Meeting Minutes – January 21, 2026

Welcome and review of ND CoP Mission: Jen welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Mission Statement and schedule for the day were reviewed. Loretta from BSC provided a quick run-down of the facility and lunch options. Jen then showed a video of the new Apple Commercial, "I'm Not Remarkable." 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 reminded the CoP about the need to develop goals for the CoP. Jen received goal ideas from one individual from the CoP, and she went over those ideas. Jen provided a QR code to a Forms document for other members to add their goal suggestions. Jen would like a goal set for the following school year. If members have ideas, please submit ideas at this link: https://forms.office.com/g/i9XvK0hWxD

XR for VR Presentation and Tour of Bismarck State College's Advanced Technology Center with Bruce Klootwyk and Shannon Coulter:

Bruce shared his powerful personal story with the CoP, and both Bruce and Shannon shared information regarding XR for VR's grant, partnerships, and vision for the future. They provided the in-person members with a tour of the Advanced Technology Center, including a tour of the new Virtual Reality Room. Those attending in person were able to interact with the Virtual Reality Room and saw firsthand how this room could be used for students, clients, and participants.

Future Planning 101 with Rachel Hafner, The ARC Grand Forks:

Rachel provided a training on the Future Planning 101 resource, which Is a free online resource on the Arc's website. It is a great way for people with disabilities to organize important and necessary documents and personal information into a one-stop shop that is easy to access. This information is useful for outside agency providers coming into the home, caretakers, medical providers, schools, and anyone who may work with the individual. It is a great tool for people with and without disabilities. Many CoP members identified ways they could utilize and benefit from this resource.

Membership Updates and Sharing:

In Person:

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!

Eliason Bullock, YCC: Students at YCC conducted mock interviews with some of the industries in the Bismarck Mandan area. The students did great and were excited about the opportunity to see the jobs out there.

Micah Olson, Protection and Advocacy (P&A): Micah is now the P&A representative for this CoP, taking over for Nick Murphy. No first order updates at this time.

Rachel Tabler, NDDPI :

Jackie Teskey, WILMAC: We were fortunate to have Jen do a transition training for Wilmac schools. It was incredibly helpful and I have seen significant improvements in paperwork. We continue to discuss getting a transition committee.

Kiara Crosby, Director of Northern Plains SEU: We continue to have robust Transition Social Group! New leader, team collaboration matters, support with Thrivent funds, and gaming for food- always a tricky part is funding the food. Had Christmas gift day, nurses from MSU teaching health. Working to train new staff on all things transition! Building jobs locally with libraries, restaurants, school maintenance, agricultural placements… teachers activity seeking job placements- looking forward to spring job fair in Minot and annual field trip.

Jenifer Updike, NDDPI Office of Specially Designed Services: Secondary Transition Talks are occurring on the Educational Hub. The first talk occurred in January with Kasi Kauts from DD Council and Micah Olson with P&A about Supported Decision Making. Teachers are very interested in a one-pager resource developed by Kasi. This is being looked over by P&A and will be circulated once it's completed. Rachel from The ARC Grand Forks provided the second talk in February, and Kayla from NDHHS will do the talk in February. There are 57 registered for this course on the Hub, 6 people attended the live session, and so far 15 have taken the first talk online. Collaborating with units to provide training to educators on Ind 13 and 14. NDDPI is still looking for Grad701 Advisory Committee members. If interested, please complete the form online. Updates on Ind 13 and 14 will occur next time due to time constraints.

Rikki Tragerton, Community Living in Fargo: We are excited to be partnering with NDCPD for a Customized Employment Grant. We are also finally serving pre-COVID numbers of students in Pre-ETS. We are very busy finding employment for people in the community!

Kerrie Oster, Minot Public Schools: Planning 18-21 programming - some HS seniors spending time in our Crossroads program to help with the transition next year. Continuing to work on some unique credit options for students. Building a partnering program with MSU - HS students taking classes and could work as peer mentors/student support. Unified PE classes in a few of our schools (students with disabilities and general ed peer mentors) - had a parent share how excited she was when students were saying hi to her child in the community.

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

Dan Juve, Upper Valley Special Education Unit Director: Attending in the place of Jessica Pankow this month. At this time we are in a transition for our ATP program. We will be moving our site from the public school in Grafton to the LSTC Campus. More space, more opportunities for rec/leisure, bigger Kitchen, bigger dining room, more community options, this also gives the students the opportunity to get off the school campus and feel more like adults rather than HS students

Kayla Stastney, ND DHHS Behavioral Health Division: Parents Lead and Parents Lead for Professionals continue to be a resource for behavioral health related needs by age/topic. They are also willing to translate specific materials into other languages. (parents lead.org) Also encouraging school communities to make connections to their regional behavioral health clinics (formerly Human Service Centers). They all have behavioral health liaisons who are making community connections and help the clinics be responsive to regional needs. They also have crisis services that are mobilized by 988, when their interventions are not enough for the behavioral health need. I will email Jen the list of liaisons. https://www.hhs.nd.gov/service-locations/regional-behavioral-health-clinics.

Loretta Benedict, Career Navigator, RADaR and XR VR in Bismarck State:

Darrel Hannum, ND Vocational Rehabilitation Director: VR is trying to reengage with partners and develop new relationships. If we haven't visited in a while or would like to partner with VR please reach out to Darrel Hannum, dhannum@nd.gov

Jen Smart, DDPM: No agency updates.

Lilly Dunrud, NDVS/School for the Blind: I am new to the Transition Specialist role at NDVS/SB, and I'm trying to learn and absorb as much as possible, so I can help my students.

Kasi Kautz, Council for Developmental Disabilities: I am in the final stretch of planning for the Better Together Conference, taking place on February 25, 2026, for middle and high school students with and without intellectual disabilities. Mock interview events (3 different sessions) will begin on January 28th with high schools in the Bismarck/Mandan area, and we will also facilitate mock interviews in Fargo during the Secondary Transition Fair. In addition, I am in the early stages of planning Life Planning Binder workshops. I have also started collaborating with the Early Learning Coalition and hope to support them as future projects arise.

Sarah Duven, Anne Carlsen Center: No first order updates.

Shawn Jenner, Anne Carlsen Center: First time attending this CoP. No first order updates.

Lea Kugel, NDDPI: Lea provided an update on the dispute resolution portfolio and number of facilitated IEP, mediation, and state complaint requests received this year. She also provided an updated on the Dyslexia screener training, and the SPDG/Grad701 project and SPP/APR.

Morgan Edmundson, NDDPI Office of Specially Designed Services: Morgan is working with North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) to create a TBI Guidance Document for the state, and continues to work on the SPP/APR.

Dustin Bures, NDSP: First time attending this CoP. No first order updates.

Online:

Kendra Vanderwall, Designer Genes: At Designer Genes we are looking forward to kicking off our meet-ups for families across the state. We are hoping families use these events to ask questions, build community, and

connect with one another. We are partnering with ND Council of Developmental Disabilities to run a mock interview series. We have a few families currently in the transition age and we have been supporting families with transitional questions and guardianship as well as connecting them to necessary organizations to support their questions.

Tracey Olson, ASTEP and IMPCCT Projects: ASTEP at MSU has spots available for next fall. IMPCCT Project is Post Secondary Ed programs all are looking for referrals for next fall. We will be putting together a survey to get to students with ID and families in the state as we are looking forward to our future planning of helping additional universities to start an IPSE programs. We are open to meeting with schools, special education units, and other agencies who may want more information about post Secondary Education programs. The Journey Program at NDCPD has 3 Dd Providers in the southern part of the state. We will be training those partners on Customized Employment. In the future we will be seeking other agencies in the state interested in Customized Employment solutions for their consumers. Our focus is working with those supporting transition aged youth and adults.

Richelle McGregor, Fargo VTC: Continue to work on a remodel and building a space to put in a PAES lab. Have started working with Horace High School for PreEts.

Jeff Anderson, Arc of Cass County: We are in the early stages of developing a program in partnership with local schools that would allow interested high school students to take a CTE class for credit that would prepare them for employment as a Direct Care Professional (DSP) with a DD service provider. HS students would take a coursework from Minot State that is the same curriculum that employed DSP's are required to take. From there, the Arc would arrange job shadows with providers and/or work at the Arc alongside people with DD. We have permission to use the curriculum, a partner agency, and working on two school partners. The goal is to structure this as an internship where students learn store tasks while also mentoring and working alongside peers with disabilities. Our hope is that these students will consider future employment as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) during college, inspire interest in pursuing degrees in the human services field. It also provides students with disabilities meaningful opportunities to learn work skills, build confidence, and strengthen their resumes for future employment- all while working alongside peer mentors from their high school. This may make the work environment more inviting. Also am working on a document for parents of kiddos with Autism to plan for wandering in the event that it ever happens. The document would provide suggestions on information to collect in advance of an event (description, fears, interests); a 911 script; map of danger areas (bodies of water, areas of special interest like fire stations etc); and a plan for first responders (as some people with ASD may hide when exposed to shouting, whistles, flashlights, etc).

Andrea Johnson, South Valley and Rural Cas Special Education Unit Director: We are working with Jen Updike to plan a transition workshop for our staff. I am on the Region V committee and we / they updated and printed a region V Transition guide which was sent out to all of our transition tea hers.

Jami Svor, Secondary Transition Specialist, West Fargo Schools: West Fargo is implementing Project SEARCH during the 2026-2027 school year. Planning is currently underway and we will be hosting an information night on January 29 as part of outreach to help students, families and community partners to gain a better understanding of the program.

Dana Kasaowski, NDSCS: Working with students to get academic accommodations in place for spring semester.

Linda Ehlers, ND School for the Deaf Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Starting to work on camp in June. We try to hire a student as a counselor in training position to get interview and work experiences.

Penny Nygaard, Federation Families: no first order updates.

Torie Post, Souris Valley SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator:

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

Jodi Scheeler, ND School for the Deaf Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Minot: No first order updates.

Angie Johnson, Grand Forks SEU Secondary Transition Coordinator:

Tami Ternes, ND Assistive:

Rachel Hafner, The Arc Grand Forks: No first order updates.

Kaycee Johnson, NDHHS, DD: Residential & Vocational Administrator for ND Health & Human Services Developmental Disabilities Section: We are working on strategic planning and guidance for Developmental Disabilities Program Managers (DDPM's) to provide more guidance for transition and IDEA, students that might have shortened school days, guidance for transition for students that attend private or homeschool settings. We are taking a closer look at youth to adult service transitions and wanting to gather more information on any gaps in services or supports. Taking a look at the Youth Community Social Supports grants that were utilized the previous 2 summers by a couple DD service providers for children 12 to 21 that provided social and community opportunities for students over the summer. We believe this would be an area of benefit for families for after school care for those 12 and up during the school year and over the summer. Employment is another area of strategic planning we are working on, finding ways we can help find meaningful employment, transitioning individuals from Pre-Vocational services to competitive employment. I would like to continue to strengthen our collaboration with VR, DPI, and Schools to support student transitions and transition activities. I am looking forward to presenting to teachers for the Secondary Transition Talks in March regarding Developmental Disabilities eligibility and service options. The DD section is working to roll out a Host Homes Pilot program that will be added to our Home and Community Based Waiver in the near future. This program will focus in Region 5 and Region 7 to start with for children in crisis at risk of out of home placement. We are contracting with Nexus PATH to utilize their licensed homes to "host" the youth, get wrap around services in place for the child and biological family and once the child is stable and ready to return to their bio home the PATH home will still provide respite services and stay engaged in the wrap around services that were started at the PATH home. Year 2 of work has begun on a Children's Cross Disability waiver to fill some gaps in services for children that exit Early Intervention services that still need support but don't meet the eligibility criterion for DD services such as those with mental health diagnosis, physical disabilities, autism, and medically fragile.

Regional Community of Practice Updates:

Region I: Northwest Region (Williston): Still looking to get meetings up and running for Region I.
Region II: Northcentral Region (Minot): Looking for a lead. No meetings have occurred this year. No updates.
Region III: (Devils Lake): No updates.
Region IV: Northeast Region (Grand Forks): Region IV is developing a 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 in the Spring. We have speakers on Rec & Leisure, Budgeting and REALNESS which is a curriculum for individuals

with disabilities in regards to healthy relationships, informed consent, internet safety, appropriate relationships, safe touch zones, etc. Sponsors for the event are DD Council & VTC (Vocational Training Center). This will be occurring on April 28th 9am-12pm at Dakota Medical Foundation
Region VI: (Jamestown). Region VI hosted the Health Technology and Trades Career Fair on November 6th. 17 schools participated with approximately 600 students. 26 vendors with close to approximately 35 interactive booths were present.
Region VII: Southcentral (Bismarck): No meetings have occurred this year. No updates
Region VIII: Southwest Region (Dickinson): Still searching for a lead.

Transition Issues and Concerns:
Jen has received two phone calls about information requests. One regarding SSI information, which she was able to get information for this individual from some of the CoP members. Darrell also brought up some SSI concerns. Families need more information about this area. This is an area of need.

A second phone call was regarding Autism Safety information for schools and families. Jeff at the Arc Fargo took this project on and will create an Autism safety one-pager resource for schools and parents. Jeff requested volunteers for a work group. Jen at NDDPI and Kasi at DD Council are willing to assist. Others interested should reach out to Jen at jupdike@nd.gov. Members provided information on other safety resources like the Safety Jacket Program and the Find Safe Program. The work group will look into these.

The CoP review October's concern, which continue to be issues and needs; however, the CoP is working to get information to the teachers through Secondary Transition Talks, and agencies are working together to provide cross training opportunities.

Fargo and West Fargo VR Update:
Curt, Tyson, and Ethan from VR in West Fargo and Fargo provided updates on how VR is involved with students within the secondary transition programs at Fargo and West Fargo. They gave an overview of the programs (Invest, Transition Academy, and Project Search), and showed some activities they do with the students. The VR counselors have developed games (How to Be a Millionaire, Jeopardy, and Recipe for a Job) that engage the students, teach job skills and self advocacy skills, and develop rapport. They are happy to share the questions and games with others who may want to implement them with their clients/students.

Next Meetings: The next meeting will be April 15, 2026 in the Pioneer Room at the Capitol.