

2010

Adult Learning Act: Results of Consultation

December 2010

Adult Education Division
Skills and Learning Branch

Nova Scotia Department of
Labour and Workforce Development





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER**December 2010**

In September of this year, our government released a discussion paper on the future of adult learning in this province. We sought input from all Nova Scotians, and we held meetings with our adult learning partners throughout the province. This input has proved invaluable to us in drafting “An Act to Provide for the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning and other Designated Components of Adult Learning in Nova Scotia” which I introduced December 2nd in the Legislature.

As we approach the 10th anniversary of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning in 2011, it is important that we take time to celebrate our achievements as well as seek ways to improve. Currently, all learning systems, except adult learning, are established in legislation in Nova Scotia. We are introducing this legislation to provide governing and accountability measures that will enhance the quality and effectiveness of adult learning in our province.



As Minister responsible for the Departments of Labour and Workforce Development, Education and the Voluntary Sector, and also from my own personal learning experiences, I have seen and can appreciate the impact that lifelong learning has on an individual, their families as well as their communities. Developing legislation that will formalize the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning in law, standardize and improve current governance and accountability mechanisms, and bring awareness to the importance of adult learning in the lifelong learning continuum is vital to advancing the province’s social and economic goals. We know that a more skilled workforce means better jobs and a stronger economy. We also know that families that are lifelong learners are healthier and have more social and economic opportunities.

This document summarizes the input we received on our discussion paper from many individuals and organizations across the province. It has helped to inform government on legislation and future directions for adult learning. Thank you for your time and efforts. I look forward to continuing to work with you to establish a province where learning is valued and celebrated.

The Honourable Marilyn More
Minister of Labour and Workforce Development
Minister of Education
Minister responsible for the Voluntary Sector



INTRODUCTION

As society continues to evolve, it is not enough to simply focus on raising literacy levels. People need to develop skills that will encourage them to keep learning and enable them to adapt to ongoing changes in their careers and in their personal lives.

In Nova Scotia, there is a commitment in many different sectors to develop a continuum of lifelong learning. This continuum encompasses early childhood, school-age, post-secondary and numerous adult and workplace learning opportunities, community and cultural experiences, sports and recreation activities and volunteer organizations.

As a result, government has proposed the development of an Adult Learning Act for Nova Scotia to better support lifelong learning by strengthening standards for adult learning programs. The proposal is based on the following goals:

- ▶ reaffirm the Government's ongoing commitment to adult learning
- ▶ formalize Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) in law
- ▶ address governance and accountability measures to regulate the quality and effectiveness of the adult learning system
- ▶ increase public awareness about the need and capacity to improve our literacy levels and essential skills in Nova Scotia.

Based on the feedback, it was acknowledged that the definition and practices of adult learning are understood differently by different organizations. Therefore, the Act has been drafted to recognize an adult learning system with different components of delivery. As this consultation was related to the formalization of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning and program delivery within its mandate, the Act will include NSSAL as the first component for the delivery of adult learning programs. Furthermore, the Act will be drafted to support recognition of additional components as deemed necessary through further stakeholder consultations and government priorities.

In the past decade, government has consistently supported adult learning programs and the ongoing development of NSSAL. As a result of this support from government and input from partners during the recent consultations, the division has adopted the following:



Goals adopted by the Adult Education Division, Skills and Learning Branch:

The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) supports a lifelong learning culture that makes life better for families in every region by encouraging adult Nova Scotians to achieve their personal learning goals. This is accomplished by:

- ▶ coordinating a continuum of tuition-free adult learning programs in both English and French
- ▶ providing resources and programs that meet the learning needs of adults from basic literacy to high school graduation
- ▶ improving accessibility to NSSAL's adult learning programs
- ▶ ensuring that learning is recognized and transferable
- ▶ meeting quality standards for adult learning program delivery that reflect exemplary adult learning practices, and
- ▶ providing ongoing professional development to NSSAL partners.

These goals will help guide the continual development of NSSAL as a component of the Adult Learning Act as one of the entities responsible for coordinating adult learning programs for Nova Scotians. Having an Adult Learning Act with NSSAL as a component supports a more consistent and coordinated approach to learning, program participation and success and provides more pathways for individuals to realize their learning and career goals.

Nova Scotians, including the province's literacy partners, have provided advice and feedback to guide the development of an Act that supports Nova Scotians in participating in lifelong learning opportunities.



CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Department of Labour and Workforce Development, through the Adult Education Division, issued a discussion paper, in English and French, on September 14, 2010. The paper requested input from interested groups and Nova Scotians in the development of an Adult Learning Act. Additionally, the department provided an opportunity for direct adult learning delivery partners and members of the division's regional planning teams to raise concerns or ask questions at information sessions in each of the Adult Education Division regions. These actions ensured that the key stakeholders, directly impacted by legislation, were given the opportunity to discuss the impacts and submit feedback.

As we move forward in the legislative process, government has committed to keeping our adult learning stakeholders informed of the status of the proposed Act. Furthermore, government has committed to subsequent consultations in the development of accompanying regulations should they be required.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Shortly after the regional sessions were completed and written responses were being reviewed, it quickly became evident that those who responded have a vision for adult learning in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, almost every respondent noted that although broad consultation is important, government should remember that the primary stakeholder is the adult learner. Since the initial consultation process did not include adult learners, government must ensure that subsequent consultations on the legislation include them.

Supporting Adult Learners to Succeed

Supporting adult learners to succeed must begin with respect. Therefore, it is important that adult learners are reflected in current programming, evaluations, planned revisions and future program development. It was further noted that adult learners have many conflicting priorities and require flexibility in order to be successful in meeting the required outcomes. To support that success, programs should not only be flexible, but be designed to allow recognition and validation of life experiences within the learning environment. This flexibility and recognition will allow instructors to modify programming to build on learner experiences ensuring that the materials are relevant to the learner and support instructors to assist learners to set realistic goals.

Flexible programming is only one aspect as adult learners can face many different barriers that make it difficult to participate in learning. Some of these barriers include learning disabilities or challenges, financial, mental health, and addictions. Supporting learners by providing supports, or working with other appropriate organizations to overcome these barriers, was indicated as an important element for consideration.



The responses regarding attendance policies and prescribed curricula were similar. Standards for attendance and prescribed curricula should be included in a way that does not contradict adult learning principles. It was further advised that any legislation should allow for flexible attendance policies and allow instructors to supplement the prescribed curricula with alternate or additional resources to meet the needs of learners.

Scope of Legislation

Feedback related to the scope of the Act, as well as the suggestion related to naming the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) in the Act, provided a general consensus that it would be important to provide legislative protection for NSSAL, but that the Act should not limit the possibility of including other government-funded programs that provide adult learning instruction. It was requested that the Act include all adult learning programs or be written broadly enough to allow other adult learning programs to be added as necessary. There was general concern that limiting the Act to NSSAL would exemplify real and perceived inequities across the system.

The focus on economic benefits in the discussion paper caused a concern for many stakeholders. It was felt that because the discussion paper only acknowledged the economic benefits of participating in adult learning programs, the resulting Act would ignore the value lifelong learning brings to individuals in terms of raising self-confidence and self-worth. It was also noted that workplace learning was not included, and many suggested that workplace learning be considered as it provides another avenue for adults to improve their literacy and essential skills.

A Strong Adult Learning System for Nova Scotia

The discussions and the responses to the discussion paper provided opportunity for suggestions to strengthen adult learning in Nova Scotia. There was a clear message sent that increased coordination among the different levels of government was required. More specifically, increasing partnerships and cooperation among the different provincial departments is needed to further support adult learners. Respondents also highlighted the many benefits of supporting or facilitating partnerships with non-government organizations, including employers. Stakeholders voiced a request for a greater effort from the provincial government to improve employer engagement, which is considered to be an important element to the success of adult learning.

Importance of Consultation

Ongoing consultation was considered vital to supporting the success of adult learning programs in the province. It was suggested that mechanisms for gaining ongoing feedback could include literacy forums, regular/annual meetings, and/or surveys. Additionally, it is important for government to include adult learners in the consultation process. This process must be designed and presented in a non-threatening way to adult learners to gain their support and ensure frank feedback.



CONCLUSION

This document, *“Adult Learning Act—Results of the Consultation,”* reports on the ideas, comments, and suggestions of the many people and organizations that responded to the discussion paper and participated in the division’s regional sessions. The appendices contain a compilation of all the feedback submitted to the department in response to the discussion paper as well as a summary of the discussions held across the province in each region of the Adult Education Division with program delivery partners and members of the division’s regional planning teams.

The feedback submitted during this stage of the consultation process was invaluable. This feedback informed government in developing legislation, and it will continue to guide the future direction for adult learning in the province of Nova Scotia. As adult learning continues to evolve, communication with our learners, adult learning stakeholders, and the general public is paramount. It is our commitment to continue to work with our partners to improve the adult learning system for the province.

In closing, we offer our sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in this stage of the consultation process. If you have further comments or suggestions, please contact us. We can be reached at:

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APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE DISCUSSION PAPER

The following is a list of comments and feedback received in response to the points raised in the discussion paper. The information submitted was reviewed and organized under the following headings. Care was taken to remove names, locations and other identifying remarks.

INCLUSION OF ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES

The following comments were submitted regarding the suggestion that the Act identify general principles related to adult learning.

- ▶ An Act is a good idea.
- ▶ Comprehensive definition of adult learning is a strength in the document
- ▶ Has potential to affect lifelong learning policy in Nova Scotia.
- ▶ All adult learning principles must be included in the Act.
- ▶ NS would be a leader in adult education.
- ▶ Use of term “learning” has more value than “literacy” or “education” and is often better received by adults who have associated those terms with negative experiences.
- ▶ New and existing programs must adhere to principles of adult learning that ensures:
 - the learner is autonomous
 - the learner has input into their learning
 - programs build on life experiences and knowledge
 - that learners are helped to set goals, make and document progress
 - that programs are practical and developed relevant to learners’ needs
 - that programs have qualified individuals to develop, teach and tutor learners
 - that programs are funded appropriately.
- ▶ Pleased to hear an Act is being considered.
- ▶ Must have respect for the learner.
- ▶ An Act would legitimize adult learning.
- ▶ The Act must have a “strengths-based perspective.”
- ▶ We must be realistic in what adults can accomplish based on other priorities (adult high school diploma is often considered too long a process).
- ▶ All adult learning principles are important but should not be listed specifically to allow for and changes based on new and evolving research.
- ▶ An Act that supports and protects lifelong learning and the rights to that learning is a good idea and comes at the right time.
- ▶ The terms used must be well defined.
- ▶ Adult learners and their needs must be the focus of any legislation.
- ▶ The act must not focus solely on workforce development but also on the benefits of lifelong learning.

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- ▶ There are certain principles that should be included:
 - Inclusion and universal access (including the provision of accessible spaces that are also neutral and welcoming)
 - Respect for the learner (content, location, method of learning, supports and instructors that can relate to the adult learner)
 - Provision of programs that support a range of learning abilities and styles
 - Increasing literacy rates impacts labour force participation, improved health outcomes, reduced justice costs, increased parent/child learning, increased participation in community and social activities, increased civic engagement
 - Family and child literacy are essential foundations for an adult learning culture
 - Build capacity for learners to adapt information for their lives
 - Strategies and practices must grow from evidence-based research defining success.
- ▶ The Act should not be limited when defining adult learning.
- ▶ Adult learning should not be limited to a focus on employment or “workforce development.”
- ▶ Agrees with the need to create legislation to support ongoing changes.
- ▶ Must ensure language does not create/support a system that excludes learners.
- ▶ Language used must “enshrine the right to learn for all adults.”
- ▶ Important adult learning principles to include:
 - Adults learn best when in control of the learning process and can learn in a non-threatening, stress-free environment
 - Adults views and status must be respected and learning must be built on their individual experiences so that they can apply what they learn to their own lives
 - Instruction for learning must be in a variety of styles, use a variety of teaching approaches, in an environment that is friendly and informal.
- ▶ Needs of learners must be at the centre of all discussions.
- ▶ Adult learning is a right, and language in the act should be consistent with the language rights of the Acadian and francophone population as well as other minority populations.
- ▶ Learning suggests a broad scope not addressed in the discussion paper. Definitions must be clear. However, the use of the term “learning” is strategic but must include right to literacy and basic education.
- ▶ The Act as proposed addresses programs but not the needs of the learner (looking at the “how” rather than the “who”).
- ▶ Incorporate acknowledgement and show support for informal learning.
- ▶ Use language in the Act that is similar to that used in describing UNESCO’s literacy pillars.

FORMALIZATION OF NSSAL IN THE ACT

The suggestion to formalize NSSAL was raised in the discussion paper including the benefits of inserting clause in the legislation to establish NSSAL as the entity responsible for coordinating educational programs for adults who want to upgrade their literacy skills and/or earn their high school diploma. The points raised are noted below:

- ▶ Limiting the Act to NSSAL is a concern. If the act is limited to NSSAL, where does Literacy Nova Scotia or general responsibility for adult learning reside?
- ▶ The scope of the Act should include workplace learning.
- ▶ Formalizing NSSAL is a logical step because it already has the unofficial responsibility for educational programming.
- ▶ Legislating NSSAL would make it easier to access information and make decisions for the best approach for the client.
- ▶ An Act is a good idea, but a cost benefit analysis should be the first step.
- ▶ An Act would provide the structure to ensure continued development of programs.
- ▶ NSSAL has been working well for 10 years so it is questioned why one should “re-invent the wheel.”
- ▶ NSSAL is an excellent vehicle to implement an Act.
- ▶ An Act legislating NSSAL is a positive step, because every citizen must have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from their participation in the workforce.
- ▶ NSSAL is outdated, and government should reconsider the mandate of the various departments and create a new one focused on sectors that support adults and their rights to basic services that also includes the responsibilities of NSSAL. This would include training, volunteerism, seniors, women, human rights.
- ▶ Support a provincial body (like NSSAL) that develops and implements educational policy and programs for adults. Relationship and capacity building to meet standards are key goals for this body.
- ▶ A provincial literacy strategy that understands and respects learner needs, partner resources and current infrastructure should be developed. It should contain current research, effective partnering strategies and development of best practices.
- ▶ The Act should not be limited to NSSAL programs. Other programs that offer adult learning and “look” much like NSSAL-funded programs should be included in the Act. Currently, some programs and funding for those programs are only accessible to learners at certain levels.
- ▶ High school diploma and post-secondary education is not a realistic goal for all learners. Some learners have abilities that could be valuable to employers if they have the benefits of training and learning opportunities---legislation should not exclude those learners.
- ▶ NSSAL is not necessarily the best entity to coordinate an adult learning system because it may limit the definition. If NSSAL is used, a broader definition must be used for upgrading to ensure learners who will not progress are not excluded.

- ▶ NSSAL is part of the learning system. It is the more formal schooling option for adults.
- ▶ Many adults need to be working while they are learning. The workplace education model should be further developed.
- ▶ Workforce intermediaries or trainer/interventionist would provide assistance in developing the workforce.
- ▶ The title suggests the legislation will have a much broader scope than what is included in the discussion paper.
- ▶ NSSAL goals should be ordered according to priority---the real focus (last goal) of lifelong learning is lost.
- ▶ The priority goals/commitments of Act should be re-ordered
 - reaffirm commitment of government vis-à-vis adult learning
 - formalize NSSAL in law
 - elaborate management/accountability measures to ensure quality and effectiveness of programs
 - raise public awareness of the need to improve literacy and essential skills as well as our ability to achieve improved literacy and essential skills.
- ▶ Intrinsic value---need to affirm and recognize personal goals of adult learners, which may differ from NSSAL or departments stated goals.
- ▶ Act should formalize the right to adult learning; not NSSAL, as it would be a much stronger statement.
- ▶ There are two directions government can take based on the discussion paper: make it about NSSAL or make the Act broader and more comprehensive.
- ▶ A broader Act should become a Skill and Learning Branch Act which would include workplace education/workplace learning programs.
- ▶ Learning is too broad a term so the Act will need to clearly define what the department means.
- ▶ NSSAL shouldn't be enshrined in legislation as it is only one small component of literacy programs and doing so would support the current "silo effect."
- ▶ NSSAL gives an image of what you know today, not what it could be in the future.
- ▶ NSSAL should be changed to provide a series of programs that encompasses all programs offering literacy programming to adults (either include all literacy programs under the umbrella of NSSAL or form real partnerships to address gaps.
- ▶ Include all literacy and essential skills offered in the department.
- ▶ Legislation should be reference lifelong-learning.
- ▶ Include mandatory development of annual strategic goals .
- ▶ Agree that NSSAL should be legislated; that adult learning is a shared responsibility, that ongoing consultation is necessary, and that a cultural change is required.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The proposal to enhancing accountability measures within the adult learning system by identifying specific accountability measures for the Minister/Department, NSSAL, service providers, instructors and adult learners within the Act was met with the following comments:

- ▶ Would we only limit maintenance of records to NSSAL-funded organizations?
- ▶ The Act will help the adult education field play a role in addressing the void between unemployed and workplace.
- ▶ Important to link adult learning results to provincial concerns such as health, civic engagement, sustainable work-force.
- ▶ The Act should ensure that all divisions of the branch do not operate at cross purposes to each other (i.e., Programs funded by Employment Nova Scotia should be able to support learners in Level II programs if there is evidence to support that the learning and skills acquired in Level II leads to learners being able to access the labour market).
- ▶ Governing body should allow for a system to be diverse, creative, and relevant to the learner.
- ▶ The importance of the learner being an active participant in his or her own learning would be a good addition.
- ▶ NSSAL already had good accountability and governance measures, but enhancing the current system is a good step that would improve program quality and consistency.
- ▶ Many adults lack the literacy and essential skills to succeed because of barriers not addressed when they were in the public school system. As a society, there is an obligation to provide the education that adults need to succeed. The question is raised whether or not we have the funding to provide and sustain programs to meet the needs.
- ▶ Funding must come from federal and provincial levels.
- ▶ Funding must be increased along with increased responsibilities for reporting/record keeping.
- ▶ Organizations/Partners will need increased financial resources to support the implementation of an Act.
- ▶ The Act must include “solid and appropriate assessment and goal setting” policies/processes including the recording of success when goals are met.
- ▶ The Act must include ways to measure meaningful outcomes and not just graduate statistics.
- ▶ Learners must be part of the goal-setting and accountability process.
- ▶ Provide adequate and sustained funding.
- ▶ Include accountability measures that measure learners’ enhancements to quality of life as well as employment (i.e., increased social activities, self-confidence.
- ▶ Require service providers to show evidence of accessibility of programs.

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- ▶ Recognition that adult learners with identified disabilities have low literacy levels. Accommodations to support participation in programs (chronic illness, hearing/vision loss that may have interrupted regular schooling) must be provided.
- ▶ One of NSSAL's successes has been the partnerships between government and stakeholders. With that in mind, accountability measures should continue to be about outcomes and not micromanaged by government with layers of bureaucracy.
- ▶ The Act should support NSSAL's strengths of high levels of collaboration, sharing, trust, initiative, and flexibility.
- ▶ Suggesting requirements of service providers is reasonable so long as they are at a high level and not micro-managed.
- ▶ Other departments should not be involved in developing curriculum and services related to adult education.
- ▶ Accountability processes/policies should be evidence based on behavior that are observable and measurable outcomes with impact measures built into each learning activity.
- ▶ Public libraries are essential partners and delivery agents.
- ▶ There should be more/increased partnerships between LWD and other government departments to ensure a greater understanding of how to meet the needs of adult learners and their families.
- ▶ Accountability measures exist in the form of service agreements and submitted documentation. Any measures should be learner-centric (progress and impact documented).
- ▶ Accountability processes must exist for both the funder and the funded. The discussion paper only references processes for organizations.
- ▶ Accountability processes should be set up for the division, and evaluations of performance should be transparent.
- ▶ The Act should include development of a performance management system to measure effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability.
- ▶ A program review and a reporting strategy must be developed to ensure quality and consistency.
- ▶ Appropriate funding is required if government is going to achieve success in stated goals.
- ▶ Accountability measures in the paper are too stringent and may work against adult learning principles. Adults need to be involved in their own learning. The idea of individual learning plans should be incorporated in the adult learning program rather than create a system where everyone uses the same model, curriculum, hours of attendance.
- ▶ Legislation needs to reflect that adult learning is cross-departmental. Supports to learn as well as the programs for learning are required.
- ▶ Strategy must be developed with groups who have the necessary expertise.
- ▶ Literacy workers are the foundation for learners in Levels I and II.

- ▶ Accountability measures must be clearly stated and be required by both NSSAL and organizations. Allowances should be made for groups with limited administrative resources.
- ▶ Official languages: affirm NSSALs commitment to deliver programs in both English and French.
- ▶ Inclusiveness: no demographic group should be excluded or underrepresented in language and intent of the Act.
- ▶ Accountability must be two-way, i.e., apply to both government departments and service delivery organizations.
- ▶ Every government department has a stake in this Act, so who would have the lead?
- ▶ Current programming in NSSAL excludes certain adult learning groups (i.e., immigrants who still need English as a Second Language (ESL) training but can't access programs for new immigrants or are only available in metro region; employed adults with low literacy skills).
- ▶ Accountability appears to be one-sided in the paper.
- ▶ Smaller organizations have a concern that they will be forced to adapt to provide programs that they do not have the resources to support (ALP-GAP).
- ▶ Include mechanism to make other government departments accountable.
- ▶ Create program evaluation and reporting tools for organizations to use.
- ▶ Support a sector-wide evaluation of community learning organizations.
- ▶ Develop a mechanism to evaluate qualitative data to recognize learner progress that does not lead to certification.
- ▶ Research potential of e-learning as another option to reach learners.
- ▶ The provincial lifelong learning network should include other government departments impacted by or have an impact on adult learning.

GOVERNANCE, QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY

Feedback below responds to the proposal to include governance provisions in the Act to formalize NSSAL's role, as well as address the governance of the various players: adult learners, instructors, service providers, NSSAL, Director of the department's Adult Education Division, and the Minister. Some of the governance provisions included were related to prescribed curricula, attendance, instructor competency, and program standards.

- ▶ Standards can be set and reached without requiring organizations to use a prescribed curriculum or abide by a set hours for instruction.
- ▶ Adult education will be recognized as a specialized field, respected, and promoted; and will encourage enrolment and decrease withdrawal rates. It will also bring more professionalism to the field.
- ▶ Learners must see progress, and government should keep this in mind when developing outcomes.
- ▶ Implementation of attendance policies could conflict with adult learning principles.

- ▶ Attendance does not ensure participation.
- ▶ Instead of an attendance record, use a participation record that includes attendance, self-evaluation, etc.
- ▶ Show respect to all involved by providing adequate resources.
- ▶ There should be greater focus on goal setting to better enable learners to succeed and to enable organizations to better plan for needed resources.
- ▶ The Act should ensure that the same funding formula be used for all organizations .
- ▶ Better funding to smaller community groups would be beneficial to ensure they can secure adequate space and hire quality staff.
- ▶ Service providers should have regular training and support to ensure they understand what data is required by government to develop statistical reports.
- ▶ The Act should include the provision of funds/resources to develop information gathering tools to ensure consistent data collection.
- ▶ Approved curricula with expected outcomes are important.
- ▶ Curricula that are standards in the industry should be shared.
- ▶ Life experiences of learners should be recognized and validated within the learning environment.
- ▶ Must be inclusive and holistic in our approaches.
- ▶ Use RPL process to help African Nova Scotians to succeed.
- ▶ Learner attendance is necessary and learning plans are essential to success and allow for better tracking of clients and provide interventions if necessary.
- ▶ Include case managers with the African Nova Scotian communities in consultations as they know the best forms of education that have been most successful.
- ▶ Permanent financing dedicated to these programs must be included rather than annual grant process. Permanent financing would provide consistency and allow organizations to secure quality instructors.
- ▶ Adults have conflicting priorities, programs must have the flexibility to work around those priorities if adult learners are to continue participate.
- ▶ Adults have different, often complicated needs, which should be kept in mind when developing the Act.
- ▶ Having approved curricula is important but evaluation of their use must be flexible to ensure the work in the classroom is not lost.
- ▶ Need to have tangible recognition (certificate of progress from level to level) for learners.
- ▶ There should be more emphasis on the knowledge gained through life experiences rather than education.
- ▶ Learners need flexible and timely programs.
- ▶ Learners need the opportunity to meet outcomes based on prior learning.
- ▶ Attendance policies should be flexible to meet the needs of learners including evidence of home study to gain progress.

- ▶ Barriers identified in a 2008 focus group for CCL research for adult learners with disabilities include:
 - Accessibility: buildings not accessible; public transit not available
 - Financial: extra costs to participate in programs (i.e. for transportation)
 - Attitudes of instructors: alternative methods for instruction, including testing, not provided; often insensitive to learners' needs for accommodations.
- ▶ Recommendations for changes to improve adult learning environment
 - Ensure funding available to make improvements
 - Provide accessible transportation and buildings
 - Provide alternative formats (note-takers, extra time for tests)
 - Create peer support networks
 - Establish disability awareness training programs.
- ▶ Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to programs in their communities in formats that are accessible to the learners.
- ▶ Require service providers to demonstrate the use of alternative formats for delivery (e.g., electronic documents, oral testing) and accommodate needs of learners with disabilities).
- ▶ Assessing learner progress must be based meeting the outcomes of the learner's identified goals.
- ▶ Qualifications and competencies of instructors should include disability awareness training.
- ▶ Policies for minimum hours of instruction must take into account learners with disabilities and provide accommodations.
- ▶ Adequate funding and resources for adult learning is important to ensure learners get the support they need to be successful.
- ▶ We should learn to measure things that are currently unmeasurable or at the very least describe the impact.
- ▶ The legislation must provide for a provincial body, that would take a leadership role to encourage innovation and provide resources to build capacity at the community level.
- ▶ Legislation including measures must take into account consideration of learner needs at Levels I and II and support their specific needs, understanding that not all learners proceed to the completion of a high school diploma.
- ▶ Legislation should allow for a variety of delivery models for success.
- ▶ A requirement to follow approved curricula may impact community-based and /or volunteer run programs. For instance,
 - Requiring "volunteers" to teach would place a demand on resources and ability to recruit volunteers.
 - Requiring adults to learn in a structured environment with a structured learning process may discourage learners and decrease their success.
- ▶ Legislation should ensure flexibility for delivery of programs for underrepresented learners is essential.

- ▶ Libraries have a stringent governance and reporting process that makes them ideal partners for adult learning programs.
- ▶ Public libraries have existing infrastructure that would support programs to address the literacy needs of adults and families.
- ▶ Access to learning programs are sometimes limited to those who are evaluated higher than level II (LMA programming).
- ▶ Many learners are working and cannot commit to a high number of hours of learning. Imposing minimum hours of instruction for learners would be restrictive to this population.
- ▶ A high school diploma or General Education Development certificate (GED) is not the only measure of success. Learners who do not have a diploma or GED as a goal deserve recognition of their success in the form of some sort of certificate of learning/essential skills.
- ▶ The community-based organization in the Annapolis Valley adult education region has worked on an employer of choice program that could inform the development of an employee of choice program and certificate that tells businesses the skills the potential employee has attained.
- ▶ Outcomes should be negotiated between funders and service providers.
- ▶ Formalizing basic skills, literacy, NSSAL, and GED is a good idea.
- ▶ Adult learning is a right and proper supports need to be present to ensure success.
- ▶ Learners need respect.
- ▶ Work needs to be done before learners get to the classroom. Adults need to understand that they can learn.
- ▶ The discussion paper gives the impression that government is just skimming the surface---it's a quick and easy way to try to solve a problem.
- ▶ Adults need an environment where they can learn with a counseling and assessment component.
- ▶ Programs need to be consistent across the province and funded accordingly.
- ▶ Act needs to provide for complex needs of people with little literacy.
- ▶ Francophone learners do not have access to programs to help them achieve the goal of increasing literacy and essential skills levels.
- ▶ Legislation must allow programs to maintain an inclusive and holistic model.
- ▶ Any standards must meet the needs of learners to ensure learners are not prevented from accessing services.
- ▶ Minimum hours of instruction must take into account the needs and availability of learners.
- ▶ Use of language such as "approved academic programs" would cause fear for learners.
- ▶ Recognize/take concrete measures directed towards overcoming barriers and/or differences in participation in adult learning in different underrepresented communities, including rural versus urban.

- ▶ Clarify who are the service delivery organizations, who are the underrepresented target groups?
- ▶ Minimums: Need greatest possible flexibility with respect to minimum number of hours of instruction, depending on the organization, depending on the learning context, and program delivery format (full-time, part-time, distance learning, etc.).
- ▶ There needs to be more focus on workplace learning.
- ▶ There is a perception that funding is not consistent or fairly allocated that it's based on personal reasons.
- ▶ Government should fund learners with an incentive equivalent to minimum wage. Some learners can only access learning if they move away or access social assistance.
- ▶ Credentials are not the only tool to measure success. Goals achieved should be measured.
- ▶ Informal learning should be supported, documented and recognized by government (i.e., book clubs) as another option to the standard literacy programs.
- ▶ Informal learning options could address literacy needs of learners who cannot move past a particular level of learning.
- ▶ Include dedicated, specific funding; curriculum; accountability measures; training for practitioners; reference priority groups.
- ▶ Include need for ongoing research.
- ▶ Address that learners have special needs and create mechanism to develop individual learning plans.
- ▶ Provide variety of curriculum to meet a variety of needs.
- ▶ Suggest that the current programming is not sufficient or accessible to meet the needs of adult learners, nor are the current programs.
- ▶ Based on the discussion paper, the proposed Act is not broad enough.
- ▶ The Act should include mechanisms to support the recognition of formal, informal and non-formal learning.

CITIZENSHIP AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The following represent suggestions to ensure ongoing citizen and stakeholder engagement:

- ▶ Consult with experts in the field of adult education and have a strong Advisory Board.
- ▶ Consult with adult learners.
- ▶ Those in the field are already engaged. Government needs to talk to those who are not connected (potential learners, employers).
- ▶ Current process for engagement works. Additional stakeholder meetings to specifically discuss the success of the Act would be important.

Adult Learning Act: Results of Consultation

- ▶ Adult learning programs need better promotion with clear and consistent messages which could be accomplished by NSSAL.
- ▶ Employer groups must be consulted.
- ▶ Discussion paper is not written for adult learners.
- ▶ The Act will facilitate greater discussions on improving the system.
- ▶ Improved linkages between community and college that include variety of options for participation in education including development of essential skills and credit for prior learning both formal, informal and non-formal learning.
- ▶ Adult learners should be part of any consultation on future directions for NSSAL. Adult learners are very successful in addressing life's challenges and would be an important resource in the development of any new policies, including an Act.
- ▶ If the Act is to be successful in its implementation, it should be written with adult learners' input to show respect for their needs and abilities.
- ▶ Ongoing dialogue with all NSSAL stakeholders is critical to the ongoing success of NSSAL.
- ▶ There is a large, publically funded infrastructure of public libraries that play a role in lifelong learning and would be interested in expanding the partnership that currently exists.
- ▶ Completion of a province-wide inventory/environmental scan of all programs. currently offered to increase collaboration and identify best practices.
- ▶ Ongoing citizen and stakeholder engagement is essential in order to achieve success. Libraries are well positioned to facilitate opportunities for citizenship engagement in all areas of the province.
- ▶ Forums should be held with citizens and stakeholders on a regular basis and workshops on dispute resolution and performance management should be included.
- ▶ Adult learners need to be consulted. Seasonal workers would be a good source of information.
- ▶ Division should create a panel of literacy and basic education partners to guide and develop NSSAL service delivery.
- ▶ Ongoing consultation could be achieved through the creation of a literacy panel and annual forum that includes experts in the field as well as learners.
- ▶ Consult with learners: documents (relating to ALA) need to be clear, plain language to enable discussion/reflection amongst learners; suggest community forums, annual symposia to provide opportunities for input from learners.
- ▶ Allow ability to broaden stakeholders.
- ▶ Include commitment to regular consultation with all stakeholders including learners.
- ▶ To fulfill the goal to consult with the public and stakeholders, the proposed Act should include the creation of a provincial lifelong learning network that would provide support, information exchange and knowledge as well as networking and communications opportunities.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY ADULT EDUCATION REGION

Availability of French programming is referenced once in the background session, but it was noted that it was absent in the rest of the discussion paper.

“Inclusiveness” and support of a change in attitude of inclusiveness must be included as a one of the key adult learning principles. Regardless of literacy levels or cognitive abilities programming must be holistic. If it is not, government is creating another barrier to learning.

Legislating NSSAL is too restrictive. It would be better for all adult learning programs to be included to ensure adult learners are treated the same in practice. This would also provide an argument for equal funding. For instance, LMA funding is limited to programs that are providing Level II and above. This goes against the goals of NSSAL and adult learning.

It was suggested that limiting NSSAL to legislation allows other adult learning programs under the umbrella of LWD, such as job readiness programs, targeted programs for seniors and youth, to have enrolment or funding criteria that is much less accountable than those within NSSAL.

All adult learning programs available have an impact on NSSAL learners, and it is not clear how the Act will change that relationship (i.e., ENS, Skill Development)

The paper does reference that accountability is a shared responsibility between government and organizations; however, it is only at the beginning. Most of the document states actions to ensure the organizations are accountable to government and not the other way around. The Act should have more references to mutual accountability.

Including literacy stakeholders (organizations) in the development of ongoing strategic plans is critical. The creation of such a report would detail government’s goals to ensure accountability to the partners, and the partners would understand and accept the role to help government achieve those goals set out in the report. As well, having adequate funding to accomplish those goals is important.

It was mentioned that reporting rules related to attendance will have to be flexible as many organizations have learners that require confidentiality.

The Act/Regulations will have to clearly define who we are talking about when terms are used, such as “underrepresented groups.” Clarity will ensure we are not limiting.



Consultation is an issue and it was suggested that an annual adult learning symposium be held with workshops, professional development, and breakout sessions to allow for broad networking but ensure groups with different needs have an opportunity to connect. The session should also include employers.

A question was raised regarding statistics provided by the Department of Education related to the graduates who require literacy support as well as the learners between the ages of 15 to 18 who are leaving school because “school doesn’t fit them.” These learners are coming to the community learning organizations asking for help. It was noted that the Department of Education is aware of the issue and are trying to address it.

A question was raised about why so many fail, and why government is not teaching for the real world. For example, if the learner has clear career goals and doesn’t require a course in physics, the system should not make it a requirement.

A comment was made that the issue of students leaving school was not an issue when “vocational schools” existed in the province. However, there seemed to be a misconception that the trades do not require higher education (i.e., chemistry, math, and physics) when in fact those jobs have evolved.

It was mentioned that in all of the documentation, the “learner” is absent. An immigration stakeholder committee that is comprised of volunteers (immigrants) and staff was provided as an example of what can work.

We need to address the learners’ needs and not the needs of the programs. The Act must be centred on the learner and not the economic need.

Funding is a huge issue and should be streamlined to limit the work to access funds (a comment was raised that it would be better to directly fund non-governmental organizations rather than through a grant system.) A request was made to ensure the Act referenced the issue of funding. It was further commented that there are many great projects but not enough funds to support them.

The department must find better ways to help community-based organizations access funds through other funding organizations such as Employment Nova Scotia. For instance, Level III students at NSCC, and learners at Level I on Employment Insurance can access funds, but the average person who wishes to increase literacy skills but can’t afford to leave work to participate in the programs can’t access these same funds.

A comment was made that the discussion paper indicated a lot of accountability measures related to program delivery but does not reference the outcome side of the delivery.



Different delivery processes can provide the same outcome. Flexibility to deliver programs is necessary.

Will the Act make adult learners more accepted? The response was that the Act on its own will not likely have much of an impact but combined with public awareness campaigns will continue to build this culture shift.

There was concern raised that implementing a policy for the provision of a minimum hours of instruction may restrict some learners. There are some learners who can only come for two hours a week due to need, employment, etc.

KENTVILLE ADULT EDUCATION REGION

In response to a request for comment on the idea that the Act must be learner-centred there was a comment that the Act should be “learner-centred” as opposed to “learning-centered.”

Need to build flexibility into the act. If it is too rigid it will restrain the organizations and learners.

An Act creates a very real “umbrella” for stakeholders.

The paper noted that the division would ensure the provision of professional development. Everyone involved in adult learning is a great resource for each other; however, there are limited opportunities to share ideas and options to address challenges.

Need to provide a solid network for the exchange of ideas.

Starting to see more consistency in delivery across the province, the system needs that consistency but also needs to have the flexibility to deliver programs according to the needs of the learners.

Everyone is teaching to the same outcome, but may have a different process to get there.

Inclusion of a standard for a needs assessment process is a critical piece for the Act. The needs of learners are different from region to region—transportation is an issue in the rural areas but learners don’t often voice it.

Outreach is important. It is suggested that we put a few computers in a rural area to see if distance learning works.



The Act will restrict programs. One comment was that the restriction of legislation is a reason there is a high attrition rate for teachers.

There is a concern that one Act will lead to others.

An Act would make it more difficult to find qualified instructors as they would be less inclined to be restricted by an act.

Measuring the quality of a teacher is difficult to define. Often the quality of a teacher is not measured by the credential alone.

Teachers/Instructors can't be tied up with doing reports when should be teaching and shouldn't "tie the hands" of teachers/instructors.

Site visits must be carefully organized and be worthwhile. Often site visits become fake.

In the development of an Act or any policy "we" can't forget that we are all accountable to the learners.

The diploma isn't the only sign of progress or success. Many learners come to the system to improve skills and develop confidence which should be considered a very real outcome.

Many employers use grade 12 as a screening tool. So it would be useful to know what learners can do with each progression through the adult learning system and then educate employers with that information.

The act will need to ensure we are sufficiently flexible and if we have a certification it should mean something.

Employers need to be educated but society in general must be educated on the value of adult learning programs. People need to understand that not having a grade 12 doesn't mean you can't get a job. For instance, Workplace Education doesn't always need grade 12 but offer programs in specific subjects.

It will be difficult to include the theory that grade 12 isn't always necessary.

If it's not broken "don't fix it."

We need to figure out how to collect the qualitative data without stifling programming.



We need to consult with adult learners on a regular basis: How do they like the program; what changes would they like to see.

Instructor salaries are an issue and are inconsistent across the province. The success of the program is due to the quality of the instructors. Is there any consideration to increasing the rate of pay of the instructors or providing a standardized pay regardless of the organization (Community based, adult high school, community college)?

It may not belong in the Act, but pay for instructors is a real issue that needs to be addressed.

It is important to have a meeting with everyone in order to share ideas and network, but it is also important to have smaller networking sessions for each group.

The assessment process needs more work and could be addressed at a group session.

Adult high schools tend to lose a lot of students after they first come in the door, we need to focus on why this happens and how it can be addressed. For instance, if daycare is an issue, could NSSAL fund a daycare or could the division help leverage funds from other departments to address that need if it's identified as a need to address.

Group meetings help to identify where partnerships can be made to access new funding opportunities.

PORT HAWKESBURY ADULT EDUCATION REGION

Government must have a realistic expectation of the learner (bridging the gap).

We must remember that of the 240,000 learners, many are persons with disabilities (learning and/or physical).

Language is important, especially to the Mi'kmaq. Government should consider translating documents (such as the discussion paper) to the Mi'kmaw language.

The Act should reference an adult's right to access.

Comment made that when federal funds were transferred to the province, the message was that we now have to do more with less.

Poverty is becoming more of an issue and is becoming real barriers to learning. For instance, a person on income assistance gets a certain amount of money each month; that



amount may not cover expenses if that person should enroll in literacy programs (i.e., meals, transportation).

The Act should be for the “real adult learner” which is one with both financial barriers and learning challenges.

Comments specific to Université Sainte-Anne (USA):

Location of campuses across the province is an issue when trying to coordinate tutors.

- ▶ French program is an academic program only; other learners end up at NSCC although working with the division to address that (i.e., math etc).
- ▶ USA does not teach GED preparatory
- ▶ USA has a committee that makes decisions and FGA gets lost in the program discussions
- ▶ Advertising is an issue
- ▶ In rural communities the citizens who remain in the area are often learning challenged and therefore filling local jobs is an issue
- ▶ Many Acadians are moving out West but are realizing they need a trade/education
- ▶ it is difficult to convince learners who have been out of school for many years to return to learning

NSSAL’s main goals are not representative of what government is trying to achieve. The last two should be first with the others to follow.

Also, the order of the issues to be addressed in the discussion paper does not represent the approach we should be taking in adult learning. For instance, governance and accountability is listed before stakeholder engagement (which includes the learner). The approach is important and needs to be reversed. This is a key point for organizations as many have the impression that government believes that if you fix accountability, the rest of the issues (financial and physical barriers to learning as well as other challenges) will be fixed.

The Act is great but must be done in more depth than it is.

Based on the discussion paper, the Act could be called the NSSAL Act rather than Adult Learning Act. The Act needs to legitimize the formal aspects of NSSAL, but also needs to recognize the informal aspects that NSSAL misses at the community level. These are hard to quantify and define. Building the “framework” (informal) that builds on the Act (formal) will be a start to define these aspects.

How “accountability” will be defined needs to be fleshed out more than it currently is in the Act. It is important that flexibility is a key component.



It was also mentioned that there is a belief that the Act will change the roles and responsibilities of organizations depending on how the accountability piece is defined. For instance, there is currently accountability by the organizations to the division (coordinators), to the learners, to the boards; and there is concern on how that might change.

It was also noted that this change in roles and definition of the roles is not a bad thing but it is key to ensure the learner is at the centre of our work.

Wording in the Act is very important. The need to ensure the Act addresses the need for flexibility, diversity, and barriers to learning is addressed.

Lack of affordable assessments for learning disabilities needs to be addressed---there is currently a huge gap. If you don't have funds to access assessments, it's a barrier to learning. Some organizations are finding creative ways to address the barriers but not all can.

Government needs to get better information from the learners as they are great problem solvers.

In order to involve the learners, the information needs to be presented in the right way to ensure they give the answers that they want/need to give rather than what they think we want to hear.

Lack of supports at the community college level for high barrier learners is an issue and often keeps them from being accepted into programs.

Community organizations are key to addressing these barriers and more coordination between the two organizations is required.

The importance of addressing barriers raised a question regarding accountability.

The question on how the division may change with the creation of an Act was raised.

The need to maintain regional committees that include all entities (regional planning teams are active across the province except in the Acadian community due to administrative challenges at the government level).

Smaller communities need more engagement as the "trickle down" effect takes too long. It was also mentioned that the term "local" was preferable to "regional" at least in some areas of the province.



The Act must incorporate the need to instill a change in philosophy in respect to adult learning in the province.

It is critical that the business community be engaged to create partnerships.

An informal needs assessment in the region provided information that the majority of learners are seniors or those who are not able to gain employment outside of the community.

The community organizations do not have the resources to address the barriers and need to create “true” partnerships with employers and others to address the needs of the learners as well as basic challenges such as space.

Community organizations are now putting more effort into fund raising to stay open rather than spending time on instruction.

A clause in the Act must be included that states programs need to be financially supported. A discussion on learning plans resulted in the need to maintain flexibility. Attendance doesn't always lead to progress.

Need to find ways to address barriers and provide incentives to learners.

Learner recognition of progress from level to level would be a good way to provide an incentive (noted that the province cannot provide this but the organizations are free to do so). A comment was made that the certificate of completion rather than participation may set the learner up for failure if they participate in a different program and is assessed differently.

The time required to review, understand, and respond to the discussion paper was much too short especially since it is important to look at it from different perspectives (i.e., aboriginal women).

SOUTHWESTERN ADULT EDUCATION REGION

The Act based on the discussion paper is not broad enough as there is no mention of workplace learning or other literacy programs that are not under NSSAL such as South Shore Work Activity Programs (SWAP) or AWENS.

Best way to get feedback from learners is to incorporate it in law.



If you can create health communities that are literate, you can save health dollars.

Often learners come to community programs, progress enough to enroll in community college programs but they didn't necessarily complete all the outcomes.

Need a way to capture the "soft" qualitative data such as, "I can read my own mail; I can read my pill bottle."

Work needs to be done with the medical community in terms of writing correspondence to patients who may not have the literacy skills to understand the document. For instance, the letter providing results should start with something simple such as, "You are fine."

Organization mentioned that a certificate of participation is given to learners rather than a certificate of completion to avoid any confusion for the learner.

Government can't just concentrate on the diploma. Programs that change the quality of life needs to be captured.

The statement "Strong lifelong learning culture" was well received.

It was noted that some communities have the highest income level but the lowest level of literacy. Regardless of that economic data, all citizens need a certain level of literacy for basic needs (such as reading medication labels).

Ensuring recognition of programs and transferability of skills was noted as a strong point in the discussion paper.

Accountability in the assessment process is required. There have been many cases where a learner is assessed higher by one organization than another in order to take advantage of funding available for high level literacy programs (i.e., general Adult Learning Program funding and LMA-funded programs).

Flexibility is required. One organization noted that there are instances where learners can attend the adult high school for some credits but return to the community level for other parts of the program. In other cases, a learner may be able to progress from level to level in some subjects but in others will remain at a lower level because of ability. Flexibility will ensure those learners are not lost.

Regular positive feedback on a learner's progression through a program is essential for learners with mental health challenges.



The potential of distance education should be included as an option, especially if an attendance policy is considered.

It appears that enrollment policies for EI-funded learners are inconsistent across the province. It was noted that one area was able to accept EI-funded learners in a program while another was not.

Learner feedback needs to be incorporated in the consultation process. The information should be incorporated into the curriculum to ensure learners understand and are not afraid to provide input.

CAPE BRETON ADULT EDUCATION REGION

Diversity, special care, recognition of barriers to adults when returning to learning

Good idea to formalize adult learning programs

Provides a level playing field: “insurance for future”

Programs need to be learner-centred---don’t repeat an education system that doesn’t work

Partnerships are very important in and out of the system, formal and non-formal in community and interagency.

Learners currently lack accountability. Would like to see a clause that addresses learner accountability related to attendance (can’t succeed if they aren’t there). If the learner comes to the program regularly, the organizations can address the barriers or challenges they face.

Employment and financial restraints, mental disorders, and addictions are high among adult learners.

Second and third generations have never been in a workplace.

Province should put more emphasis on providing incentives for adults. Province should also look at the needs of employers with low-skills workers and people on social assistance. A stipend could be provided to encourage them to attend programs.

Discussion was held on the value of GED and whether or not it will be included in the Act. GED pass rates tend to be low. Having a requirement to show the completion of a practice test to show competency before writing might address low pass rate.



A program that is currently running in the region provides learners with a portfolio when completed that includes a record of the learning they acquired (WHIMS, First Aid, resume writing). It shows skills that are transferrable to the workplace, similar to an incentive to learn; this program provides something that learners see as useful in addition to the core subjects.

Consultation is limited. The last Adult High School meeting was productive but not long enough to allow for more networking opportunities.

Learner feedback is critical for this process; and in general, a learner survey at the end of the program would be useful to gather information.

The Act must be learner-centred, not curriculum driven. Approved resources could be an issue for the community groups as they use whatever works.

Minimum standards for instruction are a concern. If the province is going to expect all instructors to have a Bachelor of Education then they must be prepared to fund accordingly.

Program transferability must be maintained. Some regions offer strict level programs, other offer a blended program.

The Act should address the fact that the Province should invest in adult learner appropriate facilities. Adults don't want to return to the building where they initially had challenges. Learners must have equal access to learning.

NORTHERN ADULT EDUCATION REGION

The statement "what principles wouldn't you include" was given in response to the question about what adult learning principles would you include in the Act.

The Act must allow for flexibility. As research and theory evolve the Act will need to grow with it.

Principles cannot be limited.

Education for adults is paramount---need to have the document in plain language rather than "legalize."



Need to be careful what is named in the Act (NSSAL, program levels). The levels often leave out learners who are in programs to improve and may never progress beyond that level for all subjects.

Need to ensure there is no conflict with the Education Act.

Standardizing certification may not be bad, but there were questions raised about what the standard would include.

The problem with requiring a certification for the instructor means the certification of the instructor becomes more important than the quality of the instructor and their ability to adapt to teach to the level of the learner.

Certification requirements can't tie the hands of the community in terms of hiring.

Certifying instructors in the adult learning programs could mean they will expect the same rate of pay as teachers in the public school system.

Naming of the person in the system is important: "instructor" vs. "teacher." For instance, there was an issue in accessing EI for one instructor in a community organization possibly based on their job title.

The age requirements and the term "adult learner" need to be better defined. Many students under the age of 19 are showing up at community learning organizations wishing to enroll because the public school system doesn't "fit" their needs.

Creating standards can eliminate or reduce the ability to be flexible. Flexibility is necessary in order to be responsive to the needs of the community from one area to another. It is important that the wording in the Act in order not to "tie their hands" too much.

Learners need validation or recognition of achievement when they move from one level to another. It would be a good idea to find some way to match the level of learning to something tangible. For instance, Level IV equals a high school diploma and Level 3 is equal to being able to work in certain professions.

Organizations would like the authority to say that learners have attained certain competencies.

Employers need to be educated on what credentials mean. Employers recognize the GED, but adult learning programs are not recognized for employment purposes.



Act needs to support better recognition of programs other than GED and include information on what they really mean.

Organizations don't have resources to do proper assessments on learners. It was suggested that the Act specify that adult learners have access to specialists who will help them to succeed.

A current LMA-funded GAP program was given as an example of a program that works for the learners because it includes training on life skills that have had a huge impact on helping the learner to succeed.

Voice of the learner in the development of the Act is key. They are the real spokespeople for our programs in communities.

The process to develop the Act did not include comments from other funders/sponsors of programs and learners. There are other organizations that provide financial supports. Some felt that head office and regional delivery in some government divisions are disconnected (i.e., ENS).

Adult learning programs are a good investment because adult learners are probably the majority of all learners (immigrants, post-secondary learners, apprentices) who actually stay in the province.

Department of Education is reviewing the need for an attendance policy so any reference in the Act will have to take that into account.



Appendix C: List of literacy stakeholders invited to information sessions

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	POSITION	REGION
Équipe d'alphabétisation - Nouvelle-Écosse	Ghislaine d'Éon	Coordinator	Acadian
Équipe d'alphabétisation - Nouvelle-Écosse	Vincent Boudreau	President	Acadian
Université Sainte-Anne	Sara Squires	Tutor	Acadian
Université Sainte-Anne	Deanna Bond		Acadian
Université Sainte-Anne	Laurier Samson		Acadian
Université Sainte-Anne	René Aucoin	Directeur	Acadian
Université Sainte-Anne	David Bourque		Acadian
Équipe d'alphabétisation-Nouvelle-Écosse	Jean d'Entremont	Board member	Acadian
Family Literacy Programs	Jacinthe Adams	Coordinator	Acadian
Adult Learning association of Cape Breton County	Karen Blair	Coordinator	Cape Breton
Community Learning Association North of Smokey	Faye Fricker	Coordinator	Cape Breton
Dept. of Community Services	Ron Canary		Cape Breton
Dept. of Community Services	Donald Squarey		Cape Breton
Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board	Heather Patterson		Cape Breton
Adult Learning association of Cape Breton County	Doug Buffet	Chairperson	Cape Breton
Community Learning Association North of Smokey	Kim Stockley	Chairperson	Cape Breton
Literacy Network Unama'ki (Eskasoni)	Elizabeth Cremona	Chairperson	Cape Breton
Literacy Network Unama'ki (Eskasoni)	Joanne Macdonald	Coordinator	Cape Breton
LWD - Employment Nova Scotia	Elizabeth MacKenzie		Cape Breton
Nova Scotia Community College	Lynn Cuzner		Cape Breton
Nova Scotia Community College	Kim MacDonald		Cape Breton
Nova Scotia Community College	Carolyn Toomey		Cape Breton
Black Educators Association	Conrad Grosse	Coordinator	Metro
Cunard Learning Centre	Jean Fogarty	Manager	Metro
Cunard Learning Centre	Dave Rideout	Coordinator	Metro
Dartmouth Learning Network	Sunday Miller	Coordinator	Metro
Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia Association	Betty MacDonald	Coordinator	Metro
Flexible Learning & Education Centres	Margie Hopkins	Principal	Metro
Halifax Community Learning Network	Joshua Judah	Chairperson	Metro



ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	POSITION	REGION
Halifax Community Learning Network	Constance Glube	Board member	Metro
Halifax Community Learning Network	Denise Morley	Coordinator	Metro
Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre	Melanie Raymond	Coordinator	Metro
Solutions Learning Centre	Robert LaPierre	Coordinator	Metro
Solutions Learning Centre	Shelly Currie	Board member	Metro
Western H.R.M. Community Learning Network	Deborah Ratcliffe	Coordinator	Metro
Justice, Correctional Services	Lori Bower		Metro
Nova Scotia Community College	Greg Russell	Academic chair	Metro
Cunard Learning Centre	Rod Singer	Chairperson	Metro
Dept. of Community Services	Barbara Campbell		Metro
Dept. of Community Services	Rob Watkins		Metro
Dept. of Education, Central NS Correctional Facility	Trudy Anstey		Metro
Bedford Sackville Learning Network	Cathy Hammond	Chairperson	Metro
Bedford Sackville Learning Network	Paul MacNeil	Coordinator	Metro
Black Educators Association	Melinda Day	Chairperson	Metro
Dartmouth Learning Network	Gordon Eastwood	Chairperson	Metro
Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia Association	Jim McDermott	Co-Chair	Metro
Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia Association	Elizabeth Doull	Co-Chair	Metro
Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Literacy Network	Heather Smith	Chairperson	Metro
Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Literacy Network	Tina Boutilier	Coordinator	Metro
Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre	Gordon King	Chairperson	Metro
Preston Area Learning Skills Society	Josephine Beals	Chairperson	Metro
Preston Area Learning Skills Society	Allister Johnson	Coordinator	Metro
Solutions Learning Centre	Barbara Hart	Chairperson	Metro
Western H.R.M. Community Learning Network	Mel Parsons	Chairperson	Metro
LWD - Employment Nova Scotia	Kimberley White		Metro
Nova Scotia Community College	Kit Jillings	Academic chair	Metro
Colchester Adult Learning Association	Debbie Farrell	Coordinator	Northern
East Hants Adult Learning Association	Beth Sellick	Coordinator	Northern
Pictou County Continous Learning Association	Dave Freckelton	Chairperson	Northern
Pictou County Continous Learning Association	Carollynne Nemecek	Coordinator	Northern
Nova Scotia Community College	Connie Fisher	Academic	Northern



ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	POSITION	REGION
		Chair	
Nova Scotia Community College	Audrey Arsenault	Academic Chair	Northern
Nova Scotia Community College	Darlene Porter	ALP Councilor	Northern
Nova Scotia Community College	Lech Krzywonos	Academic Chair	Northern
Nova Scotia Community College	Michelle Murphy	ALP Councilor	Northern
Chignecto Central Adult High School	Rob Nelson	Principal	Northern
Career Connections	Amanda White		Northern
Career Resource Centre	Jude Weatherbee		Northern
Careerworks Nova	Janet Davison		Northern
Colchester Adult Learning Association	Ken Henderson	Chairperson	Northern
Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading	Rubin Millard	Chairperson	Northern
Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading	Beth Smith	Coordinator	Northern
East Hants Adult Learning Association	Glenda Hill	Chairperson	Northern
Open Doors	Christine Pankhurst		Northern
Dept. of Community Services	Heather Collicott	Senior caseworker	Northern
Nova Scotia Community College	Scott MacGillivray	ALP Councilor	Northern
Chignecto Central Adult High School	Mary Goya		Northern
Lunenburg County Adult Learning Network	Sue Kaulback		Southwestern
Queens County Learning Network	Marlene Duckworth	Coordinator	Southwestern
Queens County Learning Network	Jan Porter	Chairperson	Southwestern
Yarmouth County Learning Network	Krista Peterson	Coordinator	Southwestern
Dept. of Community Services	Michael Anthony	ESS Caseworker	Southwestern
Dept. of Community Services	Joanne Chase	Caseworker	Southwestern
South Shore Regional School Board	Glen Matthews	Principal	Southwestern
Employment Solutions Society	Margaret Matthews	Executive Director	Southwestern
Lunenburg County Adult Learning Network	Dawn Huskins-Townsend	Chairperson	Southwestern
Shelburne County Learning Network	Krista Peterson	Coordinator	Southwestern
Dept. of LWD - LMDA Operations	Robert Lefurgey	Manager	Southwestern
Nova Scotia Community College	Mel Pothier	Academic Chair	Southwestern



ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	POSITION	REGION
Nova Scotia Community College	Brent Kaulback	Academic Chair	Southwestern
Shelburne County Learning Network	Martha Holmes	Chairperson	Southwestern
Yarmouth County Learning Network	Michele Archibald-Hattie	Chairperson	Southwestern
Dept. of Community Services	Jo-Anne d'Entremont		Southwestern
Tri-County Regional School Board	Gerry Pitman	Coordinator	Southwestern
Tri-County Regional School Board	John MacKinnon	ELL & International Student Support	Southwestern
Antigonish County Adult Learning Association	Lise DeVilliers	Coordinator	Strait
Chapel Island First Nation/Potletec	Margaret Poulette		Strait
Guysborough County Adult Learning Association	Patricia Rhynold	Chairperson	Strait
Guysborough County Adult Learning Association	Grail Sangster	Coordinator	Strait
Richmond County Literacy Network	Millie Hatt	Coordinator	Strait
Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework (CNSSLF)	Donna Anderson	Coordinator	Strait
Dept. of Community Services	Wendy Powell		Strait
Nova Scotia Community College	Tanya Levy		Strait
Antigonish County Adult Learning Association	Rhiannon Smith	Chairperson	Strait
Chapel Island First Nation/Potletec	Nancy MacLeod	Chairperson	Strait
Antigonish Career Resource Centre	Robena Stewart		Strait
Career & job Counselling Centre	Karen MacDonald		Strait
Career Development Association of Inverness/Richmond	Sheri Taylor-Wood		Strait
East Novability	Chris Cook		Strait
Inverness County Literacy Council	Sherry MacDonald	Chairperson	Strait
Inverness County Literacy Council	Shirley Miller	Coordinator	Strait
Port Hawkesbury Literacy Council	Colin MacDonald	Chairperson	Strait
Port Hawkesbury Literacy Council	Crystal Samson	Coordinator	Strait
Richmond County Literacy Network	Shirley McNamara	Chairperson	Strait
Strait Highlands RDA	Wanda MacLean		Strait
We'koqma'q First Nation	Chief Morley Googoo	Chairperson	Strait
We'koqma'q First Nation	Gordon MacIver	Coordinator	Strait



ORGANIZATION	CONTACT	POSITION	REGION
Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework (CNSSLF)	Adam Fraser	Coordinator	Strait
Dept. of Community Services	Brent MacQuarrie		Strait
Dept. of Community Services	Charlene MacLean		Strait
Digby Area Learning Association	Peter Janson	Chairperson	Valley
Digby Area Learning Association	Terry Musgreave	Coordinator	Valley
Valley Community Learning Association	Peter Gillis	Coordinator	Valley
Valley Community Learning Association	Jerry Atwater	Chairperson	Valley
Dept. of Community Services	Ethel Green	Casework Supervisor	Valley
Dept. of Community Services	Ian Kroezen	Employment Support Services	Valley
Nova Scotia Community College	Andria Lehr	ALP Councilor	Valley
Nova Scotia Community College	Brian Rhodenizer	ALP Instructor	Valley
AVRSB	Joanne MacGillivray	Instructor	Valley
Bear River First Nation	Chief Carol Dee Thompson	Chairperson	Valley
Bear River First Nation	same	Coordinator	Valley
Hants Learning Network Association	Joanne lake	Co-Chair	Valley
Hants Learning Network Association	Sandra Milbury	Co-Chair	Valley
Hants Learning Network Association	Katharine McCoubrey	Executive Director	Valley
Dept. of Community Services	Janet Thibodeau		Valley
Dept. of Community Services	Lisa Gillis	Casework Supervisor	Valley
Dept. of Community Services	Trudy Lake	Employment Case worker	Valley
Dept. of LWD - Employment Nova Scotia	Robbie Lefurgey	Program Manager	Valley
Nova Scotia Community College	Shon Whitney	ALP Student Councilor	Valley
Annapolis Valley Regional School Board	Greg Mackin	Coordinator	Valley
Dept. of Community Services	Susan Connell		Valley
Nova Scotia Community College	Dennis Kingston	Academic Chair	Valley



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Nova Scotia Community College	Jadine Sherman	Academic Chair	Valley

