



Joint Protocol
for
Student Achievement
and
Well Being

(JPSAWB)



PUTTING CHILDREN'S WELFARE FIRST



Signatories

We, the signatories of the partnering child welfare organizations and school boards, agree to the roles, responsibilities, and processes outlined in this protocol to support student achievement for children and youth in the care of CAS/Dilico, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. We will champion this protocol and the principles it espouses within our organizations.


(Name and title of authorized signatory and CAS/school board)

Aug 22/17
(Date)

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care

BRAD BAIN, E.D. THUNDER BAY CAS 
(Name and title of authorized signatory and CAS/school board)

30 JUNE 2017
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Thunder Bay Children's Aid Society

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LAKENHEAD
DISTRICT
SCHOOL
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JULY 21, 2017
(Date)

Lakehead District School Board

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June 28, 2017
(Date)

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Superior North Catholic DSB

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Preface

The educational attainment of children and youth in care is significantly lower than that of the general school population. Youth in care often face unique and multiple barriers to succeeding in school as well as pursuing postsecondary education/training or employment. In 2013, approximately 44 per cent of Ontario's Crown Wards graduated from high school, while Ontario's overall high school graduation rate was 83 per cent. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and the Ministry of Education (EDU) are committed to improving the educational outcomes of children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, children's aid societies (CASs).

In order to support school boards and CASs in this important work, MCYS and EDU jointly established an External Working Group of educators, CAS representatives, and youth formerly in care to assist in developing a Provincial Protocol template.

The ***Joint Protocol for Student Achievement*** (JPSA) is intended to facilitate collaboration between partnering CASs and school boards in their efforts to enable Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who are in the care of child welfare to benefit from the learning opportunities and supports available in schools and to achieve academic success.

CASs and school boards were strongly encouraged to work together to develop joint local protocols in order to maximize coordination of students' educational supports in their region. Partnering CASs and school boards were able to use the existing Crown Ward Education Championship Team (CWECT) platform to identify their protocol partners.

The JPSA template is a model protocol intended to outline the scope of important collaborative practices and processes to guide CASs and school boards as they develop and implement local protocols to support the educational success for students in the care of, or receiving child protection services from, a CAS in the community.

Support identified within the following JPSA can be offered to the following children and youth in Kindergarten to Grade 12:

- children and youth in the care of a CAS (e.g. Crown wards, society wards) due to protection concerns and placed in an out-of-home placement through kinship care, foster care, or group care
- children and youth of a First Nation who are in need of protection and being cared for by a person who is not the child's/youth's parent, but not in the care of a CAS (Formal Customary Care)

The ministries recognize that CASs have the authority to communicate with schools about the education of children and youth in their care – i.e., those who are crown wards, society wards, or under a temporary care order or agreement.

Many children and youth are receiving voluntary or court ordered services from a CAS, but are living with their family, placed in a kinship service arrangement, or customary care arrangement. See Appendix C for additional information and further planning as it pertains to this protocol.

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PROTOCOL PARTNERS

Lakehead District School Board is one of 31 English-language public boards in Ontario. The Board administers the funding it receives from the province for the schools within the Thunder Bay area which comprise Lakehead Public Schools. These include 25 elementary schools, four secondary schools and one adult education centre.

The **Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board** oversees all Catholic schools in the city of Thunder Bay and the townships of Gorham and Ware in Ontario. It administers education at 15 elementary schools, 3 senior elementary, and 2 secondary schools.

The **Superior-Greenstone District School Board** is a public school board in the province of Ontario, with jurisdiction for the operation of schools in eastern Thunder Bay District. Superior-Greenstone District School Board is located in Northwestern Ontario and covers an area of 45,100 square km. The board is responsible for providing public education, and its 17 schools serve the communities of Beardmore, Geraldton, Longlac, Nakina, Caramat, Dorion, Nipigon, Red Rock, Schreiber, Terrace Bay, Marathon and Manitouwadge. Its head office is located in Marathon, on the north shore of Lake Superior.

The **Superior North Catholic District School Board** is a separate school board in the province of Ontario, with jurisdiction for the operation of Catholic schools in the remote areas of Thunder Bay District. The board provides elementary (Kindergarten to grade 8) education; there are no secondary schools in the board. The board serves the communities of Geraldton, Longlac, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Nakina, Nipigon, Red Rock, Schreiber and Terrace Bay.

The **Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario** manages 10 elementary and 9 secondary French-language schools in much of Northern Ontario. The area in which this school board operates covers 64,238 km² of Ontario.

The **Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales** oversees 10 French language Catholic schools in Thunder Bay District, Ontario, Canada. It administers education at nine elementary schools, and one secondary school.

The **Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay** is a Child Welfare agency working in the city of Thunder Bay and area, including Geraldton, Longlac, Dorion, Nipigon, Red Rock, Schreiber, Terrace Bay, Marathon and Manitouwadge. In addition to providing help and support to families, CAS investigates reported allegations of child maltreatment, working towards strengthening families, and permanency planning for children.

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care provides Child Welfare Services working to promote family strengths to ensure that the health, safety and well-being of Anishinabek children are upheld and protected. With a focus on prevention, early intervention and protection in partnership with individuals, families and communities, children are cared for with respect of their cultural background and overall quality of life. Dilico is mandated as a children's aid society under the provincial Child and Family Services Act.

Approximate Geographic Boundary :

- Land area 103,720 square km
- Population approximately 147,000

Municipalities:

- City of Thunder Bay
- Municipality (town) of Greenstone
- Town of Marathon
- Township of Conmee
- Township of Dorion
- Township of Gillies
- Township of Manitouwadge
- Municipality (township) of Neebing
- Township of Nipigon
- Township of O'Connor
- Municipality (township) of Oliver Paipoonge
- Township of Red Rock
- Township of Schreiber
- Township of Shuniah
- Township of Terrace Bay

First Nations:

- Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek First Nation: Lake Nipigon
- Aroland First Nation: Aroland Settlement (Aroland 83)
- Biinjitiwabik Zaaging Anishnabek First Nation (Rocky Bay): Rocky Bay 1
- Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek First Nation (Sand Point)
- Fort William First Nation: Fort William 52
- Ginoogaming First Nation: Ginoogaming (Long Lac 77)
- Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek First Nation (Gull Bay): Gull River 55
- Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation: Lac des Mille Lacs 22A1, Seine River 22A2
- Long Lake 58 First Nation: Long Lake 58
- Namaygoosisagagun First Nation (non-status)
- Ojibway Nation of Saugeen First Nation (Savant Lake): Ojibway Nation of Saugeen
- Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation: Pic River – Biigtigong Nishnaabeg
- Pays Plat First Nation: Pays Plat 51
- Pic Mobert First Nation: Pic Mobert North, Pic Mobert South
- Red Rock First Nation (Lake Helen): Lake Helen 53A, Red Rock 53
- Seine River First Nation: Seine River 23A, Seine River 23B
- Whitesand First Nation: Armstrong Settlement, Whitesand

Unorganized areas:

- Thunder Bay, Unorganized (including the local services boards of Armstrong, East Gorham, Hurkett, Kaministiquia, Lappe, Nolalu, Rossport, Savant Lake, Shebandowan, and Upsala)

1 INTRODUCTION

As previously stated, ***educational attainment of children and youth in care is significantly lower than that of the general school population.*** According to the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), in the 2012–13 school year, approximately 46 per cent of Ontario's Crown Wards graduated from high school, while Ontario's overall high school graduation rate was 83 per cent. Locally, in the District of Thunder Bay, the stats for Crown Wards are comparable to the provincial number. Fortunately the numbers have more than doubled since CWECT was established in 2007.

Children and youth involved in the child welfare system encounter numerous barriers to educational success. In addition to the abuse, neglect and other protection issues that may require the intervention of Child Welfare, they may also experience:

- the emotional consequences of being removed from their families and community;
- separation from siblings and friends;
- frequent residential changes.

There may be as much movement among schools as in their living situations. As a result, children and youth may be unable to access the school services that would support positive educational outcomes in a timely and/or consistent manner. These children and youth often struggle academically, socially and emotionally, and may exhibit challenging behaviour. They may also leave school earlier than the general population. To address the unique circumstances and educational needs to these students, this Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA) has been developed to promote ongoing collaboration and effective planning between the English, French, Catholic and Public School Boards, CAS, and Dilico serving Thunder Bay and surrounding district from

The JPSA is also applicable to children and youth in the care of other CAS/F&CSs in Ontario, who attend school in these districts. This JPSA also takes into account the right of French families to receive services in French under the French Language Services Act.

1.1 Scope of the JPSA

The JPSA **applies** to students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 who are:

- **in the care of CAS/Dilico** through a court order or by voluntary agreement (i.e., crown wards, society wards, and children and youth under a temporary care order or agreement);
- **involved in a customary care agreement**

The parties recognize that the implementation of the JPSA may create an additional burden to the work of both sectors, require special consents, and necessitate the application of additional resources. **It is recommended that protocol be developed and added for the next review date of the initial sign off, to include students, not in care, but receiving voluntary or court-ordered services from a CAS, under the following circumstances:**

- **the required consents from the parent(s) and youth, if 12 years of age or older, are in place (see section 2 – Information Sharing);**
- **the need is subsequently recognized by both the education and child welfare sectors.**

1.2 Goals and Objectives

The JPSA is intended to assist CAS/Dilico and School Boards to improve the educational achievement of both children and youth in care by:

- providing a framework for collaborative practices and processes that supports knowledge exchange, open dialogue, and academic success, within the context of all applicable legislation and regulations;
- enhancing the working relationships and communication between the child welfare staff and caregivers, and the Board staff in order to assist students to recognize and reach their full potential
- establishing and nurturing a collaborative relationship by which CAS/Dilico and School Boards promote educational success, as well as an understanding of mutual roles and responsibilities, including engagement of parents/legal guardians and caregivers;
- establishing and maintaining practices in line with the protocol;
- providing students with as much stability and continuity as possible within the educational setting;
- ensuring the provision and continuity of services in French to members of the Francophone community.

1.3 Guiding Principles

Children and youth in the care of CAS/Dilico and their families/caregivers will:

- be welcomed, valued, accepted, supported, and treated with dignity and respect by all parties, in accordance with their faith, language, and cultural background, as well as the UNICEF's human rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see Appendix C);
- have their confidentiality respected as per the information sharing practices described in Section 2 of this protocol, or as otherwise permitted or required by law;
- have access to available opportunities and appropriate supports to ensure educational success, including language and cultural supports as required.
- be involved in decisions that affect them. Students will participate in the development of their educational pathway as appropriate for their age, developmental level, and cognitive capabilities;
- be offered an individualized Education Success Plan (ESP) built on existing practices and templates, where available, that takes into consideration the students' unique strengths and needs;
- collectively inform the collaborative work of the School Boards and CAS/Dilico aimed at increasing students' educational achievements and wellbeing.

1.4 Elements of the JPSA

The collaborative practices and processes outlined in the JPSA are grouped into the following five sections:

- **Information-sharing processes** between Child Welfare and School Boards consistent with applicable legislation and regulation;
- **Administrative processes** to support a student transitioning in or out of a school;
- **Planning for student achievement**, including: establishment of Realizing Educational Achievement for Children/youth (REACH) Teams to support and promote the educational achievement of students; and development of Education Success Plans (ESPs);
- **Dispute resolution processes** between CASs and School Boards, including timelines for dispute resolution before escalation;
- **Monitoring and evaluation** of the protocol, including a formal review of the protocol every two years.

The Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA) details the commitment of **Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay, Lakehead District School Board, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores Boréales, Superior North Catholic District School Board, Superior-Greenstone District School Board, and Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario**, also referred to in this document as “**the parties**”, to establish and implement the following processes and policies to support student achievement for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who are eligible for supports under this protocol. The JPSA will come into effect once the protocol and training plan is signed and approved.

1.5 Considerations

- The strengths and needs of children and youth in the care of CAS/Dilico must be central to all education planning, and plans must be individualized for each child/youth. A strength-based approach should be used in developing solutions for all children/youth.
- Child Welfare, school boards, and school partners, as well as caregivers and/or parents/legal guardians, are important, valued, and respected and share the responsibility to support success in school for children and youth in the care of CAS/Dilico.
- The District of Thunder Bay includes many municipalities and First Nation Reserves, covering approximately 104,000 square km of land. The sheer geographic size of our District presents unique issues with timely/costly worker travel, access to services, client transportation to services and schools, and many seasonal challenges.
 - We share a highly transient population within our community, with students often moving schools and/or school boards. We also have clients/families from other communities, involved with other child welfare organizations, living in our Districts.

- At times we experience language and communication issues including French and Indigenous languages

2. INFORMATION SHARING

CAS/Dilico may disclose information to a board or school staff regarding a student's involvement with a CAS for the purpose of supporting and improving the student's educational achievement. Information should be disclosed to authorized persons on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with all applicable legislation and regulations (e.g., including but not limited to the Education Act, the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA), and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act).

Information sharing will require different levels of consent based on varied circumstances, as follows:

- **students age 12 or older** capable of providing informed consent must be asked to do so, in accordance with the CFSA;
- in cases where a student does not have the capacity to provide informed consent, CAS/Dilico may exchange personal information with School Boards respecting **children and youth in its care** (i.e., crown wards, society wards, and children and youth under a temporary care order or customary care agreement);

There may be other circumstances in which a CAS and a board/school are authorized to share information under applicable legislation and regulation, and nothing in this protocol is intended to interfere or limit such authorized disclosure. For example, information may be reported in accordance with the duty to report that a child is in need of protection under section 72 of the Child and Family Services Act. (see **Appendix C - Professional Advisory-Duty to Report**)

2.1 The Process for Information Sharing

It is the responsibility of CAS/Dilico to advise the board when a student is in its care and to obtain any consent needed to initiate the protocol and to provide the board with a copy of this consent or confirm the terms of the consent it has obtained.

For students in the care of CAS/Dilico, the process for sharing information is as follows:

- the CAS/Dilico Leads should provide the designated School Board Lead with a list of registered students eligible for support under this protocol on an ongoing basis (For more details about registration, refer to section 3.1 - Student Registration and Transfer Process and School Board registration forms);
- the School Board Lead should verify with the CAS/Dilico Lead the listed names against the names of students registered in the School Board;
- the School Board Lead should forward the list of verified students in each school to the applicable principal;

- where legally authorized, the principal or School Point Person should facilitate the release of the following information to the CAS/Dilico Point Person, including but not limited to:
 - most recent provincial report cards and progress reports;
 - current transcript (secondary school students);
 - Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) documents
 - Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) results;
 - Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) results;
 - other assessments administered by the School Board.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

A student's positive initial experience at a new school sets the stage for their school engagement and future success. The parties recognize that all transitions for a student occur more smoothly when adequate time is given for communication and any necessary planning. Prompt registration and placement into appropriate educational programs is critical to school success.

Although some transitions are a part of childhood development, many related to a child/youth receiving protection services occur as a result of circumstances beyond the control of the child/youth, school, or CAS/Dilico. The parties agree that providing as much stability as possible for a student is a common goal and that attempts need to be made to minimize the number of transitions.

Prior to making a decision to transfer the student to a new school, a collaborative discussion should be held between the School Board and CAS/Dilico to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of such a change. The needs of students identified as members of a particular ethnic or linguistic community will also be considered. Options for a student to remain in his/her existing school will be considered, in order to promote stability and continuity within the educational setting.

Whenever a student experiences a change in environment from one home placement to another or from one school to another, thoughtful planning between CAS/Dilico and school boards should help facilitate a successful transition for the student. Such transitions may include:

- registration in a new school;
- moving from elementary to secondary school;
- a change in the student's residence that necessitates a change in schools;
- a change in the student's residence that necessitates transportation so that the student can stay in the same school.

3.1 School Transfer Process

The following considerations apply to a student's transition from one educational setting to another:

- If a student in the care of CAS/Dilico transfers to a new school, the Child Welfare Point Person (Children's Services Worker) should contact the receiving school to arrange for registration for

the student. Where appropriate, the worker can delegate this action to the caregiver.

- Either before or at the time of registration, the Children's Services Worker will determine who will provide the principal with the required information.
- An initial REACH Process meeting (see section 4.1 – **REACH Process**) should be scheduled by the school and should occur within **five** school days of the student's registration. The student may wish to participate in the meeting and should be invited as appropriate, considering age, developmental level, and cognitive capabilities.
- After the initial meeting, if attendance at school is not achieved or possible within the next **five** school days, a subsequent REACH Process meeting should be scheduled. In the event that a student's school history, current or recent serious behavioural, emotional, or academic challenges contravene school and/or school board policies preventing a timely school entry, the REACH Team may need to institute an alternative planning process. (see section 4.4 - **Disruptions**)
- If a student is not in school after 60 days of the initial REACH Process meeting, the parties may follow the dispute resolution process. (see section 5 – **Dispute Resolution**)
- Whenever possible during the transition process, a student should remain in their original school. In cases where this is not possible or in the student's best interest, bridging strategies must be implemented in the interim to ensure educational continuity, in collaboration with community partners as appropriate.
- Whenever possible, a class placement and timetable should be based on the student's strengths, needs and interests.
- Following the transition process, the CAS/Dilico Children's Services Worker will ensure that the home school has been notified that the child will not be returning.

4. PLANNING FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The parties recognize the importance of encouraging and supporting students in activities that maximize their learning potential and promote success in both elementary and secondary education settings as well as future pursuits of postsecondary education and training.

4.1 REACH (Realizing Educational Achievement for Children/Youth) Process

REACH must be offered to every student that has been identified by the CAS to the school board, with appropriate consents as outlined in the Information Sharing section.

The REACH Process is intended to be a proactive and preventive measure to support students before greater needs arise, as well as support students who may be experiencing academic challenges. It is recommended that an initial discussion with the School Point Person, the CAS/Dilico Point Person, the student, the parent/legal guardian and other stakeholders or community members take place to discuss the benefits of establishing a REACH Team prior to implementation.

If the REACH Process is refused by the parent/legal guardian and/or a student age 12 or older, who consented to be on a list provided to the school, the principal or School Point Person should monitor the student's educational progress and if appropriate consents are in place, provide the CAS Point

Person and the parent/legal guardian or caregiver with information on academic progress as part of the school's regular processes. Refusal to participate in the process does not preclude the student from accessing other supports offered by the school (e.g. student success teachers) or CAS/Dilico (e.g. tutoring supports) or asking to initiate the REACH Process later in the year.

A student's REACH Team should include, at a minimum:

- the School Point Person;
- the CAS/Dilico Point Person (children's services worker);
- the parent/legal guardian and/or caregiver as appropriate;
- the student, as appropriate to his/her age, developmental level, and cognitive capabilities.

In addition, depending on the needs and circumstances of the student and student input on who is important to them, their Team may also include at different points in time:

- other school staff as appropriate, based on the circumstances of the student (e.g., special education and/or student services staff);
- other identified stakeholders as needed, based on the circumstances of the student and the school/community (e.g., cultural adviser, community Elder, mental health professional, youth worker, youth justice worker);
- a representative from the First Nation, Métis, or Inuit community if the student self-identifies as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
- an advocate nominated by the student (e.g., youth group member, family friend, mentor);
- members of a cross-panel school team (elementary) or the Student Success Team (secondary).

The REACH Process should include:

- the team meeting to develop, implement, and review the ESP at least twice a year and as needed or requested by members;
- identifying the student's learning strengths and needs in the ESP and supporting the implementation of the strategies required to support the student's educational achievement;
- support for specific special education needs of the student, if required;
- determination if and when other community supports/programs and stakeholders need to be involved to support the student's success;
- communication with other REACH Team members between meetings, as needed;
- identifying opportunities to celebrate the accomplishments, milestones, and successes of the student in order to provide them with on going encouragement;
- identifying options and solutions to help maintain continuity of educational supports for the student in case of a change of residence and/or school;

- supporting the student's pathway planning as outlined in his/her Individual Pathway Plan (IPP). This support includes identifying opportunities in the ESP and collaborating with Crown Ward Education Championship Teams, postsecondary institutions, businesses, and the community to explore postsecondary options with the student;
- ensuring that the student is encouraged to plan and prepare for entry to postsecondary studies, training, or the workforce;
- support and encouragement for the student's academic achievement, extra-curricular participation, and education and career plans;
- support for the student providing them with assistance to explore their career goals through the following: formal and informal mentorships, cooperative education courses, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP), internships, part-time work, job shadowing, educational supports, and other available programs.

REACH Team Meetings :

- should occur within the first month of the student's registration at the school or the student's entry into care.
- should occur twice per year and should be held to develop and review the Education Success Plan.
- additional meetings may be held, as requested by REACH Team members, including the student.
- where possible, be aligned with existing school reporting periods and the CAS Point Person's meetings (and/or caseworker meetings) with the student and the parent/legal guardian or caregiver, in order to minimize disruptions;
- be collegial, positive, student-centred, strength-based, solution-focused, and culturally responsive;
- involve the student in decision making as appropriate to his/her age, developmental level, and cognitive capabilities.

The Principal/School Point Person or the CAS Point Person should notify the Team members of, and may request to meet and discuss, any changes or required supports, including:

- an academically relevant change in residence, health, mental health, or behaviour;
- an escalation of any behavioural issues;
- the need for pathways or transition planning;
- academic outcomes that are contrary to the goals outlined in the student's Education Success Plan;
- a request by the student.

4.2 The Education Success Plan (ESP)

Students with consent and who agree to participate in the REACH Process should be offered the opportunity to have an individualized ESP. The written ESP, which are similar to case conference

notes, would outline services and supports, and identify key people for promoting the educational success of a student in the care of CAS/Dilico. The plan includes and augments but does not replace other plans such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP). The ESP should be developed/amended within one month of the student's start in the school, or as needed throughout the year, with consent.

The ESP is distinct from other existing plans that may support educational success for students, such as the CAS Plan of Care, or the Individual Education Plan (IEP) in the case of students with special education needs. However, the ESP should build on the supports and elements of plans that are already in place.

The Education Success Plan (ESP) is intended to:

- promote the student's educational achievement;
- be outcome based, focused on solutions, and build on the student's strengths and needs;
- outline the services and supports needed to enable the student to achieve his/her identified goals and improve educational outcomes;
- contribute to stability for the student and minimize disruptions in school placement (including when there is a change in residence);
- include but not replace or duplicate an IEP, if appropriate;
- identify the relevant CAS and school personnel who have responsibility for the ESP;
- provide mechanisms that enable stakeholders to communicate and take joint action, based on their knowledge, expertise, and experience, to support the student in his/her learning;
- include opportunities to celebrate the accomplishments and successes of the student;
- support the student's pathways planning including opportunities for apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, or the workplace.

Access to the ESP should be limited to the REACH Team and other relevant personnel that are identified in the ESP or authorized by the Team with appropriate consents. **The ESP will be completed by the School Point Person and placed in the documentation section of the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR).**

4.3 Pathways Planning

For students to experience success in school and life, it is essential for them to plan their individual pathways and identify opportunities to make successful transitions to an initial postsecondary destination. In keeping with the policies outlined in *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools: Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2013), all students, beginning in Kindergarten, will capture their developing sense of themselves in an "All About Me" portfolio (for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6) and in a web-based Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) (for those in Grades 7 to 12).

In keeping with the **Youth Leaving Care Working Group's recommendations in the *Blueprint for Fundamental Change to Ontario's Child Welfare System***, teachers, child welfare caseworkers, and caregivers should have on going discussions with students about career plans and options.

Starting at an early age, they should be supportive of students in exploring and pursuing their career goals through formal and informal mentorships, cooperative education courses, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP), internships, part-time work, job shadowing, educational supports, and other programs.

4.4 Minimizing Disruptions to School Attendance

Research indicates that students in care are more likely than other students to miss school because of suspensions, delays in school placements, expulsions, or refusal/reluctance to attend. Absenteeism is often a precursor to students leaving school, so attendance rates deserve special attention. The parties agree that students benefit from adult support to maintain regular school attendance.

To minimize disruptions to school attendance, the REACH Team members should determine strategies and implement processes to support educators, CAS/Dilico caseworkers, and parents/legal guardians or caregivers in promoting students' regular attendance at school, identifying students who are at risk of leaving school, and minimizing disruptions in school programming. For example:

- When there are early signs that a student is at risk of being suspended or expelled or of dropping out of school, the School Point Person should notify the REACH Team to seek a resolution of the situation to prevent this from occurring;
- When a student has dropped out or is absent for extended periods, the REACH Team should develop a transition plan to support the student's return to school.

In implementing interventions and/or strategies, the REACH Team should follow the procedures outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145, "***Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour***" (December 5, 2012) as well as relevant school board policies and the school's progressive discipline plan.

In the event that a student's school history, current or recent serious behavioural, emotional, or academic challenges contravene school and/or school board policies preventing a timely school entry, or access to school supports/programs, the REACH Team may need to explore an alternative planning process, which may include:

- consultation with other appropriate CAS/school board personnel to seek input on next steps;
- a case conference that includes the REACH Team members, staff from the school board/school, CAS/Dilico staff, and any other relevant parties who could contribute to a timely and positive outcome for the student. Information shared at a case conference must be in accordance with any necessary consents, including consents regarding the disclosure of content from the Ontario Student Record (OSR), and may include but is not limited to:
 - previous transition plans;
 - documentation on which the decision about the issue in question was based;
 - current relevant assessments held by both the school and the CAS (e.g., report cards);
 - relevant content from the Ontario Student Record (OSR);
 - the most recent record of behaviours or academic challenges;

- options that would result in an entry/transition resolution;
- possible alternative programming and services that could be offered to the student while a resolution is found.

If these steps do not produce a satisfactory resolution, the situation should be referred to the dispute resolution process (see section 5 - **Dispute Resolution**).

4.5 Providing Continuity for the Student within the Education System

When a student in the care of CAS/Dilico is placed in a home outside the school catchment area, the CAS Point Person should inform the principal of the situation. They should work together to develop an appropriate response that includes the following:

- the School Point Person should request a meeting of the student's REACH Team to identify the impact of the change in residence and help determine next steps (e.g., the best school placement, transportation support) based on the best interests of the student.
- the Team should carefully consider the preferences of the student.
- if it is determined that it is in the best interests of the student to continue in the current school, the Team should identify possible options and solutions to facilitate the placement.
- if transportation is required, the parties should work together to find ways within the framework of existing policies, procedures, and cost-sharing options to address the financial aspects of maintaining the student in his/her current school.
- if it is determined by the Team, in consultation with the student, that it is in the student's best interests to move to a new school, the REACH Team should work with the new school to ensure a seamless transition and continued educational stability for the student (see section 3.1 - **School Transfer Process**).

4.6 Training

To promote the student's educational achievement, school board and child welfare personnel should look for ways to facilitate appropriate sharing of resources and related training to improve CAS/Dilico caseworkers', parents/legal guardians', and caregivers' understanding of how to advocate for and support the student's educational success. The focus of these resources and training may also include information on setting goals and expectations, creating supportive homework environments, and options/supports for postsecondary education, training, and apprenticeship opportunities that are available to students.

Topics for resources and related training for teachers, school staff, and school board personnel can include the mental health, emotional, social, cultural, and educational issues and challenges faced by students in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS as they strive to achieve academic success.

Training opportunities could be made possible through CWECT's annual planning/budgeting.

5. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

When service providers work together to assist and protect children, an understanding and

appreciation of their respective roles is required. Periodically, disagreements may arise between child welfare and school boards. When concerns are brought forward, it is important that they be resolved quickly and in a way that builds cooperation. Partnering CASs and school boards should use dispute resolution strategies that lead to positive educational outcomes for students.

The following dispute resolution process is used to identify solutions for individual cases and at the system level. This process is not intended to be an appeal or a legal process.

Step 1: The CAS/Dilico Point Person and School Point Person should be the first level of dispute resolution authority. They will work together to try to find an agreeable alternative or a solution.

Step 2: If the dispute is not satisfactorily resolved within 15 school days, the matter should be referred to the identified CAS lead and the identified school board lead. (See 7 - **Designation of CAS/School Board Leads.**)

Step 3: If the dispute continues to be unresolved within another 10 school days, the matter should be further referred to the following staff listed below:

- Director of Service, Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
- Director of Service, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care
- Superintendent of Student Services, Lakehead District School Board
- Superintendent, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
- Superintendent, Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores Boréales
- Superintendent, Superior North Catholic District School Board
- Superintendent, Superior-Greenstone District School Board
- Superintendent, Conseil scolaire du district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario

All disputes and resolutions should be documented and the records retained for reference.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF the PROTOCOL

The protocol will be reviewed by all signing parties to ensure that it is responsive to each party's needs, and is an effective vehicle for realizing the goals and objectives of the protocol.

Quantitative and qualitative measures should be determined at the local level and should be used to evaluate the protocol and serve as the basis for revisions. Examples of educational outcome measures include EQAO results, high school credit accumulation, and high school graduation.

All Parties should formally review the protocol, every two years. Boards and CAS/Dilico should identify a process to remind current staff annually and inform new staff about the procedures and strategies to be followed and to facilitate on going, consistent implementation of the protocol. CAS/Dilico and school board leads should regularly review the responsibilities of participants identified in the protocol with school principals, CAS/Dilico managers and supervisors, and other key senior staff.

7. DESIGNATION OF CAS/SCHOOL BOARD LEADS

A designated lead from CAS/Dilico and each school board should be identified to facilitate effective cooperation for all processes related to the implementation of this protocol. The responsibilities of the designated leads include but are not limited to ensuring implementation of the protocol, ensuring appropriate collection and dissemination of information, protecting personal privacy, intervening when requested where procedures are not followed or organizational barriers are identified, and developing strategies to address these barriers.

The designated Child Welfare leads who are the primary contacts:

Children's Aid Society District of
Thunder Bay
(Name of CAS)

Manager of Spring-Therapeutic
Foster Care Program
(CAS lead position)

Dilico Anishabek Family Care
(Name of CAS)

Assistant Director Child Welfare
(CAS lead position)

The designated school board leads that are the primary contacts:

Superior Greenstone District
School Board
(Name of school board)

Mental Health Lead
(School board lead position)

Thunder Bay Catholic District
School Board
(Name of school board)

Mental Health Lead
(School board lead position)

Lakehead Public Schools
(Insert name of school board)

Mental Health Lead
(School board lead position)

Conseil scolaire public Grand
Nord de l'Ontario
(Name of school board)

Bien-etre des eleves
(School board lead position)

Conseil scolaire de district
catholique des Aurores Boreales
(Name of school board)

Coordonnatrice de Services educatifs
(School board lead position)

Superior North Catholic District
School Board
(Name of school board)

Mental Health Lead
(School board lead position)

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CAS/Dilico and School Board Leads General Responsibilities:

- ensuring implementation of the protocol;
- ensuring appropriate collection and dissemination of information;
- protecting personal privacy;
- intervening when requested where procedures are not followed or organizational barriers are identified;
- developing strategies to address these barriers.

The School Point Person General Responsibilities:

The school board lead or school principal should designate a **School Point Person**, who will be the primary contact at the school level for all processes involving a student identified by the CAS with appropriate consents (see 2.1 - **Information Sharing**). The School Point Person could be the principal depending on local needs. The roles and responsibilities of the School Point Person include the following:

- monitor the educational progress of each student and ensure that all relevant educational supports outlined in this protocol, including the REACH Process and an ESP, are made available to eligible students.
- liaise with the previous school, CAS Point Person, and other appropriate stakeholders to obtain and share relevant information needed to support the student's educational success, while ensuring confidentiality and obtaining appropriate consents.
- ask the parent/legal guardian or caregiver for relevant information about the student's academic successes and challenges.
- support the student and facilitate support from the parent/legal guardian or caregiver in academic achievement, extracurricular activities, and long-term education and career/life planning.
- inform the student and parent/legal guardian or caregiver of supports and opportunities available to the student, including formal and informal mentorship, cooperative education courses, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP), internships, part-time work, job shadowing, educational supports, and other available programs.
- engage the participation of other school staff when appropriate and with consent (e.g., supporting student success, preparing for a REACH Team meeting, developing and implementing the Education Success Plan, reporting student achievement to caregivers and CAS Point Person).

REACH Team and ESP Responsibilities

- work with the CAS Point Person and appropriate partners to participate in the REACH Process for the student (see 4.1 - **REACH Team**).
- support and facilitate the development, implementation, monitoring, review, and updating of the ESP by the REACH Team.
- encourage the participation of the parent/legal guardian or caregiver in the development and implementation of the student's ESP.
- ensure that the needs and strengths of the student are given primary consideration in the development of the ESP.
- monitor the student's educational progress to ensure that the student receives the support he/she requires.

Responsibilities when a REACH Team and/or ESP is not established:

For students identified on the CAS/Dilico list but without a REACH Team or ESP, the School Point Person is responsible for monitoring these students' educational progress and providing the CAS Point Person and/or caregiver with information to ensure students receive the supports they need, as part of the school's regular processes.

The CAS/Dilico Point Person

The CAS and Dilico should each designate a Point Person, who will be the primary contact at their agencies for all processes involving the student. The CAS/Dilico Point Person could be the student's children's service worker, depending on local needs. Their roles and responsibilities should include the following:

- obtain and share informed consent, as appropriate (see section 2 – **Information Sharing**)
- liaise with the previous school, the new School Point Person, and other appropriate partners to obtain and share relevant information needed to support the student's educational success, in accordance with relevant legislation and regulation and appropriate consents.
- provide the School Point Person with information to help identify the student's strengths and needs in order to facilitate educational programming with appropriate consents.
- ask the parent/legal guardian or caregiver for relevant information about the successes and challenges of the student.
- support the student and facilitate support from the parent/legal guardian or caregiver in academic achievement, extracurricular activities, and long-term education and career planning.
- attend readmission meetings or expulsion hearings, supporting the parent/legal guardian or caregiver to attend as well, as required.
- advise the parent/legal guardian and/or student about the available supports for student achievement, and, if authorized by the parent/legal guardian, act as their liaison with the relevant School Point Person regarding access to these supports.

ADDENDUM – Children and Youth Receiving a Service but not in Care of a CAS

The primary goal of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies (CAS) is to support children and youth to live safely with their families of origin. The majority of work that CAS/Dilico undertakes involves strengthening these families to achieve the goal of keeping them intact. As a result of this work, the vast majority of children and youth in Ontario who receive services from a CAS remain at home with their family or are ultimately reunified with their families of origin.

Sometimes children/youth are placed in Kinship Service which is when they are placed in the home of an approved kin, but do not have "in-care" status. Kin are individuals who have a relationship with a child or youth and may include biologically related kin or individuals without a biological connection but with a significant social connection. Examples include a stepparent, godparent, friend, teacher, coach and neighbour.

For those children and youth who are receiving services from CAS/Dilico in the community, both the CAS and the school need the consent of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in order for the CAS and the school to exchange information about the student's education linking students with educational supports outlined in this document.

For students not in care or involved in a customary care agreement, but receiving voluntary or court-ordered services, information sharing should only be for the purposes of supporting educational achievement as appropriate and with informed consent. It is the responsibility of CAS/Dilico to:

- provide the student (over 12 years old) and the parent/legal guardian with information about the potential benefits and risks of consenting to the sharing of information between the CAS/Dilico and the School Board, so that the student and the parent/legal guardian are reasonably informed before giving, withholding or revoking consent;
- if a student is not in the care of CAS/Dilico but receives services from a CAS, the Family Service Worker may offer to provide support to the parent/legal guardian in setting up the appointment and when registering the student, if appropriate.

***The above children and youth receiving services, from CAS/Dilico are not yet included in this protocol.**

***The Parties recognize that the implementation of the JPSA may create an additional burden to the work of both sectors, require special consents, and necessitate the application of additional resources. It is recommended that the protocol be developed and expanded for the next review date of the initial sign off (2 years), to include students, not in care, but receiving voluntary or court-ordered services from a CAS, for whom the paren/guardian or customary caregiver has provided informed consent permitting CAS/Dilico and the School Board to exchange information.**

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

CAS Lead	A person in every Child Welfare Organization who is identified to facilitate effective cooperation between CASs and school boards for all processes related to the implementation of this protocol. The responsibilities of the designated leads include but are not limited to ensuring implementation of the protocol, ensuring appropriate collection and dissemination of information, protecting personal privacy, intervening when requested where procedures are not followed or organizational barriers are identified, and developing strategies to address these barriers. For purposes of this document, the CAS Lead refers to both the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay and Dilico Anishinabek Family Care.
CAS Point Person	A person designated by the Child Welfare Organization who is the primary contact at the CAS/Dilico level for all processes involving the individual student.
Caregiver	A person providing care to a child/youth in an out-of-home setting. There are two main categories of caregivers: those in family-based, out-of-home settings and those in institutional out-of-home settings. Family-based out-of-home settings may include foster homes and kinship care homes. Institutional out-of-home settings may include group homes.
Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)	Legislation governing the provision of child welfare services in Ontario.
Complex Special Needs	A continuum of needs based on Ontario's Framework for Child and Youth Mental Health as a tool to help categorize the level of child and youth mental health needs and services to address mental health problems of individual children based on their severity. Least intrusive to Most intensive. More information about this is available at your local Children's Mental Health Agency.
Crown Ward	A child/youth who has been placed in the permanent care of a CAS. The CAS has the responsibility to care for the child/youth.
CWECT	Crown Ward Championship Teams have been designed to bring community groups together to collaboratively plan and coordinate services that help meet the needs of youth with crown wardship status.

Early Development Instrument (EDI)	<p>The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a questionnaire developed by researchers at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University. The EDI is a teacher-completed checklist that assesses children's readiness to learn at school in five domains: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge.</p>
Education Quality And Accountability Office (EQAO)	<p>An independent organization that conducts the following provincial assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary (Grade 3) and Junior (Grade 6) assessments of student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics• Grade 9 assessments of student achievement in mathematics• the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)
Education Success Plan (ESP)	<p>A written plan that outlines services and supports and identifies key people and their roles for promoting the educational success of a student in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS. The ESP includes and augments but does not replace plans such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP).</p>
Formal Customary Care	<p>First Nations, Metis, and Inuit families have strong family values, are often extended, and share collective responsibility towards children. FNMI families may be related by blood, but can also be tied by clan or other social structures. This collective responsibility for raising children is known as customary care. The care and supervision of an Indian or native child by a person who is not the child's parent according to the custom of the child's band or native community" and has recognized that "where a band or native community declares that an Indian or native child is being cared for under customary care, a [children's aid] society or agency may grant a subsidy to the person caring for the child."</p>

In Care	A child/youth is in care if he/she has been assigned to the care of a CAS due to protection concerns. This could occur by way of a court order or temporary care agreement. The CAS has the rights and responsibilities of the parent. The child/youth is placed in an out-of-home placement through kinship care, foster care, or group care. For purposes of this document, the assignment to care refers to both the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay and Dilico Anishinabek Family Care.
Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)	A committee made up of School Board personnel that makes decisions about whether or not a child or youth should be identified as having special needs or "exceptionalities" and the appropriate school placement for that child or youth. The goal of the committee meetings is to ensure that the student has the support and resources necessary to be successful and to reach his or her full potential.
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	A written plan describing the specific educational program and/or services required by a particular student, based on an assessment of the student's strengths/needs that affect his/her ability to learn and demonstrate learning.
Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)	The primary planning tool that students create and use as they proceed through school towards their initial postsecondary destination. All students in Grades 7 to 12 have a web-based IPP, which they review and revise at least twice a year.
Kinship Care	Care of a child/youth by members of the child/youth's family or community who have been approved as foster parents for a child/youth.
Kinship Service	An arrangement whereby a child/youth resides with a relative or community member to prevent an admission into care. The child/youth is not in the care of a CAS, although CAS/Dilico supervises the placement. There may be an order placing the child/youth in the care and custody of the caregiver subject to supervision by the CAS/Dilico or the placement may be voluntary.
Ontario Student Record (OSR)	An official record for each student that contains achievement results, credits earned, diploma requirements completed, and other information relevant to the education of the student. Students and their parents (if the student is under 18 years of age) may examine the contents of the OSR. The Education Act and freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation protect these records.

Other Society Wards	A child who is cared for by a CAS on behalf of another CAS agency that holds the legal status for a child.
Parent/Legal Guardian	A person who is a biological parent, an adoptive parent, or a person who under a written agreement or court order (which could include voluntary services, supervision orders, and customary care arrangements) has custody of the child/youth.
Postsecondary Pathways	The five possible destinations for students after secondary school: apprenticeship training, community living, work, college, and university.
REACH Team	A group responsible for developing and implementing a plan to support and promote the educational achievement of a student in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS. The team includes a variety of school, school board, and CAS or Dilico personnel, other relevant personnel, and the student, as appropriate for his/her age, developmental level, and cognitive capabilities.
School Board Lead	A person in every school board who is identified to facilitate effective cooperation between CASs and school boards for all processes related to the implementation of this protocol. The responsibilities of the designated leads include but are not limited to ensuring implementation of the protocol, ensuring appropriate collection and dissemination of information, protecting personal privacy, intervening when requested where procedures are not followed or organizational barriers are identified, and developing strategies to address these barriers.
School Point Person	A person designated by the school board lead or principal who is the primary contact at the school level for all processes involving the student, where the student has been identified as per the Information Sharing section of the Joint Protocol for Student Achievement and consent has been received.
School Social Worker/School Attendance Counsellor	A person working as a part of the school team, helping students to attain their academic potential. They provide consultation with school administrators, teachers, school support staff, and parents, as well as individual counselling/support to students. The Attendance Counsellor has jurisdiction over, and is responsible for the enforcement of compulsory school attendance with respect to every child who is required to attend school (Ages 6 - 18).

Society Ward	A child/youth who has been placed in the temporary care of a children's aid society. There is a maximum amount of time that a child can be a Society Ward: 12 months for children under six years of age, and 24 months for children six years of age or older (the amount of time in care as a Society Ward is cumulative).
Special Education Program	An educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meets the needs of an exceptional pupil.
Special Education Services	Facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.
Student Success Leader	A senior staff person in every school board funded by the Ministry of Education who is responsible for coordinating Student Success initiatives.
Student Success Teacher	A designated teacher in every secondary school who is tasked with tracking the progress of students at risk of not graduating, providing direct support/instruction to students to help them improve their achievement, and working with parents, the broader school, and the local community to improve outcomes for struggling students.
Student Success Team	A team in each secondary school that includes the principal, the Student Success Teacher, a guidance counselor, and a special education teacher. The team identifies and provides extra attention and support for students who are at risk of not graduating.
Supervision Order	A court order that provides for the oversight of a child/youth in the home of his/her parent or in the home of a person who is not the child's parent.
Temporary Care Agreement	A written document voluntarily signed by a child/youth's parent/legal guardian and the child/youth (if 12 years of age or older) providing for a CAS to have care and custody of the child/youth for a specified period of time (not exceeding 12 months). Under the agreement, the parent/legal guardian may maintain certain parental rights.
Temporary Care and Custody Order	A court order that places a child/youth in the temporary care and custody of a CAS during an adjournment period.

APPENDIX B

SIGNING AUTHORITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH INVOLVED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Type of agreement or order

Authority to give consent, in cases where a student is less than 12 years old, or does not have the capacity to provide informed consent

Crown Ward

CAS/Dilico

Customary Care

Legal Guardian

Kinship in Care

CAS/Dilico

**Kinship Service
child or**

Parent and legal guardian (member of the child/youth's family or community who has been approved by CAS/Dilico)

**Temporary Care and Custody
Order (Interim Order)**

CAS/Dilico

Society Ward

CAS/Dilico

Supervision Order

Parent/Legal Guardian

Temporary Care Agreement

Parent/Legal Guardian (and CAS/Dilico if required)

APPENDIX C

A SUMMARY OF THE RIGHTS UNDER THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

All children have universal, human rights - the standards in international law for the treatment of children to support their optimal survival, development and protection. These standards are set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Canada in 1991. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was the first instrument to incorporate the complete range of international human rights— including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights as well as aspects of humanitarian law.

The provision and protection of children's Convention rights is the primary duty of governments at all levels. The Convention is a useful framework to advance the well-being of children because it provides a comprehensive view of the interdependent conditions to scaffold child well-being, it makes clear what children are entitled to, it distinguishes the roles and responsibilities of different actors, and it articulates the principles that should guide all actions for children. Using the Convention to develop policies, laws, programs, services, administrative procedures and other decisions and actions leads to better outcomes for children.

The 54 articles of the Convention may be grouped into four categories of rights and a set of guiding principles.

The guiding principles of the Convention include non-discrimination; adherence to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to participate. They represent the underlying requirements for any and all rights to be realized.

Survival and Developmental Rights: These are rights to the resources, skills and contributions necessary for the survival and full development of the child. They include rights to adequate food, shelter, clean water, formal education, primary health care, leisure and recreation, cultural activities and information about their rights. These rights require not only the existence of the means to fulfill the rights but also access to them. Specific articles address the needs of child refugees, children with disabilities and children of minority or indigenous groups.

Protection Rights: These rights include protection from all forms of child abuse, neglect, exploitation and cruelty, including the right to special protection in times of war and protection from abuse in the criminal justice system.

Participation Rights: Children are entitled to the freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural and political life. Participation rights include the right to express opinions and be heard, the right to information and freedom of association. Engaging these rights as they mature helps children bring about the realization of all their rights and prepares them for an active role in society.

Articles 19, 20, 21 and 25 address the rights of protection: Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. Any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable. There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behaviour – ones that are non-violent, are appropriate to the child's level of development and take the best interests of the child into consideration. In most countries, laws already define what sorts of punishments are considered excessive or abusive.

Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly, by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language. Children have the right to care and protection if they are adopted or in foster care. The first concern must be what is best for them. Children who are looked after by their local authorities, rather than their parents, have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate. Their care and treatment should always be based on “the best interests of the child”.

Articles 28 and 29 address the rights and goals of education: Every child, including the world's most disadvantaged, has the right to an education because it has the power to change lives. Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty; supporting child survival, growth, development and well-being; and closing the gap in social inequality. On average, one additional year of education can increase an individual's earnings by 10 per cent. Knowledge in hygiene and disease prevention can greatly reduce the number of preventable deaths. Furthermore, girls' education is particularly impactful for future generations: children of educated mothers are much more likely to go to school than children of mothers with little or no education.

Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. Children have a particular responsibility to respect the rights their parents, and education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their parents.

Learning environments must be a haven for children to learn and grow, with respect for their identities and varied needs. The child-friendly school model promotes inclusiveness, gender-sensitivity, tolerance, dignity and personal empowerment.

- Schools should operate in the best interests of the child.
- Educational environments must be safe, healthy and protective.
- Classrooms should have trained teachers and adequate resources.
- Children's rights must be protected and their voices heard.

APPENDIX D

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY – DUTY TO REPORT

Professional advisories inform professional judgment and practice. The Council of the Ontario College of Teachers approved an advisory on June 4, 2015 to remind members that they have a duty to report abuse and/or neglect of children and youth. This may be read in conjunction with previous advisories such as Professional Misconduct Related to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct, and Safety in Learning Environments: A Shared Responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

Each of us has a responsibility to protect children and youth from harm. As a professional educator working directly with students and supporting others who are, you have a legal and ethical duty to report to a children's aid society when you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection.

Ontario's *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) requires those who perform professional or official duties with respect to children to report suspected child abuse where there are reasonable grounds. A child is anyone under 16 (or appears to be) or who is 16 or 17 and subject to a child protection order.

You don't have to be certain that a child may need protection. Suspicion on reasonable grounds – information that an average person, using normal and honest judgment would need to decide – is reason enough to report. You have to report to a children's aid society so that they can assess and determine what the child needs.

Do you notice when children and youth have unexplained injuries, they're not eating, they have poor hygiene or are falling asleep in class? These may be signs of family problems, abuse or neglect.

Do you know what prompts your duty to report? Do you know to whom you report? Do you know the consequences of not reporting?

This advisory will help to address those questions.

It applies to all Ontario Certified Teachers (OCT) at all times and includes teachers, consultants, vice-principals, principals, supervisory officers, directors of education and those working in non-school-board positions. Each has a different role. All share the responsibility for the protection of children and youth.

WHAT IS ABUSE?


"Abuse occurs when a child is hurt intentionally or when a parent or caregiver does not provide the protection a child needs. Physical and sexual abuse are often the most recognizable, but neglect and emotional abuse can be just as damaging."

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies

The CFSA requires that you report suspicions of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and risk of harm to a children's aid society.

KNOW YOUR OBLIGATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Everyone has a duty to protect children and a duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect, according to the CFSA.
- Become familiar with the legislation and your employer's policies and protocols.
- The duty to report supersedes all other obligations.
- You do not have to prove suspected abuse or neglect. Your report enables the children's aid society to investigate the information.
 - You cannot be held liable for making a report as long as you have reasonable
 - grounds for your suspicion and are not acting maliciously. (CFSA, s. 72 (7))
- Your duty to report is immediate. If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection, report your suspicion, and the information on which it is based, forthwith to your local children's aid society.
- Your duty to report is direct. You cannot rely on anyone else to report on your behalf, nor can you delegate your legal duty. A supervisor cannot instruct you to do otherwise.
- Your duty to report is ongoing. Even if you have reported previously, you must make a further report to a children's aid society if you suspect the child still requires protection.
- Your duty to report overrides concerns about confidentiality. You are still legally obliged to report if a student tells you something "in confidence."
- Once you have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse or neglect, your duty is to report not investigate. A children's aid society will investigate.
- Be aware of your employer's policies and protocols and the advice of your professional associations.
- Document your actions.
- When in doubt about whether to make a report, call your local children's aid society.



Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education

Appendix E

Discussion Document

As the proverb says: “It takes a village to raise a child”.

Parents, educators, and community partners collectively understand how true this statement is. Together, we understand that children and students who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self are best positioned to reach their full potential. And it is through expressions of happy and healthy childhood development and a positive sense of well-being that our learners are supported to become more resilient and better able to overcome challenges now and in the future.

Well-being is that positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. As our Indigenous partners have long affirmed, healthy development of the mind, body and spirit is contingent on balance and interconnectedness.

It is our job to work collectively to make sure that our children feel this way, all the time. When the well-being of children and students is supported – whether they are at home, in the community or at school – we are meeting the conditions needed to help them learn, grow, and develop a positive sense of self.

Promoting well-being is one of the four interconnected goals of *Achieving Excellence*, Ontario's renewed vision for education. This goal is based on the principle that our education system needs to help students build the knowledge and skills associated with positive well-being so that they can become healthy, active and engaged citizens. Ontario is committed to building on and deepening the solid foundation that has been created in early years centres, classrooms, schools and communities across the province, and this requires the ongoing commitment and collaboration of all our partners in education.

Fostering learning environments that contribute to our students overall sense of self, spirit, and belonging promotes well-being. Achieving success depends on the knowledge, wisdom, passion and dedication of the entire education community, including students and families, community organizations, service providers, and government ministries.

Over many years, we have seen growing evidence to demonstrate why well-being is fundamental to overall student success. Students cannot achieve academically if they don't feel safe or welcomed at school, if their mental health is at risk and if they don't have the tools or motivation to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle, both inside and outside of school.

This is because children who have a positive sense of well-being are more resilient and more successful as learners. We also know that children who have a positive sense of self are better equipped to meet the challenges of a fast-paced and globally-connected world and to be active engaged citizens now, and in years to come. Ontario is committed to helping students build the knowledge and skills associated with positive well-being so they can become confident, capable and caring citizens.

Promoting well-being is not only part of our renewed vision for education. It is also something that collectively we have been working on for many years, all across Ontario, particularly since 2009, when promoting well-being became a responsibility of every school board through amendments to the *Education Act*.

Going forward, we are committed to working together with all of our partners in education to build on and share in the established successes of the well-being efforts already in place. At the same time, we can work together to develop ways to measure our progress in promoting well-being, from the early years through to Grade 12, and for staff. To be successful we must engage with all of our education partners – including parents, educators, staff, leaders and students – across the province to ensure their insights, strengths and perspectives are reflected to inform our work to further promote well-being. And throughout this process we will ensure that we recognize the uniqueness of all of Ontario's diverse communities.

The engagement process will take the needs and realities of the French-language education system into account, and apply the perspectives of the francophone community. The uniqueness of French-language schools lies in the fact that their mission is not only to educate students, but also to protect, enhance, and transmit the language and culture of the community they serve – efforts that are essential to the well-being of the members of that community.

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures and perspectives, which adopt a holistic view of well-being, are also a critical element that will shape the conversation. Respect for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit knowledge and traditions is fundamental to the well-being of all. With a holistic perspective, well-being is supported through the creation of safe spaces that promote and reflect cultural identity, and create a sense of belonging and connection for all.

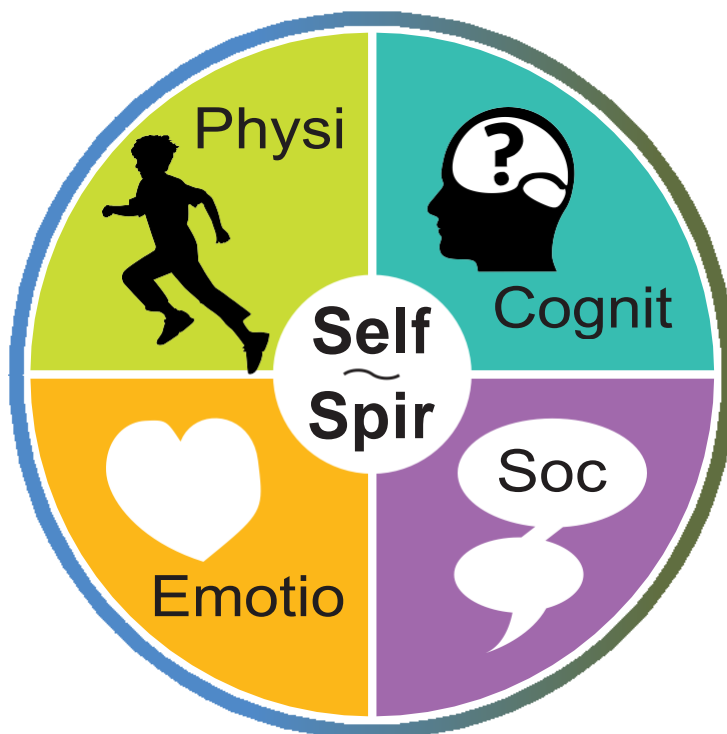
Our goal is to work together on determining what well-being looks like, establishing what conditions and supports are required to create positive learning environments, and focusing on how it underpins everything we do.

What Is Well-Being?

Well-being is a positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. It is supported through equity and respect for our diverse identities and strengths. Well-being in early years and school settings is about helping children and students become resilient, so that they can make positive and healthy choices to support learning and achievement both now and in the future.

The Four Domains of Well-Being

- **Cognitive:**
The development of abilities and skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and the ability to be flexible and innovative.
- **Emotional:**
This involves learning about experiencing emotions, and understanding how to recognize, manage and cope with them.
- **Social:**
The development of self-awareness, including the sense of belonging, collaboration, relationships with others, and communication skills.
- **Physical:**
The development of the body, impacted by physical activity, sleep patterns, healthy eating, and healthy life choices.



What is Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education?

Ontario's vision for the early years is to ensure that Ontario's children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services. A system that contributes to healthy child development today will help to ensure a strong future tomorrow.

We know the early years are critical for future health and well-being and we have introduced a range of transformational measures that put our youngest children on a solid foundation, including:

- Child Care modernization – Passing Ontario's *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, focused on building a high-quality child care and early learning system;
- *How Does Learning Happen?* – A guide for teaching and learning for the early years, targeted towards educators, child care providers and leaders in early years settings, organized around four foundations that are critical for optimal learning and growth: belonging, well-being, engagement and expression; and
- The creation of Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres (by 2018) to provide early years programs for children and families across Ontario.

Ontario's approach to well-being must be multifaceted, and its success requires working collaboratively with our education partners to promote well-being within our early years settings and schools. Our current focus is on the well-being of students from kindergarten to Grade 12, and in the future we will expand our focus to include staff and children in the early years programming.

There are **four key components** at the foundation of Ontario's well-being strategy:

- Positive Mental Health
- Safe and Accepting Schools
- Healthy Schools
- Equity and Inclusive Education



Building on Current Initiatives

Well-being has been long been recognized as an important factor in overall student success. Across the province much work has already been done, and continues every day, in pursuit of the goal of promoting well-being. This includes:

- **Promoting positive mental health** is a key component of well-being. All school boards have a Mental Health Leader who develops and implements board-level mental health and addiction strategies and works with staff to build capacity to support positive mental health in the classroom for all learners and to support students with mental health needs or addictions.
Since 2011, **School Mental Health ASSIST** is helping Ontario's school boards build professional capacity to promote mental health for all students.
- **Fostering safe and accepting schools** sets out expectations for all school boards to provide safe, inclusive and accepting learning environments that support the achievement and well-being of every student, including addressing bullying, implementing progressive discipline and creating a positive school climate.

The *Accepting Schools Act* of 2012 was instrumental in requiring a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.

- **Developing healthy schools** is key to establishing the learning conditions that are vital to help students reach their full potential by putting the conditions in place for students to adopt healthy active living practices and maintain them throughout their lives.

The newly revised **Health and Physical Education Curriculum** provides significant opportunities for students to learn about well-being. In addition, all educators are expected to create a learning environment that will support not only students' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development but also their mental health, their resilience, and their overall state of well-being.

- **Supporting equity and inclusive education** helps the education community identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in order to support student achievement and well-being. Research confirms that students who feel welcome and accepted in their schools are more likely to succeed academically. In fact, everyone in our publicly funded education system – regardless of background or personal circumstances – should feel engaged and included.

In addition, the government's youth strategy – **Stepping Up** – emphasizes the need to support all young people in becoming healthy, safe, hopeful, engaged, educated and contributing members of their communities. All of this work will help to inform us moving forward.

Next Steps

Promoting well-being requires attention and commitment at all levels and with all our partners.

In Ontario, we have already taken important steps to support the whole child. We want to continue to work together on what well-being looks like and to support the conditions required to recognize the uniqueness of different communities in order to reach our goal of supporting the well-being of all children, students and staff.

With the release of this paper, our work continues towards building consensus and sharing ideas about what is working. It is our responsibility to build on what we know and integrate existing work in a way that contributes to deepening this conversation. Starting in the fall of 2016, we will be asking education partners to consider how their work connects to well-being and how what they are doing supports well-being for all. By drawing on the knowledge of those who have done incredible and important work over many years to foster well-being for our children and students, we will strive to establish a common understanding of what promoting well-being means in schools. And by working together to define the measures that are important to us, we can ensure that all of our students and schools – all across Ontario – will benefit together.

We will begin discussing how to measure well-being in a more consistent way across schools. The intent of creating measures is to inform our efforts, resources, practices, and approaches so that we can continue to improve. These measures will provide the system, boards, schools and educators with indicators of how our students are doing beyond literacy and numeracy results. This is not about distilling the complexities of something as intangible as well-being into a simplistic measure. We understand that well-being is an interconnection between social, emotional, cognitive and physical development, with a sense of self, or spirit at the core, all subject to the learning environment.

In other words, we want to find what we're doing well, and how we can do better.

Through our collective knowledge, wisdom, and research, our discussions will identify the key factors that promote and support well-being, and how to measure them. We want to make sure that all of our learning environments promote enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills needed to make positive choices. And we want this not only for our children and students of all ages, but also for our staff.

One of our goals is to ensure that from the early years, children, educators, and all staff feel that well-being for all is supported throughout Ontario's publicly funded education system.

Engagement on the strategy will be conducted in phases. We will start with discussing well-being among students in the publicly funded education system from kindergarten to Grade 12, and following that, we will engage our partners on well-being among children in the early years sector and staff. By taking a phased approach, we are better able to engage our partners in supporting the well-being of our young children and staff.

We will be listening to students, parents and our many partners in education.

Achieving Excellence depends on the inclusion of all of their voices, and incorporating their perceptions.

Conclusion

Our well-being strategy is meant to provide an understanding of current and ongoing well-being in Ontario's education system. We will have in place the means to identify conditions that promote well-being, and a plan to improve well-being across the publicly funded education system. Our goal is that all students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices. We are also working to ensure that children, educators and all staff will feel that their well-being is supported.

It has been demonstrated that school and system leaders play a critical role in creating the conditions that support the healthy development of all students. It is vital that our education leaders feel supported as they work towards building learning environments that encourage healthy students, and engaged and dedicated teachers, parents, and staff. Educators and staff who are motivated and proud to come to work every day, are a prerequisite for enhanced student well-being and achievement.

Publicly funded schools are able to bring the focused efforts of an entire community – students, families, educators, and staff – to the promotion of well-being.

Our government is committed to supporting Ontario's publicly-funded school communities through this engagement process, where we will be speaking to everyone who is part of our school communities. Ontario schools are among the best in the world, and by working together we will continue on this positive path.

All children deserve the best possible start in life, and the right to be supported as they learn and grow. We look forward to our ongoing work with our partners as we strive to achieve excellence, ensure equity, promote well-being and enhance public confidence in our education system.

We have a collective responsibility to create healthy learning and work environments that contribute to life-long learning. Together, with the release of this paper, our work continues towards building consensus and sharing ideas about what works.