

BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

YEAR 2024-25

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS 2024-25

PREPARED FOR:
THE AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (AMDSB)



PREPARED BY:

facile
Independent Facilitation



BACKGROUND

This was an exciting year, for both the AMDSB and for Facile Perth. Together, we have highlighted what is possible when young people with a disability and their families are offered supports that are person-centred, community-focused and proactive.

In early June of 2024, Facile approached the AMDSB with a proposal to work together to support youth aged, 14-21, transitioning out of the school system. We felt that our expertise in planning and facilitation, as well as our three year history supporting youth transitions would support AMDSB's goals of offering a first-class education to their students and improving access to supports for families.

We were confident that their mission to engage, inspire, and innovate would make for a great collaborative partnership.

Over the last year, we have begun to develop a model for transition planning within the Avon Maitland school system. This model is supporting students and their families to prepare for life beyond graduation. We know that this transition is often referred to as “the cliff” by families, and can be a very challenging time. We recognized this was a community challenge that wouldn't be solved by a single service program, or by the education system alone. It is a challenge that requires a whole community approach.

The transition planning provided by Facile Perth is complementary to the ongoing plans built into the IEP process, which are directed by educators and special education teams. Each year, through our ongoing collaboration, we intend to learn and improve our processes, work plans and strategies.

As a collective, our collaboration has afforded both the school board and Facile Perth the opportunity to leverage resources and expertise, create greater transparency around transitions, and build the capacity of our community to support more effective student transitions. As a result, students with a disability, and their families, are more confident, better prepared and have a more robust vision for what is possible for their child before leaving school.



THE IMPACT

This project was funded by a one- year grant offered by the Ministry of Education. Facile Perth was engaged to deliver transition planning supports, workshops and professional development opportunities.

After one year of effective collaboration, there is a mutual recognition of how this partnership has positively impacted both organizations and their staff but also families and most importantly the students themselves.

- 25 students
- 7 schools
- 26 community connections made
- 6 students received pre-employment training
- 7 jobs or volunteer placements attained
- 4 college applications

WHAT FAMILIES SAID

In addition to expanding outcomes for young people in Huron-Perth, this collaborative effort has impacted families and caregivers. With a long-term, proactive mindset, we have supported families to tackle critical planning priorities that will set up their child for success now, and down the road.

More than that, families can feel pride and a sense of security when they look to the future.

- 7 housing-focused plans
- 24 DSO/ODSP applications
- 7 families received financial planning resources and education
- 5 families identified long-term planning objectives (e.g. Microboards)



“They [the facilitator] not only help our child, and meet them on their level, they also support us as caregivers. It can be overwhelming and they help by breaking things down; by helping with what can be done now and work towards the latter so we, as caregivers, and our child aren’t overwhelmed with everything.”

“Our Facilitator played a key role in securing a brighter future for our loved ones, as they work very closely with our family and also the organizations that provide all the support.”

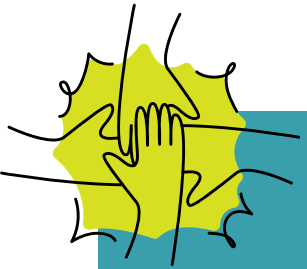
“As a parent of a child with special needs, there are so many aspects of their life that we are responsible for medical, social, financial, etc. I cannot explain the value that my facilitator had in helping me ensure I was doing the best job possible for my child and still keeping my head above water.”



Should all youth have a facilitator to help them think about their future?

Has having the one-on-one support of a facilitator helped you feel more positive about the future?

**YOUTH
SAID...
“YES!
100%”**



“Facilitation helped me think about my future differently.”

“I learned what I want to do. I feel better about myself.”



ANNA'S PLANNING FOR COLLEGE!

Mitchell District High School student Anna knows what she's passionate about. She enjoys working with children and wants to pursue it as a career.

"I like working with kids and [will be] going to college for Early Childhood Education (ECE)," Anna shares.



By working with her facilitator, Anna has been able to take meaningful steps toward the future she wants. Anna's facilitator, helped her find opportunities to connect with her community through a volunteer role at the West Perth Youth Centre. She also helped Anna prepare for the interviews that got her these roles, and connected Anna with the local Mobility Bus service, so she can get to and from her volunteering independently.

Anna has been enjoying the opportunity to gain experience working with children. She also hopes that, in the coming year, her volunteer roles might turn into a part-time job.

ANNA'S STORY CONTINUED

As a result of Anna's hard work and the support she's received from the Building Bright Futures initiative, Anna says she feels more confident about going to college and her ability to reach her goals. She also feels more prepared for the co-op placements that will be part of the ECE program she's planning to take at Fanshawe College through the Community Integration Through Co-operative Education (CICE) program.

Anna's mother, Heather, also appreciates the support that facilitation has given her and Anna **"It's taken a great weight off me,"** Heather says. **"It's been really nice to feel supported; having somebody that I can contact when I'm wondering about things."**

Facilitation has also supported Anna and her family as they make plans to set up a Microboard. This is an important step for making sure that Anna is supported to make decisions in her life as an adult. Anna and her facilitator have also been talking about options for living away from home in the future, and exploring what that could look like for Anna.



Heather says that working with a facilitator has also helped her adjust to the idea of having other people helping to support Anna in her life outside of school.

"It's been really good [for me], so that when she does go off to college, I know that people can look after Anna," Heather says.

Overall, the opportunity to access planning and facilitation through Facile has helped Anna and her family plan for a future and take steps toward making Anna's dreams a reality. Way to go Anna! We can't wait to hear more!



ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Outreach and Training

Over the 2024-25 school year, Facile Perth worked in partnership to support several school board activities in addition to offering one on one facilitation support. These included supporting conversations at two professional development days, presentations to school and board staff, and the coordination of two transition fairs.

Family Engagement

Additionally, Facile hosted a virtual webinar designed to support families with applications for adult funding and services. Facile organized speakers from the DSO and ODSP to present at this event. In addition, six families received one on one support from a facilitator to complete these applications.

Finally, Facile also developed a one hour webinar for families on the transition from school to adult life. It included a panel of speakers, including family and youth voices, as well as professionals supporting youth transitions.

School to Community Collaboration

In collaboration with our partners, Facile also invited AMDSB to leverage its network and gain training on *JobPath*, a proven pre-employment training program for youth with developmental disabilities. This event and others have resulted in the development of a Huron-Perth Youth Employment Network. This network hopes to offer schools increased partnerships with inclusive and youth-focused employers and community mentors.

***Approx. 550 people reached
41 ongoing youth-focused partnerships and
connections were made this year!***

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, Facile Perth and AMDSB are exploring plans to continue to support youth transitions from school to adult life, and at the same time, increase access to these supports earlier on. This means that, over the coming year, our focus will be on engaging families with a child aged 12 and up. We also intend to create more resources for families that support transitions to school and also from elementary to secondary school. The Building Bright Futures initiative is rooted in the values of collective impact (Tamarack Institute, 2023) and we are eager to collaborate with AMDSB on an ongoing basis to enhance the ways that we support families and young people to build good lives, firmly rooted in their community.

