

support every child
reach every student

**Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy
Presentation to the Provincial Advisory
Committee**

May 13, 2015

Overview

1. Setting the Context: Introducing the Adult Education Strategy
2. Key findings from the regional consultations held on the Adult Education Strategy
3. Timelines and scope of work for the third party facilitator, who will work with school boards to begin the regional planning process

1. Setting the Context: Introducing the Adult Education Strategy

The EDU Adult Education Strategy

Improving access and opportunities for adult learners

Key Goal:

- *To support the commitment made in “Achieving Excellence” to “ensure that the adult education system better supports adult learners in their efforts to finish high school and successfully transition to postsecondary education, training or the workplace.”*

Objectives:

- To improve adult learner outcomes by promoting system innovation and accessibility through collaboration / coordination and partnerships among school boards at the regional level.
- To better support the provision of Ministry of Education (EDU) Adult and Continuing Education programs and services that are flexible and responsive to learner needs.
- To improve the transitions for learners between EDU adult credit programs and programs funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade (MCIIT).

How do we get there?

- **To achieve success, we have consulted with school boards** about a **regional** and more **collaborative** approach among school boards to:
 - Foster a shared responsibility for adult learning.
 - Improve accountability for learner outcomes.
 - Identify and address gaps and opportunities.
 - Ensure availability of a wide range of accessible program delivery options and supports for adult learners.

- *Regional school board collaboration explores:*
 - *Coordinated delivery of EDU programs and services that are fully transparent to adult learners and provide the shortest and most effective pathway to their goal.*
 - *Opportunities for shared school board services and infrastructure to improve access for learners.*
 - *Monitoring and evaluation for continuous improvement to ensure high quality and effective EDU programs for learners.*

What do we want to achieve?

We want to ensure that all adult learners in all regions of the province have access to consistent, high quality EDU Adult Education programs and services.

A. Regional School Board Partnerships action to achieve progress in 4 key areas:

1. Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services (e.g., e-learning or hybrid delivery programs) that best meet adult learner needs.
2. Coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referral, provided at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the program or service that best meets their needs.
3. Regionally available and consistently applied Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students working towards a high school diploma.
4. Regionally available guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students working towards a high school diploma or seeking prerequisites for postsecondary education.

B. EDU Action

1. Review and renewal of key EDU policies that will support school boards in achieving progress in the four key areas.

C. Tri-Ministry Action

1. Foster a shared responsibility for adult learners through improved coordination between EDU adult credit programs and MCIIT and MTCU adult education programs, in alignment with respective ministry priorities and initiatives to improve learner transitions.



Achieving the objectives

Activity		Objective		
		1. Improve adult learner outcomes through regional collaboration among school boards	2. EDU Adult Education programs and services flexible and responsive to learner needs	3. Improved transitions for learners between EDU, MTCU and MCIT programs
A. Regional School Board Partnerships Action	1. Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services	√	√	
	2. Coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referral, provided at school boards.	√		√
	3. Regionally available and consistently applied Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students.	√	√	√
	4. Regionally available guidance, career counselling and pathway planning.	√	√	√
B. EDU Action	Review / renewal of key EDU policies	√	√	√
C. Tri-Ministry Action	Tri-ministry Reference Group on Adult Education: explore how best to achieve collaboration that aligns and supports respective ministry priorities and initiatives to improve learner transitions.			√



Plan of Action

Next Steps

Initiate and support a three-year, phased approach for ongoing dialogue and province-wide innovation, supported by concurrent EDU policy renewal.

Phase	Timeframe	Milestone
One	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional consultations with school boards.
Two	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of regional strategic plans to achieve regional coordination in the four key areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain a facilitator to work with school boards within each region.
Three	Years 2–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of regional strategic plans. Assessment of outcomes and recommendations.



2. Key findings from the regional consultations held on the Adult Education Strategy

Consultations on EDU Adult Education Strategy

- Regional consultations were held during February and March, 2015, in London, Richmond Hill, Toronto, Ottawa and Thunder Bay, and one consultation for Francophone school boards.
- Approximately 144 individuals participated from 64 school boards across the province, representing engagement by 89% of school boards.
- Participants included key Adult and Continuing Education school board administrators (Superintendents, Principals, Vice-principals, Managers) who have responsibility for EDU adult credit programs.
- Discussion centered on exploring a regional, collaborative approach to the delivery of Adult and Continuing Education programs and services by school boards
- A consultation meeting with representatives of the TVO Independent Learning Centre (ILC) will be held on May 15, 2015 to discuss the role of distance education and the GED in the Adult Education Strategy.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

Recent regional consultations with school boards:

- validated key objectives outlined in EDU Adult Education Strategy, and
- affirmed the need to build on promising practices in order to make improvements in key areas of EDU adult education program and service delivery.

Discussion focused on the following four key areas:

1. Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services (e.g., e-learning or hybrid delivery programs) that best meet adult learner needs.
 2. Coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referral, provided at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the program or service that best meets their needs.
 3. Regionally available and consistently applied Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students working towards a high school diploma.
 4. Regionally available guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students working towards a high school diploma or seeking prerequisites for postsecondary education.
- Participants were also asked to provide input on the ministry's proposed regional, collaborative approach to the delivery of Adult and Continuing Education programs and services by school boards.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

Common Overarching Themes identified by Participants

- Existing funding model does not accommodate the flexible delivery modes required to address the complex needs and schedules of adult learners, and incents competition rather than collaboration among school boards.
- Variation in the issues facing urban versus Rural / Remote school boards was identified. Examples include access to transportation and sufficient internet bandwidth.
- Human resource issues such as collective agreements and pay structure were identified as issues impacting school board ability to deliver flexible and comprehensive adult education programs and services.
- Need for increased professionalization of Adult Education, with professional development opportunities for administrators / instructors.
- Need for support and engagement from all three ministries to improve transitions for learners between tri-ministry programs.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

1. Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services that best meet adult learner needs

- School boards acknowledged the need for innovation to deliver flexible and responsive adult education programs and services that accommodate the increasingly diverse needs, schedules and mobility of adult learners.
- School boards identified promising practices such as course delivery that combines online and face-to-face modes, and partnering with community agencies to provide wrap around supports as approaches to be scaled to a regional level.
- Boards recognized the technical and training challenges that accompany a move to more flexible delivery models.
- The existing enrolment-based funding model designed for more structured programs targeted at traditionally-aged students was identified as a major obstacle to innovative and flexible delivery to an increasingly complex, multi-barriered adult learner population.
- Additional consequences of the funding model that were identified include staffing challenges, both administrative and instructional, limited opportunities for staff professional development, limited and inconsistent availability of guidance and pathway planning services for adult learners.
- Boards identified the need for greater priority/recognition to be placed on Adult and Continuing Education, as this impacts the ability of Adult and Continuing Education administrators to advocate for appropriate programs and services for adult learners.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

- 2. Coordinated information, intake, assessment and referral, provided at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the adult education and training program or service that best meets their needs.**
 - Boards offering intake and assessment effectively reported providing these services at a centralized site, with dedicated, trained staff. This model requires sufficient numbers of students to support staffing costs, which generally occurs in larger urban centres.
 - Participants from many boards reported inconsistent awareness of the full suite of programs and services available to learners, limiting their ability to provide adult learners with information on all available opportunities. Referral patterns were described as being dependent on individual service provider awareness of options and on local relationships between service providers.
 - Participants identified that competition between and among school boards, colleges and other service providers delivering similar programs impacts school board approaches to assessment and recognition of credentials and learning from all pathway, often requiring adult learners to repeat assessments and learning, and delaying learners' progress towards achieving their educational goals.
 - Variation in language, terminology and definitions used in the programs across the three ministries as well as limitations in sharing learner / client data were identified as obstacles to a consistent and robust approach to intake, assessment and referral at school boards.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

3. Regionally available and consistently applied Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students working towards a high school diploma.

- School boards acknowledged that PLAR for Mature Students has the potential to enhance and accelerate the completion of a high school diploma, while ensuring its integrity.
- Boards delivering PLAR for Mature students consistently and effectively reported using a centralized model of analysing assessments with delivery of assessments occurring at the school level.
- Participants recognized inconsistency across school boards in the delivery of PLAR for Mature Students, the availability of appropriate PLAR for Mature Students resources, teacher training on PLAR for Mature Students assessment, and opportunities for adult learners to prepare for the PLAR for Mature Students assessments. This challenge was identified as a potential barrier to reengaging vulnerable populations of adult learners.
- It was recommended that EDU Policy/Program Memorandum 132: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students, issued more than 10 years ago, be updated in order to align with *Learning to 18* legislation, better address the needs of an increasingly diverse adult learner population, and facilitate timely completion of a high school diploma.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

- 4. Regionally available guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students working towards a high school diploma or seeking prerequisites for postsecondary education.**
- School boards acknowledged the importance of tailoring guidance and pathway planning to the unique needs of adult learners, most of whom have employment goals in the long term. This type of guidance is different from that offered to regular high school students, requires counsellors to have knowledge of labour market information and trends, and to develop relationships with postsecondary institutions, Employment Ontario service providers and employers.
 - Participants described successful school board to college pathway programs for adult learners that were developed through individual local school relationships with postsecondary institutions, and identified these as approaches that could be scaled to a regional level.
 - Boards identified that challenges with adult learner transition from EDU adult credit programs to postsecondary education are due in part to limited and/or inconsistent access to guidance and pathway planning for adult learners at school boards across the province.
 - Challenges in covering the costs of guidance and pathway planning staff were identified at rural / remote school boards where there were insufficient numbers of students to generate funding.

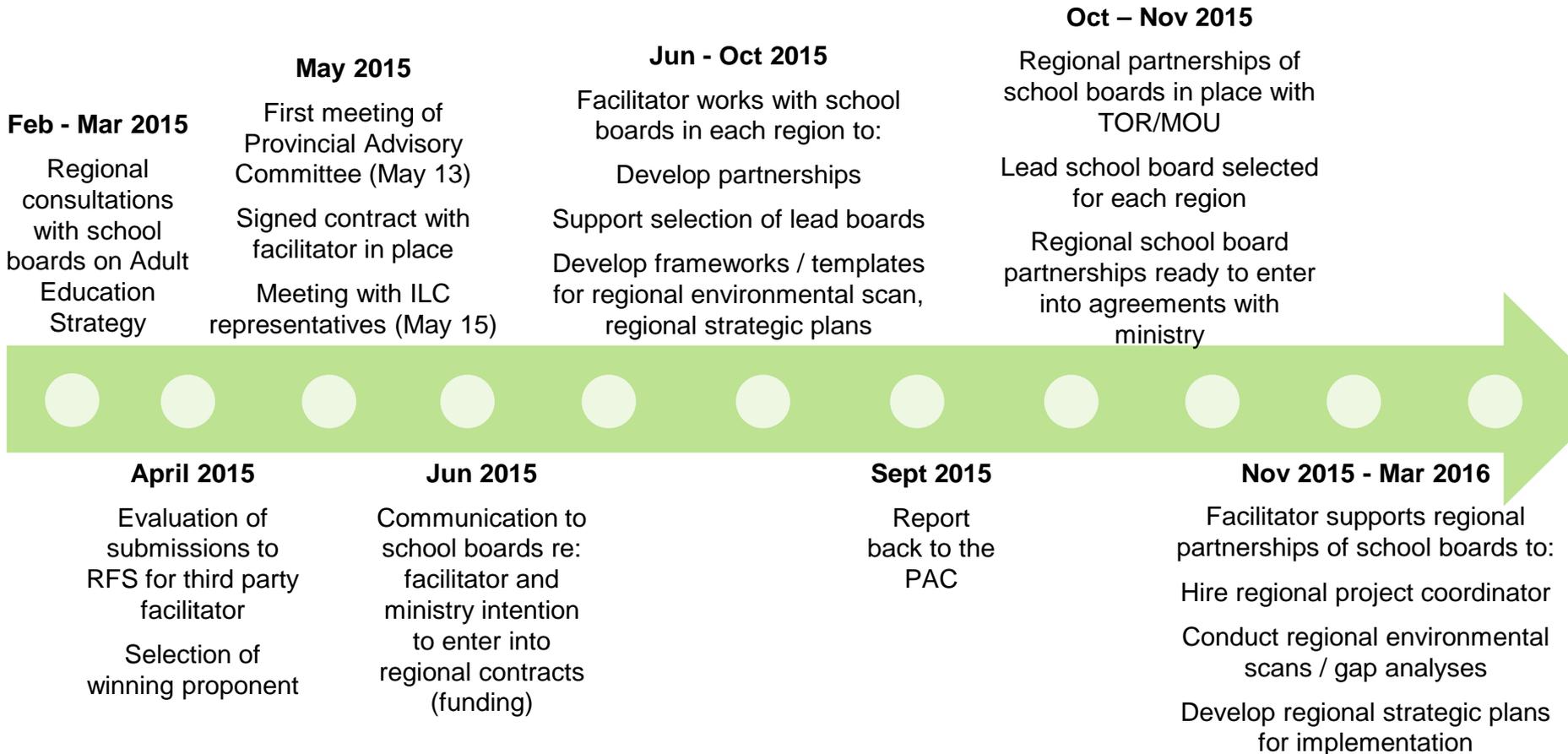
KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

School board input on the ministry's proposed regional approach to the delivery of EDU Adult Education Programs and Services

- School boards indicated support for regional collaboration as a means of sharing promising practices and increasing the profile of Adult Education at school boards.
- A number of positive and successful relationships between coterminous school boards and between school boards and community agencies were described by participants.
- School boards recognized that a regional approach provides opportunities to strengthen relationships with other services providers, which would improve transitions for learners between tri-ministry programs, with adaptation to local community context.
- Participants expressed concern about the partnership formation process, particularly where strong competition between school boards exists, and concern about the loss of individual school board autonomy.

3. Timelines and Work of the Third Party Facilitator

Adult Education Strategy Timeline



Third-Party Facilitator

- EDU conducted procurement of third-party facilitator to support school boards on implementing EDU Adult Education Strategy.
- Request for Services posted in March 2015 to four potential vendors on Vendor of Record list.
- One proposal was received in April 2015, from a proponent familiar with the Ontario education system, and its adult education programs in particular.
- **Scope of work:**
 - Provide coordination for Anglophone school boards in forming partnerships at regional level (e.g., six EDU provincial regions) in accordance with goals and objectives of EDU Adult Education Strategy.
 - Develop standardized approach that school board partnerships can use in conducting regional environmental scans that identify opportunities for innovation and collaboration, identify programming and service gaps at regional level, and that school board partnerships can use in developing regional strategic plans; and provide support to school boards on these processes.
 - Work with existing Francophone school board partnerships (Partenariats en éducation et en formation des adultes francophones, commonly referred to as “PEFAs”) to build on existing research and strategic plans in accordance with goals and objectives of EDU Adult Education Strategy.
 - Monitor / evaluate school board partnership implementation of regional strategic plans in years 2 and 3.
 - Provide ongoing advice / recommendations to EDU based on findings from evaluation of implementation of regional strategic plans.