianship in ND. A discussion occurred regarding guardianship. The financial aspect of guardianship is a barrier for families. DD has some funding to pay up to $3,000 of guardianship fees if the individual qualifies under DD.

Membership Discussion: Secondary Transition issues and concerns

Bridging the transition cliff.

More employment options in rural areas, need personnel to be job coaches in the rural areas (rural differential would be beneficial), and transportation if an individual does not qualify under DD.

What is the best way to get information regarding outside agencies to teachers?

Financial aspect of guardianship is a barrier.

Homelessness Presentation-Jen Withers, NDDPI:

Jen presented on the McKinney-Vento Act, including the definition of homelessness and educational definition. She provided information on ND century code surrounding homelessness, websites and programming for resources to assist those struggling with homelessness, and some ND data surrounding students experiencing homelessness

XR for VR-Bruce Klootwyk

Bruce provided a more in-depth presentation on XR for VR, the programs, partnerships, and mission/vision of the program. They are looking for a youth 18-24 to be on the advisory, and a direct support professional for advisory committee. Contact Bruce at XR for VR if interested. Updates on workshops and upcoming robotics day were provided, which are available on their website.

Regional Community of Practice Updates:

Region I: Northwest Region (Williston): Jackie Tesky – Secondary Transition training for teachers on 11/19.
Region II: Northcentral Region (Minot): Looking for a lead. Participate with Independence Inc. Transition Fair, which was held in April. Three different groups developed curriculum, and students came and learned information.
Region III: (Devils Lake): Jordan Lunde-no update
Region IV: Northeast Region (Grand Forks): Jessica Pankow – Have a really good core group, looking to expand, working on a resource for information
Region V-Fargo-Jamie Svor and Katelyn Vilmo. Hosted a movie, rented out a theater in Fargo and showed Casper, had 275 people. Looking at planning a spring transition fair. Core group of people.
Region VI: (Jamestown). Heidi Budeau-Career fair every other year. Meet monthly.
Region VII: Southcentral (Bismarck): Tom Schiwal and Heather Kapella –no updates
Region VIII: Southwest Region (Dickinson): Need a lead

Next Meetings: The next meetings will be January 21, 2026 at Bismarck State College, and April 15, 2026, in the Pioneer Room.