

Meeting of the Provincial Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the Adult Education Strategy on Wednesday, May 13, 2015

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Severn Room, Macdonald Block
900 Bay Street, Toronto

Organizations invited to Participate in the Provincial Advisory Committee on Implementation of the Adult Education Strategy

Acronym	Organization
CODE / CODELF	Council of Ontario Directors of Education / Conseil ontarien des directrices et des directeurs de l'éducation de langue française
OASBO	Ontario Association of School Business Officials
AGEFO	Association des gestionnaires de l'éducation franco-ontarienne
CESBA	Ontario Association of Adult & Continuing Education School Board Administrators
COFA	Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes
OSSTF	Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
OECTA	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
AEFO	Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens

Attendees:

AEFO: Maureen Davis; CESBA: Jean-Pierre Durette, Nancy Campling, Mike Silverstro, Raluca Lazar; CODE: Kathy Mills on behalf of David Euale, Anne O'Brien; COFA: Michel Robillard; Ministry of Education: Mary Jean Gallagher (Chair), Janine Griffore, Pauline McNaughton, Suzanne Gordon, Helene Gregoire; Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade: Yvonne Ferrer; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Paddy Buckley, Dan Leinwand; OECTA: Susan Perry; OASBO: Nancy Tallevi; OSSTF: Wendy Anes Hirschegger

Regrets:

AGEFO: Michael Philbin; CODE: Roch Gallien, David Euale, Linda Staudt; Ministry of Education: Denys Giguère, Gabriel Sékaly, Joshua Paul; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Marie-Lison Fougère; OECTA: Kevin O'Dwyer; OASBO: Bill Blackie

Meeting Purpose:

This was the first meeting of the Ministry of Education's (EDU) Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) on the Implementation of the Adult Education Strategy. The purpose of the meeting was to welcome committee members and provide orientation to the Ministry of Education's Adult Education Strategy, to

summarize key findings from the Ministry's recent consultations with school boards on the implementation of the strategy, and to approve the committee's Terms of Reference.

Summary:

The Committee Chair, Assistant Deputy Minister of Student Achievement in the Ministry of Education Mary Jean Gallagher, welcomed the Committee and thanked its members for accepting the Ministry's invitation to participate on the Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC). In reviewing the proposed Terms of Reference for the Committee, the Chair outlined the purpose of the Committee and the context for the Committee's work, as summarized below.

The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice to the Ministry of Education on the implementation of the Ministry's Adult Education Strategy. Other ministries are represented on the committee in order to bring alignment and coherence to the implementation of EDU's strategy. The strategy aims to ensure that EDU funded adult education programs and resources are available as broadly as possible across the province. To achieve that vision, the strategy focuses on achieving collaboration among school boards at the regional level so that course offerings are coordinated to maximize availability to all learners.

The strategy also aims to ease learner transitions between EDU funded programs and those adult education programs offered through the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade (MCIIT) and the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU). Regardless of where an adult learner turns up, the learner should get the same "pathway" identified to their goals and objectives. We recognize that from a learner's perspective, goals cross the education programs of three ministries (EDU, MCIIT, and MTCU). That said, this strategy is focused on bringing coherence among EDU funded adult education programs. It is in this context that we are seeking the advice of the Provincial Advisory Committee on how to move forward with the implementation of the EDU strategy.

The Committee reviewed the proposed Terms of Reference and proposed a number of friendly amendments including:

- Broadening the representation on the PAC from the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) originally specified as two Superintendents of Business Finance, to the more generic term "representatives," (Terms of Reference, page 1).
- Include representation on the PAC from the Aboriginal Education Office (Terms of Reference, page 2).
- Articulating that the facilitator will have the capacity to provide services in French and in English (Terms of Reference, page 2).
- Articulating that the EDU Adult Education Strategy aims to encourage a more collaborative and regional approach not only among school boards but also with their partners in the adult education sector (Terms of Reference, page 3).

The updated Terms of Reference are attached to this summary.

Before asking the Committee to approve the Terms of Reference, with the amendments as proposed, the Chair provided an overview of the Ministry's Adult Education Strategy as well as key highlights from the recent consultations with school boards on the implementation of the strategy. The presentation is attached to this summary. A number of committee members had questions and comments throughout the presentation. The discussion is summarized below.

1) Regional Collaboration of School Boards

The strategy seeks coordination in EDU adult education programs and services through greater school board collaboration at the regional level. A number of committee members requested clarification regarding how regions would be determined. Other committee members sought clarification regarding what is meant by collaboration and coordination.

Definition of Regions:

School boards will have an opportunity to provide input into how 'regions' are defined. Initially, for the purposes of facilitating the Ministry's recent consultations, the Ministry used the EDU regions plus one francophone-only consultation to define 'regional'. It was indicated at these sessions that the ministry was open to revision of these groupings as long as the regions identified were not too small and were sufficiently broad to promote constructive sharing and administrative coordination.

Definition of "Collaboration":

By collaboration we mean striving to achieve better service/program coordination across a region, not the integration of existing, separate programs under 'one roof'. For example, a group of school boards might look across their region to determine who is offering what digital/ hybrid course delivery and determine how best to ensure broadest access to online offerings possible.

Similarly, the three ministries recognize the need for better collaboration among the ministries:

The concern is how we, working at the ministry level, can help the system deliver more effectively from a learner's point of view so that needless barriers between our programs are reduced. The idea is that if we collaborate/coordinate better, the experience for the learner can be akin to arriving on a 'single front porch' facing three potential doors. Each ministry's program is the same, the options and the choices are still the learners, but the entry point, or 'landing' is one that is better connected to support the learner's choice and movement between the various ministry programs.

The Committee inquired about whether, in seeking to improve transitions between the three ministry's programs, the adult education strategy was proposing common tracking and reporting systems across all three ministry programs. The Ministry clarified that the strategy does not seek to bring all three Ministry programs into one reporting system. EDU funded programs report

through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), MCIIT programs report through the HARTs system and MTCU programs report through the EOIS system.

The extension of the Ontario Education Number (OEN) to adult learners does provide the opportunity to track data / evidence regarding adult learners who transition between the secondary school system and the postsecondary system. English and French as a Second Language (ESL/FSL) learners are not eligible to receive an OEN because they are enrolled in non-credit courses.

2) Mapping of Existing Programs and Services

The Committee pointed out the usefulness of service mapping and recommended that the Ministry undertake this work. The committee also highlighted to the ministry that mapping may be challenging given the competitive dynamic between some school boards.

The Ministry will be acquiring the services of a third party facilitator who will work with the school board regions to map existing EDU programs and services at the regional/local level. The purpose of mapping will be to identify existing gaps and support discussion of how a regional grouping of school boards could address the needs of learners who are not currently being served. The Ministry stressed that when competition means that people cannot access much needed programs and services, competition needs to give way to collaboration.

3) Recognition of Enrolment in Adult and Continuing Education in the Accommodation Review Process

The Committee noted that the ministry may wish to consider alignment of its accommodation review policy with its adult education strategy. Current ministry policy on school usage does not take enrolment in adult and continuing education into account when determining school occupancy. Some Committee members wondered whether this policy could be reviewed given the ministry's commitment to adult learners in the Adult Education Strategy.

The Ministry acknowledged this point, and also highlighted the reality of the need to address the costs of having over capacity in the system.

4) Rationale for Consultation Scope

Several committee members asked for clarification on why only school board representatives/administrators were consulted, commenting on the absence of teachers, instructors, providers of other adult education programs from MCIIT and MTCU and the absence of e-learning consortia.

The Adult Education Strategy, in its initial phase, is really focused on identifying a process to support planning at a regional level and setting milestones – the strategy focuses first on mapping services and resources at the regional level to better address learner needs. For this reason, teachers and instructors were not engaged directly at the recent consultations. The Ministry recognizes the importance of teacher/instructor input into the implementation of the strategy and invited representation from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) and Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO) on the Provincial Advisory Committee for this reason.

Similarly, representatives from adult education programs funded by MCIIT and MTCU did not participate in the EDU consultations but both ministries are members of the Committee to ensure that the implementation of the EDU Adult Education Strategy benefits from the perspective and expert knowledge of these related programs. In addition, EDU recognizes that both MCIIT and MTCU are leading their own consultation processes as they seek to examine their programs. To respect the timing of those initiatives, EDU led a targeted and school board focused consultation on its strategy. EDU's strategy focuses on achieving greater collaboration and coordination at the regional level begins with a focus on school board collaboration. It is also hoped that the establishment of greater collaboration among school boards will also encourage greater connections between these regional school board groups and the programs and services of MCIIT and MTCU. It will be up to each regional planning team to decide how and when they wish to proceed. Recommendations from the regional planning teams on such matters will come to this table for advice and discussion.

On the subject of e-learning, the Ministry noted that it was having a separate consultation meeting with TVO to hear the perspective of the Independent Learning Centre and noted that it is hoped that the subject of e-learning will come up during the service mapping led by the third party facilitator and the deeper discussions to occur at the regional school board level.

5) Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students and Access to Guidance Support for Adult Learners

The strategy seeks greater consistency in the delivery and access of PLAR for Mature Students at the regional level so that all learners can access PLAR, regardless of where they live. The strategy recognizes the need to update the Ministry's policy memo on PLAR to align it with the Learning to 18 legislation. Similarly, the Ministry recognizes that while we know who uses PLAR, we don't yet have a good understanding of the outcomes. There is an opportunity to use data to target results and efforts to better inform discussion at a regional level.

Discussion also focused on the need to recognize that the guidance and supports required by adult learners are different from that provided to a traditional high school student. There is a need for deeper connection to labour market information, and postsecondary and employment

pathways, in addition to broader supports required to help adult learners overcome complex barriers to their re-engagement in education and put in place the supports needed for course completion.

Programs that already map out clear school – college pathways for learners were recognized by the committee as helpful in this regard. While there is no funding to support broader targeting of ministry initiatives such as the dual credit program (currently targeted to age 20 and under) there may be an opportunity to explore how a more regional approach might help to scale up existing successful pathways negotiated on the basis of particular school – college relationships to a regional level.

6) Highlights from Consultation with Francophone Boards:

Many of the issues raised by the Francophone boards echoed those discussed by Anglophone school boards. These issues include, but are not limited to the following:

- Use of flexible modes of delivery, such as hybrid learning, to better support adult learner success.
- Need for a funding model that accommodates the needs and schedules of adult learners.
- Need for consistency and additional support in the delivery of PLAR for mature students.
- Issue of competition between school boards, and between school boards and colleges.
- Differing challenges faced by rural/remote boards relative to boards in more urban centres.

These comments are reflected in the high-level summary of consultation findings presented in the PowerPoint presentation.

A number of issues that were unique to the Francophone consultations were also raised:

- Limited school board adult education services available to Francophone learners in the centre-southwest region, where the French population is growing.
- General perception that Francophone newcomers are often referred by default to English services. This may be due to a more limited range of services in French, competition for learners, or a lack of awareness about the existence or value of French-language services.
- The perception of conflicting priorities promoted by government: obtaining an OSSD; pursuing postsecondary education; and transitioning to the workplace. Boards are unsure what the goals are: more diplomas or more jobs?
- Francophone school boards are already collaborating well with each other. Some examples of successful collaborations include:
 - o The PEFA (regional adult education and training partnerships), seen as functioning well because they reflect the realities of each region.
 - o The CEFEQ (Centre d'éducation et de formation de l'est de l'Ontario), an adult school run by two boards (Catholic and public).

- o The coordinated/centralized referral system in the east and the common assessment tools created by the PEFA for literacy and numeracy.

7) Need for a Strong Communication Strategy to Support Effective Implementation:

The committee observed that to be successful, the strategy will need to be supported by a strong communications strategy. They noted a potential role for CESBA in this regard, which could facilitate cross-cutting conversations and dissemination of information.

The committee recommended that the ministry consider the use of the following to support transparent communication to the sector and build understanding and support:

- CESBA newsletter to communicate back to the sector next steps
- Use of a portal or website to share information and updates
- Consider how to use the “Learn/Teach/Lead” website to support information dissemination
- Use of PAC members to pass along key information and quick updates via email so that committee members can distribute to their networks

The Committee advised careful consideration of how to communicate the next step in the strategy implementation, namely the announcement of the third party facilitator, their role and how they will be contacting boards.

The committee recommended that the facilitator speak with Frank Kelly (Director of CODE) about how to have conversations about the Adult Education Strategy with school boards. In addition, the committee requested an opportunity to provide advice to the Ministry on the role of the facilitator, once the facilitator is in place.