

# Student Transitions Protocol

to Guide and Support Anishinabek Education System Students from Early Years to Post-Secondary and the Workforce



**ANISHINABEK**  
EDUCATION SYSTEM

## About this Document

This protocol was developed in partnership by a working group that included representatives from select District School Boards (DSBs) in Ontario, the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body, and the Ministry of Education.

This protocol provides information and guidance to Anishinabek Participating First Nations, DSBs, the Ministry of Education, and other partners regarding Anishinabek Education System (AES) student transitions. This protocol is guided by the AES Vision, Mission, Values, Principles, and reflects the relationships being built as outlined in the Master Education Agreement.

## Intent of this Document

Dbenmondaagnaan gi kinoomaagnag pane go megwaa nokiing wiidookwangidwaa endwendang kinoomaagnag. Nga-gnawendmaanaan enji-nokiing zoongendmowaad, ni biindgeng, wiidookwaanaan gi kinoomaagziwaad. I nendmowin, gichi-piitendmaa mina wiidookwindwaa gi kinoomaagnaang i naaknigewin.

---

As Anishinabek, we commit to an ongoing respectful relationship that will meet the needs of our students. We will keep the students at the center of all our work to ensure they feel safe, welcome, and supported wherever their learning takes them. This intention, to honor and support our students, is central to this protocol.

## AES Vision

Anishinaabe Aadziwin. A wholistic learning path using Anishinabek ways of knowing, celebrating a bright future for our people. Anishinaabe Bimaadziwin.

## AES Mission

Embracing our past, empowering our future.

## AES Values

We will be guided by our seven grandfather / grandmother teachings:

Zaagidwin(Love) "To know love is to know peace."

Debwewin (Truth) "Truth is to know all of these things."

Mnaadendmowin (Respect) "To honour all creation is to have respect."

Nbwaakaawin(Wisdom) "To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom."

Dbaadendiziwin (Humility) "Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation."

Gwekwaadziwin (Honesty) "Honesty in facing the situation is to be brave."

## Overall AES Principles

- Anishinabek have the inherent right to educate our children
- Anishinaabe education is based on Anishinaabe intellectual, holistic knowledge
- Anishinaabe education ensures the preservation and ongoing development of Anishinabek

- Anishinaabe education developed by Anishinabek will increase student success and well-being

## A Note on First Nation Student Transitions

The term "transitions" refers to a student's movement between educational levels and experiences, such as moving from elementary school to secondary school, or moving to a whole new school all-together. The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) defines student transitions as the "strategies, programs, policies, curriculum and resources that make movement between educational levels seamless" (ONECA 2010).

Anishinabek students encounter transitions at many stages during their educational journeys. It is the AES' position that Anishinabek students must be supported:

- at every transition stage (before, during and after);
- in addressing regional and localized perspectives, such as culture and language;
- through consideration and thoughtful planning for:
  - special education needs, including students that are gifted;
  - children and youth in care;
  - students transitioning from remote to urban, or from on-reserve to off-reserve locations; and
- in any other situation that requires a student to adapt to new learning situations, including transitions to online learning and return to classroom learning.

## Transition Stages

1. Home to elementary
2. Early Years Care Centre to elementary
3. Elementary to secondary
4. First Nations school to a provincially-funded school
5. Provincially-funded school to First Nations school
6. First Nations School to First Nations School
7. Provincially-funded school to provincially-funded school
8. Secondary school to post-secondary (e.g., apprenticeship, college, university)
9. Secondary school to workforce
10. Early leavers
11. Re-entry

## Student Transitions and the Master Education Agreement

The Master Education Agreement, signed in 2018, created the vision of a new relationship between the Anishinabek First Nations and Ontario that supports Anishinabek student success and well-being in both the AES and the provincially funded education system. Part of the agreement is to facilitate the transition of students between Anishinabek First Nations' schools and schools in the provincially-funded education system.

The agreement specifically states that the Participating First Nations, the Kinooomaadziwin Education Body and the Province of Ontario will work collaboratively to:

a) establish protocols and support arrangements for student transitions between and into Anishinabek First Nations' schools and schools in the provincially-funded education system; and

b) establish protocols with respect to orientation and support arrangements to enable parents/guardians, caregivers, families, and communities to better support student transitions between Anishinabek First Nations' schools and schools in the provincially-funded education system; among other things.

## Transitions Guiding Principles

This Student Transitions Protocol is guided by the following principles of:

1. respectful information-sharing that balances the need for sharing with the need to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of of students' personal and academic information and their parents'/guardians', families', and communities' unique situations
2. overall and active Board and school administrator commitment and collaboration related to and for Anishinabek students;
3. trust, respect, and relationship building with parents/guardians, families, and communities;
4. alignment of transitions with:
  - a) special education plans;
  - b) Education Service Agreements;
  - c) existing health and social services already in place; and
  - d) other existing agreements in place, e.g. Engagement Framework Agreement.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wiidookwandwaa Ekinoomaagzijig - Orientation and Support	8
Minoyaawin Minwa - Health and Social Services	9
Mino Nendmowin Minwa Minoyaawin - Mental Health and Wellness	10
Anishinabek Mino-Naadziwin Zhichgewnan - Anishinabek Well-Being Initiatives	11
Anishinaabe Bimaadziwin - Ways of Knowing	12



# TRANSITION PRIORITIES



- 1 Wiidookwandwaa Ekinoomaagzijig  
Orientation and Support
- 2 Minoyaawin Minwa  
Health and Social Services
- 3 Mino Nendmowin Minwa Minoyaawin  
Mental Health and Wellness

- 4 Anishinabek Mino-Naadziwin Zhichgewnan  
Anishinabek Well-Being Initiatives
- 5 Anishinaabe Biimaadziwin  
Ways of Knowing

# TRANSITION PRIORITIES

1

## Wiidookwandwaa Ekinoomaagzijig Orientation and Support

Realizing the shared vision for student success and well-being that addresses body, mind, emotional, and spiritual well-being; and

Enhancing the collaboration among the Anishinabek First Nations, the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body, Ontario, and School Boards.

2

## Minoyaawin Minwa Health and Social Services

Facilitating protocols and supporting arrangements for the continuity of on-reserve student-focused health and social services when transitioning to schools in the provincially-funded education system.

3

## Mino Nendmowin Minwa Minoyaawin Mental Health and Wellness

Supporting the coordination of access to provincially-funded school and community-based social services, including child and youth mental health and support services for Anishinabek students attending schools in the provincially-funded education system.

4

## Anishinabek Mino-Naadziwin Zhichgewnan Anishinabek Well-Being Initiatives

Promoting access to, adaptation of, and development of student success, pathways, and well-being programs and initiatives that are inclusive of Anishinabek perspectives on student success and well-being.

5

## Anishinaabe Bimaadziwin Ways of Knowing

Increasing knowledge and understanding of Bimaadziwin, Kendaaswin, and Anishinaabe languages in Anishinabek First Nations' schools and schools in the provincially-funded education system through the supporting work of transitions; and

Supporting relationship building by creating a circle of care for Anishinabek students at various levels of school engagement.



# Wiidookwandwaa Ekinoomaagzijig

## Orientation and Support

School Boards and Participating First Nations will:

- realize the shared vision for student success and well-being that addresses body, mind, emotional, and spiritual well-being; and
- enhance the collaboration among the Anishinabek First Nations, the Kinooaadziwin Education Body, Ontario, and School Boards.

### What Should Take Place?

At the District Level for DSB, Leadership Level for PFN

- Awareness and understanding of the Master Education Agreement.
- Establish processes for engagement between DSBs and Participating First Nations and their respective staff.
- Identify system roles who will work collaboratively to support transitions.
- Work collaboratively with AES to collect and share relevant student data.

At The School Level

- Develop and distribute a transition calendar outlining upcoming events and information sessions.
- Develop transition action plans, with key transition dates.
- Distribute brochures to address transitions issues and who to contact to secure required information.
- Ensure Support for Workers who are part of any transition meetings and continued communication and collaboration to monitor student engagement and success.
- Identify opportunities to plan and participate in transition activities (e.g., visits to the school, meet and greet, including day care visits).

- Work collaboratively with AES to collect and share relevant student data.
- Check in with students throughout the year, to proactively address any issues that arise.
- Proactively engage in an anti-racist approach in all levels of engagement with Anishinabek youth.

At the Community Level

- Hold transition meeting(s) for parents, caregivers, families, and communities to support transitions (e.g., transportation, sports, with invitation to community Elder(s)).
- Develop relationships with First Nation teachers, principals, and support workers from community feeder schools, where needed.
- Connect with community throughout the year to build connections.
- Utilize the AES Special Education Guideline, as needed.
- Work collaboratively with AES and District school boards to collect and share relevant student data.
- Utilize the AES Special Education as needed

When Should Action Take Place?

- January (prior to the transition year).
- Ongoing, as required.



# Minoyaawin Minwa

## Health and Social Services

School boards and Participating First Nations will:

- facilitate protocols and support arrangements for the continuity of on-reserve student-focused health and social services when transitioning to schools in the provincially-funded education system.

### What Should Take Place?

#### District Level for DSB, Leadership Level for PFN

- Awareness and understanding of the Master Education Agreement.
- Establish processes for engagement between DSBs and Participating First Nations and their respective staff.
- Identify system roles who will work collaboratively to support transitions.
- Work collaboratively with AES to collect and share relevant student data.

#### At The School Level

- Coordinate dedicated space in school for community-based services and staff.
- Develop transition action plans, as required.
- Ensure Support Workers/Indigenous Graduation Coaches, guidance counsellors, and Indigenous student advisors are part of any transition meetings, continued communication, and collaboration to monitor student engagement and success.

#### At The Community Level

- Facilitate holistic information sharing about the students' specific health, educational, cultural, and social service needs with teachers, 'host families', and schools.

- Identify opportunities to plan and participate in transition activities (e.g., visits to the new school).
- Create opportunities to connect with First Nation support staff.
- Plan transition event which would include health service providers, support services, and local Health Unit.
- Share information about health and social services with contact and location information for potential services required.
- Hold transition meeting(s) for parents/guardians, caregivers, and families to support transitions (e.g., transportation, orientation extracurricular activities (social, physical, academic)), and sports, with invitation to community Elder(s).

#### When Should Action Take Place?

- January (prior to the transition year).
- Ongoing, as required.

# Mino Nendmowin Minwa Minoyaawin

## Mental Health and Wellness

School boards and Participating First Nations will:

- support the coordination of and facilitate access to provincially-funded school and community-based social services, including child and youth mental health and support services for Anishinabek students attending schools in the provincially-funded education system.

### What Should Take Place?

#### District Level for DSB, Leadership Level for PFN

- Awareness and understanding of the Master Education Agreement.
- Establish processes for engagement between DSBs and Participating First Nations and their respective staff.
- Identify system roles who will work collaboratively to support transitions.
- Work collaboratively with AES to collect and share relevant student data.

#### At the School Level

- Coordinate dedicated space in school for community-based services.
- Identify a school-based position responsible for coordinating access to community-based social services (e.g., Indigenous graduation coach, guidance counsellor, social worker, etc.).
- Engage an Elder by board practice who has connections with the community and has built relationships with the students.
- Plan transition event(s) which would include families, guardians, health service providers, support services, local health unit, and other community supports as the school sees fit.

- Identify services that are available 24/7.
- Utilize the AES Wellness Portal to support students.

#### At the Community Level

- Coordinate continued community supports for students, with community partners.
- Utilize the AES Wellness Portal to support students.
- Engage with Elders, knowledge keepers, and language speakers for cultural programming to support Mental Health and Wellness.

#### When Should Action Take Place?

- January (prior to the transition year).
- Ongoing, as required.

# Anishinabek Mino-Naadziwin Zhichgewnan

## Anishinabek Well-Being Initiatives

School Boards and Participating First Nations will:

- promote access to, adaptation of, and development of student success, pathways, and well-being programs and initiatives that are inclusive of the Anishinabek perspective on student success and well-being.

### What Should Take Place?

#### District Level for DSB, Leadership Level for PFN

- Awareness and understanding of the Master Education Agreement.
- Establish processes for engagement between DSBs and Participating First Nations and their respective staff.
- Identify system roles who will work collaboratively to support transitions.
- Work collaboratively with AES to collect and share relevant student data.

#### At the School Level

- Hold career days inclusive of First Nation people and businesses/organizations (role models).
- Ensure Support Worker is part of transitions.
- Invite Elder(s) into the school to build relationships with parents/families.
- Invite Support Workers and Education Counsellors to school events.
- Plan for students who require re-engagement and attendance monitoring.
- Plan visits with feeder schools.
- Set up buddy systems or opportunities to connect through technology (letter writing, project, etc.).
- Ensure students are informed of any funding opportunities, bursaries, and awards that they can apply for and support them to apply.

- Identifying post-secondary transition programs that students can participate in.

#### At the Community Level

- Enable students to connect with other students from their communities/other communities, older students facilitated by Anishinabek youth leadership in schools.
- When hosting transitions days, ensure there is a First Nations cultural component that has been co-created with local First Nations (new to school).
- Kindergarten, grade 8 to grade 9, First Nation school to provincial school, etc.)
- Work with communities to identify volunteer opportunities in the First Nations and with First Nation businesses/organizations (to fulfill the mandatory volunteer hours for graduation).
- Work with communities/organizations to identify co-operative education opportunities in the First Nations and with First Nation businesses/organizations.
- Conduct Post-Secondary pathway presentations inclusive of First Nation programs/staff.

#### When Should Action Take Place?

- January (prior to the transition year).
- Ongoing, as required.

# Anishinaabe Bimaadziwin

## Ways of Knowing

School Boards and Participating First Nations will:

- increase knowledge and understanding of Bimaadziwin, Kendaaswin, and Anishinaabe languages in Anishinabek First Nations' schools and schools in the provincially-funded education system through the supporting work of transitions; and
- support relationship building by creating a circle of care for students at various levels of school engagement.

### What Should Take Place?

#### District Level for DSB, Leadership Level for PFN

- Awareness and understanding of the Master Education Agreement.
- Establish processes for engagement between DSBs and Participating First Nations and their respective staff.
- Identify system roles who will work collaboratively to support transitions.
- Work collaboratively with AES to collect and share relevant student data.

#### At the School Level

- Participation in Ezhi Kendmaang Anishinaabe Naadziwin (EKAN).
- Culturally-relevant curriculum development and programming - ensure staff are aware of cultural perspectives through collaboration with local Participating First Nation
- Create opportunities for the inclusion of Elders in classrooms and the school environment.
- Connect with existing youth groups in communities to ask youth what supports they need during transition.
- Review and update transition resources are to reflect First Nation perspectives.

#### At the Community Level

- Consider including a restorative practice to support relationship-building and strength-based solutions that move students on their path forward, i.e. a wrap-around student-focused approach.
- Increase understanding of Anishinabek perspectives on Life-long Learning.

#### When Should Action Take Place?

- January (prior to the transition year).
- Ongoing, as required.

### What is a Circle of Care?

A circle of care refers to a child-centred wrap-around approach that requires professionals, educators, First Nations staff, families, and community to develop solutions that are individualized to the learner.

## Regional Education Council Coordinators

Nancy O'Donnell

Regional Education Council 1

807-371-0004

[nancy.odonnell@a-e-s.ca](mailto:nancy.odonnell@a-e-s.ca)

Lisa Wabegijig

Regional Education Council 3

705-923-3382

[lisa.wabegijig@a-e-s.ca](mailto:lisa.wabegijig@a-e-s.ca)

Tammy Moreau

Regional Education Council 2

705-869-8579

[tammy.moreau@a-e-s.ca](mailto:tammy.moreau@a-e-s.ca)

Greer Atkinson

Regional Education Council 4

705-471-8808

[greer.atkinson@a-e-s.ca](mailto:greer.atkinson@a-e-s.ca)

# Resources and Links

Anishinabek Education System. (2020). Anishinabek Education System Wellness Portal. Kinoomaadziwin Education Body. <https://www.aeswellnessportal.ca/>

Government of Saskatchewan. (2018, September). Student Transitions Guide Supporting New Students in Your School: A Guide for Schools. Student First. <https://resourcebank.ca/authoring/327-student-transitions-guide-supporting-new-students-view>

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. (2012). ENSURING a SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM ELEMENTARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL. Direction des communications. [http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/dpse/adaptation\\_serv\\_compl/Guide\\_SoutenirTransitionScolaireQualiteVersSec\\_a.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/Guide_SoutenirTransitionScolaireQualiteVersSec_a.pdf)

Ministry of Education. (2002a). Transition Planning: A Resource Guide. Queens Printer of Ontario. <http://www.oafccd.com/documents/transitionguide.pdf>

Ministry of Education. (2002b). Transition Planning: A Resource Guide. Queens Printer of Ontario. <http://www.oafccd.com/documents/transitionguide.pdf>

Ministry of Education. (2013). Creating Pathways to Success. Queens Printer of Ontario. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/cps/creatingpathwayssuccess.pdf>

My Blueprint. (2020). My Blueprint. <https://myblueprint.ca/support/videos/education-planner/4bOVF2pVu1J5A8TILj4NiG>

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES. (2017, May). A TRANSITION GUIDE TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/postsecondary-transition-guide-may-2017.pdf>

ONECA. (2009). Walk In Our Moccasins: A Comprehensive Study of Aboriginal Education. Ontario Native Education Counselling Association. <https://oneca.com/resources/Walk%20In%20Our%20Moccasins%20Report%20by%20P.Toulouse.pdf>

ONECA. (2016). Transitions - Supporting First Nation, Metis and Inuit students in School and Career Success. <http://Www.Oneca.Com/Transitions/>. <http://www.oneca.com/transitions/>

Rainbow District School Board. (2019, August 20). A Day in the Life Transitioning from Grade 8 to Grade 9 [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLNH1CC\\_A4I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLNH1CC_A4I)

Rainbow Schools. (2010). Aanjiwin: Transition Supports for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students. Rainbow District School Board. [https://www.rainbowschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Transitions\\_June\\_2010.pdf](https://www.rainbowschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Transitions_June_2010.pdf)

Rainbow Schools. (2016a). First Nation, Métis and Inuit Presence in Rainbow Schools. Rainbow District School Board. [https://www.rainbowschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/RD\\_FNGuide\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.rainbowschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/RD_FNGuide_WEB.pdf)

Rainbow Schools. (2016b). Making the Transition, Finding your way from Grade 8 to Grade 9 : Guide for Students and Parents/Guardians. Rainbow District School Board. [https://www.rainbowschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RS\\_TransitionGuide2016\\_access.pdf](https://www.rainbowschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/RS_TransitionGuide2016_access.pdf)