

**OCDSB Transition Planning**  
**Proposal for Transition Counsellor/Coordinator**  
**Ottawa Technical Secondary School (OTSS) School Council**  
**(November 3, 2019, amended)**

**1. Background**

Ensuring that students are well prepared for life after graduation is a critical part of the educational program for all secondary school students. This is no less important for students with exceptional needs. Indeed, *Ontario Regulation 181/98*, section 7(4), states that, for exceptional students who are age 14 or over and who are not identified solely as gifted, the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) must include a transition plan for the student's transition from school to work, further education, and/or community living.<sup>1</sup>

A key part of preparing for post-graduation transition is identifying both the skills that a student will need as well as the opportunities available. School boards provide typically developing students with assistance in preparing for future career or vocational path through guidance counsellor services, who provide information about post-secondary educational programs and vocational programs. Such guidance counsellors are not equipped to provide targeted services for special needs students.

An essential part of an effective IEP transition plan is identifying appropriate post-secondary programs, including potential vocational or voluntary opportunities. Other government departments (e.g. Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)<sup>2</sup>), either directly or through funded agencies, have programs to identify appropriate services for this population. However, there is often a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Education and MCCSS. Past attempts to organize cross ministry coordination for integrated transition planning have failed.<sup>3</sup>

OCDSB has no formal mechanism to implement effective transition plans. The policy on *Special Education Programs and Services* (Policy P.096.SES) makes no reference to planning for post-graduation. Strategies for preparing for post-secondary life are rarely specifically identified in IEPs, although the IEP has a specifically designated section that is supposed to address this issue. Specific transition advice is provided on an *ad hoc* basis and depends in large on part the interest or motivation of principals/teachers. Moreover, transition planning is rarely started early in the students' secondary school career and is only, if at all, prioritized in the last year of a student's high school career.

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<sup>1</sup> O. Reg. 181/98, section 7(4): "Where an individual education plan does not include a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities and the pupil has attained the age of 14 or will attain the age of 14 within the school year, the principal shall ensure that a transition plan is developed and included in the individual education plan." Also, see SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS, Ministry of Education, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm156.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Service Coordination for People with Developmental Disabilities. ([www.scsottawa.on.ca](http://www.scsottawa.on.ca))

<sup>3</sup> In 2013, a tri-Ministry memorandum was released by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Education [Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities](#), that set out a shared goal working together ("2013 Memorandum").

## **2. Proposal**

In order to effectively implement the legal requirements for transition planning under *Ontario Regulation 181/98* and 2013 Memorandum, we propose that the Board (a) amend Policy P.096.SES to make post-graduation transition planning one of the *Guiding Principles* and *Key Learning Supports* and consider whether a specific Board Procedure on Transition Planning should be developed and (b) expressly set aside dedicated resources to assist parents, students, principals and teachers in developing detailed transition plans (“transition counsellor”). There are two options: (a) identify dedicated support staff at each school where the number of students warrant; or (b) designate a central Board resource person(s) to consult and provide advice to principals, teachers and parents.

## **3. Role/Objectives**

The role of the Transition Counsellor would be to:

- Consult with principals, teachers and parents in the development of an integrated post-secondary transition plan to be included in IEPs;
- Provide advice to students and parents of the program options available for students with special needs;
- Coordinate with the MCCSS and its funded agencies (e.g. Service Coordination) to assist parents, students, principals and teachers to implement integrated transition plans;
- Work with relevant social services organizations to develop a strategy for increasing the number and variety of vocational placements within the community for special needs students; and
- Work with other school boards and outside professionals to develop and promote best practices for transition planning

## **4. Potential Way Forward**

We propose that the OCDSB Special Education Advisory Board (SEAC) adopt a motion, for Board consideration, to require that the District Staff:

- 1) Assess current policies, practices and capacity for development and operationalization of effective transition planning for post-graduation work and/or community living as part of the IEP’s of special needs students;
- 2) Evaluate the reasons for why previous attempts to implement integrated transition planning with other relevant ministries have failed;
- 3) Amend Policy P.096.SES to make post-graduation transition planning one of the *Guiding Principles* and *Key Learning Supports* and consider whether a specific Board Procedure on Transition Planning should be developed;
- 4) Develop options for the implementation of a “transition counsellor” to support principals and teachers in transition planning for such students, who duties would include:

- a) Consult with principals, teachers and parents in the development of an integrated post-secondary transition plan to be included in IEPs;
- b) Provide advice to students and parents of the program options available for students with special needs;
- c) Coordinate with the MCCSS and its funded agencies (e.g. Service Coordination) to assist parents, students, principals and teachers to implement integrated transition plans;
- d) Work with relevant social services organizations to develop a strategy for increasing the number and variety of vocational placements within the community for special needs students; and
- e) Work with other school boards and outside professionals to develop and promote best practices for transition planning;

5) report back to the SEAC and/or the Board in no less than 3 months on progress on this motion.

Adopted by OTSS School Council

October 15, 2019

Amended November 3, 2019