

# CESBA Response to the Adult Education Consultation

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## Summary and Overview

CESBA's response to the ministry's adult education consultation represents comments provided by 11 survey respondents (6 English, 5 French) and additional commentary provided by CESBA's board members. To collect feedback, a confidential, bilingual survey was developed using the [27 questions suggested by MAESD](#). The survey was available online from December 15, 2017 to January 15, 2018. French responses were translated. Next, 39 pages of text or about 17,000 words were synthesized and categorized based on the content of the data. Comments were initially sorted into three main categories, and then sub-categories were developed to reflect the content.

The final submission is a rich source of professional insights into the adult education system, with numerous examples of the elements needed to improve the system and develop a truly learner-centred and seamless system---one that strives to address the pressing issues and important ideas expressed in this submission and summarized below.

### Supporting Adult Learners

1. Current and future learners need access to in-person educational counselling, community supports and pathway planning in their communities.
2. Adult learners confront systemic inequalities related to access to financial supports for their education, and must also pay more to apply to post-secondary institutions.
3. Many adult learners face complex challenges that impact their learning such as negative school experiences, poverty, disability, poor health and well-being.
4. Most adult learners are not confident and need consistent and predictable access to educators (i.e. qualified teachers and instructors).

### Developing Programs

1. System reform needs to address chronic underfunding and funding inequities.
2. Low funding levels have resulted in a precarious workforce and inequitable pay for similar work.
3. Disparate program funding levels have led to unequal access to PLAR and pathway planning, and differences in its implementation and interpretation.
4. Funding issues can also interfere with access to technology and curricula to support its integration.
5. The push for experiential learning is a contradiction for ESL/FSL and LBS programs without access to WSIB coverage.
6. Possibilities for different types of program development include families, on-site workplace learning, and more vocational learning integrated with credits leading to valued credentials.
7. Existing First Nations programs provide important insights into the elements needed to fully support all Ontarians who face structural and personal challenges.

8. Target marketing to particular learner groups and develop a forward thinking message about adult education.
9. An online information and navigation system could support the community access hubs and raise the profile of adult education.

**Integrating Accountability Systems**

1. Low funding and accountability targets are at the core of many misunderstandings, conflicts and unproductive competition in the system.
2. Points of connection, sharing and collaboration in the system have been limited to individual ministry systems, and are often limited to a program and its own efforts.
3. Integration and consideration of different accountability, curricular and assessment systems will be a challenge.
4. Core competencies could conflict with existing systems and not be useful or of value to learners, employers and educators.
5. Core competencies would need to align with and consider existing achievement and progress mechanisms such as PLAR and the CLBs.

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## Supporting Adult Learners

### **Current and future learners need access to in-person educational counselling, community supports and pathway planning in their communities.**

All respondents addressed the issue of providing information, navigation, referral and program access. They focused comments on the development of in-person community hubs with online support. Respondents also made concrete suggestions to help re-think and re-organize how *all* learners (credit and non-credit) access programs.

The main idea discussed is the development of community education and employment support hubs, combining many current services such as language assessment, PLAR access, employment services and regional LBS networks. The hubs would have to serve the needs of all learners in English and French. The students would experience something akin to a health care “triage approach,” described one respondent, in which they participate in an initial interview, which is then followed up with a referral to a specific program. One comment summarized the need for such an approach:

*Adult student pathway planners are needed who have knowledge about all adult pathways and programs funded by MCI, MAESD and EDU. These planners need capacity and a place to obtain that knowledge and must be located where the adult learners are.*

The above respondent and others highlighted what such an approach could involve.

- Access to records and databases across systems.
- Integration of employment services and work placements, providing access to co-op and PLAR.
- Could also consider access to credential recognition services and supports for immigrants.
- A guidance/education counsellor and system navigator with in-depth knowledge of *all* programs and systems in each community.
  - The role requires initial and on-going professional development to keep up-to-date
  - Would need to consider current system qualifications such as OCT, TESL and CLB Assessor
  - Would need to have knowledge of various learner profile groups and be able to align the individual with the relevant program and course available
  - Ensure that learners are directed to programs in French or English
  - Would need to keep up-to-date will all education providers and liaise with community services, employment services, and settlement agencies
  - This knowledge could then be shared with other educational and social service providers in the community during regular partnership meetings
  - At the same time, program changes and updates are shared

- And referrals could also be discussed at these meetings to demonstrate transparency and make adjustments to protocols
- Learners could also be referred to community and social service supports.

*Un service impartial d'information et d'aiguillage est un bon début - la réalité est que les adultes changent souvent de parcours, tout au long de leur route - une personne en orientation qui connaît bien tous les services disponibles doit être "objective" et sensible aux buts de chaque client, toujours dépendant du point d'entrée et des besoins les mieux adaptés pour répondre aux besoins particuliers... des gens qui connaissent bien l'AFB, les cours du secondaire pour adultes, le postsecondaire, l'apprentissage et la transition au monde de travail - comme ce que fait les personnes en orientation et COOP qui oeuvrent avec les adultes; le défi c'est de bien connaître ce qui se fait partout dans la province, tout en maintenant de bons liens avec les besoins courants des employeurs.*

*A good start is an impartial information and referral service - the fact is that adults often change paths along their journey - a referral person who knows all the available services well must be "objective" and sensitive to the goals of each person, always according to the point of entry and the most appropriate services to their particular needs...people who know well LBS, high school adult education, post-secondary education, learning programs and the transition to the labour market - such as those who work in guidance and coop education for adults - the challenge is to get to know what is being done in the province, while maintaining good links to the ongoing needs of employers.*

Respondents also emphasized the need for clear roles and transparency in the referral and assessment process. The community hub would need to be run “independently from any service provider.” The education counsellor/system navigator could not be directly employed by one provider, similar to the way YMCA language assessment services operates in many communities. The counsellor could also be an advocate for learners and ensure their access to timely assessments, information, and community services, explained one respondent.

Such an approach could also alleviate some of the negative competition in the system and support more collaboration and partnerships.

*Rather than having partner oriented projects, round tables of providers should be mandated by government on a regular basis. Competition amongst partners*

*needs to be eliminated by clear delineation of roles and changes to funding models that eliminate dependence on numbers.*

**Adult learners confront systemic inequalities related to access to financial supports for their education, and must also pay more to apply to post-secondary institutions.**

Adult students attending credit and non-credit programs are not able to access the same types of financial support as students in colleges and universities. Although tuition is not charged, they incur additional expenses related to their education such as transportation, childcare, living expenses, and some direct educational costs. Support can be offered to individuals using tax credits, for example, or through the system by providing student support funding for childcare, transportation, and direct costs such as internet, a couple of respondents suggested.

In addition, noted a respondent, adults pay significantly higher fees than high school students to simply apply to college and university.

*Universities and colleges will all make up their own registration and eligibility rules for adults to apply to programs, conditions that do not apply to day school students who apply directly out of high school.*

**Many adult learners face complex challenges that impact their learning such as negative school experiences, poverty, disability, poor health and well-being.**

Then can also face challenges accessing the supports they need in their communities.

*Adult students have to negotiate several agencies and each has their own rules about eligibility which can make the search for the necessary "wrap around" services difficult to retain.*

Adults registered in education programs, explained respondents, can encounter perplexing and contradictory policies such as an inability to access some Employment Ontario programs because they are registered in school or taking additional courses in a program, ones they don't need, simply to maintain a childcare spot through Ontario Works. Although the federal government recently announced that mature students on EI [can now enroll in Ontario's post-secondary programs](#), the same affordance was not extended to adults in secondary and non-credit programs.

Adult Credit and LBS see a higher proportion of the population with disabilities, and particularly learning disabilities. Yet, they have a fraction of the supports provided to K-12 and colleges. Inequities in the system double-down on these learners. Not only can they not access supports they may have received in K-12 or supports they could receive in colleges, once ready to attend, but they may not have access to a teacher or guidance support of any kind.

*There are no specialists in the school for adults with identified learning disabilities. This makes a student's transition from the high school to adult education exceedingly difficult. As a guidance counsellor in adult education, I have had to discuss our funding model. It is rarely a positive conversation.*

Adult education programs, particularly LBS and some ESL programs, also work with adult learners who have a variety of physical disabilities or are Deaf.

*For special needs learners, how do we provide training without Educational Assistants and equipment to help the special needs as in the K-12 system? Currently our Deaf learners have tutors in the class, but they are not trained in special education supports. How do we offer training for special physical needs when we don't have equipment or even accessible schools? Definitely in this area we need a lot more supports at our school board to make it happen.*

One respondent who works with blind learners described a frustrating barrier.

*The only way to translate materials into Braille is to send to one place in Toronto and it takes weeks to obtain this translation, why can't ILC.org materials be available in Braille, ready for school boards to purchase or to refer students to in order to take courses without a lengthy delay waiting for Braille materials?*

### **Most adult learners are not confident and need consistent and predictable access to educators (i.e. qualified teachers and instructors).**

However, many are not getting this access in correspondence programs, whether online or in print. In addition, the move to online learning could introduce additional access barriers to those learners who can't afford regular internet access at home, for those who simply don't have digital abilities (because they do not have regular access) and learners who have had interrupted and negative learning experiences, and need the support of educators.

*Nos cours sont disponibles en ligne sur le web, cependant on a souvent besoin de coordonner de l'appui d'une personne locale. Le défi demeure comment payer pour les Ress Hum sans changer la formule de financement. Il ne faut pas oublier que pas tous les adultes sont à l'aise avec les outils technologiques*

*Our courses are available online. However we often need to coordinate support from a local person. How to finance human resources without changing the*

*funding formula remains a challenge. Let's not forget that adults are not all comfortable with technological tools.*

In addition, notes another respondent, “administration is being pressured to move learners as quickly as possible through mathematics, English, and other subjects.”

## Developing Programs

### System reform needs to address chronic underfunding and funding inequities.

Current funding levels, combined with increasingly complex and time-consuming accountability demands, do not support program development, staff development, collaboration and partnership development, leading to inequitable and tenuous access to programs and services, particularly in Adult Credit.

A rough estimate of per-pupil funding across Ontario’s education systems indicates that those in adult education (i.e. ESL/FSL, Adult Credit and LBS) are funded at a fraction of the level allocated to students in PSE and K-12.

#### Per Pupil Funding in Ontario's Education Systems

|                                  |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>K-12</b>                      | \$12,100 (2016-2017)             | <a href="#">Toronto Star, April 13, 2017</a>                                |
| <b>Colleges and Universities</b> | \$9,902 (2014-2015)              | <a href="#">Financial Accountability Office Ontario</a>                     |
| <b>Adult Education</b>           | \$1,205 (2016-2017) <sup>1</sup> | (Personal communication, January, 2018 with Ministry of Education official) |

Does the ADE model really work?” asked one respondent about the Adult Credit system. Currently, some students have access to teachers and many don’t. Some have access to guidance counsellors, others don’t. Even when there is access, the guidance counsellor carries a massive portfolio, approximately 1500 to 1600 students, four times [the average load carried by secondary school guidance counsellors](#). It is the guidance counsellor who provides access to PLAR, pathway planning and ultimately the OSSD.

Current funding levels and formulae also mean that many boards can’t generate enough funding to cover a contract teacher’s wage, and can only offer a correspondence model to students. This means that students are usually working in isolation with little or no direct and sustained support.

<sup>1</sup> 188,000 students and \$226.6 million for Adult Credit 21+, ESL/FSL & LBS

*Look at the funding model for adult education. If you can only offer a correspondence based model it doesn't leave a lot of extra [funding] to pay a teacher to be available to provide support for learners who are finding the material difficult or to help them learn to use an online course. Maybe some funding for each board to provide tutoring time?*

It also means, explained a respondent, there is no funding to update content and develop curriculum. “Basically as curriculum changes, our curriculum list gets smaller and smaller.” Students have fewer courses to choose from.

Access becomes even more challenging for those living in rural and remote communities. “Some of our newcomers are truly isolated in their rural communities without access to public transportation and ESL and Settlement services,” writes one respondent.

In addition, there is a lack of French-language programs and services across the province.

*Grande disparité sur le plan provincial et régional au niveau de l'accessibilité à des programmes et services en français de qualité répondant aux besoins réels des apprenants et du marché de travail.*

*There is great disparity at the provincial and regional levels in terms of accessibility to quality French-language programs and services that meet the real needs of learners and the labour market.*

A couple of respondents advocated for a mandated K-graduation policy that could possibly lead to more equitable funding throughout the system.

*If it was treated as education required by every person, in order to live the life they want, it would no longer carry a stigma or include barriers.*

Others described the need for more flexible funding and supplemental funding for particular challenges and community needs, such as supporting Syrian refugees with little or no education or working with seniors returning to work or newcomers in rural areas or Indigenous learners in remote locations.

### **Low funding levels have resulted in a precarious workforce and inequitable pay for similar work.**

Most educators in school boards, whether teachers with their OCT, ESL/FSL instructors with a CTESL and LBS educators, work on short-term contracts.



*The ambiguous nature of employment (never being sure if you will have a job in the next few months) affects the tenor of the school and staff. Often, teachers who support parents on fixed income or teachers who have families are under incredible pressure. Funding for adult education teachers should be similar to that of secondary and/or elementary teachers.*

Respondents also commented on the staff hierarchies and inequities when working with the same group of students across programs. For example, grid teachers and contract teachers may work side by side. There is also a hierarchy and pay inequities between credit and non-credit educators.

Also, most educators have little access to regular and on-going professional development, specifically related to working with adults with mental health challenges, learning disabilities, other disabilities, working with those in rural and remote programs, and working with Indigenous adult learners. One respondent commented that the system needs staff who better reflect the diversity of the students. There is also a need to integrate more cross-cultural awareness and training as part of educator professional development and training.

**Ideas to address develop professional development opportunities include the following:**

- Why not integrate an adult education component into initial teacher training?
- Adult Guidance ABQ,
- Adult Education ABQ, perhaps with additional parts and/or specialist qualification
- Continue with Guidance Bootcamp
- Training to work with adults who have learning disabilities and mental health challenges

**Disparate program funding levels have led to unequal access to PLAR and pathway planning, and differences in its implementation and interpretation.**

*PLAR is an excellent government policy and working very well to help adult students achieve credit for their life experiences and to assist in the timely completion of the high school diploma.*

Importantly, the OSSD and particular courses are mandatory pre-requisites needed to access the college and university entry systems. Employers also require the OSSD over GED and ACE.

*Le programme RDA répond bien aux besoins des adultes qui cherchent à obtenir le diplôme. Le GED/ACE semble poser des problèmes lorsque les personnes diplômement d'un programme collégial et se cherchent un emploi.*

*The PLAR program is well suited to the needs of adults seeking a degree. GED and ACE seem to be a problem when people graduate from college and are looking for work.*

Currently, wrote a respondent, not all students have access to PLAR and, when there is access, the process may not be consistent. There is also a need for more support resources in French.

*The PLAR process must be consistent and accessible across the province. Current models of funding for adult credit do not allow this to happen. There is no funding for guidance counsellors other than the funding provided through PLAR.*

Another reason for inconsistency is the “steep learning curve” requiring on-going training and support. Access to PLAR for mature students in the secondary system must be considered alongside the recognition of foreign credentials. Policy makers need to be engaged in a discussion with universities and colleges in order to recognize out-of-province and out –of-country credentials.

One respondent described how employers and PSE institutions require an OSSD because they understand its meaning and what it represents, but disregard other credentials. This becomes a tremendous barrier for adults who may be compelled to return to high school, despite completing university outside of Canada.

*Why would someone who obtained a bachelor of engineering in another country be compelled to take 4 high school credits to obtain an Ontario High School Diploma?*

The PLAR for credit policy (PPM 132) must also be re-examined, urged one respondent, to remove the OLC40 requirement for those who have *already* completed Grade 12 or college or university level English courses.

### **Funding issues can also interfere with access to technology and curricula to support its integration.**

One respondent cautioned that programs are not prepared for an increase in online learning. “Not all the pieces are in place.” There is a lack of technical support, professional training and infrastructure. More worrisome are the assumptions that learners have access at home and want to engage in online learning. There is also a need to develop more responsive curricula that works with technology and integrates learning about technology and its impacts.

### **The push for experiential learning is a contradiction for ESL/FSL and LBS programs without access to WSIB coverage.**

While Adult Credit programs have a mechanism to support work placements and experiential learning (i.e. co-operative education), non-credit programs do not. The greater barrier is a policy

issue. Non-credit programs can't access WSIB coverage, which is required by employers and volunteer organizations. Students in K-12 and colleges and universities can access work placements organized by their institutions and integrated with their learning programs, but ESL/FSL and LBS students can't.

**Possibilities for different types of program development include families, on-site workplace learning, and more vocational learning integrated with credits leading to valued credentials.**

One respondent described the need for more on-site workplace learning.

*Many immigrants need to work in order to support their families and so cannot take courses to learn English. Programs in the past allowed for partnerships with employers to take courses on the worksite. This should be encouraged again.*

The respondent described how their program attempted to develop on-site workplace language classes but employers were not interested without incentives “for employers to help cover off release time for training, replacements when staff are in training, etc. This is especially hard for small employers.”

Another respondent emphasized the need for more vocational training integrated with credit accumulation and/or language development, such as the PSW program, skilled trades and other pre-apprenticeship programs. Such an approach is needed for those who may not have the time, money and learning readiness to transition to a college or private training program. One innovative example is a new partnership with Landscape Ontario.

Another respondent identified the need for more holistic family learning, particularly in northern communities:

*Families need to be encouraged to be a part of the school by opening up classes for parents both during the day and after school to develop their skills and dependent on need. This is the one central place they can receive information.*

**Existing First Nations programs provide important insights into the elements needed to fully support all Ontarians who face structural and personal challenges.**

One respondent pointed out how First Nations communities have been able to develop holistic and inclusive models that we can learn from.

*Education needs to be truly a lifelong endeavour. The efforts of some of our First Nations communities to find a path forward that supports the learners in a*

*respected and inclusive manner recognize this. The PREPP program and the KKETS program are both good models of this.*

### **Target marketing to particular learner groups and develop a forward thinking message about adult education.**

Some respondents shared their ideas for better promotion and marketing of an integrated adult education system. The message should be “forward thinking” focused on opportunity, transformation and change. And not backward thinking, with a focus on missed opportunities, second chances, recovery and remediation.

*[Adult education] must become part of the fabric of working life as a means to move ahead in a time when technological advances are changing the world of work forever.*

When promoting the program, target communities and particular adult learner groups (i.e. newcomers with credentials and professional skills, newcomers without credentials and work experience, those who left an Ontario school 20 or 30 years ago, Indigenous learners who may be reluctant to re-engage with the system, young adults disillusioned and disengaged, moms who have delayed their aspirations until children are older, Francophone immigrants, seniors returning to work, newcomer seniors and grandparents caring for grandchildren while parents work, seniors who need digital literacy to access government services, etc...).

Marketing also needs to target partner agencies such as social services and Employment Service centres, to promote a better understanding of the OSSD and its accessibility with PLAR. The public may assume that the GED is an adult’s only option for a high school credential since it is part of popular culture (due to its predominance in the US and in popular culture). Many don’t realize that Ontario has a unique system. One person commented:

*Too often clients are referred to a GED program or an LBS program rather than directly to a credit program.*

### **An online information and navigation system could raise the profile of adult education.**

Up-to-date information, including a mobile app, could be useful for learners and providers, stated one respondent.

*It would be nice to have some kind of online system that shows all provincial and federal programs available to adult learners. Even for service providers, we may refer people amongst ourselves to ones we know of, but sometimes we are not aware of all the options and not able to provide the best ones.*

It could also be used as a promotional tool and help raise the profile of adult education with school board officials who may be unaware of the variety of programs available in their own boards.

A couple of respondents cautioned that people who access adult education do not have online access, or rely on word of mouth and may not trust online information.

*If you are looking at Code for Canada, you need to recognize that not all adults have good digital skills or even comfort with using technology. That is often why they come to our programs...to learn.*

In addition, a respondent asked, how will a digital solution support the current mode of access and referral, which is word of mouth?

One respondent also suggested that there are good models available to guide the development of an online information system such as Ontariocollges.ca or the Directory of Community Services. Other ideas include Open Badges for Learning for immigrants and eInfo website for university planning.

## Integrating Accountability Systems

### **Low funding and accountability targets are at the core of many misunderstandings, conflicts and competition in the system.**

What government needs to recognize, emphasized one respondent, is what may appear as misunderstandings and confusions in the system are actually choices program sometimes make to maintain their funding levels and meet targets.

*Il y a souvent mention de partenariats, mais sans réforme des formules de financement, on demeure en compétition. **On connaît nos partenaires.** Le gouvernement doit imposer certains changements fondamentaux dans les formules pour éliminer le besoin de compétition entre les partenaires.*

*Partnerships are often mentioned, but without reform of funding formulas, there is still competition. **We know our partners.** The government must impose certain basic changes in formulas in order to eliminate the need for competition between partners.*

Respondents addressed the issue of negative competition over students leading to “scooping” students, holding on to students for too long, overfilling classes to off-set less in demand classes, and registering students in a less than ideal program.

*We have had other organizations aggressively entice learners away from us. This hurts our bottom line. We have also worked on preparing to deliver a program where another provider heard about the idea and "scooped it"...not sure how this encourages*

In addition, one respondent wrote,

*The funding model of LBS encourages providers to intake students who may not necessarily need LBS support.*

Such competition becomes a liability to the system as a whole and the learner who is caught in the middle.

*The loss of funding that comes with losing a learner or client is the largest barrier to the kind of adult student movement that is being sought by the government.*

Not only will it prevent the realization of any sort of "seamlessness" in the system, but it will be an on-going impediment to partnership development and collaboration between programs writes a respondent.

*We are punished if we don't meet targets. If we must spend our time protecting our program from directed/targeted improvement, [then] collaboration (which is costly and time-consuming) is an unrealistic expectation.*

**Respondents also shared several examples of competition and conflict:**

- Colleges award high school equivalency certificates. Students could end up completing pre-college programs or ACE, only to find out that they need a specific credit or the OSSD even within the college system.

*Le ACE n'est même pas transférable d'un collège à un autre, et est très peu reconnu par les employeurs. Soyons honnêtes avec les clients adultes et disons les vraies informations. Éviter la frustration et le découragement des gens qui n'ont pas été bien informés, pas bien desservis et qui ont perdu du temps.*

*The ACE program is rarely transferable from one college to another, and hardly recognized by employers. We have to be honest with adult clients and provide the right information. People must not be frustrated and discouraged because they have been misinformed, badly served or wasted their time.*

- LBS “oversees credit programs”
- French school boards deliver ESL
- Low-level ESL for credit programs are over prescribed with beginning language learners to offset credit classes with lower enrollments, taking learners from ESL/FSL programs, generating more credits than needed and extending a learner’s time in school
- LINC is perceived to be more rigorous than ESL/FSL attracting more students
- Misunderstandings and competition between PLAR/GED/ACE

*The GED takes away students who could do PLAR and make our credit program stronger. Our local Contact North agency refers to [another program] for high school credit instead of our own programs, despite us letting them know what we do.*

- Anglophone immigrants are not able to access FSL in bilingual communities (e.g., Ottawa area, Windsor, northern Ontario and Sudbury) the same way as Francophone immigrants are able to access ESL.

*[This] is potentially a human rights challenge waiting to happen. These immigrants pay the same immigration fees to move to Canada, yet they are not eligible to receive the same degree of service.*

**Points of connection, sharing and collaboration in the system have been limited to ministry systems and are often limited to a program and its own efforts.**

Respondents also described some points of connection and partnership development. However, most of the examples they provided are focused on their own program development efforts within their programs or with some community partners or with CESBA,

**Examples of connection and collaboration:**

- The work of the Adult Education Strategy (also mentioned as a model of collaboration and integration)
- CESBA in general and regional partnership activities
- Adult Education Strategy partnership with 12 French school boards
- Online credit information for French school boards
- MAESD funded regional networks and planning tables for LBS
- MCI and LINC funded programs meet regularly and may also meet with settlement agencies
- Project funding that brings together various partners is a start but there is a need for more permanent mechanism
- Various programs have developed their own partnerships depending on location and funding and could involve MCSS, Corrections Canada, Indigenous communities, colleges and universities, OW, employers, etc.

One respondent would like to make better use of LBS in order to support credit by having students enrolled in both programs at the same time. Another respondent commented that their partnership with LBS is “rich and has lasted for many years.” (Ce partenariat est riche et dure depuis de nombreuses années.)

Overall though, collaboration “takes work and time,” which programs simply don’t have, especially considering the policy barriers and accountability demands. It’s simply easier to forgo the partnership development, lamented one respondent.

*Certainly more collaborative programs are interesting and help provide new delivery models. However, with two that we are setting up now, it seems to require an extensive amount of time coordinating things between the 3-4 agencies involved prior to delivering the course...more than if we were running it ourselves. I feel that in some cases, we deliver programs more efficiently and also have the capacity to do it.*

One respondent provided comments for policy-level organization and consideration of both a regional and provincial structure, particularly for Francophone programs. Provincial bodies could be established to support broad issues like curriculum development, technology integration and policy that impact PLARs, for example. A regional structure would work with all partners to ensure pathway planning and access to programs for adults in their communities.

*1ère étape: Provinciale: collaboration interministérielle avec l'implication actives des leaders du milieu: Alpha, conseils scolaires, post-secondaire.*

*2e étape: À partir du travail provincial, les structures de gestion régionales adaptent les différents parcours selon les régions et les communautés.*

*Step 1: Provincial: Interdepartmental collaboration with the active involvement of community leaders: literacy, school boards, postsecondary.*

*Step 2: Based on provincial work, regional management structures adapt the different paths according to regions and communities.*

### **Integration and consideration of different accountability, curricular and assessment systems will be a challenge.**

Three ministries have developed and integrated the use of three very different database, accountability and funding systems for their programs. Some respondents wondered how these could be integrated. The table below provides an overview of the types of accountability and data reporting tools and mechanisms that are in use, many of which were mentioned in comments.



|                     | Database Systems                 | Official Curriculum Frameworks                                      | System Assessments   | Main Progress Indicator  |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Adult Credit</b> | PowerSchool<br>Trillium<br>Onsis | Ontario Secondary School Curriculum                                 | EQAO Grade 10 Literacy Test or OLC40<br><br>PLAR for Mature Students (Grades 9/10 assessments and senior credit challenge/portfolio) | <b>Credit completion</b> (reflects content and subject knowledge)              |
| <b>ESL/FSL</b>      | HARTS/CLARS                      | CLB   | CLB tests<br><br>PBLA  | <b>Completion of BM levels</b> (reflects everyday language skill development)  |
| <b>LBS</b>          | EOIS-CaMS                        | OALCF<br><br>ACE alignment with Ontario Secondary School Curriculum | OALCF Milestones, Culminating Tasks and Learner Gains (LG under development)   | <b>Completion of Milestones</b> (reflects completion of a pre-fabricated task) |

One respondent emphasized the need to make system integration changes based on the learner, and not what may work for the management of programs:

*Revoir les structures et règles en fonction des besoins des apprenants et non aux besoins des ministères et organismes publics.*

*Review structures and rules according to the needs of learners, not the needs of government departments and agencies.*

**Respondents also commented on what better integration of data and records means to them:**

- Student management system that works *with* current systems
- Access to transcripts and Ontario Student Record (OSR) in a provincial system; avoid duplication of credits
- Access to student’s credit history through their OEN
- Current time and effort to obtain transcript is a barrier
- Shared access to a student’s CLB’s
- Provincial access to PLAR records
- Access to LBS participation and completion information.

**Core competencies could conflict with existing system and not be useful or of value to learners, employers and educators.**

Some respondents expressed their concern with the development of another core competency framework, particularly since they already use the CLB’s and the OALCF, and some also use the

Essential Skills. They worry about the introduction of yet another competency system and the inherent lack of meaning these systems have for learners and employers.

One respondent worried that a core competency system will look like the current system in use in LBS.

*I would hate to see another Milestones be created, expanded or adapted for adult learners that duplicates many things already out there. It would be horrible to invest money and see it not truly capture what adult learners may need to define them.*

A respondent also questioned their value among employers and educators.

*As frameworks, they mean little to employers who just need to know that someone can do the job and has the right attitude. For educators, the frameworks also tend to be very abstract and some teachers are not sure how to integrate either Essential Skills or CLB into their training classes.*

Another respondent stated that the effort to describe and use a single set of core competencies across diverse learning systems may be difficult to achieve.

*It may be difficult to define core competencies or essential skills given that these skills and competencies are likely dependent upon the intended pathway of the adult learner.*

One respondent expressed concern with the way that the Essential Skills introduces negative connotations and deficit thinking about learners.

*Don't assume literacy learners do not have Essential Skills. Many of them have compensated for low literacy (either in English/French or in their first languages) but manage to live their lives successfully in other ways, e.g., raise their kids, work at jobs, etc.*

### **Core competencies would need to align with and consider existing achievement and progress mechanisms such as PLAR and the CLBs**

- They would need to support a framework of distinct pathways that considers CLBs and credit and PLAR and previous credentials.

- Students could use a personal tool that is related to PLAR and the development of a personal learning portfolio monitor pathway achievements (e.g., BMs achieved, credits earned, courses completed, certificates earned, etc.).
- Would have to be careful about overlaps, duplication and extra work considering PBLA and PLAR portfolios already in use.
- Would need to consider how available and future content aligns with the competencies.
- Would need to have allowances for dual program participation in LBS and Credit or LBS and ESL or Credit and ESL (e.g., competency for communication in the workplace or language development for academic English).
- Some indication of employment entry requirements that are connected to CLBs and OSSD (e.g. what jobs need OSSD only, may not need OSSD but other credentials?) could be useful
- They would need to provide some direction to help update curriculum and content (e.g. focus on digital literacy and analysis of online information, or coding or numeracy applications related to analysing data and graphical information).
- They could be useful when promoting lifelong learning and remind Ontarians of the importance of accessing adult education opportunities (e.g., competencies describing critical digital literacy).
- Would need to reflect employer aims and communicate learner accomplishments in a way that employers recognize and value.
- They would need to support current PSE entry requirements and facilitate transition and access.