



Strengthening Ontario's Adult Education System

What We Heard from the Consultation

Lifelong Learning Advisory Committee Meeting
March 20, 2018

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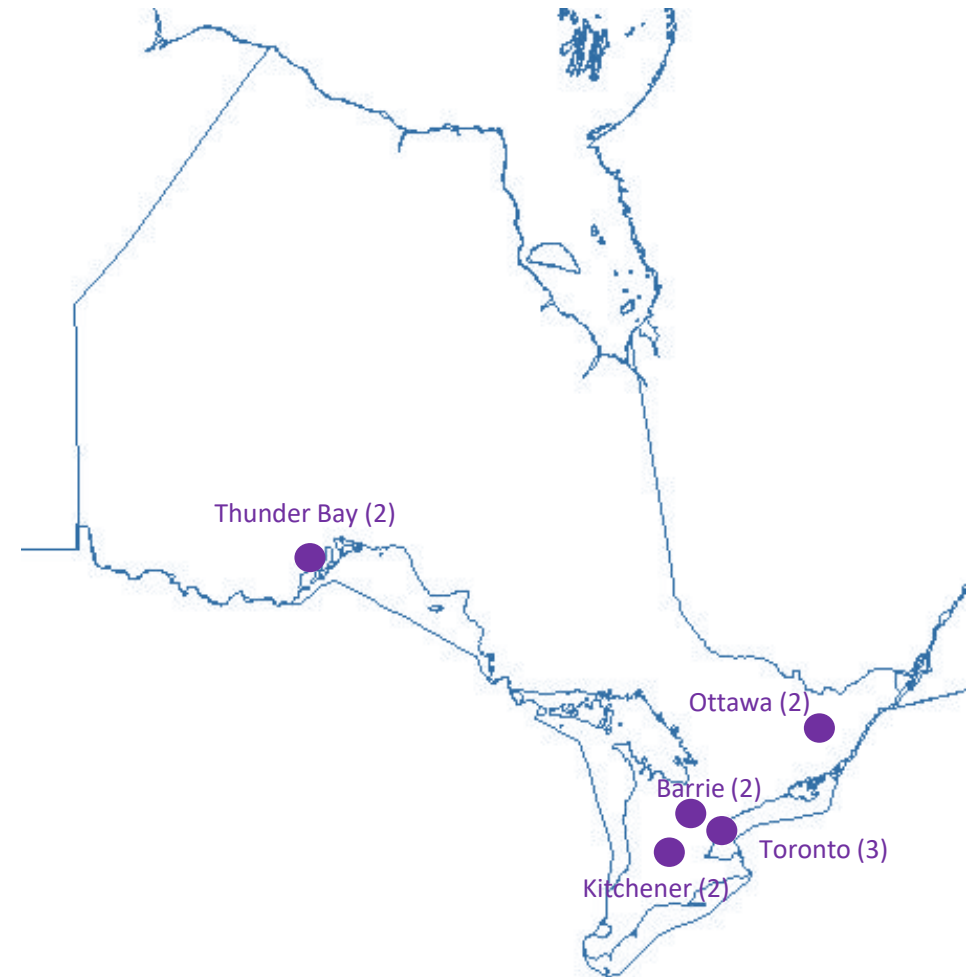


Online Consultation

- On December 1, 2017, the Ministries of Advanced Education (MAESD), Education (EDU) and Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) released a consultation paper, *Strengthening the Adult Education System in Ontario*.
- We asked Ontarians to share their feedback on our ideas, priorities and proposed action plans for:
 - Finding information about the system;
 - Improving how learners enter adult education programs;
 - Supporting regional collaboration and partnerships;
 - Recognizing individuals' prior learning; and
 - The development of a core competency framework
- The feedback from the online consultation is one of the avenues in which we will be soliciting input on our work planned or already underway to improve adult education programs across the province.

Adult Learner Focus Groups

- From December 2017- February 2018, the ministries, in partnership with Code for Canada, conducted regional focus groups across the province with learners from all adult education programs and streams, including Indigenous, Deaf and Francophone learners.
- The focus groups provide learners with the opportunity to share their experiences and identify how the system could be improved from the learner's perspective.
- To date, we hosted a total of 11 focus groups which were held in Toronto, Barrie, Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Kitchener.
- Our conversations with adult learners will be ongoing. The ministries will be planning another round of focus groups.



80 responses

to the consultation paper.

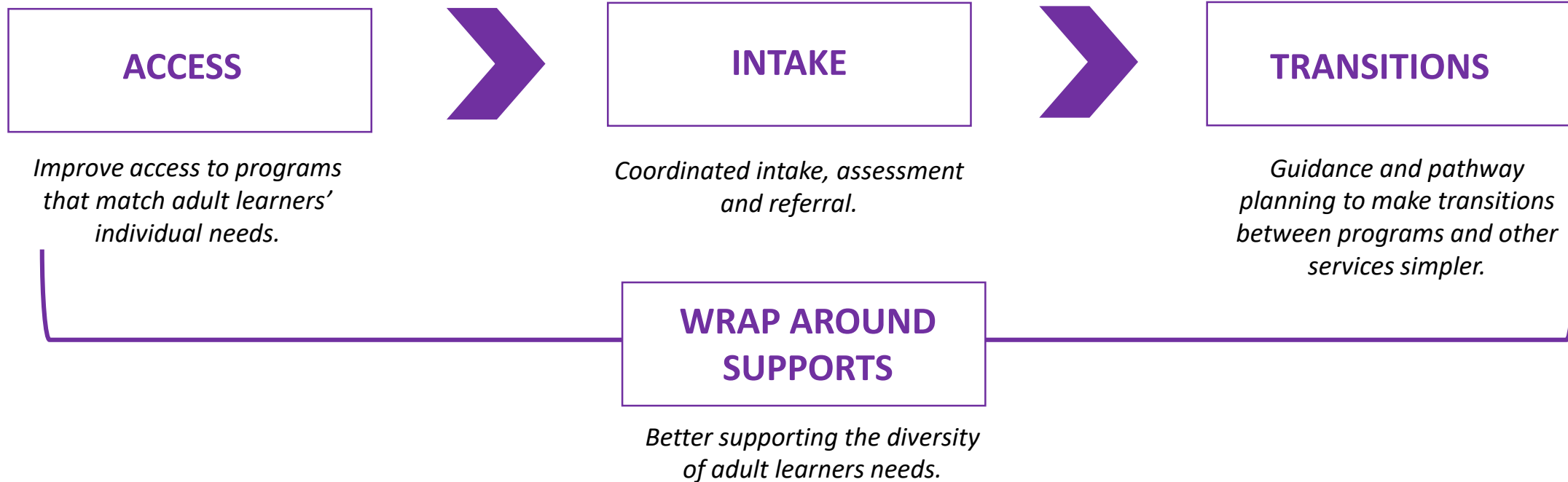
School Boards
Colleges
Universities
Community Agencies
Private Career Colleges
LBS Support Organizations
Individuals

87 learners

participated in focus groups.

Literacy and Basic Skills
Academic Upgrading
ESL & FSL
Adult Credit
Ontario Bridge Training
General Education Development (GED)
Academic Career Entrance (ACE)

THE LEARNER'S JOURNEY + PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE MINISTRIES



WHAT WE HEARD FROM LEARNERS*

“Going back to school and handling other life issues has been really difficult. I am happy to know that the government is trying to find ways to help people like me. Thanks to my teacher, I am finally moving towards my goal. It’s been a long road to get here.”

* The following is a direct summary of participants feedback and does not confirm government decisions.

OVERVIEW OF WHAT WE HEARD FROM LEARNERS

ACCESS



INTAKE



TRANSITIONS

- Adult learners were unaware of the education and training options available to them.
- Learners want to be empowered to make their own decisions, as opposed to feeling “pressured” by service providers.
- Indigenous learners said that On-Reserve communication about learning opportunities is important.

- Adult learners feel anxious about enrolling in programs.
- Learners felt that information provided by their service provider was not transparent and complete.
- Learners, especially francophone learners, expressed that they are not always referred to the most appropriate program.

- Majority of learners shared positive feedback about their instructors and program administrators.
- However, many learners indicated that they feel confused about their next steps and want a roadmap to help guide them to their end goals.
- Francophone learners and Deaf learners feel as though their language is a barrier to employment.

WRAP AROUND SUPPORTS

- Learners felt that there needs to be more transparency of services available
- Learners said that social assistance programs do not provide adequate supports for people, especially as they pursue education and employment opportunities.
- Deaf learners often feel discriminated against due to their disability, especially in the workforce.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE CONSULTATION PAPER*

“Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on strengthening Ontario’s adult education system. It is critical that all partners work together to develop a strong and integrated system that provides learners with the skills they need to succeed in the new economy.”

* The following is a direct summary of participants feedback and does not confirm government decisions.

ACCESS

INTAKE

TRANSITIONS

SUPPORTS

Common Ground

1. Developing a digital solution to help learners navigate information.
2. Create a province-wide marketing campaign.
3. There is an opportunity to improve coordination.
4. Competition and duplication in programs is a challenge for collaboration and seamless pathways.
5. Gaps in services exist in some areas of the province, in particular for francophones.

Other Opinions

Information Navigation:

- The ministries should also consider ways to support adult learners who have low digital-literacy skills.
- Digital information should still be backed up by personal guidance counseling.

Service Delivery:

- Adult learners need information on wrap-around services that will support them in their decision making process and throughout their education journey.



"I do not recognize the names of any of these programs except for the upgrading program that I am in now. But before, how would I know which program was best for me? At the time, I tried to search for information online but there are so many different schools with different programs. I need to know who I can go to for help. Luckily one day I saw a poster for this program while I was on my morning walk. I kept it with me for a while until I had the courage to go into the center to ask for more information." - Craig

ACCESS

INTAKE

TRANSITIONS

SUPPORTS

Common Ground

1. Competition and duplication in programs is a challenge for collaboration and seamless pathways.
2. Funding and accountability targets are an area of some concern.
3. Better integration of learner records would assist with creating a standard intake process.
4. The intake process must be sensitive to learners' prior learning (both formal and informal).

Other Opinions

- Coordination amongst programs needs to be improved to ensure that the intake process is consistent across the various adult education programs.
- Professional development with respect to intake should be explored.
- Francophone learners are too often referred to English services.
- Intake needs to be done impartially, to help ensure learners are being referred to the most appropriate program or service for them.
- Align semesters for adult education programs.



"I would not have signed up for the program if it wasn't for the program administrator and assessors encouragement and support. They're amazing. I have dyslexia and depression and struggled so much in high school. I dropped out. They understand the hard stuff that I've gone through and how it stops me from doing what I need to do. My teacher makes me feel like I can do it. She is like my mother away from home" - Tayen

ACCESS

INTAKE

TRANSITIONS

SUPPORTS

Common Ground

1. It is important for the adult education system to be equipped with counsellors who can help learners make appropriate transitions.
2. Common referral forms between various services can help enable appropriate referrals for learners.
3. Clearer connections to employment and training services can help adult learners plan their next steps accordingly.
4. Information on various options and pathways must be clear and easily available to learners and prospective learners.

Other Opinions

- Standardizing and promoting PLAR is important.
- The government should support and incentivize collaboration and partnerships between providers of adult education programs across ministries.
- It was suggested that leveraging existing regional networks/planning bodies could help support regional planning and coordination.
- Stronger labour market connection to education and training is needed.
- Experiential learning opportunities for immigrants will help them gain experience and network with potential employers.



"We just need people to explain to us what choices we have and what our next steps for education and work are. If I did not meet my friend, Shelly, I would not have known about this [LBS] program. I was having a really hard time feeling good about myself because I wasn't able to do math or read to my kids. I dropped out of high school in grade 9. If I did not talk to Shelly, who knows where I would be today. Now I can show my kids that Mommy can do well at school too." - Catherine

ACCESS

INTAKE

TRANSITIONS

SUPPORTS

Common Ground

1. Learners need access to in-person counselling e.g., community and social supports, childcare, transportation etc.
2. Centralized hubs may support one-stop shops for services.
3. Need a system that is more responsive to the complex needs of adults, such as previous negative school experiences, poverty, disability, poor health and well-being.
4. Adult education learners are often the furthest from the labour market and are in need of additional interventions and supports to help them achieve their employment and career goals.

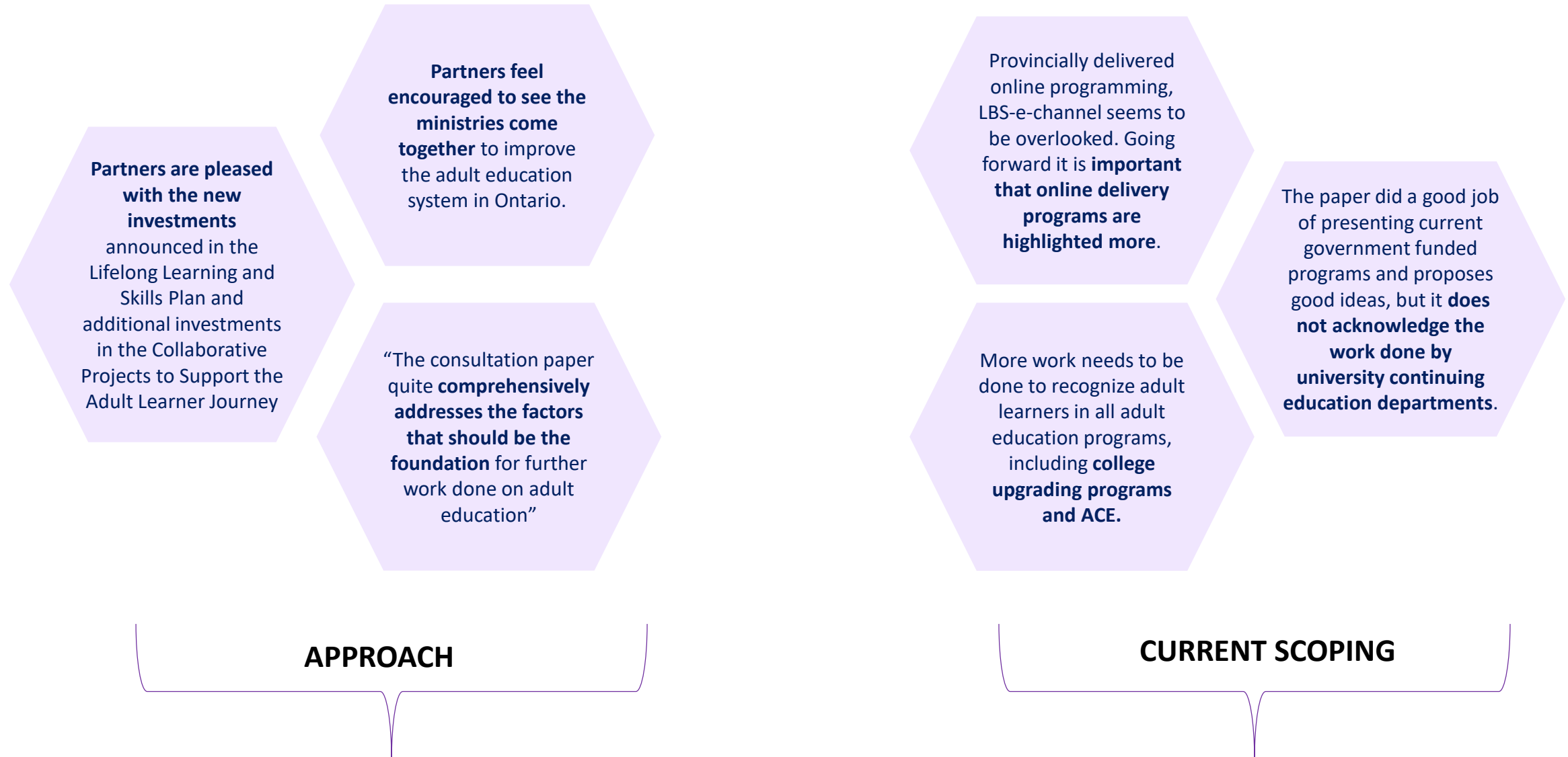
Other Opinions

- Best way to collaborate by meeting with various organizations and sharing information.
- Better coordination with embedded employment supports at service level needs to be considered.
- The push for experiential learning is a challenge for ESL/FSL and LBS programs who do not have WSIB coverage.
- Wrap around services are important for adults; transportation is one of the biggest obstacles preventing learners from pursuing LBS or other education/training, especially in remote/coastal/ rural communities.
- Building culturally appropriate and personal relationships is important, particularly with Indigenous communities.
- Programs, services, and supports outside of major metropolitan areas are needed.



"I had no idea these types of [support] programs existed...I wish I heard about this five years ago. I would be much further along than where I am today." - Mei

GENERAL FEEDBACK TO THE MINISTRIES ON THE PAPER



NEXT STEPS

- The ministries will continue to engage with key partners, including adult learners on the development of a digital solution.
- Facilitated discussion with the Lifelong Learning Advisory Committee (LLAC) will take place this afternoon, where we will seek your input on an implementation plan.
- The ministries will post a “summary of what we heard from the consultation” on Ontario.ca in spring 2018.