# Accessible transitions for students with disabilities in kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12): to the workforce, the community and postsecondary education

Read the report from the Education Technical Sub-Committee about barriers that students with disabilities experience during transition and the recommendations for removing these barriers.

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Executive summary

The Technical Sub-Committee (sub-committee) is comprised of representatives from both the K-12 and Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committees (committees).

The sub-committee’s mandate, as received from the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, was to identify barriers that students with disabilities experience during transition, with a special focus on transition planning between the sectors, and to make recommendations for removing these barriers.

Transitions considered by the sub-committee included those into and within K-12 and from K-12 to work, the community and postsecondary education.

Specifically, the purpose of the sub-committee was to:

* share information across the K-12 and Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committees
* consider areas of commonality and alignment
* provide practical advice and guidance to both committees on transition planning and alignment issues
* review and provide input on committee meetings specific to transitions
* identify barriers to students with disabilities during transitions throughout their educational career and make recommendations for their effective removal

Note: Barriers relating to transitions from K-12 into colleges and universities are addressed in this report. Barriers relating to transitions within (for example, undergraduate to graduate) and out of postsecondary education to employment are addressed in the upcoming [Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee’s Initial Recommendations Report.](https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-2021-initial-recommendations-report)

### Barrier areas

The sub-committee identified eight broad areas of barriers that impact the experiences of students with disabilities transitioning between K-12; and from K-12 to postsecondary education. These are:

1. lack of consistency of planning in transitions
2. lack of understanding between the K-12 and postsecondary education systems
3. transitions for Indigenous students (between First Nations boards and communities and provincially funded school boards)
4. lack of a consistent and clear process (and required documentation) to obtain accommodation supports
5. not all students have individualized education plans – how to support those students (lack of clear support process)
6. integration of transition planning
7. financial implications for reassessment in the transition from K-12 and postsecondary education

### Transition planning

Transition planning involves a coordinated set of activities, undertaken by students, families and academic institutions, that are intended to support academic achievement, health and well-being through numerous transition periods in a student’s life. This includes the pathway to work, adult services, independent/supported living and community participation. These activities need to be informed by needs, experiences, strengths and interests. For students living with disabilities, equality of opportunity, and full and meaningful participation in their schools and communities require considerable planning, attention and coordinated services.

Audits of student individual education plans have consistently identified transition planning as an area for improvement because the transition from K-12 to postsecondary presents many barriers for students with disabilities. Many of these barriers stem from poor coordination between secondary schools and postsecondary education institutions.

Transitions for students with disabilities to the community or to employment can also be challenging. Adults with disabilities have higher rates of unemployment and under employment than individuals without disabilities. To address these barriers, supportive and effective transitions are essential for the future success of students with disabilities.

### Recommendations

The sub-committee made 75 recommendations to remove barriers that impact on the transition experience of students with disabilities in the following areas:

1. **Transitions to and within K-12 education**

The recommendations in this section address the following:

* creating transition facilitator/navigator positions across school boards mandated to specifically support the transition needs of students with disabilities
* developing and sharing effective, evidence-based transition practices and resources to ensure consistency across the district school boards
* inter-ministerial collaboration to share financial supports for students with disabilities
* improving curriculum design for learning skill development
* eliminating streaming of students with disabilities
* improving the individual education plan process (including enhanced student participation), information to student and parents, and providing more funding for assessments

1. **Transitions from K-12 to postsecondary education**
2. **consistent and integrated transition planning**

The recommendations in this section address the following:

* establishing a professional learning community for transition facilitators/navigators
* co-creating a transition training program for students with disabilities for delivery in K-12 and postsecondary
* publishing transition-related barriers and their associated removal timelines in multi-year accessibility plans
* delivering assistive technology training for staff and students

1. **Collaboration and coordination**

The recommendations in this section address the following:

* enhancing funding for transition programming and transition facilitators/navigators
* improving access to accessible instructional materials and adaptive technology in a timely fashion (such as, before the start of classes)

1. **Documentation and funding barriers**

The recommendations in this section address the following:

* establishing consistent disability documentation requirements across postsecondary institutions
* establishing consistent disability documentation requirements within the K-12 sector aligned with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*
* providing accessible information about interim accommodations while waiting for documentation
* increasing bursary funding for assessments and other disability-related needs

1. **Transitions for Indigenous students with disabilities**

Recommendations in this section centre on striking an Accessible Indigenous Education Circle to address the unique transition barriers faced by Indigenous students with disabilities. The circle would share information and make recommendations specific to the needs of Indigenous students with disabilities, including about language and training to remove systemic barriers.

1. **Transitions from secondary school to the workplace and community**

The recommendations in this section address the following:

* expanding experiential learning opportunities for high school students
* establishing repositories for sharing of transition planning resources
* making information about alternative credential programs available and accessible

1. **Alternative transition programs/pathways**

The recommendations in this section address the following:

* developing, promoting and funding alternative academic and non-academic programs and pathways in postsecondary institutions
* developing, through ministry collaboration, new industry-recognized certification programs to offer more options for gaining employability skills and portfolios

The full reports are posted in the following locations:

* K-12 Education Initial Recommendations Report
* Postsecondary Education Initial Recommendations Report

### Purpose of the education technical sub-committee

In the initial mandate letter (2017) from former Minister Responsible for Accessibility Tracy MacCharles, and the updated mandate from Minister for Seniors and Accessibility Raymond Cho (2019), the chairs of the K-12 and the Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committees were asked to consider the subject of transition for students in both sectors.

A technical sub-committee was created from members of both these committees (see Appendix A) to address this request.

More specifically, the purpose of the technical sub-committee is to:

* share information across the K-12 and Postsecondary Education Standard Development Committees.
* consider areas of commonality and alignment.
* provide practical advice and guidance to both committees on transition planning and alignment issues.
* review and provide input on committee meetings.
* identify barriers to students with disabilities during transitions through K-12 into the workforce, the community and postsecondary education and make recommendations for their effective removal.

Note: Barriers relating to transitions from K-12 into colleges and universities are addressed in this report. Barriers relating to transitions within (for example, undergraduate to graduate) and out of postsecondary education to employment are addressed in the Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee’s Initial Recommendations Report.

The sub-committee identified eight barrier areas that impact transitions between K-12 and to postsecondary education:

1. lack of consistency of planning in transitions
2. lack of understanding between the K-12 and postsecondary education systems
3. transitions for Indigenous students (between First Nations Boards and communities and provincially funded school boards)
4. lack of a consistent and clear process (and required documentation) to obtain accommodation supports
5. not all students have individualized education plans – how to support those students (lack of clear support process)
6. integration of transition planning
7. financial implications for reassessment in the transition from K-12 and postsecondary education

Context

Transition planning involves a coordinated set of activities, undertaken by students, families and academic institutions, that are intended to support academic achievement, health and well-being through numerous transition periods in a student’s life. This includes the pathway to work, adult services, independent/supported living, and community participation. These activities need to be informed by needs, experiences, strengths and interests. For students living with disabilities, equality of opportunity, and full and meaningful participation in their schools and communities require considerable planning, attention and coordinated services.

Transitions for many students with disabilities can be challenging, including grade to grade, school to school and between school boards. The COVID-19 pandemic has made many aspects of the educational experience difficult, and transitions are no exception. In addition, the transition at the end of secondary school to postsecondary, and the transition from both levels to the world of employment can present unique challenges. Adults with disabilities have higher rates of unemployment and under employment than individuals without disabilities. Supported and effective transitions can impact the future success of students with disabilities.

When thinking about transitions, there is a tendency to think about the large transitions involved that include: first entry to school, grade to grade, school to school, elementary to secondary, secondary to the workplace, secondary school to postsecondary institutions and secondary school to community participation.

Smaller transitions that also need to be addressed include those within class settings: activity to activity, class to class movement, non-instructional times in the day, community hours, and co-op and other experiential learning experiences.

There are several guiding principles to apply when engaged in transition planning. They include:

* acknowledging a student’s right to supports and services
* including student and family voice in the planning process
* remaining student-centred and directed to the greatest extent possible
* promoting self-advocacy and interdependence
* collaborating across the education and other sectors
* reflecting an accessible and inclusive practice

Transition plans must:

* identify specific and individualized transition goals that are consistent with students’ strengths, needs and experiences to inform successful transitions
* identify accommodation and support needs
* implement the actions required to achieve the goals
* identify roles and responsibilities
* set timelines for the implementation and completion of each of the identified actions
* be aligned with effective practices in assessment-informed instruction
* invite choice in program options based on strengths, preferences, interests and needs
* create multiple accessible pathways to student achievement and well-being

The Ministry of Education and school board audits of Individual Education Plans have consistently identified transition planning as an area for improvement. However, transition practices are not consistent within school boards or across the province, with practices frequently dependent on the skills and knowledge of individual principals or teachers. More sharing of effective practices and resources is required to ensure that school board staff have the resources and training to support effective transitions.

Transitions to postsecondary education also present specific barriers for students with disabilities. Many of these barriers stem from lack of coordination between secondary schools and postsecondary institutions. Barriers include those associated with disability documentation, linking students with on-campus transition supports, and awareness of the information about available supports such as learning skills development, funding, and social supports. Students with disabilities also require enhanced skill development to prepare them for the adult, independent learning environment in postsecondary institutions.

Students with disabilities also face a number of barriers in securing and successfully participating in experiential learning placements and co-op programs. These barriers include attitudes about disabilities, concerns about the safety of students with disabilities or others, lack of accessible transportation, provision of on-site job coaches or supports, and the real or perceived costs of accommodations to support the student’s needs.

The Education Technical Sub-Committee makes the following recommendations intended to remove barriers for students with disabilities in their transition through K-12 into work, community or postsecondary education. As noted, the Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee’s Initial Recommendations Report addresses the barriers for students with disabilities through the postsecondary journey and into employment.

Transitions to and within K-12

The Ministry of Education shall:

1. Ensure the sharing of effective practices about effective transitions for students with disabilities by developing a repository and mechanism for sharing with school boards, students and their families.
2. Make available to school boards transition resources, guidelines and other materials that facilitate targeted instruction on self-advocacy, disclosure and transition planning.
3. Make available to school boards, resources that support instruction for teaching the learning skills outlined in the report card, as these skills are directly linked to student achievement, and help students understand how they learn best and what supports they might require to access their learning.
4. In partnership with school boards, design an integrated transition planning approach with service providers and other partners who deliver services for students with disabilities so that multiple plans with similar and/or distinct goals are merged into one document.
5. Ensure consistency across boards in designing and implementing evidence-based transitional practices and processes with early intervention services across Ontario.
6. Ensure that all evidence-based transition practices and processes include a comprehensive system of services and supports for students with disabilities transitioning into Kindergarten.
7. Mandate school boards to design strengths-based curriculum resources, assessment methods, and professional development for educators about assessing the resiliency needs of all students, including students with disabilities that will promote and enhance their mental health and well-being.
8. Mandate that school boards design curriculum resources that focus on the development of learning skills including executive functioning skills (for example, emotional and physical self-regulation, working memory, self-monitoring, organizational planning and prioritizing, and task initiation).
9. End the practice of prematurely streaming students with disabilities as well as students from cultural, linguistic and economically disadvantaged communities, into courses or academic streams, that limit options and pathways to postsecondary education and employment.
10. Collaborate with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and other relevant ministries to ensure that schools receive information about community and provincial supports, such as those available through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) and the Ontario Disability Supports Program (ODSP). Such information shall include details about eligibility criteria and application processes.
11. Require school boards to make the information indicated in recommendation ten available to school staff and students with disabilities and their families beginning in Grade 7 through the individual education plan process.

District School Boards shall:

1. Create a Transition Facilitator/Navigator position with a mandate to:  
   1. assist students to access special education supports
   2. educate school staff and secondary students about services, supports and accommodations typically available at postsecondary institutions
   3. support students and their families, school staff and community agencies to identify pathways and develop transition plans
   4. support students to identify and access supports, services and accommodations at their chosen destinations
   5. consult and liaise with community disability service providers
   6. establish partnerships with social services agencies and business partners to support employment paths for graduating students with disabilities
   7. provide transition planning resource development and training for all school board and school staff
2. Ensure that co-operative education programs include accommodations and supports for all students as needed, including transportation to and from placements and support staff at placement as needed.
3. Where possible, and to the point of undue hardship, allow siblings of a student with a disability who attends a special education program outside of their home school, to attend that same school if requested by the family. Note: This does not include provincial schools, for example W. Ross MacDonald School.

1. Offer learning strategies courses in secondary school that are responsive and aligned with the individual education plans of participating students.
2. Facilitate the participation of all students with disabilities in their individual education plans and transition plans through teacher student conferences, beginning in elementary school.
3. Work with teachers to review curriculum and learning expectations (in literacy, social studies, etc.) that highlight the development of self-advocacy/self-awareness/resiliency skills.
4. Deliver professional development for educators about students disclosing their disability and how to help them identify and access available supports in secondary and postsecondary education, the workplace and in social situations.
5. Support instruction development for educators and students about the lived experiences of students with disabilities, the impact of their disability, how it might affect their need to request disability-related services, and how to identify and request specific and reasonable accommodations.
6. Ensure that students with disabilities receive all necessary accommodations and other supports as outlined in their individual education plans and transition plans when accessing summer or night school continuing education courses during their secondary school education.
7. Ensure that principals, guidance counsellors and high school teachers are informed about assessment requirements, including updated assessments (for example, psycho-educational), for postsecondary institutions.
8. Obtain information about the formal professional assessments that secondary school students with disabilities require to support their need for accommodations and supports at postsecondary institutions.
9. Ensure that students and their parents/guardians are given current information about why updated assessments are required prior to or when entering postsecondary education.
10. Ensure that students with an identification, placement and review committee (IPRC), and their parents/guardians, are informed in Grades 7 through 10 about the importance of updating their assessment during Grade 11 and 12.
11. Ensure that students in Grades 11 and 12 are informed during their individual education plan review/renewal meetings and transition support meetings if/when their formal professional assessment must be updated.
12. Ensure that students with an individual education plan only that includes a transition plan, and their parents/guardians, are informed in Grades 7 through 10 that they will need an identification, placement and review committee if they will be requesting accommodations when they enter postsecondary education. As well as ensuring students and their parents/guardians understand accommodations in K-12 do not automatically translate to the postsecondary environment and an assessment of accommodations needs will be conducted in postsecondary.
13. Ensure that every student with an individual education plan in their transition plans from Grade 9 onwards, and specifically in the year prior to graduation, is informed about the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD) and the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities (CSG-PDSE). Information provided will include the following:

* the Ontario Student Assistance Program Bursary for Students with Disabilities and the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities funding may be available for disability-related educational services and equipment.
* eligibility requirements for students with permanent and temporary disabilities to be eligible for Ontario Student Assistance Program Bursary for Students with Disabilities and the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities.
* how and where to apply including timelines for application and the importance of applying to Ontario Student Assistance Program early, when the application system first opens in summer
* fees for new or updated assessments completed up to six months prior to postsecondary education enrolment may be eligible for reimbursement through the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (to be assessed by the office for students with disabilities at the postsecondary school).
* the costs of a Learning Disability Assessment may be eligible for Bursary for Students with Disabilities and/or Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities. To be considered, the assessment must have taken place no more than six months before the student’s study start date.
* students attending publicly funded postsecondary schools need to apply to the Bursary for Students with Disabilities/ Canada Student Grant through the office for students with disabilities.
* students should engage with the postsecondary disability services office before the start of the school term.

1. Inform every student with an individual education plan and transition plan from Grade 9 onwards, and specifically in the year prior to graduation, about other funding sources for psycho-educational assessments if they are not Ontario Student Assistance Program-eligible (for example, sliding fee scale support available through the Assessment Resources Centers [RARC, NOARC] and through family health plans).

Transitions from K-12 to postsecondary education

For specific information regarding campus life, residence living, financial supports and transition within the postsecondary sector, read the upcoming Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee’s Initial Recommendations Report.

* 1. **Consistent and integrated transition planning**

The Ministry of Education shall:

1. Establish a centralized transitions hub that will serve as a professional learning community of practice for transitions facilitators/navigators (as identified in recommendation twelve). The hub will:
   1. serve as a network for transitions facilitator/navigators throughout the province
   2. facilitate sharing best practices in the field of transitions among public school boards and the postsecondary sector
   3. provide smaller boards partnership opportunities with other boards for partnerships in developing successful transition programs
2. Develop and share accessible information resources regarding supports available for students with disabilities at postsecondary institutions.
3. Direct K-12 boards to identify the barriers to transition at all levels of a student’s academic journey within their multi-year accessibility plans, indicating plans for barrier removal with appropriate timelines.
4. Ensure that assistive technology training is provided to staff and students as they explore the technologies required to access their learning in elementary schools, secondary schools, and as they transition to postsecondary institutions.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities shall:

1. Enhance existing transition programs for incoming postsecondary students with disabilities, in collaboration with the Offices for Students with Disabilities and stakeholders that include students with disabilities, to ensure the transition programs include, but are not limited to, the following:  
   * self-advocacy skills
   * resiliency skills
   * disclosing their disability (if, when and how)
   * how to describe the impact of their disability in daily life and at school
   * how to discuss one’s own disability and accommodation needs with postsecondary education accessibility personnel
   * understanding the link between disability documentation, one’s disability and functional limitations with academic accommodation needs
   * how to research, access and use assistive technologies used in secondary and postsecondary institutions
   * how to use personal assistive technologies with academic software/hardware requirements
   * how to manage accessibility supports (for example, attendant services, sign language interpreters, etc.)
   * essential learning skills such as effective note taking, organizing schoolwork and study materials, creating academic work plans (daily, weekly, monthly, term), planning assignments, creating study aids, etc.
   * negotiating accommodations with professors (for example, assignment extensions)
   * articulating and negotiating accommodation needs with peers in group work
   * understanding how to manage synchronous/asynchronous course work
   * navigating learning management systems
2. Postsecondary institutions shall promote and make the transition programs available on their website in a clear location.
3. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities shall provide government resources to develop and enhance the transition programs and supports.
   1. **Collaboration and coordination**

For specific information regarding campus life, residence living, financial supports and transition within postsecondary, follow the link below to read the upcoming Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee’s Initial Recommendations Report.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, shall:

1. Review and enhance the current funding formula to ensure that each Ontario postsecondary institution enhances programming designed to support the transition needs of students with disabilities (programming as outlined in recommendation 33).
2. Fund a transition facilitator/navigator position for each postsecondary institution who will lead the institution’s response to supporting the transition needs of students with disabilities. Transition facilitators/navigators will:
   * develop information and resources for the K-12 sector about services and supports, including accommodation services, available for students with disabilities at postsecondary institutions.
   * develop and deliver outreach and programming to students with disabilities to facilitate transitions.
   * coordinate with a range of institutional departments to educate programs on the transition needs of students with disabilities (this would include the admissions and recruitment, student life, residence and other departments operating transition programs).
   * advise the institution on transition-related barriers and make recommendations for their removal.
3. Establish a centralized transitions hub for postsecondary institutions that will perform the same functions as indicated for the K-12 transitions hub in recommendation 29. The hub will:
   1. serve as a professional learning community of practice network for transitions facilitators/navigators throughout the province.
   2. facilitate sharing best practices in the field of transitions among colleges and universities.
   3. provide smaller schools partnership opportunities with other schools for partnerships in developing successful transition programs.
   4. consult with students with disabilities on transitioning from/into postsecondary education to develop resources and programs.
   5. connect with the K-12 Hub to ensure a common understanding of ongoing transition needs of students with disabilities.
   6. provide professional development opportunities to ensure transition navigators have sufficient training, expertise and education to support the needs of students with disabilities transitioning into postsecondary education.
4. Ensure students are aware of the need to request accessible format material (for example, braille textbooks) in the semester before starting their postsecondary studies.
5. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, transition navigators shall develop and deliver a plan to coordinate technological assessment needs of student with disabilities, so they have the assistive technologies they require before commencing their postsecondary studies.
   1. **Documentation and funding barriers**

The Ministry of Education shall:

1. Use the data indicated in recommendation 21 in budgeting processes so that students with disabilities in Grades 11 and 12 receive new or updated formal professional assessments as they plan for transitions to postsecondary institutions.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities shall:

1. In collaboration with the Offices for Students with Disabilities in postsecondary institutions, develop documentation requirements to ensure the smooth transition from K-12 to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. These documentation standard requirements shall be reasonably consistent across the sector.
2. Require postsecondary institutions to publish clearly stated documentation requirements that:

* confirm that the student is a person with a disability
* confirm that the student does not have to disclose their medical diagnosis to receive accommodations
* requests sufficient information about the student’s functional limitations to inform accommodation planning

Increase the Ontario Student Assistance Program Bursary for Students with Disabilities funding cap of $2000 to match the current cost of neuro-psychological and psycho-educational assessment for eligible students, and permit reimbursement for other assessments, such as occupational assessments.

1. Ensure that the eligibility criteria for psycho-educational assessment funded through the ARCs are fair and equitable.
2. Increase funding options for students with disabilities who have significant educational related costs but are not Ontario Student Assistance Program eligible, or whose needs exceed the Ontario Student Assistance Program Bursary for Students with Disabilities available funding.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities shall:

1. Address and align funding for assessments and documentation requirements in K-12 to the *Ontario Human Rights Code* to remove barriers to transition.
2. Ensure that students with disabilities who are leaving high school without sufficient disability documentation are referred to the postsecondary offices for students with disabilities and informed that student’s may be eligible for interim accommodations at postsecondary institutions while they obtain updated documentation.

Transition for Indigenous students with disabilities

In addition to the current actions being taken through [Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/indigenous/), we recognize the importance of a collaborative and consultative process to ensure Indigenous students with disabilities are recognized and considered in the development of recommendations. As a starting point, the following additional recommendations have been provided to primarily address organizational, awareness, and attitudinal barriers faced by Indigenous students with disabilities:

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility in collaboration with other ministries shall:

1. Strike an Accessible Indigenous Education Circle to enhance collaboration among the ministries, First Nations Boards and communities, and provincially funded school boards with a focus on the unique and specific barriers faced by Indigenous students with disabilities. The circle shall establish a process to collaborate on and monitor the trends and needs of Indigenous students with disabilities, take a systemic examination into the accessibility needs of Indigenous students with disabilities during the numerous transitions they make throughout their educational careers, share and develop responsive transition planning, protocols and processes to support student success and well-being and meet the needs and identities of Indigenous students with disabilities, share resources between boards and First Nations communities.
2. The circle will be made up of a constituency group with members of who have knowledge, experience and understanding of disability, ableism, education and Indigenous peoples, their values, histories, current issues and cultures. The group should include First Nations Boards and communities, Indigenous educators and disability service providers.
3. Ensure information and resources developed through the *Accessible Indigenous Education Circle* are transmitted to the [Special Education Advisory Committees](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/seac/) to ensure knowledge sharing.
4. Ensure that education service agreements and memoranda of agreements between First Nations Boards and communities and the Ministry of Education should include language related to the transition with Indigenous students with disabilities to support student success and well-being.
5. Identify strategies to facilitate student information transferring between First Nations and provincially funded systems that does not cause undue delay in supports to Indigenous students with disabilities such as in the cases where a first nation’s student does not have an [Ontario Education Number](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/oen/index.html).
6. Ensure that the transition between Indigenous and the provincially funded schools should start early to address systemic barriers moving between systems and prepare the students spiritually and mentally.
7. Provide education transition facilitators/navigators for Indigenous students with disabilities to facilitate connections with students when transferring between First Nation’s schools and provincial schools. The transition facilitators/navigators will meet with students, parents, teachers, resource and key staff from both systems to provide advocacy, develop trust between parties where needed, and address fear of moving between systems.
8. Develop an outreach strategy to promote engagement and pathways to higher education for Indigenous students with disabilities.
9. Ensure students, families, transition facilitators/navigators and teachers are aware of, and supported to access band funding, scholarships, OSAP and other funding available to Indigenous students with disabilities.
10. Train teachers when writing individual education plans to consider not only the student’s disability and learning needs, but also gaps in cultural awareness and responsiveness within instruction, assessment practices and the learning environment that impact on student learning.
11. Provide coordinated professional development for teachers on Indigenous peoples to understand the complexities with transitions between the Indigenous and provincial systems for Indigenous students, including how to address and support the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of students.
12. Increase opportunities for Ontario teacher education programs and education partners to work cooperatively on enhancing Indigenous teacher education and teacher education programs that meet the needs of Indigenous learners with disabilities.
13. Increase awareness, and celebrate, Indigenous communities within schools to create a safe, welcome, accessible and inclusive environment and address racial tensions which exist, especially in specific regions of the province.
14. Promote and develop mental wellness tools for students transitioning which considers the [Indigenous Wellness Framework](http://chiefs-of-ontario.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/COO_FNMWC_Indigenous-Wellness-Framework.pdf).
15. Encourage and promote research and scholarship in the area of Indigenous students with disabilities and transition to higher education.

Transitions from secondary school to the workplace and community

The Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee’s Initial Recommendations Report has given extensive consideration to the subject of transitions from that sector to the workplace or community and you can read their recommendations when the report is posted.

The Ministry of Education shall collaborate to:

1. Ensure that administrators, teachers and other educational staff are sufficiently trained to effectively support transitions for students with disabilities throughout their school career, from school entry to postsecondary education, employment and community participation.
2. Expand current experiential learning opportunities and offer new ones for students with disabilities who transition directly to employment from secondary school to develop essential employment skills. Examples of current programs include the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM), Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), Community Involvement and cooperative education programs.

The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Colleges and Universities and Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development shall:

1. Establish a repository for sharing transition planning resources with educators to support the transition of students with disabilities to postsecondary institutions and the workplace.
2. Make information available through school boards about alternative credential program (for example, micro credentials) so that students with disabilities know of all available options during their transition planning.
3. Share existing employment practices and lessons learned between the K-12 and postsecondary institutions, provincial and federal employment providers for persons with disabilities, and the broader business associations to identify and address barriers to employment for students with disabilities.
4. Require that K-12 school boards publicly commit to ensuring that all experiential learning opportunities are equitable, inclusive and accessible for students with disabilities.
5. Require K-12 schools to ensure employment standards set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* are followed for all students participating in experiential learning opportunities.

Alternative Transition Programs/Pathways

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities and Ministry of Education shall:

Develop and promote alternative programs and pathways by:

1. Publishing information about accessible academic and non-academic programs currently available at universities and colleges in Ontario, Canada and worldwide.
2. Ensure transition navigators, guidance counsellors, and educators are aware of the alternative programs/pathways and inform students and families of these options.

1. Funding the development and expansion of academic and non-academic programs through Ontario universities and colleges.
2. Requiring postsecondary institutions to publish accessible and transparent information about alternate pathway programs such as Community Integration through Co-operative Education and special admission programs for students with disabilities.
3. Requiring colleges that offer the Community Integration Through Co-operative Education program to establish consistent admission requirements.
4. Collaborate with the Ministry of Education, and in consultation with industry experts and the disability community, to jointly offer new industry-recognized certification programs, like the current Ontario Skills Passport and food handling certificate.

Appendix

### Appendix A: sub-Committee members

**Co-chairs:**

* John (Jack) Stadnyk (K-12)
* Jeanette Parsons (Postsecondary Education)

**Members:**

* Ben Smith (K-12)
* Rana Nasrazadani (K-12)
* Lindy Zaretsky (K-12)
* Jon Greenaway (K-12)
* Jennifer Jahnke (Postsecondary Education)
* Elizabeth Mohler (Postsecondary Education)

**Honorary members**

* Lynn Ziraldo (K-12 chair)
* Tina Doyle (Postsecondary Education chair)

### Appendix B: Background information

Ontario has a framework for transitions under Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) PPM 156: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm156.pdf>, *Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs.* The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has a *Provincial Transition Planning Framework Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities* to coordinate access between school boards, health and community agencies. Ontario has a well-established program for the transition of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders into school through the Connections program. Developmental Services Ontario and the Ontario Disability Support Program have developed protocols for reducing duplication and recognizing eligibility of individuals with developmental disabilities for both programs.

More specifically, the following PPMs address school board requirements related to transition plans and planning:

* Regulation 181/98 requires that a transition plan be developed as part of the Individual Education Plan for exceptional students who are 14 years of age or older, unless they are identified solely as gifted.
* PPM 140 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/140.html> (May 2007) requires school boards to plan for transitions for students with ASD. Staff must plan for the transition between various activities and settings involving students with ASD.
* PPM 156 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm156.pdf> (September 2014) requires school boards to develop a transition plan for all students who have an individual education plan, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. The transition plan is developed as part of the individual education plan.

Students with disabilities assessed as young children are often not being reassessed using adult scales in secondary school. Grade 11 and Grade 12 students often report being denied an updated assessment in secondary school “because they are too close to graduation” and they are not sufficiently informed about why they need updated academic and disability documentation when entering postsecondary institutions.

### Appendix C: Guiding principles in transition planning guides

There are several documents published by the Ontario Ministry of Education that directly connect to transitions and transition planning. They include:

a) Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career Planning Program for Ontario Schools, Policy and Program Requirements, K-12, 2013

b) Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013

c) Special Education in Ontario K-12: Policy and Resource Guide, 2017

d) Planning Entry to School: A Resource Guide, 2005

e) The Individual Education Plan: A Resource Guide, 2004

f) Transition Planning: A Resource Guide, 2002

More sharing of effective practices and resource is required to ensure that school board staff have the resources and training to support effective transitions. See the reference list for more resources.

### Appendix D: Glossary of terms and research references

**Micro-credentials**

Rapid training programs offered by colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes across the province that can help you get the skills that employers need. They help people retrain and upgrade their skills to find new employment.

**Badge**

Use of digital technologies to represent competencies and various learning achievements; electronic badges should include meta-data on the evidence of learning and link back to sponsoring institution and evaluation criteria.

**Certificate**

A credential issued by an institution in recognition of the completion of a curriculum that usually represents a smaller domain of knowledge than established degrees. Credit bearing certificates must be approved by the institution. These certificates typically contain fewer credits than a degree program. All credits must be applicable toward a degree program at the issuing institution. Non-credit certificates need no external approval and must be identified as such.

**Certification**

Mastery of or competency in specific knowledge, skills or processes that can be measured against a set of accepted standards, usually established by a recognized entity.

**Experiential Learning**

Today's students need learning that goes beyond the classroom. School-work programs expand students' learning by helping them:

* understand more about the industries they may want to pursue in the future
* get exposed to career options in industries they may not have known about or even considered
* develop essential workplace skills
* see how their in-class learning can be applied in the workplace
* make more informed decisions about their education and career path so they make a successful transition into the job market
  + In experiential learning opportunities, students work in partnership with communities or community organizations to support community-identified priorities. These opportunities allow students to learn from community expertise, enhance their knowledge, and develop their social and civic responsibility. These opportunities typically involve engagement with community, non-profit, and/or public organizations. Co-curricular community-engaged learning consists of a structured learning experience that takes place outside of a course, in partnership with community for the purpose of supporting priorities identified by the community, enhancing students’ knowledge, and sense of social and civic responsibility. It occurs in non-profit, community and/or public organizations.
  + Experiential learning opportunities include, but are not limited to, co-operative education, work integrated learning, internships, practica, field trips, field placements.

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