

THE EASTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATION
(EASTERN RPAE)

ERPAA Collaborative Cross-Sector Partnership Project Report

OCTOBER 2018

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Note: The views expressed in this report are the views of the authors and no necessarily reflect those of the Province of Ontario.

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INTRODUCTION

This report details the activities undertaken by the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (ERPAAE) in implementing a cross-sector partnership project between eight of the district school boards within the ERPAAE and regional partners who support the ERPAAE adult learners. The report provides an overview of how this project came about, its overarching goals, and the activities completed to date at the time of this report going to print.

BACKGROUND

The Ontario Ministry of Education's Adult Education Strategy (AES) supports the commitment made in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* 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" (p. 13). The AES encourages exploration of innovative ways to reengage adult learners and build school board capacity to better assist them in achieving their goals (Eastern Ontario Staff Development Network). The three objectives of the AES are to:

- (1) Promote a regional and more collaborative approach among school boards to foster a shared responsibility for adult learning that will improve accountability for learner outcomes;
- (2) Ensure availability of a wide range of accessible program delivery options and supports that are responsive to adult learner needs; and
- (3) Improve the transitions for learners between Ministry of Education adult credit programs and programs funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (formerly known as the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development) and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.



THE SCOPE AND GOAL OF THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY

The key goal of the Adult Education Strategy is to improve the educational outcomes of adult learners by fostering a shared responsibility for adult education among school boards within respective regions. Regional partnerships enable key stakeholders to more efficiently provide learners with a range of quality programs and services. To better address the multiple needs and aspirations of adult learners, the strategy promotes sustainable system innovation and flexible modes of delivery. Accordingly, a continuum of learner pathways and transitions planning is crucial for supporting learners in achieving their educational and employment goals.

As outlined in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, there is a need to cultivate an education system that is responsive, high quality, accessible and integrated from early learning and child care through to adult education. With respect to high quality adult education in Ontario, clear learner pathways that take adult learners on the shortest and most effective route to their goal must be established, with improved transitions between adult education programs, postsecondary education, training and the workplace (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). In line with these recommendations, the Adult Education Strategy strives for a more coordinated and accessible approach to the delivery of Adult and Continuing Education programs and services that address the diverse needs and goals of adult learners.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS TO SUPPORT THE ADULT LEARNER JOURNEY

As part of the Ontario government's mandate to strengthen adult education, the Ministry of Education (OME) recognized the need to encourage collaboration to support adult learner-centred program and service delivery. Given that greater partnership across sectors would help streamline referral processes, facilitate mobility, and ease transitions for adult learners, the OME offered enhancement funding for Regional Partnerships for Adult Education (RPAEs) to promote cross-sector partnerships. Enhancement funds were to be used to support projects that built on RPAEs' existing strategic plans to improve collaboration in the adult education system and foster more seamless and learner-centred program and service delivery for adults. This

opportunity was intended to enrich the environmental scans and strategic plans that the RPAEs had already developed, as well as the progress achieved to date, while remaining appropriate for the local context in each region (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018).

In response to the OME's messaging about available enhancement funds, the Eastern Partnership for Adult Education (ERPAAE) reviewed its strategic plan and determined that a proposal to support cross-sector partnership development within the eastern Ontario region be submitted. At a meeting held in November 2017, members of the ERPAAE submitted proposal ideas. The Coordinator of the ERPAAE, Frank Hummell, considered these ideas in light of the established enhancement funds criteria and wrote a proposal on developing cross-sector partnerships between school boards, employment

centres, and labour training boards. The proposal included a brief overview, clear goals and intentions, a monitoring and evaluation plan, and a budget. Once the proposal was approved by the ERPAAE Table (consisting of one representative from each Board of Education in the ERPAAE), it was submitted to the MOE in February 2018. Subsequently, the ERPAAE learned of acceptance of their proposal and funding allocated for this project was disbursed, with a requirement for the cross-sector project to be implemented and funds to be spent by the fall of 2018.

MINISTRY FUNDING AND PROJECT CRITERIA

The ministry set a number of criteria to guide proposal applications for enhancement funding. To receive funding, projects needed to:

- involve collaboration among more than one program/ service for adults; and
- include cross-sector collaboration related to one or more of:
 - (a) flexible delivery of programs/ services for adults;
 - (b) coordinated intake, assessment and referral of adults;
 - (c) guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for adults;
 - be approved by the ERPAAE; and
 - be tied to the ERPAAE Strategic Plan and/or environmental scan.

THE ERPAAE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

The overarching goal of the project was to facilitate the development of partnerships between adult education programs delivered by district school boards and service providers of labour market information and employment services. The project involved the hosting of five local area initial meetings (Belleville, Kemptville, Ottawa, Pembroke, Kingston) where representatives would share information about their respective organizational mandates and collaborate to identify how they might collectively better support the journeys of adult learners and clients in the eastern Ontario region. In addition to the five local area meetings, follow up visit days/meeting days were encouraged so that partners could visit each other's work location(s) to discover "first hand" the services offered to support adult learners. This project aligned with the ERPAAE Strategic Plan (Youmans, Godden, & Hummell, 2017a) to build capacity and to continue to learn "from within and outside of our region." A district school board in each area was selected to lead and organize the initial cross-sector partnership meeting and any follow-up meetings. This strategy was adopted as the school boards were all aware of partnership organizations in their area and, in some cases, already had an established relationship with the partnership organizations.

The project was intended to align with some key findings in the ERPAAE's environmental scan (Youmans, Godden, & Hummell, 2017b) that suggested: (a) that guidance staff played a pivotal role in providing academic, career pathway, and personal support for adult learners; and (b) wrap around services were critical for ensuring the success of adult learners who have varied and complex individual needs. In particular, the partnership meeting discussions and networking opportunities were intended to enhance the (a) intake, assessment, and referral practices, and (b) guidance, career counselling, and pathway planning processes.



THE ERPAE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project's overarching goal was to facilitate the development of partnerships between adult education programs delivered by district school boards and service providers of labour market information and employment services. In order to facilitate this, the ERPAE members agreed on a number of sub-goals:

- (1) To achieve an increased awareness of partner mandates, services, and roles;
- (2) To establish a collaborative culture and network;
- (3) To identify the interrelationships between partnering organizations that are able to better support the navigation of adult learners/clients in their chosen and or preferred pathways;
- (4) The development of strategies for how partnering organizations can best work together to support the needs of adult learners/clients;
- (5) The development of a poster/visual representation to illustrate how the partnering organizations are interconnected in the support of the adult learners/clients; and
- (6) To implement a knowledge mobilization strategy to raise public awareness of how interrelationships and collaborative practices are supporting the lifelong learning goals of adult learners in the ERPAE.

ERPAAE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

Five cross sector partnership meetings facilitated by the ERPAAE were held in the eastern Ontario region during the month of May 2018. Meetings were held in the following areas: Belleville, Kingston, Kemptville, Pembroke, and Ottawa. Table 1 identifies the district school boards (DSBs) that were represented at each of the area meetings.

TABLE 1.
LOCATION OF CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATING DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARDS

Location of Meeting	Participating District School Boards
BELLEVILLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board • Hastings and Prince Edward County District School Board
KINGSTON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board • Limestone District School Board
CORNWALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Canada District School Board • Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario
PEMBROKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renfrew County District School Board • Renfrew County Catholic District School Board
OTTAWA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ottawa Catholic District School Board • Ottawa Carleton District School Board



ATTENDEES AT THE ERPAE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

It was intended that a variety of partners would be invited to attend the cross-sector partnership events, including: DSB staff, area employment agencies, labour market agencies, and additional adult service provider staff who worked with the same populations of adults as the district school boards. While labour market agencies varied across the eastern region, each area had an allocated workforce planning board (i.e., <http://www.workforceplanningontario.ca>) and these were encouraged to attend the relevant meetings in their locale. Though each of the DSBs operate

uniquely, they have a shared commitment to supporting adult learners, and through this project shared a mission to identify workforce issues that were characteristic of the local community, providing collaborative solutions by engaging stakeholders, and working with appropriate partners. A breakdown of attendees of the meetings is provided in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. An overview of the total attendees by all affiliate groups across the cross-sector partnership project are outlined in Table 7.

TABLE 2. ATTENDEES BY AFFILIATE SECTOR AT THE OTTAWA MEETING

Sector/Affiliate Group	Number of Attendees
School Board	28
College/University	11
Immigration/Settlement Services/ESL	7
Literacy (Non-credit) service provider	8
City/Municipality	10
Community Agencies	8
Labour Market Groups/Training Boards	2
Employment Services/Skills Services	5
First Nations/Inuit Support Agencies	8
Other	2
Total	89

TABLE 3. ATTENDEES BY AFFILIATE SECTOR AT THE KINGSTON MEETING

Sector/Affiliate Group	Number of Attendees
School Board	7
College/University	2
Immigration/Settlement Services/ESL	-
Literacy (Non-credit) service provider	4
City/Municipality	3
Community Agencies	3
Labour Market Groups/Training Boards	1
Employment Services/Skills Services	4
Other	3
Total	27

TABLE 4. ATTENDEES BY AFFILIATE SECTOR AT THE PEMBROKE MEETING

Sector/Affiliate Group	Number of Attendees
School Board	25
College/University	9
Immigration/Settlement Services/ESL	-
Literacy (Non-credit) service provider	-
City/Municipality	-
Community Agencies	8
Labour Market Groups/Training Boards	1
Employment Services/Skills Services	5
Other	-
Total	48



TABLE 5. ATTENDEES BY AFFILIATE SECTOR AT THE KEMPTVILLE MEETING

Sector/Affiliate Group	Number of Attendees
School Board	29
College/University	2
Immigration/Settlement Services/ESL	-
Literacy (Non-credit) service provider	-
City/Municipality	-
Community Agencies	-
Labour Market Groups/Training Boards	4
Employment Services/Skills Services	9
Other	-
Total	44

TABLE 6. ATTENDEES BY AFFILIATE SECTOR AT THE BELLEVILLE MEETING

Sector/Affiliate Group	Number of Attendees
School Board	6
College/University	3
Immigration/Settlement Services/ESL	1
Literacy (Non-credit) service provider	9
City/Municipality	-
Community Agencies	-
Labour Market Groups/Training Boards	3
Employment Services/Skills Services	6
Other	4
Total	32

TABLE 7. TOTAL ATTENDEES BY AFFILIATE SECTOR FOR THE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

Sector/Affiliate Group	Number of Attendees
School Board	95
College/University	27
Immigration/Settlement Services/ESL	7
Literacy (Non-credit) service provider	22
City/Municipality	13
Community Agencies	19
Labour Market Groups/Training Boards	11
Employment Services/Skills Services	29
First Nations/Inuit Support Agencies	8
Other	9
Total	240

At the five initial cross-sector partnership meetings, there were representatives from 54 different organizations (see Appendix 1 for a list of the organizations). There were 240 total participants at the five meetings, 95 of which were from district school boards.



STRUCTURE OF CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

Each of the five initial meetings were structured to allow for participants to get to know each other, share the mandates of their organization, and undertake joint activities that identified how they each supported the adult learner/client’s learning and development journeys. During joint activities, cross-sector partners identified linkages and interconnections in the services they provided. Four of the five meetings (Belleville, Kingston, Kemptville, and Pembroke) were facilitated by the ERPAE Coordinator, Frank Hummell. Table 8 is the agenda that was used for those four meetings.

TABLE 8. AGENDA FOR CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS IN BELLEVILLE, KINGSTON, KEMPTVILLE, AND PEMBROKE

Time	Activity
9:00 to 10:00 am	Registration and breakfast
10:00 to 10:45 am	Welcome, Introductions, roles, partnership mandates
10:45 to 11:30 am	Overview of the Ontario Adult Education Credit Strategy and intended outcomes
11:30 to 12:00 pm	Supporting the adult learner/client – challenges and opportunities
12:00 to 12:45 pm	Lunch
12:45 to 2:00 pm	Interconnecting – a visual representation
2:00 to 2:15 pm	Sharing of visual representations
2:15 to 2:30 pm	Next steps and wrap up

For the culminating activity at the four meetings facilitated by the ERPAE Coordinator, partners created a visualization of how all of the cross-sector organizations were interconnected through their work to support adult learners/clients.

The cross-sector partnership meeting held in Ottawa was facilitated by an independent consultant, Angela Hoyt. Given the size of the Ottawa meeting, there were slight variations in the agenda and participants did not take part in a visual representation culminating activity. Table 9 is the agenda that was used in the cross-sector partnership meeting in Ottawa and Appendix 3 is a report about the Ottawa partnership meeting.

TABLE 9. AGENDA FOR CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETING IN OTTAWA

Agenda

- 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. - Registration and (refreshments) from
- 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - School board panel presentation
- 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Question and Answer forum
- 10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. - Refreshment Break
- 10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - Working Groups
- 11:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Working group feedback
- 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Lunch and Networking

At follow-up meetings, cross-sector partners visited each other's place of work to learn first-hand about the services and programs offered. For these meetings, the host site was to provide an overview of the particular agency's mandate, identify the services that they offered, including any pertinent background information, and facilitate a tour of the work site where feasible.



OUTCOMES OF CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

At cross-sector partnership meetings, participants had an opportunity to become familiar with the Adult Education Strategy and its intended outcomes. They also had a chance to record and share their organization's mandate and hear about partners' mandates. Mandates were clearly articulated in terms of what the organization did, how they did it, and why they did it.

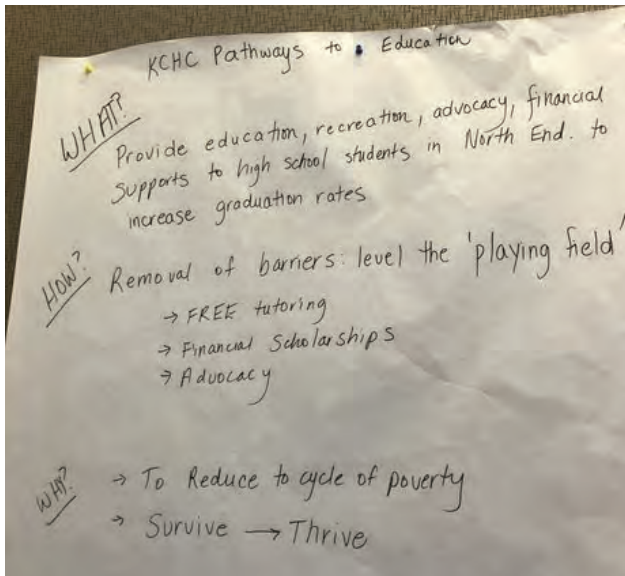


IMAGE 1: SAMPLE MANDATE FROM KCHC PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION (KINGSTON MEETING)



IMAGE 2: LISTENING TO MANDATES OF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS (PEMBROKE MEETING)



IMAGE 3: PEMBROKE MEETING PARTICIPANTS COMPLETING A VISUALIZATION ACTIVITY

Working in small groups with participants from various organizations, partners identified a number of challenges and opportunities associated with supporting the adult learner/client.

Challenges included:

- Making adults aware of the benefits of education/services (e.g., buy-in)
- Adult life challenges (e.g., family responsibilities, poverty, mental health, housing, food insecurity)
- Lack of support for adults (e.g., resources, support network, transportation, language, case management, etc.)
- Lack of access to programs
- Difficulty navigating government services
- Low self-esteem/confidence of adults and/or past negative experiences with school
- Insufficient funding for service providers

Opportunities included:

- Providing wrap-around services (e.g., food programs, mentorship, counselling, etc.)
- Supporting adults by referring them to community partners
- Flexible program delivery, especially in rural communities
- Piloting new programs
- Exploring common assessments
- Creating apprenticeships
- New funding sources

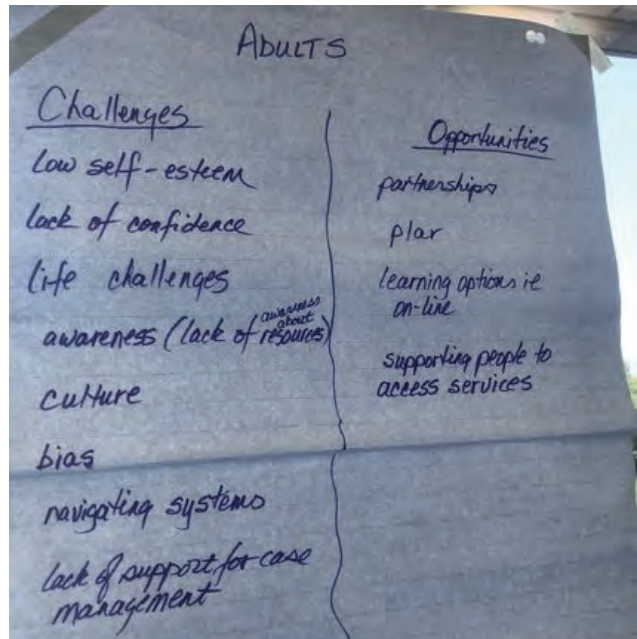
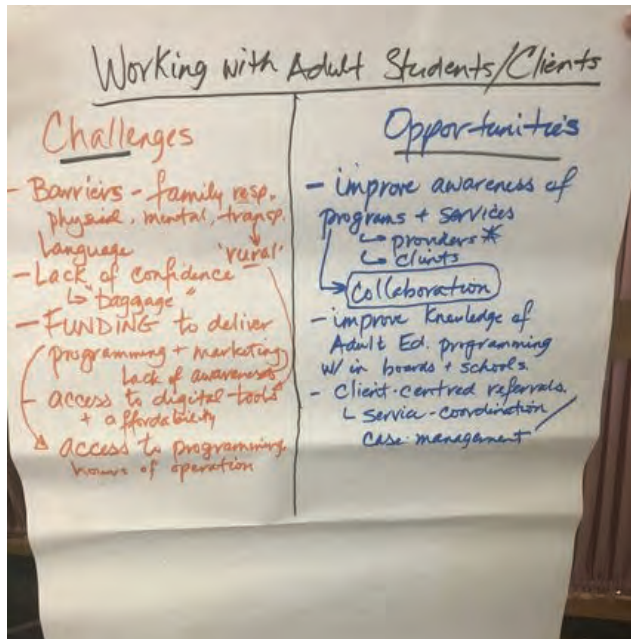


IMAGE 4: SAMPLE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES CHARTS (BELLEVILLE MEETING)



As the culminating activity for four of the partnership meetings, small groups were asked to develop a visual representation of how cross-sector partnerships could work together to support the journey of the adult learner/client.

Many groups visually represented the adult learner/client's journey using a path to signify the idea of a journey or trees to represent growth. Sample representations are presented below.

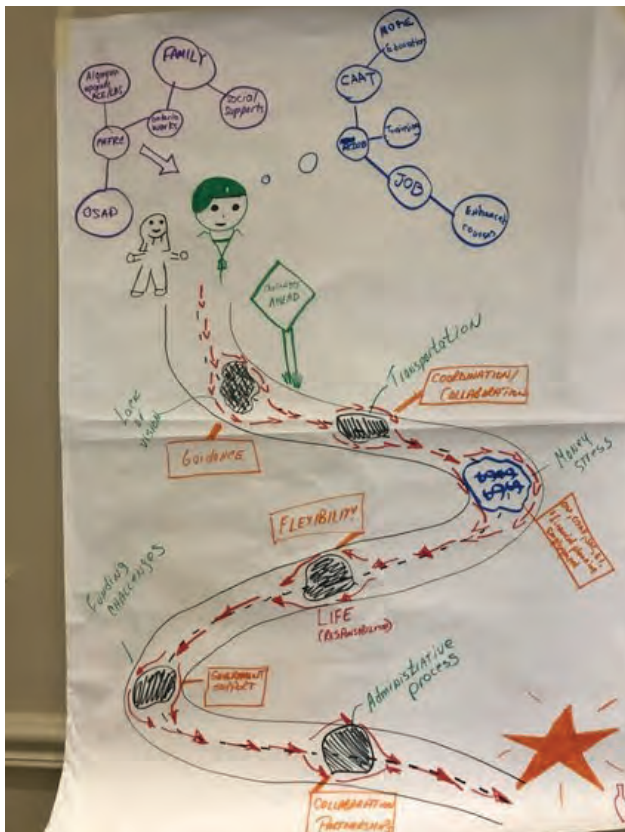


IMAGE 5: SAMPLE VISUAL REPRESENTATION USING A PATH (PEMBROKE MEETING)

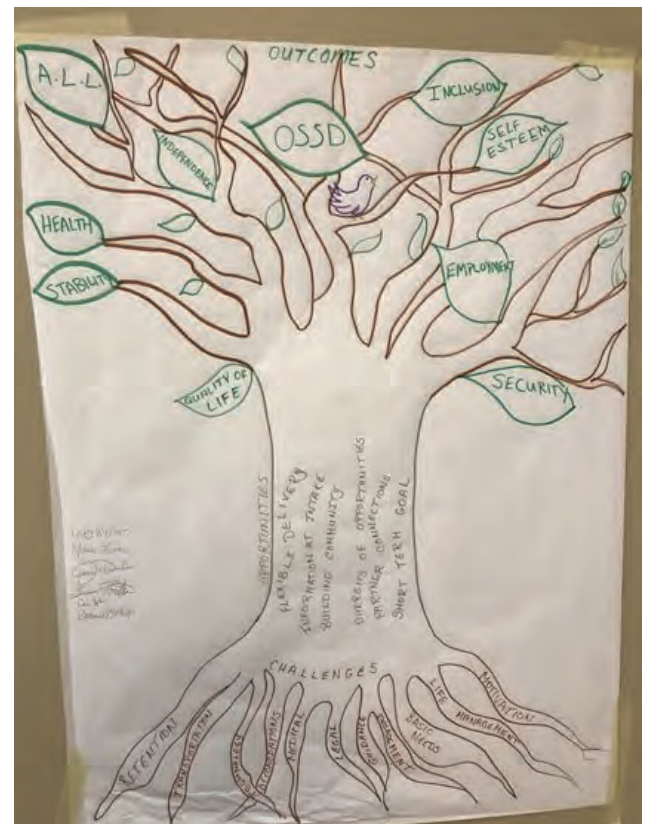


IMAGE 6: SAMPLE VISUAL REPRESENTATION USING A TREE (PEMBROKE MEETING)

Using the visual representations from the cross-sector partnership meetings, the ERPAA Coordinator and two researchers from Queen’s University (Dr. Lorraine Godden and Dr. Sandy Youmans) developed a consolidated visual representation called, Supporting Adult Lifelong Learning, to highlight how cross-sector partnerships support adult learners. This visual representation is being finalized and is forthcoming.

DSBs have started having the follow-up meetings with community partners in Renfrew, staff from the Ontario Works (OW) and Renfrew County District School Board (RCDSB) met. The agenda for this meeting can be seen in Image 6 below. After a series of introductions, participants each described the scope of their work and geographic areas that they served. Attention was given to where areas overlapped and working practices intersected. Participants learned about funding structures, case-loads, and learner centred practices, with particular focus placed on the nuances and challenges faced by each partner.

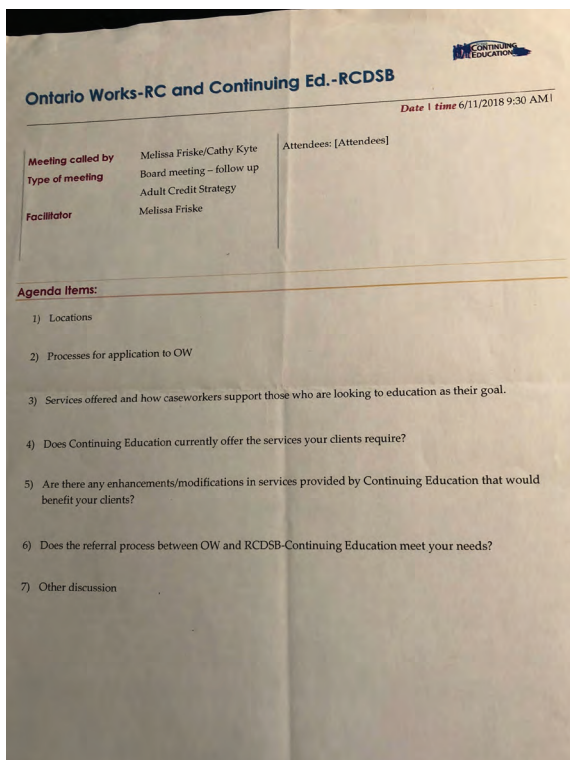


IMAGE 7: AGENDA FOR FOLLOW-UP MEETING



IMAGE 8: LOCATION OF FOLLOW-UP MEETING AT ONTARIO WORKS, RENFREW



OW staff highlighted the vulnerability of many of their clients, and the need for life stabilization to be completed prior to identification of learning and employment needs. Case workers from OW work closely the LBS Manager from RCDSB, a relationship that had been established for more than 10 years. All partners agreed that empathy, reliability, honesty, and trust were crucial in forming effective working relationships with clients/adult learners.

The meeting included lengthy and detailed discussion on areas where information sharing could be optimized and partnership working could be improved. The meeting ended with an enthusiastic commitment from both partners for ongoing communication and sustained efforts to further build on the positive outcomes of the meeting. The remaining district school boards to organize follow-up meetings in October.



IMAGE 9: RENFREW MEETING ATTENDEES FROM RCDSB AND OW WITH FRANK HUMMELL (ERPAE COORDINATOR)

FEEDBACK FROM CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

To capture feedback about the value of the cross-sector partnership meetings, paper-based evaluation forms were distributed to participants and they were asked to rate how the following components of the day met their expectations:

- General Organization of the Day
- Introductions/Icebreakers
- Sharing Mandates Activity
- Adult Education Strategy Overview
- Visual Representation Activity

Overall, the majority of participants rated aspects of the meetings as having “exceeded” their expectations or meeting their expectations “to a large degree”. Evaluations for four of the meetings are presented in Figures 1 to 4. Evaluations were not distributed at the Ottawa meeting.



IMAGE 10: PARTICIPATING IN VISUALIZATION ACTIVITY AT PEMBROKE MEETING



IMAGE 11: PARTICIPATING IN VISUALIZATION ACTIVITY AT KEMPTVILLE MEETING



FIGURE 1. KINGSTON CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETING FEEDBACK

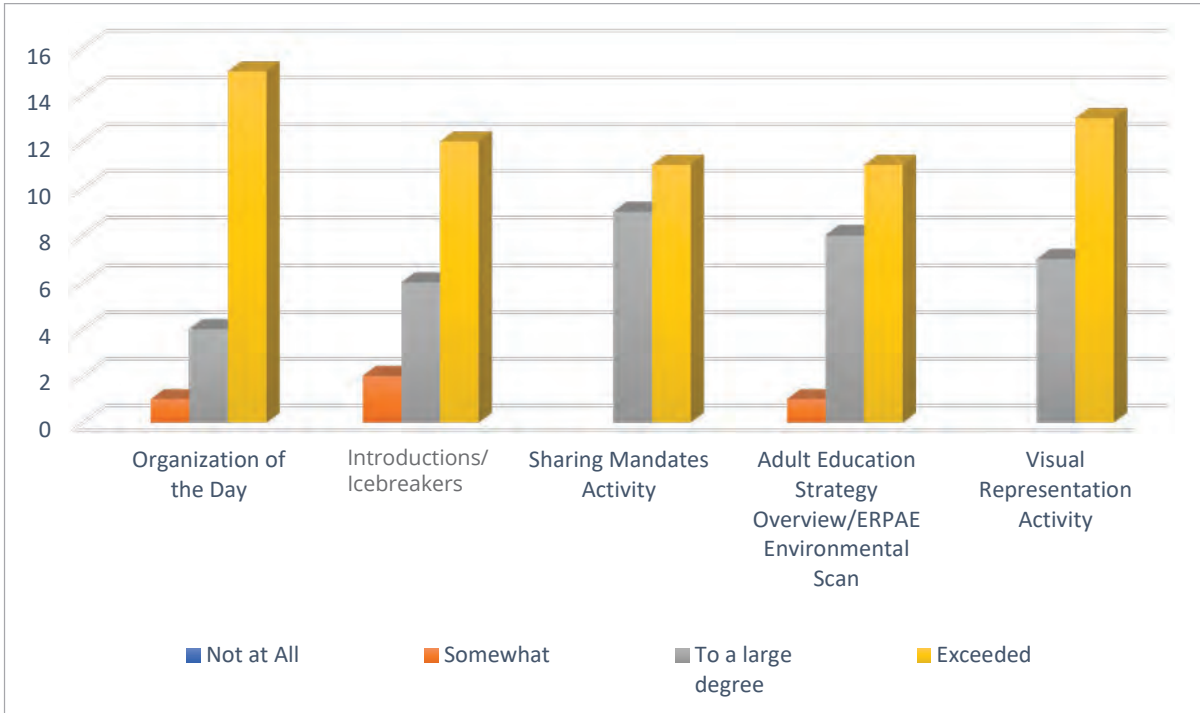


FIGURE 2. KEMPTVILLE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETING FEEDBACK

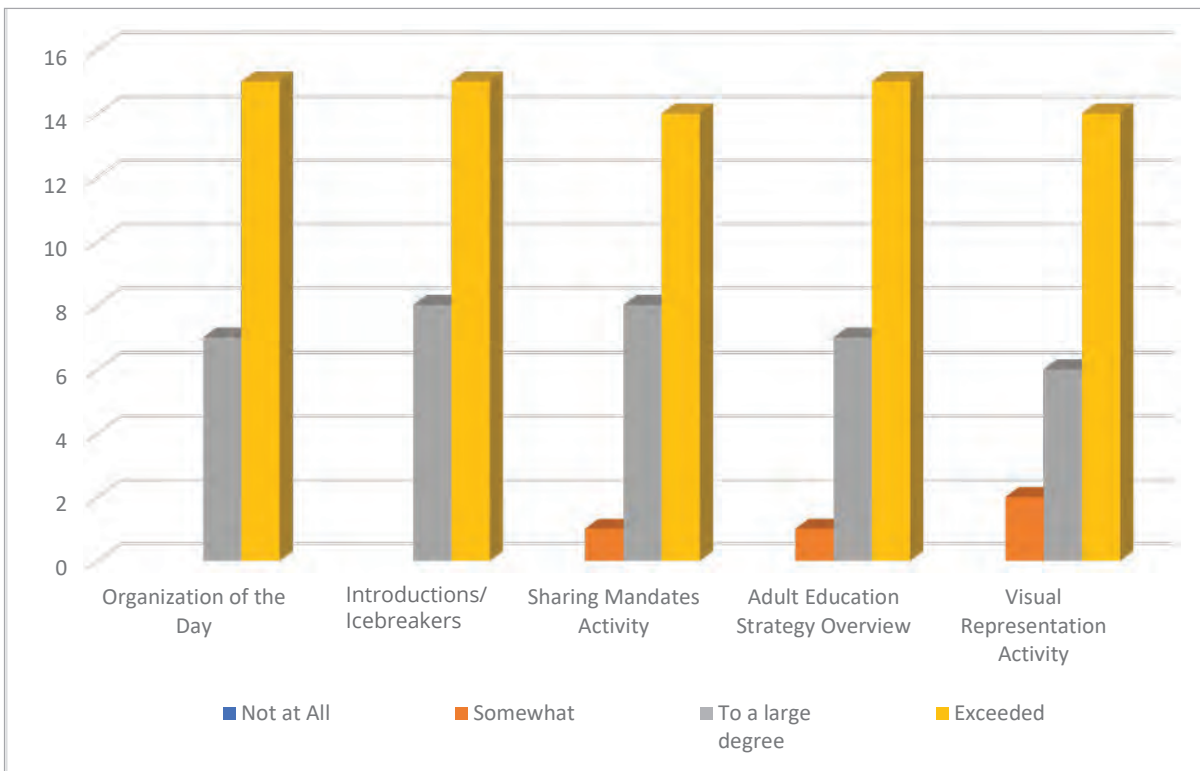


FIGURE 3. PEMBROKE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETING

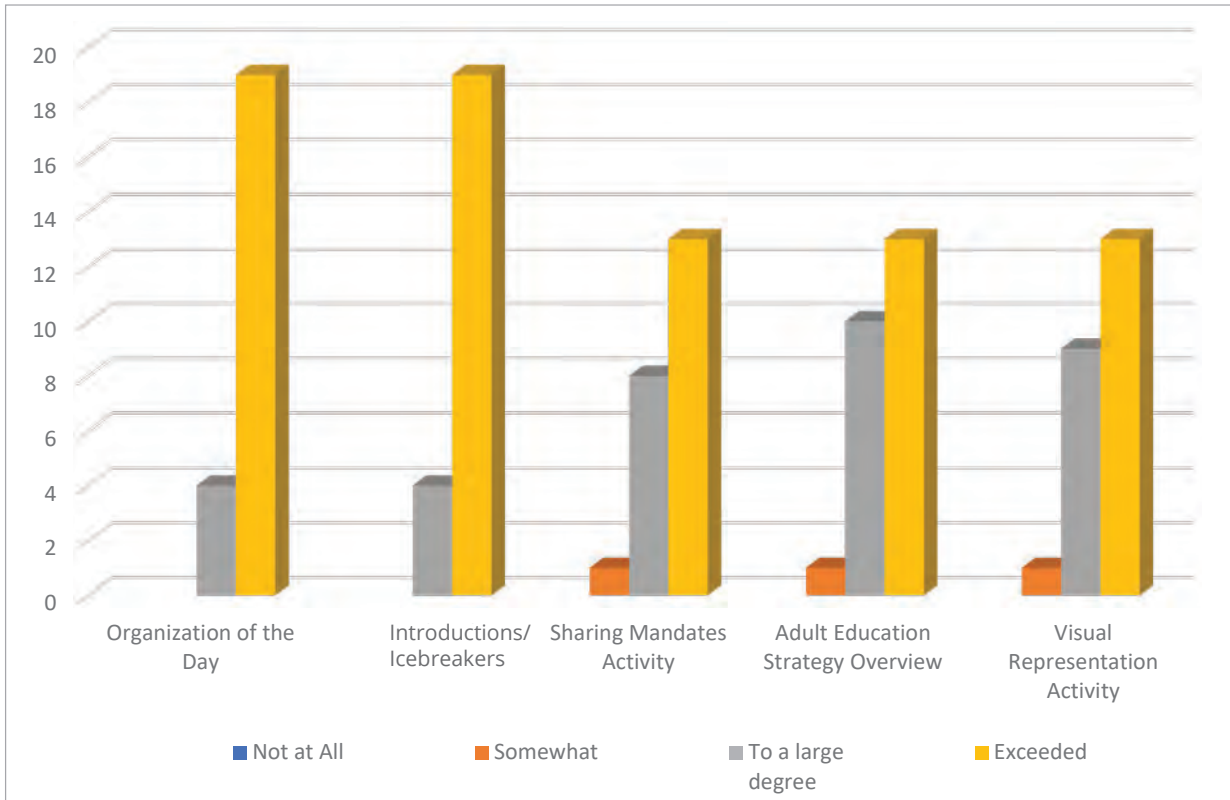
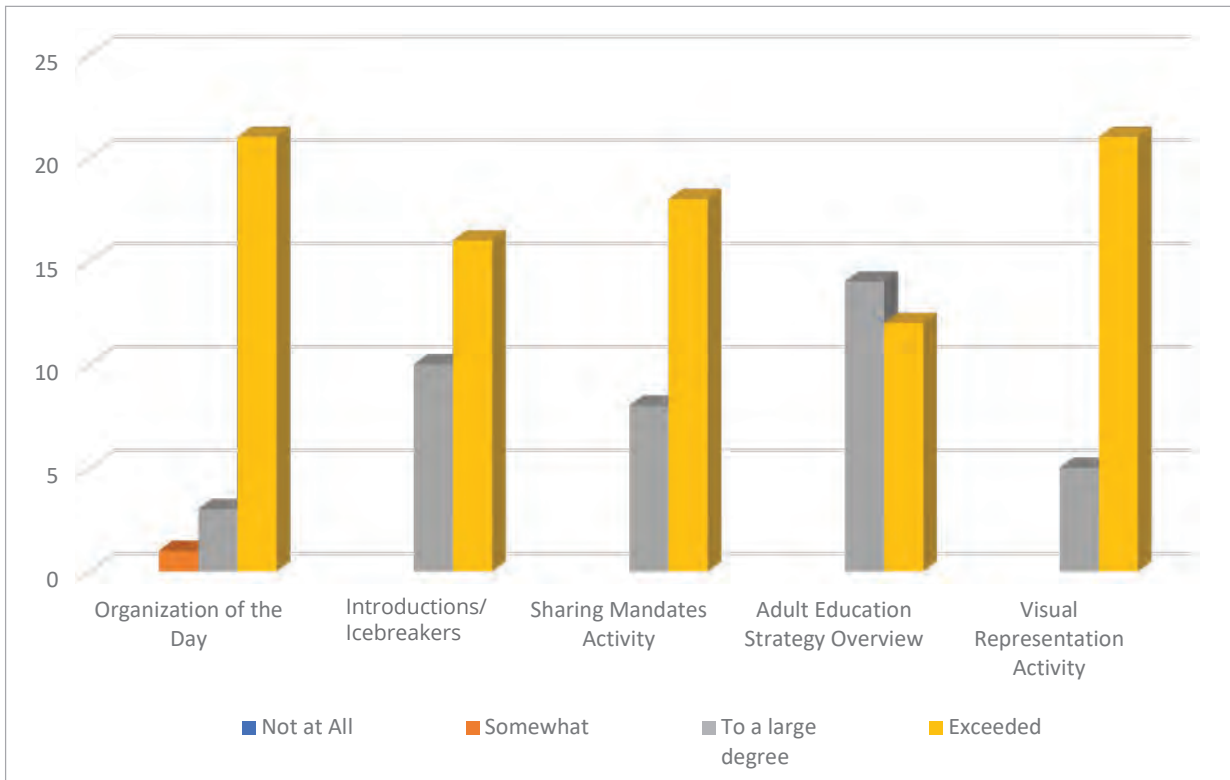


FIGURE 4. BELLEVILLE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETING FEEDBACK





Generally, participants appreciated being a part of the cross-sector partnership meetings and found the experience valuable. They were eager to strengthen their working relationships with their partners.

SUMMARY AND FINAL COMMENTS

Enhancement funds from the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) provided invaluable opportunities for Regional Partnerships in Adult Education (RPAE) to promote cross-sector partnerships. The Eastern RPAE used their enhancement funds to facilitate five cross-sector partnership meetings between district school boards, labour training boards, and employment service providers. Initial cross-sector partnership meetings in eastern Ontario were marked by enthusiastic participation and follow-up meetings allowed partners to deepen their understanding of one another's mandates and available services. Meetings reinforced the notion that cross-sector partnerships are critical for supporting the diverse needs of adult learners/clients and providing the wrap-around support necessary to help them overcome any barriers to lifelong learning. With this in mind, the ERPAE recommends that the OME shares the cross-sector reports of each RPAE so that regions can learn from each other and to strengthen Ontario's Adult Education system as a whole. In addition, the ERPAE would welcome the opportunity to continue the development of cross-sector partnerships through additional enhancement funds.

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APPENDIX 1.

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE FIVE INITIAL CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

Agilec – employment and vocation services
Algonquin College
CAF – Canadian Army Forces
Career Edge
Christian Horizons
City of Kingston
City of Ottawa
Community Learning Alternatives
Connections Adult Learning
CSE Consulting
DND – Department of National Defense
Drake Employment Agency
Eastern Ontario Training Board
ECOTB – East Central Ontario Training Board
Employment Education Centre
EOSDN – Eastern Ontario Staff Development Network
Evolution Group
GIAG – Glengarry Inter-Agency Group
KCHC – Kingston Community Health Centres - Pathways to Education
KEYS – Job Centre Kingston
Kingston Housing and Social Services
KMPRC – Kingston Military Family Resource Centre
La Cite Ottawa
La Route du Savoir – Kingston’s French Language Education Centre
Labour Market Group Renfrew and Lanark
Language Assessment and Referral Center
LLEO – Literacy Link Eastern Ontario
LMG – Labour Market Group Renfrew and Lanark

LOCS – Literacy Ontario Central South
Loyalist College
MAESD – Ministry of Advanced Education Skills Development (now called Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities)
March of Dimes Canada
Meta Employment Services
Minwaashin Lodge
NATDA – North American Transport Driving Academy Kingston
Ontario Works
Ontrac
Ottawa Community Load Fund
Ottawa Employment Hub (LEPC)
Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre
PELC – Prince Edward Learning Centre
PMFRC – Petawawa Military Family Resource Centre
Queen’s University
Rideau-Ottawa Valley Learning Network
Somali Centre for Family Services
Tim Hortons
TIRWDB - Thousand Islands Region Workforce Development Corporation
Tungasuvvingat Inuit
Tyerman and Daughters – Rural Outreach Employment Centres
Vanier Community Service Centre
World Skills Employment Centre
YMCA-YWCA
Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa
YPSP – Young Parent Support Program – Renfrew

APPENDIX 2.

SELECT ANECDOTAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS FROM THE COLLABORATIVE CROSS SECTOR INITIAL MEETINGS

Great day! Very informative and a great opportunity to connect school board with community agency.

Excellent – networking time would be beneficial.

Good step in the next journey of collaborating around Adult Ed and improving it for the community!

Highly interactive. I hope we have more opportunities to collaborate – Great Synergies!

I wasn't sure what to expect today but am glad that I came. I am excited to see what happens next.

Well done workshops. Good to have the opportunity to reflect and make connections.

Well organized. Excellent facilitation!

Overall a really great day! Very informative looking at what our community partners do and what we have in common.

More time or another meeting - thanks!

Excellent! Wonderful Day! Wonderful Facilitators! Wonderful location! Thank you!



APPENDIX 3.



CONTINUING EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP BUILDING EVENT

MAY 17, 2018

OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD AND
OTTAWA CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD

PREPARED BY ANGELA HOYT, EVOLUTION GROUP INC.



CONTINUING EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP BUILDING EVENT

May 17, 2018

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and
Ottawa Catholic School Board

Prepared by Angela Hoyt, Evolution Group Inc.



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Overview:

In an effort to further develop community partnerships, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) and Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) hosted a Partnership Building Event for community service providers and stakeholders on May 17, 2018 at the Ottawa Event and Conference Centre to highlight the shared services that are provided to adult learners to achieve their high school diploma. The school boards expected there would be many questions regarding this process and they wanted to ensure that participants had accurate information to help their clients. Therefore the school boards wanted to engage participants in a short workshop to identify areas to further mutual partnerships.

Session Agenda (see Appendix 1: Detailed Agenda)

1. Registration and (refreshments)
2. Opening remarks and Frank Hummel presentation
3. Getting to know audience
 - How many work at community service agencies?
 - How many work directly with clients?
 - How confident in explaining, to clients, the pathway to work towards a high school diploma? (Low, Moderate, High)
4. School board panel presentations
 - What do you offer to learners?
 - What is unique/different about your program?
 - What have you learned about working with adult learners?
 - Student success story
5. Question and Answer forum – table discussions and worksheets
 - What do you know now that you didn't know?
 - What do you still need to know?
 - What question, if any, would you like to ask the panel?
 - Tables ask panel questions
6. Refreshment Break
 - Working Groups and feedback – table discussions and worksheets
 - What might a successful partnership between your organization and the school boards look like?
 - What prevents your clients without a high school diploma from going back to school?
 - What do you need from the panel to support your clients to get back to school?
7. Working group feedback and responses from panel members
8. Thank you and next steps
9. Lunch and Networking



Detailed Session Notes

Agenda Item 5: Question and Answer Forum – School Board Presentations. Group Exercise Worksheets N=12

1. What do you know now that you didn't know? n=11

- Details on dual credit program
- Learned about alternative schooling system
- Range of ages
- Four groups of sub-populations of adult learners
- Flexibility of offerings and delivery
- How many options are in the community for clients/adult learners
- Dual credit program
- How much flexibility in different options/programs i.e. Online, in class, work to get credits
- About the alternative education programs
- Credit program
- Dual credit program with college credits
- Different programs, tailored programs-dual program
- A lot of various programs, all for different boards (Catholic and public)
- Flexibility and accessibility in programs (online and one on one)
- Breaking it in pieces to reduce the overwhelm – small steps
- Continue (?) of stops
- Were not aware of all the education opportunities available
- I was not aware of alternative programs are available for students up to 21
- Dual credit, college
- Flexible learning
- Alternate learning
- Homeschooling
- Apprenticeship program
- Variety of learning styles
- 73% of students are ESL, the stats in alternative schools
- Of all the programs that are offered
- Thought the number of ESL learners would be higher
- Number of employed people going back to get an education
- Level of flexibility within the various programs. There will be something for each individual
- Collaboration between the Boards
- The adult services regarding the alternative programs
- Pre-apprenticeship programs?
- Alternate programs-wraparound services?
- What are the supports in place for these challenged clients?



- Dual credit program
- Age range 18 to 83 years old
- St. Nicholas adult high school
- Program for students (one-on-one programming) can start program and stop when student cannot continue. He/she can start later from the point where he/she had left
- Alternative programs

2. What do you still need to know? n=11

- What brings students in for upgrading-access to college? Access to university? Wanting to access specific pathways? Science? Tech?
- What are the main barriers to accessing PSC that adult students face? How can service providers help students overcome barriers to accessing PSE?
- Intake process, how does someone get connected to the programs?
- More about the Stepping Stone program
- With ESL (non-credit) courses be offered online?
- When would you send a client to the Ottawa Missions Stepping Stone program rather than to adult high school classroom?
- How do people who are employed know that they can complete their OSSD through work?
- Assessment-how did they get assessed to date, where assessed?
- Learning disabilities (what are the resources, where did they get assessed?)
- Eligibility criteria for the OYAP (age)
- How do we know about their programs (how do adult learners learn about programs?)
- Do they hire within their learner population, daycare etc.
- List of schools (options) programs they offer
- How to Inuit students/adults get supports?
- Is there a centralized process or location to refer clients for individual intake and assessment?
- Disconnect -not what we are hearing from clients
- Exemptions to recognize postsecondary education from other countries
- Testing is still standardize and doesn't match different learning opportunities
- More technical details...
- What's the latest someone can register at the schools?
- How does someone register at OCDSB alternate?
- More information on the partnership with the YSB to support downtown/Centre town clientele
- Family reception Centre
- How to make connections to build not only referrals but also partnerships
- More detail around PLAR are and possible partnerships
- More about the apprenticeship programs. Retention barriers
- Is dual credit available at AHS?
- How to keep adults with skills from back home but does not have schooling and has very little English language?



3. What questions, if any, would you like to ask the panel? n=8

- What are the main barriers to accessing PSC that adult students face? How can service providers help students overcome barriers to accessing PSE?
- How do we connect clients to the programs and services
- If an adult student has done the GED test and failed one component, do they have to do the test again or is there another direction they can take?
- List of schools-options-and programs they offer
- How to school boards provide supports for Inuit and first Nations youth?
- Do the teachers have Indigenous students/Inuit students to include Inuit culture on the walls and in the classrooms to help students feel safer and included?
- Who should we contact/what's the process for referrals?
- How can they achieve a course in six weeks?
- What is the difference between alternative school and adult high school?
- What strategies do you have in place for newcomers, e.g. Mental health supports and services
- How to build partnerships to link education and social community education services
- Roadmap of pathways – handout to provide clients-centralized intake
- What programs offer transportation?
- What additional wraparound services are available for adult learners in the schools?

Parking Lot – includes questions written on yellow post-it notes

- Teachers who speak other languages? Relate to the students-adults
- What is your learning path design from beginning (assessment) to their desired goals (career pathway)?
- Are there female only classes available i.e. ESL, credit bearing?
- When and how will the issue of undocumented individuals left without a right to education in Canada be addressed?
- What additional wraparound services and supports are available for adult learners in the school or apprenticeship programs i.e. Housing, retention, funding for criminal pardons, psychoeducational
- Opportunities to partner with employment programs for credit recognition? Work placements/financials support options/partnerships?
- Is there a way to help adults with trade skill from back home but do not have schooling and good English. They went to ESL school but achieved little success
- who should we contact and what is the process for referrals?
- What do you do to support students with disabilities? Those with IEPs?
- There is a disconnect between what we have heard today versus what our clients are experiencing firsthand
- How can newcomers be referred to one central location to access what they need (options) and be recognized (PLAR) for education and experience earned in their country of origin?
- I didn't know OYAP applied to adults?
- How do we connect our clients to these programs?



- In what ways do schools include Indigenous and Inuit cultures on the walls and in the classrooms to help students feel safe and welcome?
- Are there teachers that have taken cultural sensitivity training or plan on doing so?
- What apprenticeship training programs are available and how do people access them?
- Is dual credit available to adult learners in AHS, Continuing Ed, night school or summer school?
- “From camp to school” strategies for newcomers? Wraparound services? Partnerships?
- When students are transitioning out of your programs what are the main barriers they still face to accessing post-secondary education and how can partners help students overcome these barriers?
- Counselling services for newcomers? Adaptation to new school system
- Working with organization who serve immigrants? MLO? Settlement counsellor? Hiring? Filling the gap
- When do you advise a client to do the GED test as opposed to doing a credit course?



- Money
- Confidence
- Slip through the cracks
- Language skills new line literacy issues
- No single point of access
- Not sure where to start or where to go
- Coordination of services
- Mental health, anxiety - undiagnosed
- Bad experience-integration/adaptation
- Money-low income
- Other responsibilities
- Childcare
- Discrimination
- Low self-esteem
- Housing
- Lack of support, no support
- Addictions
- Acceptance
- Employment essentials
- Uncomfortable with class/group setting
- Negative experience with the system
- Not feeling they have the literacy skills to succeed in a high school class
- Schedule: time constraints, family obligations; unpredictable/unreliable work schedule
- Transportation
- Age
- Childcare
- Anxiety
- No support
- Not knowing where to go
- Not wanting to be with kids (in school)
- Needs money, needs allowance
- Not clear on first step
- Life priorities; they need money and a job. \$60 cash for adult high school
- Life circumstances/parenting
- Some don't disclose it (lack of high school education) ; we don't ask for proof; they see it as a weakness and know that most employers don't ask-apprenticeship gets checked but not otherwise. Only an issue when asked for proof or going for promotion
- Where do they go to register?
- Need to pay to get Ontario to trial transcript, process to get transcript. Transcript for school outside Canada
- Full-time job



- Family commitments/responsibilities
- Mental health
- Confidence and ability
- Bad previous school experience
- Transportation
- Too long a pathway to finish OSSD
- Past experience
- Need to work/money
- Family obligations/childcare
- Confidence/fear
- Lack of information
- A learning disability-makes it challenging or literacy
- Fear
- Childcare
- Need to work
- Overwhelmed
- Mental health, addiction
- Lack of awareness of flexibility
- Make connections between ESL/Link and adult credit
- Language
- Motivation
- Responsibilities-kids, job, aging parents
- Not sure where to go, which doorway
- Transportation
- Need for paid work
- Life in general-prioritizing
- Childcare
- Mental health
- Confidence
- Language barriers
- Past experience with traditional high school/system failure
- Daycare needs
- Mental health
- No time due to day to day responsibilities
- Deal with adult issues yet lacking the adult development required
- Lack of confidence/family support/experience with success
- Not yet recognizing the value of education
- Difficulty accessing the type of education
- Need for revenue-financial barrier
- Age-older clients
- Lack of stability



- Lack of knowledge on resources/services in the community
 - Not knowing they can combine a few services at the same time
 - Poverty, single-parent, low self-esteem, not knowing the resources new and when he needed to continue working in their minimum wage job to support the family
 - Lower reading level
 - No funds to pay tuition
 - Bad experience at school
 - Mental health issues
2. What might a successful partnership between your organization and the school boards look like?

Word Cloud:



Worksheets from group exercise (n=15 worksheets with answers to this question)

- Continuing collaboration work between the organizations in the schools regarding successes/problems of students-both adult and non-adult and feedback to each other
- Communication/respect trust
- Programs located in school building
- Information exchange i.e. Meetings, values
- Mutual referrals
- Information sessions for students in classrooms/auditoriums
- Positive partnerships/relationships over time



- Like today :-)
- Trust
- Communication
- Alignment of services/support
- Physical presence at hubs and service organizations
- Coordination of supports
- Increase frontline staff knowledge
- More shared space
- Shared communication between school boards and service providers, back and forth
- More presence in the school: more resources available
- Have someone available in the schools to meet with students/clients
- Settlement counsellors from communities that represent population on-site
- Building trust
- Visibility
- Inviting mainstream organizations for presentations and vice versa
- Open communication
- A centralized referral point
- More lunch and learns or regular meetings
- A coordinating agency that directs learners to the appropriate learning institution. Then when the education program comes to an end to the agency can direct the learner back out to the appropriate support agency
- Partnerships with organizations, pilots to train adult learners in specific fields
- Incorporate VAW Best practices into upgrading and further education pathways
- Contacts of partnerships where organization can refer clients directly
- Simplified referral
- Personal visits-info sessions
- Having a contact person we can reach out to
- Liaison person
- Streamlined process
- Transparency
- Communication
- Trust
- Cooperation
- List of contacts
- Flexibility
- Financial literacy workshops around credit etc.
- System navigator as a first stop/step possibly in same space as representatives from the various programs
- Bridging the gap coordinators existing already
- Referral networks
- Information sessions/workshops



- Open communication between partners, solid collaboration, establish a multiservice plan with client
- Having a continuous presence in each other's establishments, all year long
- Smooth transition between services the client is supported throughout all the process
- Know the eligibility criteria for all services
- Incorporate Indigenous culture and curriculum with the input/ideas/suggestions from the Indigenous community
- Make students feel welcome
- Non-discrimination

Plenary Discussion (Flip Chart): What might a successful partnership between your organization and the school boards look like?

- Share the value-trust
- Go to the students
- Simplified referral-need to know the details
- List of organizations-who to call on
- Good communication new
- Work with existing networks-to bring presentations (ENG, NIC, Hubs)
- More information about adult education
- Systems coordination at school board. The go-to person to contact-one person who knows everything
- Sharing space-visibility
- Visibility all year long
- Direct contact that is responsive – answers phone and email
- Knowledge at all community agencies
- Increased coordination of supports
- Classes on-site
- Partnership/pilots to train clients on specific skills in different fields e.g. where there are labour market gaps
- Simplified referral-liaison
- Online “this is what I’m looking for”



- Promotional materials to give clients
- Expert information session for learners-travelling to different groups, Francophone, Indigenous, Newcomers
- Simplified referrals and simplified information focused on the next step - come back and talk to us
- Each matrix, language requirement, documentation requirements
- Talk about program options after clarity on first steps
- Is daycare available?
- Simple process
- Emphasize more personal information session for student specific pathways
- What services can our partners offer with respect to supports for students?
- Tracking of credit and non-credit
- Additional resources-how do we get the most return?
- Online database, connections
- More Inuit cultural awareness within our school programs
- More partnerships with Inuit service providers i.e. OICC/TI in the schools to support especially Inuit children in care without Inuit parents
- Lower class sizes! At all levels
- A better knowledge of available services/programs
- Contact points in all organizations to make the referral flow easy and ensure the client is receiving services according to their needs new line solid partnerships
- Streamline contact
- Website
- Comprehensive one-stop website

Plenary Discussion (Flip Chart): What do you need from the panel to support your clients to get back to school?

- Physical presence at service hubs-go to students
- Tutors to support with specific courses-not LBS
- Streamline contact
- Do better with what we do have: know who to contact, streamline, know where to go for supports
- Simplify information on first steps and don't scare the student off
- Matrix of what is available by age, location etc.
- Reach out to mainstream community
- Boards to help with (?)
- Information sessions at locations in community
- Removal of arbitrary barriers-PLAR to be consistently applied
- collaborative websites for both boards in order to see the options in one place new like YSB, takes school where the students are at. Satellites-meet where they are at
- more partnerships with indigenous and Inuit partners
- lower class sizes



Appendix: Detailed Agenda

1. 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. - Registration and (refreshments)
2. 9:00 am – 9:10 am – Opening remarks and Introduce Frank **(Bruce)**
 - Bruce: Greeting, Acknowledgement we are standing on Indigenous land, overview and purpose of the day, tequest for everyone to actively participate (including Board reps)
 - Frank Hummell’s quick, brief overview of the ERPAE
3. 9:10 am – 9:15 am – Getting to know audience
 - Quick introduction if Angela (“Angela is our facilitator from Gananoque) **(Shirley)**
 - Show of hands, how many of you work at community service agencies? **(Angela)**
 - Show of hands, hand many of you work directly with clients? **(Angela)**
 - On a scale of 1-5 (1 low “not at all confident”, 5 – fully confident), how confident are you explaining, to your clients, the pathway to work towards a high school diploma? (Show of hands 1-2 or 3 or 4-5) **(Angela)**
4. 9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - School board panel presentation – introduce panel **(Bruce)**
Guiding questions for presenters, 5 - 7 minutes each x 7 presenters (?) = 45 minutes
 - What do you offer to learners?
 - What is unique/different about your program?
 - What have you learned about working with adult learners?
 - Please share a short success story of one of your students in one of your programs
5. 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Question and Answer forum – table discussions **(Angela)**
Small groups at each table will discuss the following questions. They will put answers on worksheets and will hand in worksheets.
 - What do you know now that you didn’t know? (5 minutes)
 - What do you still need to know? (5 minutes)
 - What question, if any, would you like to ask the panel? (5 minutes) – some may not have questions
 - Tables ask panel questions – panel provide succinct answers (15 minutes)
 - Introduce Parking Lot **(Angela)**
6. 10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. - Refreshment Break
7. 10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - Working Groups and feedback (may only need 45 minutes, play it by ear) – **(Angela)**
Small groups at each table will discuss the following questions, one question at a time.
 - What might a successful partnership between your organization and the school boards look like? (15 minutes). Angela to ask the room for a few answers to this question



- What prevents your clients without a high school diploma from going back to school? (15 minutes) Angela to ask the room for a few answers to this question
 - What do you need from the panel to support your clients to get back to school? (15 minutes) Angela to ask the room for a few answers to this question.
8. 11:45 a.m. – 11:55 am- Working group feedback (Recommend this to be used for the panel to respond to feedback from groups) **(Angela)**
- Would any panel members like to briefly respond to the information shared by the groups?
9. 11:55 am – 12 pm Thank you and next steps **(Bruce)**
- Could ask the question again: Now that you know what you know, on a scale of 1-5 (1 low “not at all confident”, 5 – fully confident), how confident are you explaining, to your clients, the pathway to work towards a high school diploma? (Show of hands 1-2 or 3 or 4-5)
10. 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Lunch and Networking