

2026 Update of The Transition Collaborative Summative Report

-A Plain Language Companion Guide-

Purpose: This guide is designed to help educators, families, students, and community partners understand the key ideas in the Transition Summative Report before participating in listening sessions. You do not need to read the entire report to participate. This guide highlights the most important points and explains them in plain language so you can come prepared to share your experiences and ideas.



Why Are We Here?

Washington State is updating a transition report required by the Legislature under [ESSSB 5253](#).

The report focuses on supports that students with disabilities may need as they move from school into adult life, including:

- employment
- education or training after high school
- independent living
- community participation

Listening sessions help gather community input to:

- ✓ Shape recommendations
- ✓ Identify opportunities and next steps
- ✓ Include real-life experiences in the final report

Who the Report Focuses On?

The report centers on students with significant support needs who may qualify for adult disability services. This includes many students identified under disability categories such as:

- Autism
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities

These students often face additional challenges during transition and may experience gaps between school services and adult services.



Report Summary

What Has Happened So Far?

A previous 2020 Transition Report found strong collaboration but also system challenges like:

- Services not connecting smoothly
- Different agency timelines
- Uneven access to employment-focused transition services

Since then, Washington has made important progress, including:

- Expanding School-to-Work programs



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- Creating regional transition networks
- Improving data sharing between agencies
- Extending special education eligibility to age 22

These improvements help reduce the “transition cliff” students sometimes experience after leaving school.

What We have Learned So Far?

The report shows both progress and ongoing challenges.

Bright Spots

- More students with disabilities are included in general education.
- Stronger coordination efforts and tools across agencies
- Expanded regional coordination and the Transition Council
- Expanded access to transition employment programs.

Research shows that inclusive education and early employment preparation improve long-term outcomes.

Ongoing Challenges

Some challenges remain:

- Students with significant disabilities have lower employment rates
- Systems can feel confusing or disconnected. Agency timelines do not always align.
- Need for more job readiness activities and work-based learning experiences.
- Staffing, student access and outcomes vary by region.

These challenges often affect students with the highest support needs the most.

Key Recommendations (Summarized)

The report shows both progress and ongoing challenges. The report suggests improvements:

- 1. Maintain stable funding**
 - a. Support programs like School-to-Work that prepare students for employment.
- 2. Improve statewide alignment**
 - a. Make transition planning more consistent across Washington.
- 3. Clarify roles and timelines**
 - a. Ensure school services and adult services overlap when needed rather than leaving gaps.
- 4. Strengthen coordination**
 - a. Help schools and agencies work together earlier and more clearly.
 - b. Engage business and improve systems to address underemployment.
- 5. Improve system navigation**
 - a. Create clearer resources and strategic outreach so families understand available services.



Your Voice Matters

Listening Sessions

Data and research show trends, but they do not capture lived experience. Your participation helps answer questions like:

- What actually works for students and families?
- Where do transitions feel confusing or difficult?
- What changes would make the biggest difference?

What You Will Be Asked During Listening Sessions

1. Where do students or families experience gaps or confusion?
2. What is working well that should expand statewide?
3. When or how does coordination work well? When does it break down?
4. What one change would improve transition outcomes most?

Your experience and perspective are valuable. You are the expert.

How to Prepare

Before the session, consider:

- A transition experience that worked well.
- A moment where navigating services felt difficult.
- Something you wish families or educators knew earlier.
- One change that would make transition easier.

What Happens Next?

Input from listening sessions will:

- Help update the final report.
- Inform recommendations to the Legislature.
- Be included in a public comment period before submission.

Timeline:

- Listening sessions.
- Report updates based on feedback.
- Final report submission to Legislature.

Thank You! *Your participation helps strengthen transition systems so students with disabilities can move successfully from school to adult life.*
