

Transition CoP Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes –September 22, 2021

Attending: Dr. Ann Beste-Goldberg, Barb Burghart, Kirsten Dvorak, Linda Ehlers, Wendy Dannenfelzer, Mark Ehrmantraut, Donene Feist, Colette Fleck, Amanda Francis, Cynthia Wagner Goulet, Danielle Hoff, Linette Irwin, Heather Kapella, Marsha Knutson, Jeannie Krull, Lea Kugel, Ruth Lacher, Tracey Olson, Kerrie Oster, Dawn Paulsrud, Katie Richards, Roxane Romanick, Jeanine Schmidt, Jami Svor, Rikki Trageton, Jackie Teske, Deb Unruh, Brandon Vandervort, Mari Wanzek, Renee Wetzsteon,

Welcome: Lea Kugel opened the meeting with a welcome and thanked everyone for what they do for students who are transition aged in the state of ND. She notified the team of changes within the NDDPI, Office of Special Education: Mary McCarvel-O’Conner is the new Director of Special Education and Lea Kugel is the new Assistant Director of Special Education. NDDPI Office of Special Education has two more staff resign in addition to Emmanuel Mensah, they include Karyn Chiapella and Susan Gerenz. The Office is currently looking to fill the positions. The advisory counsel than reviewed the minutes from the June meeting and accepted them. Then they reviewed the membership list. Lea will contact members on the list that were questioned as to whether they were still participating.

ND Transition CoP:

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:

Jeanine Schmidt; Dickinson High School: Held summer job shadows, work experiences and volunteering opportunities for students to support agencies in the community. 36 students were provided job experience opportunities. 18 of those students found jobs through the experiences.

Dr. Anne Beste-Goldberg; IMPCCT Consortium Project: expanding TPSID post-secondary programs. There are currently three programs in ND: The ASTEP program at Minot State, which currently has 17 students enrolled who will receive an alternate certificate. REACH at Bismarck State College currently has 6 students and will be moving forward with enrolling more. The students are enrolled in typical vocational programs. The other is Aspire at Dakota College at Bottineau where they started with one student and have expanded to five. They are looking for one more site and will be creating a list of programs students can enroll in if they choose.

Brandon Vandervort; Grand Forks Public Schools: There are about 30 students who are in the Adult Transition Program and about 2/3. Grand Forks is working with agencies to form partnerships for students. They were able to get back on track with the summer work experience. They also have new students moving in, many of whom have already had a job.

Barb Burghart; Vocational Rehabilitation: They have a new Director and Assistant Director and an open regional administrator position in Devil's Lake and a counselor position in Bismarck. They are getting a new website and continue to move with the Department of Health.

Dawn Paulsrud; GST Special Education Unit: Students and staff are getting back in the classroom. Staff are being trained with Conover coursework, transition assessment and Choice Ready.

Deb Unruh; Dickinson High School: Started an Academy model – more collaboration with general ed. and special ed. and guidance counselors-working with some Choice Ready work. Collaborating with the ARC doing a “book study” where they will receive rewards for completing. They are also doing projects students could sell at the ARC. They will be conducting a business expo “speed interviewing event” where students choose 3 businesses to conduct an interview with. Last year they did this as well and kids go hired. Finally, they complete Customized Employment training with two students who now happily employed.

Amanda Francis; Behavioral Health Division: They are working on Suicide Prevention Efforts and developing curriculum for educators related to mental health. Amanda will present at next the next Transition CoP meeting and will share Behavior Health tools for school personnel.

Donene Feist; Family Voices: Received a grant from Special Health Services to train families with transition age students on health-also a training for families with children of ID. The monthly extended learning calls for parents, providers, etc. will continue this year. They will continue sharing their newsletter-let her know if there is anything you want to go out in the newsletter.

Danielle Hoff and Heather Kapella; Special Health Services: They completed year two of their five-year plan. Year two will be an extension of year one. They have been working on a provider toolkit -focus on transitioning from pediatric to adult care. They have sent out a PowerPoint for school nurses to review and will collaborate with VR to present the material outlined in the PowerPoint.

Jackie Teske; Wilmac Special Education Unit: They have added PAES labs and Project Discover Units. There are labs in Williston, Ray and Grenora. The labs are being used to begin work with middle school students. Wilmac has had a large influx of students with high needs moving in from other states. They have had a hard time hiring staff and looking for out of schoolwork experiences.

Kerrie Oster; Minot Public Schools: Have had a stressful start to the schoolyear with finding paraprofessionals and teachers. They hired a new staff person for the 18-21 year program who is bringing in new ideas for employment experiences. Transition students are busy working on various activities. Staff is working on graduation recover for students and increasing the number of Choice Ready students.

Ruth Lacher; ND Job Service: Trying to figure out why the unemployment numbers are not changing. They are responsible to provide data monthly to the Governor's Office regarding unemployment efforts. Have launched a Job Up campaign on social media trying to increase individual's interest with returning

to work. Have also been posting job openings on boards outside their agencies to increase awareness of job opportunities. On the youth front, they are busy getting youth enrolled in work experiences and college.

Linda Ehlers; ND School for the Deaf: Wanted to share that it is deaf awareness week. Many students have been moving into the state with hearing lost. Three students have gone through the interview experience which successfully enabled them to obtain a job. In addition, they have hired a new coordinator.

Linette Irwin; Oliver Mercer Special Education Unit: Have hired one new teacher in the unit and have been working on getting their students back into the community in chosen areas of work. They are entering their second year of work with the EWIMS pilot project where they are working with NDDPI and AIR to develop systems to track students.

Mari Wanzek; Fargo Public Schools: Fargo added a second transition room opened a district-wide summer work experience this past summer. The numbers were not as high as in the past, but it was good to get students in the community. Customized employment is getting up and running, and they are working on Choice Readiness.

Renee Wetzsteon; ND Federation of Families: They have a new person in the Fargo Office and are working on educational videos that will be on their website. They have been busy working with families and mental health needs of students.

Katie Richards; ND Disability Service Provider: With the beginning of a new school year, they have been working on maintaining students at the college level along with the Covid cases on campus.

Rikki Trageton; Community Living Services: Wrapping up work experiences for the summer and beginning fall work experiences. It seems as if people are excited to work and find jobs. They have provided customized work experiences with a couple students and are currently short staffed.

Roxane Romanick; Parent and Designer Genes of ND: Her daughter is in her fourth year at ASTEP where she has seven classes left to earn an associate degree. Her daughter was hired as a mentor for ASTEP and will be presenting at the Early Childhood Conference. Designer Genes: Saturday is the Buddy Walk for Down Syndrome which starts at 11. They have been working with a small subgroup from P&A to address snags for families applying for ABLE accounts. This has to do with ND guardianship laws and the five-year expirer. They have been collaborating with the YESS group, specifically for the YESS! Conference. I Can Bike and I Can Swim were both very successful this past summer.

Jamie Svor; West Fargo Special Education Unit: They have opened a new high school using the academy model, and eventually, the other two high schools in West Fargo will follow that model. They are wrapping up work-based learning experiences. Currently the Transition Academy has 30+ Students.

Cynthia Wagner Goulet; Protection & Advocacy: The Client Assistant Program (CAP) and P&A are updating their website and are doing work around individual justice plans. They also have fact sheets on their website about 504 and IEP plans that include information on supported decision making and things for students to consider if they are interested in SSI.

Wendy Dannenfelzer; Development Disabilities Division: They are working with students transitioning to college and providing services while the students are on campus and are busy staffing for other areas of transition.

Mark Ehrmantraut; Office of Special Education: Held the Northern Plains Law Conference which had some sessions specific to transition. He shared information about Senate Bill 2147 also referred to as the GED Bill that allows local school boards to decide if GED courses would tie into credits students can earn towards graduation.

Presentation:

Jolyn Webster from the Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) partnered with the State Bar Association and the ND Council of DD to create two adapted versions (standard and visual versions) of the “Living in an Adult World” Curriculum. The modifications make more easier to read and the content is less difficulty so it can be used by those with more severe disabilities. The Curriculum is accompanied with Supplemental Learning Activities for each of the 16 chapters. A person can opt to use one chapter at a time or use them all at once. Disclaimer: The materials are not meant to provide legal advice and contain sensitive topics, so make sure to obtain parent permission prior to using with students.

Link to [Living in an Adult World](#).

Link to Living in an Adult World [Adapted Resources](#).

Transition Issues and Concerns: There are a lot of staff shortages in the field. Have also been concerns with mental health in students and staff.

NDDPI updates: Interagency Secondary Transition Conference, “Blazing a Trail 2022”, will take place on November 2-3, 2022 at the Baymont Inn in Mandan. Registration fee is \$135 for both days or \$75 to attend for one day. Cost of vendor booth will be \$100. The opening Keynote will be Caleb Olson, and the closing keynote will be Hasan Davis. Committee will continue to meet.

Lea will be participating along with other members of NDDPI and NDCTE in the Council of Chief State School Officers Career Readiness Collaborative.

ND’s CTE/VR/SpED collaborative team attended the NTACTION Virtual Capacity Building Institute. Lea shared data from the NTACTION CBVI.

Nine different awards were given with transition discretionary funds for the 2020-2021 school year. They included: Wilmac Special Education unit who increased work based learning supports in the high school and transition/job readiness skills in the middle school; East Central Special Education Unit worked on preparing students to be Choice Ready; Northern Plains increased the number of PAES labs; DCIL continued to empower youth through YESS!; and Rural Cass, South Valley, GST, Sheyenne Valley and Wahpeton used funds to cross align applied topics courses with Conover Academy curriculum.

Mark shared information about the ND SSIP and SiMR related to messaging, alignment of efforts, pilot project of Early Warning Systems, Continuation of transition work into both middle and high school practices and the Web based document, PIER. To be successful, a student needs to show up, (attendance) know how to act (behavior) and work hard (do the academics). Relationships Matter. The Best predictor of Student achievement in school is family involvement The 2021-2022 message will be

“All students have hopes and dreams.” Last year’s message was “Dropping Out is a Process, NOT an event.”

Regional Community of Practice Updates:

Region I: Continue working on transition things and building relationships with community partners.

Region II: Next meeting will take place next week. In September, they toured Minot State for accessibility of resources.

Region IV: Have been holding hybrid meetings-held at the ARC in Grand Forks. The NE Human Services, Arc and Protection & Advocacy took part in the meeting. Feature speaker included students sharing their experiences in work settings. They will continue adding representatives from other agencies when they hold their next meeting.

Region V: Meetings held 2nd Thursday of each month, and they have 10-15 members who attend. Their last Conference had to be cancelled due to Covid, but the Spring Conference is now scheduled and will be scaled down from what it had been in the past. The Conference includes members from West Fargo, Northern Cass and Fargo, and will be held in person with students who regularly attend. Will look at holding their Region meetings in a hybrid style.

Region VII: Meetings have been held virtually, and attendance is down. The team has been visting about creating a mission statement. At the last meeting, a student from Standing Rock shared their transition portfolio and their PowerPoint for Graduation.

Region VIII: They do not meet on a regular basis and may look at how to increase the size.

CoP Priorities for the 2021-2022 School year:

NDDPI will be seeking assistance in setting targets for Indicators 1, 2, 13, 14 and 17 (transition indicators) for the next five-year State Performance Plan required by OSEP.

Next Meeting will be virtual through Teams and will take place on **December 15 from 9:00-3:00**. Lea will send an invitation with the link later. If anyone has any ideas for agenda items, please share prior to the next meeting.