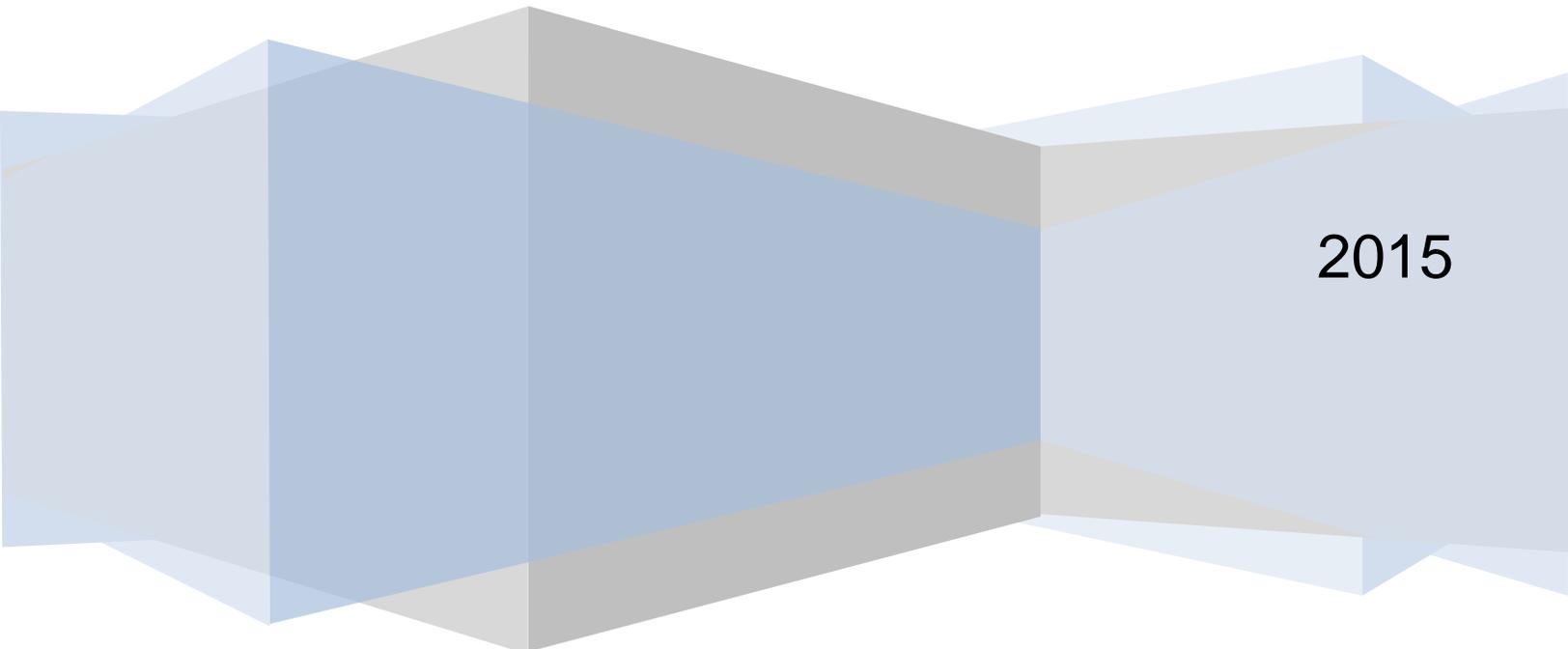


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Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA)



2015

Preface

The 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 2012–13 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. 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, or receiving services from, a CAS to benefit from the learning opportunities and supports available in schools and to achieve academic success.

CASs and school boards are strongly encouraged to work together to develop joint local protocols or amend existing protocols as soon as possible in order to maximize coordination of students' educational supports in their region. Partnering CASs and school boards may consider using 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. CASs and school boards that already have protocols in place should use existing protocols and update them if necessary to ensure that all elements of the JPSA template are included.

Support identified within the 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);
- children and youth receiving voluntary or court ordered services from CAS in the community (e.g. voluntary services, supervision order, customary care arrangement) for whom the parent/guardian/customary caregiver has provided consent, permitting the CAS and the school/school board to exchange information.

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. However, for those children and youth who are receiving services from a CAS 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 and to link students with educational supports outlined in this template.

Consent is sought in two areas covered in the template where information is shared and supports are offered to students:

- to disclose information regarding a student's involvement with a CAS;
- to establish a Realizing Educational Achievement for Children/youth (REACH) Team and/or Education Success Plan (ESP).

Depending on the circumstances, consent may be provided by:

- the CAS (where the student is in the care of a CAS);
- the parent/legal guardian (where the student is receiving services from a CAS);
- the student (in all cases where the student is over 12 years of age).

The JPSA template includes five key elements:

- **information sharing processes** between CASs, school boards and schools;
- **administrative processes** to support a student transitioning into or out of a school;
- **planning for student achievement**, including:
 - establishment of a REACH Team to support and promote the educational achievement of the student
 - development of an individualized ESP
- **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 template also outlines roles and responsibilities for a CAS Lead, School Board Lead, CAS Point Person and the School Point Person.

Included in many sections of the template is information labelled "**Area(s) for local customization**". CASs and school boards are encouraged to expand these sections in order to adapt the template to reflect local needs and terminology. Explanations of terminology used in the template are provided in the appendix to this document. In addition, some sections include lists labelled "**Implementation considerations for discussion**". These are intended to alert protocol development teams to specific issues or concerns they may need to take into account.

Where protocol development teams identify additions that are needed to accommodate local conditions or respond to specific issues or concerns, these elements should be incorporated into their protocol.

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INTRODUCTION

Area(s) for local customization

Insert a snapshot of your community(ies), including unique circumstances such as:

- ✓ *educational needs and challenges of children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, children's aid societies (CASs) in your region;*
- ✓ *relationships between partnering CASs and school boards; and*
- ✓ *your commitment to work collaboratively to support improved educational outcomes for these students.*

The Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA) details the commitment of (*insert names of school boards and CASs*), 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 comes into effect on (*insert date*).

SCOPE OF THE JPSA

This protocol outlines collaborative practices and processes to support the educational success of children and youth in Kindergarten to Grade 12. The protocol will apply to the following children and youth, also referred to in this document as “a student” or “the student”:

- children and youth in the care of a CAS through a court order or by voluntary agreement (i.e., those who are Crown wards, society wards, or under a temporary care order or agreement);
- children and youth receiving voluntary or court-ordered services from a CAS in the community (i.e., voluntary services, a supervision order, or customary care arrangements) for whom the parent/guardian or customary caregiver has provided a consent, which has not been withdrawn, permitting the CAS and the school/school board to exchange information.

Collaborative practices and processes include:

- information-sharing processes between CASs, school boards, and schools consistent with applicable legislation and regulation;
- administrative processes to support a student transitioning into 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 the development of Education Success Plans;
- 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;
- establishment of roles and responsibilities for the school board lead, the CAS lead, the School Point Person, and the CAS Point Person.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This protocol template is intended to help CASs and school boards to:

1. improve the educational achievement of children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS;
2. provide a framework for collaborative practices and processes that supports knowledge exchange, open dialogue, and academic success for students in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS within the context of all applicable legislation and regulations;
3. enhance the working relationships and communication between CASs and school boards in order to promote the well-being of children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS and assist these students to recognize and reach their full potential through both education and work experiences;
4. establish and nurture a collaborative relationship by which CASs, school boards, and schools promote educational success as well as an understanding of mutual roles and responsibilities, including engagement of parents/legal guardians and caregivers;
5. establish and maintain effective local protocols.

Area for local customization

Expand to suit local needs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Children and youth in the care of or receiving services from a CAS, and their families and caregivers, must be welcomed, valued, accepted, supported, and treated with dignity and respect by all parties.
- Confidentiality beyond the information sharing described in this protocol or otherwise permitted or required by law must be respected to reduce the stigmatization of children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS (see [Information Sharing](#)).
- Children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS will have access to available opportunities to succeed in school and available and appropriate supports, including cultural supports as required.
- Children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS and their families and caregivers will be involved in decisions that affect them, and children and youth will participate in the development of their educational pathway as appropriate for their age, developmental level, and cognitive capabilities.
- The strengths and needs of children and youth in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS 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 and youth.
- CASs, 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, or receiving services from, a CAS.

Area for local customization

Expand to suit local needs.

ELEMENTS OF THE JPSA

Five key elements in the local protocol are essential to achieving the goals and addressing the required scope of an effective protocol to support students in the care of, or receiving services from, a CAS to achieve their highest educational potential:

- **Information Sharing**
- **Administrative Processes**
- **Planning for Student Achievement**
- **Dispute Resolution**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation of the Protocol**

INFORMATION SHARING

A CAS 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, 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 in the care of a CAS:** A CAS may exchange personal information with school boards respecting children and youth in its care (i.e., crown wards, society wards, and those under a temporary care order or agreement);
- **Students receiving services from a CAS:** A CAS and a school board must obtain the consent of the parents/legal guardians or customary caregiver before exchanging information if a child is receiving protection services but is not in the CAS's care;
- **For all cases when a student is over 12 years of age:** Students age 12 or older must be asked to provide consent, if capable of providing a valid consent.

It is the responsibility of the CAS 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.

The CAS Point Person or Lead should provide the parent/legal guardian and the student with information about the potential benefits and risks of consenting to the sharing of information between the CAS and the school so that the parent/legal guardian and the student are reasonably informed before giving or withholding consent.

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.

The Process for Information Sharing

The collecting and monitoring of educational outcomes and achievements of individual students should be ongoing. Information sharing should only be for the purposes of supporting educational achievement as appropriate and relevant.

The process for sharing information is as follows:

1. The CAS lead should provide the designated school board lead with a list of students eligible for support under this protocol who are registered with that school board. The limits or restrictions on the consent should be provided. The list should give each student's given name and surname, date of birth, gender, and Ontario Education Number, and the name of the school the student attends.

2. The school board lead should verify with the CAS lead the listed names against the names of students registered in the board.
3. The school board lead should forward the list of verified students in each school to the applicable principal or School Point Person.
4. Where legally authorized, the principal or School Point Person should facilitate the release of the following information to the CAS Point Person, including but not limited to:
 - school report cards;
 - credits achieved to date (for a secondary school student);
 - 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.

See [Planning for Student Achievement](#) for next steps.

Implementation considerations for discussion

- ✓ Consideration should be given to the process for notifying all relevant parties if there is change in consent related to information sharing.
- ✓ Consideration should be given to the CAS obtaining consent in writing, which is a best practice.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

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

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. 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. Options should be considered for a student to remain in his/her existing school, prior to a decision to transfer the student, 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 CASs 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.

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 a CAS transfers to a new school, the CAS Point Person should contact the receiving school to arrange for registration for the student. Where appropriate, the CAS Point Person can delegate this action to the caregiver.
- If a student is not in the care of the CAS but receives services from a CAS, the CAS Point Person should offer to provide support to the parent/legal guardian in setting up the appointment and when registering the student, if appropriate.
- Either before or at the time of registration, the parent/legal guardian, the CAS, or the caregiver, as appropriate, should provide the principal with the required information needed for registration.
- A planning meeting should be scheduled by the school and should occur within **five** school days of the school's receipt of the necessary registration information. 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 within the next **five** school days, the dispute resolution process should be initiated. (See [Dispute Resolution](#).)
- Whenever possible during the transition process, a student should remain in his/her original school without interruption to school attendance. In cases where a student cannot remain in

his/her original school, bridging strategies (e.g., home instruction) must be implemented in the interim to ensure educational continuity.

Implementation considerations for discussion

- ✓ In the event that the family and/or student self-identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit, consideration should be given and consent sought as to whether a representative from their community should be involved in administrative processes.
- ✓ If a student or family have ties to or identify with a particular ethnic or linguistic community, consideration should be given to what type of additional representatives may be appropriate to be involved in administrative processes.
- ✓ For students in Grades 7 to 12, pathways planning should be discussed at the initial registration meeting.
- ✓ Class placement for elementary students or course availability for secondary school students may be affected by various factors (e.g., class size, collective agreements). Wherever possible, arrangements should be made to accommodate the student by providing a placement and timetable based on the student's strengths, needs, and interests. When a student is in the care of a CAS, the appropriate level of delegation of signing authority for school-related matters may be determined by the CAS. School-related matters may include authorization for experiential learning opportunities (e.g., class trips), access to student records, and transportation arrangements.

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. To facilitate a collaborative approach between partnering CASs and school boards and support the educational success of students, the following should be established:

- REACH Team
- Educational Success Plan (ESP).

The Realizing Educational Achievement for Children/youth (REACH) Team

A REACH Team 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.

If a student is receiving services from a CAS and not in the care of a CAS, the CAS must obtain the consent of the parent/legal guardian for the student to receive support from the REACH Team.

If a student is age 12 or older, the CAS must obtain consent from the student to receive support from the REACH Team.

A REACH Team 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 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 a REACH Team 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 of a REACH Team does not preclude the student from accessing other supports offered by the school (e.g student success teachers) or the CAS (e.g. tutoring supports) or asking for a REACH Team later in the year.

The REACH Team should include, at a minimum:

- the School Point Person;
- the CAS Point Person;
- 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 him/her, the REACH 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 responsibilities of the REACH Team include:

- 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;
- supporting specific special education needs of the student, if required;
- determining if and when other community supports/programs and stakeholders need to be involved to support the student's success;
- communicating with other REACH Team members between meetings, as needed;
- identifying and implementing opportunities to celebrate the accomplishments, milestones, and successes of the student in order to provide him/her with ongoing 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;
- supporting, encouraging, and facilitating the student's academic achievement, extra-curricular participation, and education and career plans;
- Supporting the student in exploring and pursuing his/her 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.

A minimum of two REACH Team meetings per year should be held to develop and review the Education Success Plan. Additional REACH Team meetings may be held, as requested by REACH Team members, including the student. A REACH Team meeting should occur within the first month of the student's registration at the school or the student's entry into care. REACH Team meetings should:

- 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 REACH Team 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.

The Education Success Plan (ESP)

Students with consent and who agree to have a REACH Team should be offered the opportunity to have an individualized ESP. The ESP is 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 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 as identified in the student's "All About Me" portfolio (K–6) or Individual Pathways Plan (Grades 7–12), 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 REACH Team with appropriate consents.

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, CAS caseworkers, and caregivers should have ongoing discussions with students about career plans and options, starting from an early age, and 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.

The REACH Team should have the responsibility to support the student's pathways planning as outlined in his/her IPP. This support includes identifying opportunities in the Education Success Plan and collaborating with Crown Ward Education Championship Teams, postsecondary institutions, businesses, and the community to explore postsecondary options for the student.

Minimizing Disruptions to School Attendance

Research and anecdotal evidence indicate that students in care are more likely than other students to miss school because of suspensions, delays in school placements, expulsions, or refusal or 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 should determine strategies and implement processes to support educators, CAS 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 previous school history and/or current or recent serious behavioural, emotional, or academic challenges contravene school and/or school board policies and prevent a timely school entry, the REACH Team may need to institute an alternative planning process that involves:

- defining the presenting issue;
- sharing information and ideas;
- generating and exploring possible solutions;
- predicting the likely consequences of each suggested solution;
- choosing a solution and developing a plan of action; and
- following up on the agreed action.

The REACH Team, in collaboration with other school personnel, can explore an alternative or adapted home support program while the alternative planning process is underway. If this process does not lead to timely access to school supports and/or programs for the student, the CAS lead should consult with the school board lead to determine the most appropriate next steps, 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, staff from the school board, the school, the CAS, 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 [Dispute Resolution](#)).

Providing Continuity for the Student within the Education System

At times, a student in the care of a CAS may move to a home outside the catchment area of the school he/she attends. When this happens, the school board should, if at all possible, arrange for the student to remain at the current school, if desired by the student. To reduce barriers that may have a negative impact on the student's ability to succeed, the relevant CAS and school board should work together, including through the REACH Team, so that:

- stability is maintained for the student within the education system;
- accumulated knowledge about the student at the current school is not lost, and is appropriately transferred to the new school;
- supportive connections between the student and his/her community are maintained.

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

- The School Point Person should request a meeting of the REACH Team, including the student (if he/she is able to participate based on age, developmental level, and cognitive capabilities), 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 REACH 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 REACH Team should identify 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 REACH 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 [School Transfer Process](#)).

Training

To promote the student's educational achievement, school board and CAS personnel should look for ways to facilitate appropriate sharing of resources and related training to improve CAS 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 include information on setting goals and expectations, creating supportive homework environments, and options and 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.

Implementation considerations for discussion

- ✓ An individual student's strengths and challenges should be considered in establishing a REACH Team and determining the supports, if any, required.
- ✓ Boards and CASs may wish to include information on relevant school board and CAS policies and practices in an appendix.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Periodically, disagreements may arise between CASs and schools or school boards. Partnering CASs and school boards should use dispute resolution strategies to 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 Point Person and School Point Person should be the first level of dispute resolution authority.

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 [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 at a higher level (and may possibly include the authorized signatories of this protocol):

(Insert name of CAS)

(Insert CAS position)

(Insert name of CAS)

(Insert CAS position)

(Insert name of school board)

(Insert school board position)

(Insert name of school board)

(Insert school board position)

- Disputes that have an immediate impact on the student’s educational success or pathway goals should be resolved within 10 days.
- All disputes and resolutions should be documented and the records retained for reference.

Implementation considerations for discussion

- ✓ Boards and CASs may wish to include information about their specific complaint or dispute resolution processes in an appendix to their protocol. Boards and CASs may wish to make provision for students in care who are near or at age 18 and who may lack the support of a caring adult to support them.

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 (see **Goals and Objectives**).

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.

The protocol should be formally reviewed every two years.

Implementation considerations for discussion

- ✓ Boards and CASs should identify a process to remind current staff and inform new staff about the procedures and strategies to be followed and to facilitate ongoing, consistent implementation of the protocol. In particular, the following should occur:
 - CAS and school board leads should regularly review the responsibilities of participants identified in the protocol with school principals, CAS managers and supervisors, and other key senior staff.
 - At the commencement of each school year, the principal should review the protocol with school staff.
 - At the end of August of each year, the CAS lead should communicate the CAS's responsibilities related to the protocol to the CAS caseworkers.

DESIGNATION OF CAS/SCHOOL BOARD LEADS

A designated lead from each CAS and school board should be 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.

The designated CAS leads who are the primary contacts:

(Insert name of CAS)

(Insert name of CAS lead position)

(Insert name of CAS)

(Insert name of CAS lead position)

(Insert name of CAS)

(Insert name of CAS lead position)

The designated school board leads who are the primary contacts:

(Insert name of school board)

(Insert name of school board lead position)

(Insert name of school board)

(Insert name of school board lead position)

(Insert name of school board)

(Insert name of school board lead position)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL AND CAS POINT PERSON

The School Point Person

The school board lead or 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 [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:

General Responsibilities

- Monitor the educational progress of each student and ensure that all relevant educational supports outlined in this protocol, including a REACH Team 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 establish a REACH Team for the student (see [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 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 Point Person

The CAS should designate a CAS Point Person, who will be the primary contact at the CAS level for all processes involving the student. The CAS Point Person could be the student's caseworker, depending on local needs. The roles and responsibilities of the CAS Point Person should include the following:

General Responsibilities

- 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.

REACH Team and ESP Responsibilities

- Participate in REACH Team meetings and in the development, implementation, monitoring, review, and updating of the ESP.
- 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.
- Identify and suggest to the REACH Team the participation of other supporting stakeholders, with input from the parent/legal guardian or caregiver and student, such as Band representatives, cultural advisers, contracted agency staff, and adults significant to the student, as appropriate.

Responsibilities when a REACH Team is not established

Where the necessary consent is not provided for a School Point Person or REACH Team involvement, the CAS Point Person's responsibilities include the following:

- Assist and encourage the student to advocate for his/her own needs in school or the parent/legal guardian to advocate for the student's needs in school;
- Maintain communication with the School Point Person as appropriate and in accordance with legislation, regulation, and the necessary consents;
- Initiate an annual discussion with the student or parent/legal guardian about establishing a REACH Team to support the student.

Area(s) for local customization

Expand to suit local needs.

SIGNATORIES

We, the signatories of the partnering children’s aid societies 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 or receiving services from CASs, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. We will champion this protocol and the principles it espouses within our organizations.

(Insert name and title of authorized signatory and CAS/school board)

(Insert Date)

(Insert name and title of authorized signatory and CAS/school board)

(Insert Date)

(Insert name and title of authorized signatory and CAS/school board)

(Insert Date)

(Insert name and title of authorized signatory and CAS/school board)

(Insert Date)

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

CAS Lead	A person in every CAS 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.
CAS Point Person	A person designated by the CAS who is the primary contact at the CAS 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.
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.
Education Quality And Accountability Office (EQAO)	An independent organization that conducts the following provincial assessments: <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)	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).

Formal Customary Care	The care and supervision of a First Nation child/youth in need of protection, by a person who is not the child/youth's parent, according to the custom of the child/youth's Band or Native community. The child/youth is not in the care of a CAS.
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.
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 and 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 the placement is supervised by a CAS. There may be an order placing the child/youth in the care and custody of the caregiver subject to supervision by the CAS 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. These records are protected by the Education Act and freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation.
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 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.
Society Ward	A child/youth who has been placed in the temporary care of a CAS.
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 counsellor, 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.

Area(s) for local customization
Expand to suit local needs