

**THE EASTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATION
(EASTERN RPAE)**



Phase One Part B:
**An Environmental Scan of Adult and
Continuing Education in the Eastern
Ontario Region**

REPORT BY:

DR. SANDY YOUMANS, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
DR. LORRAINE GODDEN, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
FRANK HUMMELL, EASTERN RPAE COORDINATOR

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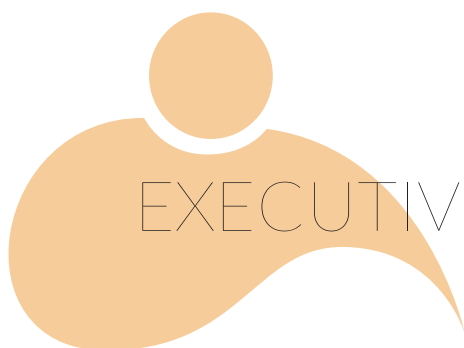
CONTENTS

	PAGE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE	5
OVERVIEW: EASTERN RPAE PROJECT	6
PHASE ONE PART B: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	8
METHODOLOGY USED FOR CONDUCTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	9
DATA COLLECTION	10
DATA ANALYSIS	14
POSITIONING OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION	17
CULTURE OF CARE	29
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS	36
QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS	47
SUMMARY	77
LIMITATIONS	81
REFERENCES	81
APPENDIX	82

Appendix A: Adult Education Interview Questions for Staff and Students

Appendix B: Examples of Shared Services and Coordination of Services

Note: The views expressed in this report are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province of Ontario.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the results of phase one, part b of the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (Eastern RPAE) project, an Environmental Scan of Adult and Continuing Education in eight district school boards in the Eastern RPAE region¹. The purpose of the environmental scan was to identify the key features of Adult Education (AE) programming and provision in the participating school boards, including program strengths, challenges/barriers, and potential areas for improvement. The results from the environmental scan provide insight about where there is potential for collaboration with respect to similar programs currently being offered by boards, innovative practices that school boards may want to consider incorporating, and gaps in programming that boards might want to address. This information is essential for phase one, part c of the Eastern RPAE project, which involves developing a multi-year regional AE strategic plan. The environmental scan was conducted using the following sources of data: 1) AE program enrolment and student success data for each school board, 2) an online school board survey requesting information about each board's AE programs, 3) interviews with staff and students in AE programs, and 4) supplementary materials related to AE programs (e.g., student handbook, promotional materials).

Contained in this report are: aggregate AE program enrolment and student success data for the Eastern region, results from the online AE school board survey results, and a description of themes that emerged from AE staff and student interviews. Key findings from each data source are highlighted at the end of each section. This report concludes with key findings from the Environmental Scan of Adult and Continuing Education in the Eastern region in relation to the overarching Adult Education Ministry objectives. Key findings related to Ministry objectives include:

1. Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services (e.g., e-learning or hybrid delivery programs) that best meet adult learner needs.
 - There is a wide variability of AE programs offered in the Eastern Ontario region, which could lead to inequitable access and outcomes for adult learners
 - There is a need to balance AE programs (e.g., eLearning and correspondence) that require a lot of independent work with accessibility to in- person teacher support and accountability measures (e.g., a program advisor, mentor)

¹ There are nine school boards in the Eastern RPAE, but Renfrew Catholic District School Board is currently not offering any Adult or Continuing Education Programs.

- Hybrid courses may be a good option for some adult learners in that there is a balance between online learning and in-class teacher support
- Adult learners are most successful when they are situated in a “culture of care” (i.e., caring staff, guidance counsellors, and availability of wrap around support)
- There is currently no Special Education funding for adult learners, but some adults do not “outgrow” their learning disability and would benefit from support
- There was evidence of collaboration between some school boards, which can be extended through the process of strategic planning

2. Access to coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referrals at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the program or service that best meets their needs.

- Most students currently feel welcomed into AE, but there is a lack of consistency on how the intake process occurs
- To best meet the academic, career pathway, and personal needs of adult learners, there should be qualified guidance staff available to all students enrolled in Adult and Continuing Education at intake and throughout their learning program
- There would be benefit in having a comprehensive AE database shared by all school boards in the Eastern region to easily access adult learners’ past schooling experiences, AE goals, the prerequisites they need to achieve their goals, and their progress towards their goals; there was one school board who had developed a database for their school board that could be a viable model for this

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

- All eight school boards used PLAR, but there was inconsistency in how and when it was administered; the Eastern RPAE will need to develop best practices around this
- Additional funding should be allocated to school boards so they can implement best practices around PLAR
- Given the immense benefits of PLAR, students need to be told about PLAR at their initial intake session and have follow up about PLAR when appropriate
- One best practice around PLAR in the Eastern region included the active assessment and administration of PLAR to those who were eligible
- Given that AE staff spend a lot of time preparing students for PLAR, the Ministry of Education might consider providing school boards with a register for a PLAR preparation course

4. Regional guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students working towards a high school diploma or seeking prerequisites for post-secondary education.

- There was variability among school boards as to whether students in AE had access to guidance and career counselling
- Given the pivotal role that guidance staff play in supporting adult learners’ needs, all adult learners should receive ongoing guidance and career pathway support from a qualified guidance staff
- Students who participate in on-site AE programs may have greater access to guidance support that is not readily available to off-site learners; off-site delivery programs may need to be more intentional about providing ongoing guidance and career pathway support
- One school board had monthly check-ins with their adult learners to discuss their goals and their progress towards their goals; we highlight this as a best practice



1 ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

In Fall 2013, stakeholders across Ontario came together to discuss the skills and knowledge Ontario learners would need to possess for successful lives and future employment. The government received input from multiple representatives within the education system (e.g., parents, students, teachers, support staff, school administrators, and school board administrators) and outside the education sector (e.g., businesses and non-profit organizations). *Achieving Excellence* was the ensuing Ministry document that captured public feedback in the form of a renewed vision and goals for K-12 Education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). The renewed goals for education were focused on four themes:

- *Achieving Excellence*: Children and students of all ages will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills and demonstrate good citizenship. Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as among the best in the world.
- *Ensuring Equity*: All children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.
- *Promoting Well-Being*: All children and students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.

- *Enhancing Public Confidence*: Ontarians will continue to have confidence in a publicly funded education system that helps develop new generations of confident, capable and caring citizens.

Achieving Excellence included a statement outlining the need to improve the existing Adult Education system 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” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 13).

In response, the Ontario Ministry of Education established an Adult Education Strategy with three main objectives:

- Improve adult learner outcomes by promoting system innovation and accessibility through ***collaboration/coordination and partnerships*** among school boards at the regional level.
- Better support the provision of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and services that are flexible and responsive to learner needs.
- Improve the transitions for learners between EDU adult credit programs and programs funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) and Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI).

2 OVERVIEW: EASTERN RPAE PROJECT

OVERVIEW OF THE EASTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATION (EASTERN RPAE) PROJECT

The Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy provides an opportunity to explore innovative ways to re-engage adult learners and build school board capacity to better assist learners in achieving their goals.

The three objectives of the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy were as follows:

- 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.
- Ensure availability of a wide range of accessible program delivery options and supports that are responsive to adult learner needs.
- Improve the transitions for learners between Ministry of Education adult credit programs and programs funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

The seven Regional Partnerships for Adult Education (RPAEs), which include six regional, English-language partnerships and one province-wide, French-language partnership, are to promote a regional and more collaborative approach among school boards and foster a shared responsibility for adult learning to improve accountability for learner outcomes. Each partnership received provisional funds from the Province to support regional strategic program objectives, pending the terms and conditions set out under Ontario Transfer Payment RPAE Agreements.

The four key areas of scope for the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy are as follows:

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

THE EASTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATION

As articulated in the Terms of Reference for the Eastern RPAE, the following guiding principles underpin the regional partnership's focus on developing a culture of collegiality and shared responsibility:

- The regional partnership will advance the Ministry's goal for Adult Education in Ontario through existing authority and accountability structures.
- This effort does not entail changes to service delivery models.
- Member school boards within the partnership will strive to identify, acknowledge, and apply the partnership's full range of capabilities, within the region to improve their productivity and value to adult learners.
- Member school boards will not engage in activities that will disenfranchise another school board's Adult Education program.
- Disputes pertaining to Adult Education will be resolved through documented consensus of member school boards.

The role of the Eastern RPAE is to provide leadership to promote a regional and more collaborative approach among member school boards to the provision of Ministry of Education Adult Education programs and services, that

- Fosters a shared responsibility for adult learning.
- Improves accountability for learner outcomes.

- Identifies and addresses gaps and opportunities.
- Ensures availability of a wide range of accessible program delivery options and supports that address the needs of adult learners.

2016-17 PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Funds were made available by the Ministry of Education to support the following activities:

Phase One, Part A: Establish a collaborative network of school boards within the region that acts to coordinate its member activities that are related to the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy.

Phase One, Part B: Conduct a regional environmental scan that identifies opportunities for innovation and collaboration, as well as programming and service gaps, in the delivery of Ministry of Education Adult Education programs and services.

Phase One, Part C: Develop a multi-year regional strategic plan based on the outcomes of the regional environmental scan, to direct activities in subsequent years that will promote progress in the four key areas in scope, with key milestones and provision for ongoing evaluation and monitoring.

A large, stylized number '3' in a dark teal color is positioned to the left of the text. Behind the '3' is a light teal silhouette of a person's head and shoulders. The text 'PHASE ONE PART B: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN' is written in a light teal, sans-serif font to the right of the '3' and the person icon.

3 PHASE ONE PART B: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

This report outlines the results of phase one, part b of the 2016-2017 project, the Environmental Scan of Adult and Continuing Education provision in eight district school boards in the Eastern RPAE region. An environmental scan “is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information for the purposes of planning, forecasting, or choosing a preferred future” (Calderon, Garner, Palermo, & Tangas, 2003). This environmental scan was undertaken to inform future strategic planning for AE in the Eastern region. It involved collecting both quantitative (e.g., enrolment figures and graduation rates) and qualitative data (e.g., interview data and survey data) to identify key features of AE programming and provision in individual school boards, including information about program strengths, challenges/barriers, and potential areas for improvement. This data is critical for identifying where there is potential for collaboration among similar programs, innovative AE practices that may be worth adopting, and gaps in programming that may need to be addressed.

The following research questions guided the environmental scan:

1. What and how are Adult and Continuing Education programs delivered by district school boards in the Eastern RPAE region?
2. How many learners enroll in each of the programs offered and what are their graduation numbers?
3. What do each of the eight district school boards perceive as the strengths, challenges/barriers, and areas for improvement in their Adult and Continuing Education programs?
4. Where are Adult and Continuing Education programs delivered across the Eastern RPAE region and how are they promoted?
5. How is Adult and Continuing Education programming addressed in district school board and school level planning?
6. What are the perceptions of staff working in Adult and Continuing Education?
7. What are the perceptions of students participating in Adult and Continuing Education?

4 METHODOLOGY USED FOR CONDUCTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The eight participating Eastern RPAE district school boards each responded to a series of questions about their AE programs using a web-based survey tool. In addition to completing the survey, each of the eight boards provided enrolment data and corresponding student achievement data (e.g., graduation rates and credit accumulation) for their AE programs using an Excel file data collection template. Each board also assembled supplementary materials (e.g., promotional materials, student handbooks, Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement) which provided additional information about their AE programs. These materials were collected by the research team when they visited each board to conduct the student and staff interviews. Each board was asked to make necessary arrangements for up to eight students at their board to be interviewed by the research team. Selected students collectively depicted a cross representation of student enrolment/program (different ages, genders, program types etc.) and were (at the time of data collection) enrolled in an EDU funded program (or recently enrolled). Students signed the necessary board permission form in addition to the Eastern Ontario Staff Development Network (EOSDN) consent form. Furthermore, boards were asked to make the necessary arrangements to have four staff members (and, if possible a backup in each category) available to the research team.

The research team interviewed one person from each of the following employee groups:

- Guidance counsellor (if there was a guidance counsellor on staff)
- Teacher/instructor
- Program Coordinator/Department Head
- Principal or Vice-Principal (if available)





5 DATA COLLECTION

The research team collected the data for the environmental scan between February 1st and March 30th, 2017. In total, the research team visited eight district school boards in the Eastern RPAE region. There were four components to the regional environmental scan that each Eastern RPAE Adult Education district school board staff completed and/or assisted with;

1. Quantitative Data – a collection of enrolment data and corresponding student achievement data for each of the Eastern RPAE district school board’s individual AE programs, using an Excel file as the data collection template.

2. Fluid Survey – a series of questions about the Eastern RPAE Adult Education programming presented through a web-based survey tool for each AE district school board to respond to.

3. Student and Staff Interviews – these were conducted by the three researchers during visits to each Eastern RPAE school board site. Interview protocols were developed for staff and student interviews and these are provided in Appendix A.

4. Supplementary Material Checklist – an assembly of supplementary materials that provide additional information about each Eastern RPAE district school boards AE programs. These materials were collected by the three researchers when they visited each of individual Eastern RPAE Adult Education district school boards. A full list of materials collected is provided in Table 1.



Table 1 provides a breakdown of data that was collected from the eight school boards via the fluid survey completion, the submission of quantitative data, the collection of supplementary materials, and interview data.

Table 1. Overview of Data Collection

FLUID SURVEY DATA	QUANTITATIVE DATA (EXCEL SPREADSHEET)	SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS	INTERVIEW DATA
Number of schools and secondary students	Enrolment data	Excerpts from respective Collective Agreements (i.e. clauses that pertain to AE and/ or Continuing Education)	<p>The role of staff participants in Adult Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their knowledge of what programs were offered for adult learners at their board • How the staff might support adult learners with career-related information and guidance • Perceptions of success and challenges in AE • The possible opportunities for improvements to and innovation within AE • What future professional development is needed for all staff
Number of adult learning sites (owned/ leased)	Student achievement data- credit accumulation (if applicable) and graduation numbers	An organizational chart(s) for AE programs –credit and non-credit. Including the number of administrators (full time equivalent - FTE), teachers (FTE), Instructors (FTE) and support staff (FTE)	
Programs offered (by type and funding source)		Strategic plan/ School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement -SIPSA for AE and or Continuing Education	
Strengths of programs (board and student perspective)		Copies of Boards’ Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement - BIPSA plan.	
Challenges of programs (board and student perspective)		Listings of all AE campuses/sites with addresses and postal codes	
PLAR		Sample marketing materials for AE –brochures, posters, newspaper advertisements, etc.	
Non-Credit programs Promotion and marketing activity		Student handbook	
Adult Hybrid eLearning project		Course/AEprogram calendar and/or the pertinent website address	
		Student registration forms for each of various AE programs	
		PLAR registration form	
		PLAR assessments (9/10 assessments)	

In addition to collecting the data listed in Table 1, the research team undertook 104 interviews, 63 with adult learners, and 41 with adult and continuing education staff.



Table 2 provides a breakdown of the job titles of participating staff together with the total numbers of students interviewed.

In total, 63 students were interviewed for the environmental scan, and the research team categorized students into learner profiles to provide context around the type of adult learners who were interviewed.



A summary of learner profiles is provided in Table 3.

In summary, the research team collected both quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources in order to fully represent what provision of Adult and Continuing Education currently looks like across the Eastern RPAE region. In the next section of this report, we outline how the data was analyzed.

Table 2. Overview of Study Participants

OCCUPATION WITHIN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Principal/Vice Principal	8
Guidance Counsellor/Student Services	7
Teacher	15
Coordinator/manager/education officer	9
Office Assistant	2
Total staff	41
Total students	63
Total # of Study Participants	104

Table 3. Learner Profiles

PROFILES WITHIN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Displaced workers	7
Career advancement or change	11
Newcomers	16
Early school leavers	24
Alternative education	5
Total #	63

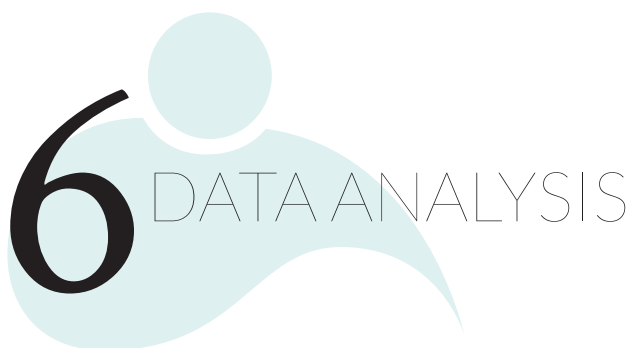
STUDENT STORIES >>

Displaced Worker

Mary graduated High School with her peer group and then attended college in a large city in Ontario. While attending college, Mary completed a co-operative education (co-op) placement at a major bank. The bank was impressed with her work and offered her a permanent full-time job. Mary opted not to finish her college diploma and took the job offer from the bank. When she wasn't working at the bank, Mary would care for an elderly neighbor who needed assistance with everyday living. The extra money she earned caring for her neighbor was needed because Mary was a single mother raising two children in a large urban city.

Mary had worked at the bank for 15 years when she received notice that she was being laid off due to teller positions being reduced nationwide. Although Mary searched for work, she could not find a job that matched the salary she was earning at the bank. After much soul searching she concluded that she really enjoyed caring for elderly people and began investigating what she would need to do to be a certified Personal Support Worker (PSW). Mary's initial enthusiasm was met with disappointment when she learned that most college based PSW programs were two years in length and she knew she could not afford to return to school for that length of time.

Mary did not give up hope of becoming a certified PSW and eventually found a a PSW program offered by a district school board that she could complete in 16 weeks. The only issue was that she would need to sell her home and move her family to the district school board that offered the PSW program. Mary sold her home and used the generated equity to relocate and support her family while she returned to school. Mary will soon receive her PSW certification and because of the contacts she made during her PSW program co-op placements, she is confident that she will find a full-time job as a certified PSW when she graduates.



6 DATA ANALYSIS

Our data analysis phase began with a process of aggregating the quantitative data to give an overview of the service, range, and scope of AE provision and programming across the Eastern RPAE region. This was followed by summarizing responses from the online AE school board survey with respect to the strengths, challenges/barriers, and areas for improvement for each credit and non-credit AE program. We then constructed a series of thematic findings to reflect the following from the staff interview data; (a) the role of staff participants in AE, (b) their knowledge of AE programs, (c) how staff might support adult learners with career-related information and guidance, (d) perceptions of success and challenges in AE, (e) opportunities for improvements to and innovation within AE, and (f) professional development needs of staff. In addition, we constructed a series of thematic findings to reflect adult learners' perceptions of, (a) the process they had undertaken to return to school, (b) their past school experience, (c) what program they were currently registered in and why, (d) participation in PLAR, (e) relevance of current program to future goals, (f) what they enjoyed about participating in AE, (g) what they would improve about AE, and (h) their future goals.

Through a process of deductive and inductive

analysis, the three researchers identified the following overarching themes across the data;

- Service, range, and scope of Adult and Continuing Education
- Positioning of Adult and Continuing Education
- Culture of care
- Vulnerable populations

Within each of these overarching themes there are a number of sub-themes which are described in the Findings section of this report. Although the supplementary materials are yet to be thoroughly analyzed, they provided important context for the researchers about the unique nature of each district school board's AE program.

STUDENT STORIES >>

Early School Leaver and Career Advancement/Change

Sam struggled in high school and eventually dropped out in Grade 10. Sam worked for a while as a stone mason but then decided to join the military. The military was a good choice for Sam as it boosted his confidence and provided him with solid structure. Sam had been in the military for 12 years and was tired of seeing people who he felt had less experience and skills get promoted because they had a high school diploma and he didn't. This bothered Sam and he decided to return to school to receive his high school diploma. Fortunately, Sam's local school board offered face-to-face evening classes that allowed Sam to continue working during the day while he attended school in the evening. Face-to-face classes, with a teacher in front of the class aligned well with Sam's preferred learning style as he is an auditory learner. Sam appreciated that his local school board offered him PLAR, as the PLAR process served as a robust refresher and gave Sam the confidence he needed to succeed in school. Sam received his high school diploma and recently enrolled part time at the University of Ottawa Conflict Studies program. Sam looks forward to completing his university degree and to being promoted in the Military!

Thematic Analysis of Adult Education Interview Data

Analysis of AE interview data revealed three major themes: The Positioning of Adult Education, a Culture of Care, and Vulnerable Populations. Each of these themes is presented using relevant sub-themes. Where appropriate, direct quotes from participants are used to support the data analysis. The names of interview participants and school boards are not given. Instead, staff and students were assigned a number in relation to their respective school boards, which were assigned letters. For example, a participant may be referred to as Student 1, School Board A. The distribution of data points illustrate where each theme occurred in staff and student data populations across each of the district school boards.

Table 4.
Board by Board Thematic Analysis Chart
- POSITIONING OF ADULT EDUCATION

	Ottawa-Carleton DSB		Renfrew County DSB		Limestone DSB		Hastings & Prince Edward DSB		Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic DSB		Upper Canada DSB		Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario		Ottawa Catholic SB	
	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT
Partnerships	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Program delivery	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Public awareness	●	●	●			●					●		●	●	●	●
Perception	●	●	●	●	●	●			●			●			●	
PD	●		●		●		●		●		●		●		●	
Funding	●		●		●		●		●		●		●		●	
Transformative	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Adult Centered Curriculum	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
PLAR	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Innovation	●	●	●		●		●		●		●	●	●	●	●	

7 POSITIONING OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

The first major theme identified in our qualitative interview data is the Positioning of Adult Education. In marketing terms, positioning refers to a strategy used to make a product or service occupy a distinct position either through emphasizing its distinguishing features (e.g., what it is, what it does, how it works) and/or by creating a desirable image of the product or service (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/positioning.html>). For the purposes of this report, the Positioning of Adult Education (AE) refers to stakeholder descriptions of the unique position AE occupies in relation to its distinguishing features and image. In terms of the unique features of AE, stakeholders described: 1) how it is delivered (i.e., program delivery and funding), 2) what it does (i.e., transforms people's lives), and 3) how it works and could optimally work (i.e., adult-centred curriculum, partnerships, PLAR, PD, and innovation). Stakeholders' reports about the perception and public awareness of AE provided important insights about the image associated with AE. The sub-themes for the Positioning of Adult Education and the school boards in which they were identified are in Table 17.

FEATURE 1: How Adult Education is Delivered

How AE is delivered was reported in terms of program delivery and available funding. Program delivery refers to the mode of delivery of AE services: how it is delivered, when it is delivered, and the methods used. Funding relates to the issues of securing and managing funding to support quality AE.

Program delivery: Participants in all eight school boards described aspects of program delivery in AE. A central issue reported by stakeholders in six out of eight school boards (School Boards A, B, C, D, F, and G) was the need for "flexibility". One staff asserted, "There are lots of people out there who really want to succeed, but have so many things going on in their lives and we need to continue to build that flexibility to meet their needs" (Staff 1, School Board H).

However, the tension between the need for flexibility and structure was noted by another staff: “Our challenge is to be flexible to meet student needs, but not too flexible that students can’t obtain the outcome of an OSSD in a timely way” (Staff 3, School Board B). An example of a balance between flexibility and structure was reflected in the decision of three students (Student 1, School Board B; Student 1, School Board E; Student 2, School Board H) with an independent program of study (correspondence or eLearning) to come into their local AE centre daily to complete their work. One such student explained his actions: “It’s correspondence books so I don’t have to come in, but if I sit at home I’m probably not going to do it so I just get up and come in every day” (Student 1, School Board B). Stakeholders described a need for flexibility in AE with respect to:

- Providing courses that do not require students to be in class because they need to work to support themselves and their families (Student 2, School Board A; Student 1, School Board C)
- Using blended learning and online learning to offer more courses to the people who need them (Staff 1, School Board B; Staff 1, School Board D)
- Letting students come in and out of courses because they have life issues to deal with (Staff 1, School Board H)
- Providing Dual Credit Programs for adult learners, including those over the age of 21 (Staff 1, School Board C)

- Offering fast-track programs that result in employment certification (e.g., Personal Support Worker) and a high school diploma (Student 2, School Board G; Staff 2, School Board G)
- Allowing students to choose a 6- week, 9- week, or 12-week course of study based upon their personal and academic needs (Staff 1, School Board B)

While AE delivery modes based on independent work (i.e., correspondence and eLearning) are often viewed positively because they provide students with flexibility, a reliance on independent work in AE was viewed as problematic by stakeholders in three school boards (School Boards A, C, and F). One staff explained,

Many of these [students] are our most disengaged and disadvantaged not only youth, but adults as well, and yet we rely on them to be self-sufficient to go through booklets with minimal help and supervision. We require the most motivation from the least maybe able people... we may not provide them with the engaging programming that I think would help them reach their goals (Staff 1, School Board C).

A student described her unsuccessful attempt at an online course that led her to an AE centre: “I couldn’t do math online... I just thought I can’t do it on my own and then I came here and it’s my third semester in school” (Student 3, School Board F).



Another student indicated why independent work was a challenge for her: “Because I am more of an auditory learner, it’s more of a challenge because it’s mostly bookwork and you don’t have the teacher explaining everything” (Student 1, School Board F).

Staff at five school boards (School Boards B, D, E, F, and H) provided support to their students in independent programs by:

- Providing a classroom for students where a teacher was available to answer questions and provide clarification throughout the day (School Boards B, E, F, and H)
- Offering tutoring session two afternoons a week (School Board D)

Students at two school boards recommended balancing the demands of independent work with at least some “stand up” classes, where a teacher teaches at the front of a classroom (Student 2, School Board B; Student 3, School Board C). For example, one student suggested, “Instead of booklets and you work at your own pace maybe include some classes. More people have to actually be on time sort of thing... I prefer the whole classroom teacher, students, one-on-one thing” (Student 3, School Board C).

Despite the need for quality teaching staff in AE to meet the diverse needs of adult learners, staff in two school boards (School Boards A and C) described hiring practices that do not support the recruitment of optimal staff. For example, staff from two school boards indicated that most teachers in AE did not choose their

position (Staff 1 and 2, School Board C; Staff 2, School Board E).

Similarly, it was reported that hiring practices in one school board staffed K-12 positions first and AE sites last (Staff 2, School Board 3). Lastly, Regulation 274 under the Education Act requires hiring based on seniority and qualifications, which one staff reported is a challenge because “you’re not supposed to take into account experience or even fit for that matter in terms of teachers in the workplace... I am not convinced that it works in the best interests of schools or students” (Staff 2, School Board A).

Funding: The issue of funding is critical for developing and maintaining quality AE programs. As such, it was an element addressed by staff at seven out of eight (School Boards A-G) participating school boards. Overall, staff indicated that the quality of AE programming was undermined by insufficient funding (School Boards A-G).

One staff summarized the issue of inadequate funding and AE programming:

“Our adult students are not funded the same amount as regular K-12 students. It’s half the funding, and tied to that funding, there is no funding for guidance, no funding if a student needs an educational assistant, or if they have some physical or mental challenge, there is no support for that. So the whole funding piece is tough. This forces... things to be done in a certain way, which is maybe not the best way for students.” (Staff 2, School Board E)

Staff at four school boards (School Boards A, B, C, and E) attributed the following issues to lack of funding:

- Not being able to provide a course that a student requires (Staff 3, School Board A)
- Not providing sufficient special education support for adult learners (Staff 2, School Board A; Staff 1, School Board C; Staff 1 and 2, School Board E)
- Not providing sufficient guidance programming for adult learners (Staff 1, School Board C; Staff 2, School Board E)
- Being short-staffed and unable to fully meet the needs of adult learners (Staff 2, School Board D; Staff 1, School Board B)
- Having to increase class sizes to be able to afford professional development for teachers (Staff 3, School Board A)

In addition to insufficient funding, staff at four school boards (School Boards A, B, D, and E) indicated there were challenges related to funding register requirements. These challenges included:

- Not getting funded enough when allowing a student to enroll in just one course, even though the student only needed one course (Staff 2, School Board A; Staff 1, School Board E)
- Having to edit online courses (which takes about 30 hours a course) to break them down into 20 lessons to meet funding requirements (Staff 1, School Board D)
- Not getting funded for students in certain six-week semesters (terms 1, 3, 4 and 6) because they are not there over a count date (Staff 1, School Board B; Staff 1, School Board E)



FEATURE 2: What Adult Education Does

Despite some of the challenges associated with how AE is delivered in the Eastern RPAE region, stakeholders at all eight school boards reported that AE had a transformative influence on the lives of adult learners. In this section, transformation refers to the ability of AE programs and experiences to change people’s lives.

Transformative: According to one student, the power of AE lies in its provision of a second chance (or chances) for people:

“It’s [Adult Education] awesome! I believe that if a person couldn’t do well in their teenage years, they have to have another opportunity to do better because we all make mistakes or we have difficulties in our life and sometimes it’s not our fault and, even if it is, we should always get another chance or even more chances because I think everyone deserves to go to university and have the education.” (Student 3, School Board A)

A recent graduate of the AE high school program indicated that he had better employment opportunities:

“Now it’s opened up doors that I’ve graduated because now there’s jobs that I can apply for that I actually qualify for.” (Student 2, School Board A)

A student in the Personal Support Worker (PSW) program described how AE gave him the opportunity to go from menial work to more meaningful work:

“I always felt like I was kind of useless, like I was never really valued... [with PSW work] people are thankful, they’re happy. I feel like I make a difference that way. I guess that’s what I was looking for”. (Student 1, School Board C)

Staff from three school boards (School Boards A, B, and D) witnessed the transformative influence of AE on their students in the following ways:

- Students coming back and telling staff, “You changed my life!” (Staff 1, School Board A)
- Seeing families go from social assistance to gaining employment (Staff 1, School Board B)
- Seeing students go from finishing high school in an AE setting to pursuing post-secondary degrees (Staff 1, School Board B)
- Students coming back and telling staff that they got a job or bought a new car because they’re making more money (Staff 1, School Board D)

Moreover, when students were asked if they had any additional comments to share at the end of the interview process, the majority expressed gratitude for AE and for the support they received from AE staff. For example, one student commented,

“Without Adult Education, I wouldn’t be where I am today and for that I am pretty grateful”. (Student 1, School Board D)

FEATURE 3: How Adult Education Works and Could Optimally Work



Stakeholders from school boards described how AE works in terms of the practices employed and/or potential practices for improvement. These practices included: adult- centred curriculum, partnerships, PLAR, PD, and innovation.

Adult-Centred Curriculum: Adult-centred curriculum is curriculum that addresses the unique needs of adult learners and respects their past experiences. Stakeholders in seven out of the eight school boards (School Boards, 1-3 and 5-8) identified the importance of adult-centred curriculum in AE. Specifically, staff and students in five school boards noted the importance of real-life applications (Student 1, School Board A; Student 2, School Board H), authentic tasks (Staff 1, School Board B; Student 2, School Board C), and experiences (Student 1, School Board C; Staff 1, School Board G; Student 3, School Board H) in facilitating learning. For example, one student noted she enjoys “more of the hands-on learning stuff... like I retain more that way, like ‘see it and do it’ and that versus sitting and reading out of a book because you know some of it is pretty dry” (Student 1, School Board G). Two students reported that the content of their courses was not useful (Student 2, School Board B; Student 3, School Board C). One such student remarked that he “wished schooling in general helped build experiences towards a person’s goal to avoid unnecessary courses” (Student 3, School Board C).

A critical issue identified by participants in three school boards was that some adult learners were not well equipped to participate in for-credit courses (Staff 1, School Board B; Student 1, School Board E; Staff 1, School Board F). One staff member described this issue and a potential solution for it:

“Students come into school after being out for five years, or even a year, that means there’s an erosion in skills. I think they should have some kind of preparation for credit [courses] that’s not currently being offered. They have LBS [Literacy Basic Skills], but it’s not geared towards that kind of thing. So I think it would be useful to have a math teacher preparing people to do math at a higher level.” (Staff 1, School Board B)

This same staff went on to explain that when students are not prepared for the for-credit courses, “they end up failing a course and a good half of that course was used as remediation” (Staff 1, School Board B).

Partnerships: In AE, partnerships refer to a relationship with an external stakeholder that benefits adult learners (e.g., Ontario Works, Community Colleges, Addiction Services). Stakeholders from all eight school boards reported working with partners to better meet the needs of adult learners. Staff at three school boards (School Boards A, B, and E) recognized that non-education needs could be more pressing than education needs and reached out to community partners for assistance (Staff 3, School Board 1; Staff 3, School Board B; Staff 1, School Board E). For example, one staff asserted, “Success in the program may not necessarily mean a diploma, sometimes it’s a referral” (Staff 3, School Board B). Staff at two school boards (School Boards C and F) indicated that part of their role involved identifying and building partnerships and were considering the development of a community learning hub, where adult learners would have access to AE and essential services (e.g., health care, mental health services, a day care, social services, etc.; Staff 1, School Board C; Staff 2, School Board F).

PLAR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby students may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways. All eight school boards attempted to help students attain credit through the PLAR process. However, staff in two school boards (School Boards C and G) reported different practices that actively recruited student participation. In School Board C, a staff member was responsible for “identifying the individuals that are eligible for PLAR... [and] identifying the ones that could be eligible and working with them to ensure their eligibility comes about as soon as possible” (Staff 1, School Board C). Whereas in School Board G, staff members drove to all of their sites to present information on PLAR and collect PLAR paperwork (Staff, School Board G). Students generally had a positive experience with PLAR (School Boards A-H). One student at School Board F referred to PLAR as a refresher that prepared her for coursework: “PLAR was a bit of a refresher for me – it boosted my confidence and I felt like I was prepared for credit courses” (Student 7, School Board F). On the other hand, another student at the same school board struggled with PLAR and needed help to prepare for the process:

“At first I went into PLAR which was a bit difficult because it was things I wasn’t actually taught in school so they suggested to put me in... LBS [Literacy Basic Skills] program... so I had to start like basically basics, back to basics to actually get back in to do PLAR”. (Student 3, School Board F)

PD: PD refers to professional development for staff working with Adult learners. Staff from seven out of eight school boards (School Boards A-G) identified a need for more PD. Suggestions for AE staff PD included:

- Training on how to work with adult learners because many staff have not been formally trained for the field (Staff 1, School Board A; Staff 2, School Board E; Staff 1-3, School Board G)
- Mental health training to better meet the needs of adult learners (Staff 1, School Board A; Staff 1, School Board H)
- Training around digital literacy and eLearning (Staff 1, School Board C; Staff 1, School Board D; Staff 1, School Board H)
- The opportunity to network with colleagues (e.g., within your own site, across school board sites, at conferences) to learn from each other (Staff 2, School Board A; Staff 1, School Board B)
- Training for guidance staff to provide them with “a thorough understanding of labour market information and trades and apprenticeships” (Staff 6, School Board H)

Innovation: In the context of AE, innovation is an educational practice or program that adopts an original approach to meeting the needs of adult learners. While all eight school boards reported having innovative practices, three school boards (School Boards E, F, and G) had noteworthy innovations. These innovations are:

- A shared database developed for multiple sites that includes notes about students, a copy of students’ education plans and transcripts, tracking from the last five years, administrator paperwork, course offerings, and the ability to assign IT passwords and enroll students in courses (Staff 1, School Board E)
- A redesign of online courses: “each lesson is in one page where it has the learning goals and expectations and the success criteria and the examples and then the assignment is at the bottom... teachers are using Snaggit, which is a screen casting, and they are creating their own videos... video feedback... annotating on their work and talking about their work” (Staff 1, School Board E)
- In the planning stages of bundling courses (e.g., Computer Science: Grade 11, Grade 12, and Coop) so students can earn a certificate and curriculum expectations can be streamlined; students feel success from earning certificates (Staff 2, School Board F)
- A partnership of credit and non-credit programs to develop bridging courses from non-credit to credit and to provide the opportunity for students to complete non-credit and credit path simultaneously (Staff 1 & 2, School Board F)
- A five-month delivery model for a combined PSW program and high school diploma to help people get gainful employment quickly (Staff 2, School Board G)

Image of Adult Education

The image of AE was described by stakeholders with respect to both perception of AE and the public’s awareness of it. Perception refers to how people view and understand AE. Public awareness is the knowledge that AE exists: **knowing where it is and what it is.**

Perception: A negative perception of AE was reported by participants at seven out of eight school boards (School Boards A-C and E-H). For example, participants from three school boards (Schools Boards A-C) referred to a stigma that learners in AE and their teachers often experience (Staff 1, School Board A; Student 1, School Board A; Staff 2, School Board B; Staff 3, School Board C). One staff member described it like this:

“What I don’t like is the stigma that the students sometimes feel about coming to Adult Ed, like it is a failure in some way. I also feel that way with some of my own colleagues, as though they almost take pity on me having to work with ‘those students.’” (Staff 2, School Board B)

In addition to AE having a negative stigma, stakeholders in three boards (School Boards A, C, and E) indicated that AE was often forgotten in their boards (Staff 1, School Board 1; Staff 3, School Board C; Staff 2, School Board 5). Perhaps the best example of this is the exclusion of AE from Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement (BIPSA):

“It is demoralizing for staff who work in adult programs that their work and passion is not reflected in the Board plan.” (Staff 3, School Board C)

Similarly, one staff described regularly being left out of school board activities: “I am constantly at meetings where our superintendent will say that we have [number] high schools and I say, ‘No, actually we have [number + 1]. We are the [number + 1].’ We are often left out of things” (Staff 2, School Board E). Staff at two school boards (School Boards B and E) indicated a desire to change the negative perception of AE (Staff 2, School Board B; Staff 3, School Board E). One staff thought that if her colleagues had a better understanding of what AE is about, they would get more support for what they did:

“I think a lot of our teachers in our board don’t know what we do, and I think they should because it’s incredible. It was definitely something I knew nothing about until I started as a teacher here... I think we would get more support from our board if they actually knew what goes on.” (Staff 3, School Board E)

Public Awareness: Participants at six out of eight school boards (School Boards A- C and F-H) reported a lack of public awareness about what AE is and where it is located.

Students from three school boards (School Boards A, C, and G) indicated there was a lack of awareness about AE programs or sites (Student 3, School Board A; Student 1, School Board C, Student 5, School Board 3; Student 1, School Board 7). One student who went past an AE site regularly reported being unaware of what it was: “For a long time I didn’t even know, I would drive by, or walk by, this school... and I just never really knew what it was” (Student 5, School Board C).

Staff at three school boards (School Boards A, F, and H) stressed the importance of raising awareness of AE to reach more students and gain more support from their school boards (Staff 2, School Board A; Staff 2, School Board F; Staff 2, School Board H). One staff commented, “People have no clue what goes on here... we also talk about trying to get people in here so they see, ‘Wow! That is a real need and let us support you on that’ (Staff 2, School Board A). Another staff highlighted the need to make the public aware of AE, otherwise what they did was useless: “It’s wonderful that we have great resources in AE but what if nobody knows about them?” (Staff 2, School Board F) This staff member described how their school board had begun recruiting parents for LBS from low SES schools.



Key Findings from the Positioning of Adult Education Interview Theme:

- Adult learners require flexibility of AE program delivery, but if there is too much flexibility with little accountability it is unlikely that they will be successful
- Some school boards are attempting to support students in independent programs by offering ongoing in-person teacher support or tutoring sessions
- Hybrid courses may be a good option for some adult learners in that there is a balance between online learning and in-class teacher support
- Flexibility of AE programs can include: the method of delivery (e.g., in-class, eLearning, correspondence), the duration of the course (e.g., 6-week, 9-week, 12-week), fast-track programs where students can earn certification and a high school degree simultaneously, and dual-credit programs that count towards a post-secondary degree
- AE staff should be selected based on their ability to best meet the needs of adult learners, and collective agreements should acknowledge this
- Given that AE plays a transformative role in the lives of people (especially people from vulnerable populations) by helping them achieve gainful employment and pursue post-secondary education, it makes social and economic sense to increase funding for AE programs to maximize their impact and reach
- To best meet the needs of adult learners, AE programs should incorporate adult-centred curriculum (i.e., real-life applications, authentic tasks, and experiential learning) as much as possible
- AE programs often meet the diverse needs of adult learners through partnerships
- PLAR is an effective tool for helping students acquire their OSSD quickly; school boards should optimize the use of this tool by having qualified PLAR professionals who actively recruit adult learners for PLAR
- The professional development needs of AE staff include: training around best practices in AE, digital and eLearning training, time to collaborate with other AE staff and share best practices, and knowledge of labour markets and trades (including apprenticeships)
- Innovative AE practices in the Eastern RPAE region include: software database developed to meet the needs of AE programs across multi-sites, redevelopment of online courses to make them more user-friendly and help instructors develop an online presence through videos, bundling of courses to help students achieve a certificate and curriculum expectations can be streamlined; collaboration between credit and non-credit programs to help adult learners transition from one program to the other, fast-track (5 months) PSW program in which adult learners earn PSW certification and their high school diploma
- There needs to be increased public awareness of AE to maximize its impact and reach
- AE in Ontario has a negative stigma and it needs to be re-positioned/ re-branded so that is viewed positively

STUDENT STORIES >>

Alternative Education

Samantha hated regular school revealing how she “...had a horrible experience there... the drugs, the alcohol, the drama, the social scene...everything I did there was a crazy attempt to fit in, but it didn’t work out...and now I am enrolled in this young Mom’s program.” Samantha feels a sense of belonging in the young Mom’s program and recognizes that her teacher, through being caring and supportive, helps her to feel comfortable in her learning program. Sam is attending a program that is a partnership between the school and other community agencies. While attending class the young mothers are able to have their children attend day care, which is located in the same building as their classroom.

Samantha explained how “you grow up quickly when you are a young Mom, I am now focused on school and want to do well to have a better future for me and my daughter.” Sam plans to go to post-secondary after she completes the requirements for her OSSD.



8 CULTURE OF CARE

Many adult learners we interviewed in the Eastern RPAE Region, particularly Early School Leavers, shared negative experiences of high school with our team: stories of being bullied, struggling with mental health challenges, having overlooked learning disabilities, being kicked out of school (for too many absences), and becoming a teenage mom abounded. One student reflected on her lack of educational support as a teenage mom, “I wish that the principal wouldn’t have kicked me out. I wish I would have had adults in my life that would have helped me continue with my schooling, but I didn’t so here we are” (Student 1, School Board 7). An AE staff referred to these negative high school experiences as “educational baggage” and highlighted the importance of caring for adult learners to help them get past their baggage:

“One big challenge that we need to overcome is the educational baggage that adult students bring with them when they return to school. That baggage is often based on their previous school experience, which was typically negative, sometimes these students have an anti-authority stance and defense mechanisms that they have developed over time. Sustaining the human touch and care factor must be paramount in our delivery.” (Staff 7, School Board F)

Care for adult learners was identified as a major theme in the qualitative interview data. The Cambridge Dictionary defines care as “the process of protecting someone or something and providing what that person or thing needs” (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/care>). With this in mind, care for adult learners is demonstrated when others protect them and meet their needs. For the purposes of the report, the term “culture of care” is used to refer to stakeholder descriptions of who is involved in caring for adult learners (i.e., a caring adult, guidance and career counselling staff, wrap around services), how AE staff demonstrate caring (i.e., creating a sense of belonging, building self-esteem/self-confidence, being responsive to individual needs), and the result of caring too much (i.e., compassion fatigue). The sub-themes for a Culture of Care and the school boards in which they were identified are in Table 3.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN CARING FOR ADULT LEARNERS

Participants identified three main categories of people involved in caring for adult learners: a caring adult, guidance and counselling staff, and wrap around services. Adult learners expressed deep gratitude for the care they received in AE programs.

Table 5.
Board by Board Thematic Analysis Table
- CULTURE OF CARE

	Ottawa-Carleton DSB		Renfrew County DSB		Limestone DSB		Hastings & Prince Edward DSB		Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic DSB		Upper Canada DSB		Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario		Ottawa Catholic SB	
	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT
Wrap around services	●		●		●		●	●	●		●		●		●	
Caring adult	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Responsive to individual needs	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Sense of belonging	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Guidance and career counselling	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Building self-esteem/self-confidence	●	●			●		●		●		●		●			
Compassion fatigue	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	

A Caring Adult: A caring adult is an AE staff member who supports the well-being of an adult learner in the provision of one or more of Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs. Stakeholders from all eight school boards reported the presence of caring adults on their AE staff. Students described caring AE staff as “helpful” and “understanding”.

Students from three school boards (School Boards A, F, and H) reported how helpful one or more of their teachers were (Student 2 and 3, School Board A; Students 2 and 8, School Board F; Student 2, School Board H). One student described her teachers’ willingness to help like this,

“They will help you and it’s not like you are bothering them or it’s a waste of their time. They actually want to help you and they want to teach you... to help you go where you want to go in life.” (Student 2, School Board F)

In addition, students described their teachers as being understanding when they missed class for personal reasons (Students 1 and 3, School Board A) or needing break from classes (Students 1, 2, and 7, School Board B). In line with this, AE staff described their role as “teaching people, not just subjects” (Staff 1; School Board E; Staff 1, School Board H) and helping adult learners achieve their goals (Staff 5 and 6, School Board 1). Two staff described meeting the needs of adult learners on multiple levels (e.g., physiological, safety, belonging; Staff 7, School Board F; Staff 4, School Board H). One such staff explained,

“Many of our adult students lack the basic needs – food, transportation, and a warm, safe, and caring environment. We are like Maslow’s Hierarchy in that we provide these basics.” (Staff 4, School Board H)

Students in all eight school boards expressed appreciation for the care they received from AE staff. Two students indicated they would have graduated much earlier if they had received the same type of care in high school as they did in AE (Student 3, School Board F; Student 2, School Board H).

Guidance and Career Counselling:

Guidance and career counselling is formal and informal life and career related discussions and planning. Even though some school boards did not have “official” guidance counsellors for their AE programs, all eight school boards reported having some form of guidance and career counselling. Staff at two school boards (School Boards A and E) described their roles as twofold: creating pathways for adults and supporting students on a personal level (Staff 6, School Board A; Staff 1, School Board E). One staff highlighted the unique opportunity for guidance in AE:

“We have the ability in Adult Ed to focus on the whole student, unlike the volume at mainstream school. We are involved in the whole plan for the student to be successful.” (Staff 5, School Board C)

Staff members at two school boards (School Boards A and B) indicated they valued the expertise and support of guidance staff (Staff 2, School Board A; Staff 1, School Board B). A staff member at one school board that recently hired a staff with a guidance background explained:

“What’s been really useful is having a [staff member] who does lots of guidance that really does cut through all the problems we have with, you know, trying to scope exactly where the student is in terms of credit accumulation and where they go... the most we had [in the past] was looking at the transcript.” (Staff 1, School Board 2)

Adult learners in four school boards (School Boards A, C, E, and F) reported appreciating the support of a guidance counsellor (Students 2, 3, and 5, School Board A; Student 1, School Board C; Student 1, School Board E; Student 1, School Board F). One student described receiving ongoing personal support from a guidance counsellor:

“I still go to guidance sometimes when I really don’t know [something]... if I get a bad grade, I fail a course I go there. I talk to him and that motivates me. Then I continue with the next semester.” (Student 3, School Board A)

Another student indicated that his original plan of just getting his GED changed for the better when he met with a guidance counsellor:

“He kind of pointed out that it would be just as easy for me to get my full Grade 12... I didn’t know that mature credits were possible. I didn’t know that Prior Learning Assessment existed.” (Student 1, School Board)

Staff at three school boards (School Boards A, B, and H) reported taking opportunities in their class for informal guidance and counselling by discussing adult learners’ career goals (Staff 1, School Board A; Staff 1, School Board B; Staff 1, School Board H). One staff described her informal guidance role as critical because “some students would rather talk to the known teacher than the psychologist” (Staff 1, School Board A). Whereas the provision of guidance and career counselling is understood by adult learners as a form of caring, a lack of it may make learners feel unworthy of support. For example, one student attributed her lack of guidance and career counselling to multiple unsuccessful attempts to complete her high school diploma:

“That’s because I’ve been attempting for so long [to finish] that they weren’t 100% sure if I was going to do what I’ve done before, which is stop coming, so I can understand and respect that ‘let’s not put energy into someone we’re not sure is going to graduate’ [laughs]. They’ve got so many other people who are actually graduating.” (Student 2, School Board H)

Wrap Around Services: Wrap around services is the accessibility and availability of services that support the unique needs of adult learners. Staff members in all eight school boards referenced the importance of wrap around services for adult learners. One staff indicated that wrap around services “really make a difference for our students... whether it’s medical assistance, whether it’s social workers, whether it’s psychology these things would be very helpful” (Staff 2, School Board A).

Staff members in two school boards reported establishing partnerships with community agencies to support adult learners (Staff 3, School Board A; Staff 5, School Board C). One AE staff explained, “My role is to be very connected to all the services: the settlement services, agencies, the employment Ontario services” (Staff 3, School Board A). One alternative education student reported the benefit of a community agency that provided her with lodging and day care for her son: “It makes it less stressful. I don’t have to worry about where to put him while I finish school. It gives me peace of mind” (Student 5, School Board D).

How AE Staff Demonstrate Caring

In addition to being helpful and understanding, AE staff demonstrated caring for adult learners by creating a sense of belonging, building self-esteem/self-confidence, and being responsive to individual needs. This resulted in students feeling welcomed and valued.

Sense of Belonging: A sense of belonging is feeling valued as an individual and connected within and to the adult learning environment (staff and students). Participants in all eight school boards reported feeling a sense of belonging in their AE programs. Students in six school boards (School Boards A-C, E, G, H) described feeling connected to and supported by their teachers and peers (Student 3, School Board A; Student 6 and 7, School Board B; Student 8, School Board C; Students 5 and 6, School Board E; Student 4, School Board G; Student 4, School Board H). For example, one student reported “do[ing] big

discussions and get[ting] viewpoints from other students and teachers. The other students here they want to be here also, so we are always trying to help each other... you have got a big support system coming into this school” (Student 6, School Board B). Another student indicated that she liked “the small class and personal relationship[s].” All the students, we work together here, no-one is down-played and the teacher helps us all with that” (Student 4, School Board G). Staff in two school boards (School Boards A and E) described taking an active role in facilitating a sense of belonging by creating formal (clubs; Staff 2, School Board A) and informal (school meals; Staff 3, School Board E) events for students to participate in.

Building Self-Esteem/Self-Confidence:

Building self-esteem/self-confidence involves the use of practices that contribute to the growth of self-esteem and self-confidence in adult learners. In seven out of eight school boards (School Boards A-C and E-H), stakeholders identified the issue of self-esteem/self-confidence in AE. Staff in three school boards (School Boards A, C, and H) described being “cheerleaders” for their students through affirming words to help them build their self-esteem and self-confidence (Staff 1, School Board A; Staff 6, School Board C, Staff 1, School Board H). A staff member described helping build self-confidence in adult learners by figuring out why they were unsuccessful in traditional school and developing a plan of action to help them succeed:

“We get to go ahead and say, ‘Okay, what are we looking at and how can we make it different so that it [school] works for you this time?’” (Staff 1, School Board E)

Adult learners in three school boards (School Boards A, C, and E) reported appreciating efforts by AE staff to build their self-esteem and self-confidence (Student 2, School Board A; Student 2, School Board C; Student 1, School Board E). In addition, students in two school boards (School Boards B and H) reported that their experiences in AE programs helped them develop self-esteem and self-confidence (Student 5, School Board B; Students 1, 3, and 5, School Board H). For example, one student explained that it “felt pretty good, to be able to say I am in class, and I am getting pretty good marks... just the confidence to know that I could go on, and I could go to college, that I could get those things that I wanted” (Student 5, School Board B).

Responsive to Individual Needs: Being responsive to individual needs involves AE practices that address the individual needs of adult learners. Participants in all eight school boards recognized the importance of being responsive to individual needs. Staff from four school boards (School Boards B, D, F, and H) described being responsive to the individual needs of students by:

- offering one-on-one help to students as needed (Staff 1, School Board B)
- having regular monthly check-in meetings with students to review their goals and progress towards those goals (Staff 2, School Board F)

- giving follow-up calls to students who had not completed their lessons in a couple of months (Staff 1, School Board D)
- differentiating the class learning space to meet the needs of different types of learners (e.g., a stand-up desk, a swivel chair, and a study carrel; Staff 1, School Board H)

Students from three school boards (School Boards A, B, and F) reported appreciating being able to get one-on-one assistance when they needed it (Students 2 and 3, School Board A; Student 3, School Board B; Student 3, School Board F). One student commented, “Any time I have a problem or I don’t understand anything, I can just go up to a teacher and he or she will explain it to me very well” (Student 3, School Board A).

In addition, students from School Board 2 appreciated the ability to take breaks from class whenever they needed them (Students 1, 2, and 7, School Board Board B).

Result of Caring Too Much

Given the complex needs of adult learners, working in AE can be very taxing on staff. In fact, compassion fatigue is a condition that occurs when people in the helping professions “care too much” about others and start to neglect their own well-being.

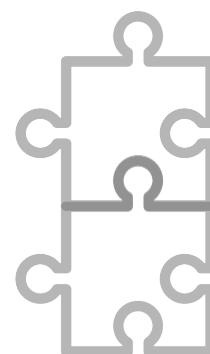
Compassion Fatigue: Compassion fatigue is the emotional, physical and professional “burn out” that takes place when AE staff are unable to rejuvenate (e.g., apathy, fatigue, emotional distress). This issue was identified by participants in half of the school boards (School Boards D-F and H). A staff at School Board F explained how compassion fatigue affects AE staff: “As a staff member, it is easy to be overcome by the staggering number of life challenges our students go through, everything from health, addiction, relationship issues, mental health issues... in time, we all develop some degree of Compassion Fatigue” (Staff 6, School Board F).

One staff at School Board E explained his personal experience of compassion fatigue:

“It’s pretty busy and it’s emotionally exhausting. I get a lot of compassion fatigue. My wife knows that sort of once a month I’ll go downstairs and I’ll have a little cry. I just need that time alone because the amount of stories I hear and the amount of life issues that people have. They don’t shock me anymore but they certainly affect me and I think that’s good because if they didn’t affect me that would be bad.” (Staff 1, School Board F)

Key Findings from the Culture of Care Theme:

- AE program staff create a culture of care by being responsive to the diverse needs of adult learners to promote their success
- Adult learners in all eight school boards expressed gratitude for the care they received in AE programs; they appreciated the help and understanding they received from staff
- Guidance staff played a pivotal role in providing academic, career pathway, and personal support for adult learners
- Wrap around services are critical for ensuring the success of adult learners who have complex needs (e.g., economic challenges, mental health, addiction)
- AE staff cared for adult learners by helping them develop a sense of belonging, building their self-esteem/self-confidence, and being responsive to their individual needs
- AE staff reported that there was a tendency for compassion fatigue in this field if they became preoccupied with meeting the needs of adult learners and neglected their own well-being





9 VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

It is widely agreed that the world is increasingly becoming a “knowledge economy” and that through this perspective, the most important means of production becomes the knowledge produced by individuals within the labour market (de Greef, Verte, & Segers, 2015). In addition to participating in the labour market, individuals need knowledge to be able to cope with the growing responsibility of making life decisions within complex individualized societies (de Greef, Verte, & Segers, 2015). Developments such as globalization and individualization make it more and more difficult for vulnerable adults to successfully participate in activities and life within complex societies (Schedler, 1998). Vulnerable people often lack competence in their ability to make their own decisions, for example in contacting official organizations or in managing their own finances (de Greef, Verte, & Segers, 2015). Consequently, they risk social exclusion. Social exclusion is defined as as “a lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services and the ability to participate in normal relationships and activities” (Levitas et al., 2007, p.25).

It has also been argued that AE programs are a powerful tool to support vulnerable adults to increase their social inclusion (de Greef, Verte, & Segers, 2015). We have known for some time that educational

programs for vulnerable adults provide a significant increase in their understanding, decision-making, participation, literacy, and numeracy, as well as growing their self-confidence (Crittenden, 1968).

A report produced by the Ministry of Education in 2005 spoke of the particular difficulties faced by vulnerable adults in Ontario:

“Adult learners live complex lives. Their re-entry into the learning environment, in many instances, requires a profound leap of courage, and yet their learning success is integral to the health of our communities and our economy. These learners are the parents of the children in our public schools. They are newcomers whose expertise we require in our workforce. They are young adults who want to contribute but need to find a way back into the education system before they can enter the workforce. Often, they are students at risk of leaving school, even 16- and 17-year olds, who can benefit from strategies used in adult programs. And they are seniors who will stay healthy and mobile if they are able to remain active in the community.” (Wynne, 2005)

As we analyzed the data collected for this Eastern RPAE environmental scan, we found that the challenges faced by vulnerable adults in Ontario will remain an important underlying reason as to why adult learners come to adult and continuing education, and can subsequently

struggle with their learning. In addition, the series of adverse, traumatic life circumstances being navigated by vulnerable populations speak to the need for recognizing the significant challenges faced in simply being able to attend and participate in Adult Educational programming. In the following section of this report, we discuss the overarching theme of vulnerable populations and indicate how identified sub-themes were present in the data collected from staff and student interviews in each of the eight district school boards that we visited. These are highlighted in Table 4.

Adverse/Traumatic Life Circumstances:

The first of the sub-themes we defined as extraordinary challenging life situations (past and present) that influence and impact the life trajectory of adult learners. Adverse/traumatic life circumstances were recognized by all of the eight district school boards in data analyzed from both staff and student participants. Staff in Adult and Continuing Education work intimately with their learners, and were fully informed of many of the difficulties faced by their students. One member of staff (Staff 2, School Board B) reported how the “greatest chance of success with adult learners comes from not giving up on them.” She added that it was important to

provide a “lot of encouragement, helping them get in the right frame of mind for learning, and making connections to other people and services that could be helpful in their lives.” In order to do this, she had found her training in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and courses in mindfulness were invaluable. The motivation for her was to help her students:

“I have had so many thank-you cards and letters, one from a grandparent, one from a student that feels I helped to save her life from dangerous additions...I was an orphan at the age of 18. I feel like I understand these students, I can relate to them, this is where I can do most good.” (Staff 2, School Board B)

In a further example drawn from our data, a member of staff (Staff 1, School Board E) described how with a lots of the adult learners, staff “talk about monkeys in a barrel. They start doing well and then their friends and family start clawing them back and stopping them, especially when they get towards that last credit.” The guidance counsellor explained that family and friends of adult learners seemed to be feeling that students were beginning to “‘think you’re better than us[them]’ and they get pulled back down again.” The guidance teacher highlighted how staff were very aware of the need to “be the support system and community for them that says, “hey, no, no, you’re doing awesome!””

Table 6.

Board by Board Thematic Analysis Chart
- VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

	Ottawa-Carleton DSB		Renfrew County DSB		Limestone DSB		Hastings & Prince Edward DSB		Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic DSB		Upper Canada DSB		Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario		Ottawa Catholic SB	
	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT	STAFF	STUDENT
Adverse, traumatic life circumstances	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mental health—anxiety, addictions, relationships	●		●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Special Education needs	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●		●	
Competing Priorities		●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●		●	●	●
Economic challenges	●	●		●		●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●
Motivational context		●		●		●	●	●		●		●		●		●
False starts	●	●	●			●				●		●		●		●
Resiliency	●	●	●	●		●		●		●		●		●		●

The students themselves were very forthcoming in describing their individual challenges and often painful life circumstances. One adult learner (Student 2, School Board A) described the following:

“...I ended up got kicked out of school because I wasn’t attending. I just [pauses] I just had a lot on, had a lot of stuff on my plate [became emotional]...My father was an alcoholic so going to school was something, days weren’t good for me but I still had to go to school and it was a lot of physical abuse and emotional abuse so I never really had the opportunity growing up to have a normal upbringing, and I had younger siblings, they all graduated high school so I am really proud of that, but they never seen it.”

Student 2 went on to explain that his father:

“...drank all the money. It was really bad... I had to work... I got into drugs and alcohol because I didn’t know how to deal with a lot of this stuff because there was really no one there to help me out.” Though he acknowledged that involvement of his grandmother and grandparents helped, he described how he “just didn’t know how to deal with any of it so I turned to that [drugs and alcohol] and that ended up ruining me for many years.” Eventually he ended up going to work (installing carpets) to help support his family at a very young age.”

Another adult learner (Student 2, School Board B), described how he had “a ‘f@\$\$ the world attitude. I didn’t care. I had a chip on my shoulder... through time you lose that and settle down.” Another student at the same board shared a particularly painful story, “I was a young girl, I was raped seven times. Then at age 16, I got pregnant and ended up raising myself. School back then just wasn’t my priority” (Student 8, School Board B). Listening to the narratives of both staff and learners in AE, it was no surprise to the research team that a further sub-theme was identified of mental health.

Mental Health: We defined this sub-theme as issues related to mental well-being that can prevent adult learners from attaining their goals. The staff interviewed across six of the district school boards identified adult learners’ mental health as an issue that negatively impacted upon their learning. One member of staff (staff 2, School Board E), described that they “have a lot of students with mental health issues, [where] life gets in the way and it’s not their fault.” The guidance counsellor explained that because of these challenges it was hard to get these adult learners to attend adult school, however “we know that if they can get in they can be successful, but it’s their family, their lives, their situation, they’re homeless, they’re couch surfing and it’s hard to get them in.”

A member of staff (Staff 1, School Board C), also described the challenges faced by many of their adult learners, in particular those aged 18-21, and how these often manifested into

“behavioural issues, or attendance, or anxiety which leads to the attendance issues. They like a smaller quieter space and fewer students.”

Other staff shared that adult learners “baggage” caused continued issues for the learners and staff attempting to facilitate and nurture a positive learning environment. A member of staff (Staff 5, School Board F) highlighted a significant challenge they faced in their school was that they needed to “overcome the educational baggage that adult students bring with them when they return to school.” The staff member clarified “that baggage is often based on their previous school experience, which was typically negative, sometimes these students have an anti-authority stance, and defense mechanisms that they have developed over time.” Consequently, the staff member highlighted how “sustaining the human touch and care factor must be paramount in our delivery” (Staff 5, School Board F)

Staff (Staff 1, School Board A) also used the term ‘baggage’ when describing past school experiences of their adult learners and the continued impact this had upon their learning, “students have baggage, so you try to undo it”. A staff member at the same board (Staff 2) noted that although they experienced few behavioral issues with adult learners, when they did occur, they were “usually quite serious”. A member of staff (Staff 6, School Board F) revealed that many of their adult learners “enter with trepidation and have anxiety and usually were not successful with their previous school experience. Nevertheless, adult students are genuine, open and honest.”

Data from five of the boards featured students identifying issues related to their mental health as having potentially negative consequences. In particular, one student (Student 7, School Board F) described that it was helpful for adult learners to “have a time-frame on course completion, not a time limit to complete the course.” The same student went on to say that if they felt “too much pressure, I stress out and drop out”. One student (Student 8, School Board D) described how negative regular K-12 school had been previously, “I found regular school horrible, I hated it, the social scene, drugs, alcohol, it was so hard and all I wanted to do was to fit in.” The more intimate learning environment found in adult schools was seen as an important alleviation of stress. A student explained:

“...there’s not like 30 kids giving me anxiety and like no help and me not wanting to do anything. It’s just like a small classroom full of kids and [teacher’s name] ...I can just go see [teacher’s name] whenever and it’s not like I am surrounded by people making me anxious or anything and not want to be there.”
(Student 1, School Board Board B)

Special Education Needs: The sub-theme of special educational needs refers to the availability and accessibility of special education services and supports for adult learners. All eight district school boards featured in this study highlighted that the lack of specific funding for supporting students with special educational needs was problematic. A member of staff described:

“...a lot of our learners that are coming to us, either through e-learning, or through our PSW (Personal Support Worker) day-program have an IEP (Individual Education Plan), and qualified for funding at the day-school model, but in our world they don’t... the lack of support for special education, is huge.” (Staff 2, School Board G)

This was also seen as a significant challenge in board A, where the staff member (Staff 4) outlined finding that “more and more adults are returning to school with undiagnosed LD’s [learning disabilities].” This was further complicated due to the adult school lacking the ability to obtain psych-ed assessments, that would be valuable to us to better help and support the students and show that we care” (Staff 5, School Board A).

In addition to the data gathered from the staff participants, issues around special educational needs were identified by students within three of the district school boards. One student (Student 7, School Board E) identified how the environment in adult school better met his learning needs, “I have ADHD and take meds and

there were a lot of distractions in other schools I attended, there are few distractions here.” The increased flexibility found in adult school learning environments was also seen as beneficial by another student (Student 8, School Board F), “I like to work at my own pace, when I am pushed, I get anxious and when I get anxious my anger kicks in.”

Competing Priorities: The third sub-theme of importance was the issue around students facing many adult responsibilities and competing priorities (e.g., work, economic, children,) that often take precedence over academic goals as they navigated their AE learning experience. This was a sub-theme that occurred across three district school boards for staff participants, and all eight participating boards for student participants. A member of staff (Staff 1, School Board B), explained that working around adult learners’ personal schedules was a challenge “because they have adult lives and they’re trying to fit in school on top of kids, on top of work, on top of everything and right now we are in a six-week format which they find very difficult to meet, especially in the academic courses.” In board G, a member of staff (Staff 3) described that their students “have so many barriers, so many things they are juggling at the same time. You want to see them be successful, but like anything with teaching there is only so much you can do.” The teacher concluded that “seeing them struggle, and seeing the challenges they face,” made her realize not to “take for granted that I am not in that situation, and how hard it is for some of these students to be juggling so much all of the time.”

For the adult learners, flexibility in programing was seen as being helpful to support them with juggling competing responsibilities. A student (Student 1, School Board C) described that “flexibility with hours I think would be the biggest thing [help] because I do live on my own so I do have to work and everything else full- time, so it does kind of lead me to burn out... being able to come different times or maybe access to some content online is great.” This was also reported by a student who was juggling work, parenting, and adult school (Student 2, School Board B). A further student summarized feeling “...really tired. I just keep looking for light at the end of the tunnel” (Student 1, School Board C).

Economic Challenges: This sub-theme was defined as representing financial hardships that negatively impact adult learners’ ability to fully participate in AE programs. In four of the district school boards staff reported that difficult economic situations faced by students had negatively impacted their learning. One staff member (Staff 1, School Board A) described that, due to economic challenges, many students needed to work and so work on their courses “needs to be done in class or during lunch.” In addition, a member of staff (Staff 4, School Board C) explained how economic issues impacted upon how a program could be delivered or learning activities set, as many students, especially those on social assistance, “can’t afford internet service at home.” This, the teacher explained resulted in her using a lot of paper-based materials as “they can take booklets home.” Staff in many of the boards described their

willingness to try and help students if at all possible. In one board, a member of staff explained, “I’d love to be able to help students out more. People are getting evicted...you know they can’t afford food... we have a compassion fund from our board and I’ve accessed that a few times for students and I’ve sent food home for students” (Staff 2, School Board E). The member of staff highlighted being “lucky we’ve got ‘food for learning’ here, so we get a lot of our food donated...” In addition, she described how every Friday “we do a shared lunch and that comes out of my budget, but that’s okay because that’s about building community.”

Within seven of the district school boards, students reported the difficulties they faced due to economic circumstances. Many students reported how this impacted upon where they were able to attend adult school, for example a student highlighted that “the school location is important to me. I can’t pay for a bus because I do not have the money. This school is great as I can walk here” (Student 5, School Board H).

False Starts: The cycle of repeatedly registering in an AE course or program and shortly thereafter abandoning (dropping) that course or program was seen as an important sub-theme. Staff from two of the district school boards mentioned the frequency with which they see adult learners making false starts with their adult or continuing education programs. In one board, a member of staff (Staff 2, School Board E) highlighted having “multiple

starts on a few people and we just have to make sure that they know we want them to come back.” She understood “that ‘life gets in the way’ so we use that expression a lot...” Subsequently, staff would reiterate to students “let’s move forward,” whereby she explained that one of the reasons she liked the school’s system was “where we set up into six different terms because we have multiple entry points. Every six weeks we can start again.” In another board, a member of staff (Staff 1, School Board B) reiterated never giving up on students, and described “some long-term relationships with some students... I have known [name] for almost 10 years.” A staff member in another board explained, that “one of my favourite students had three false starts in a row...and then all of a sudden it was time to go, and she took off, and she was our valedictorian.” (Staff 3, School Board E)

Students in six of the boards described how they had made multiple attempts to begin courses or programs in adult learning. One student (Student 2, School Board B) explained coming to adult high school “and try, and [then] be gone for a couple of years because of life circumstances.” Another student in School Board B rationalized, “just because you drop out doesn’t mean you can’t finish.” (Student 5, School Board B)

Motivational Context: Motivational context or the motivating factor(s) why adult learners return to and/or persist with their education, was a sub- theme shared by students in all eight of the district school boards. For all of these students, it was important to share with the researchers the reasons why they had returned to education through an adult high school. In one board, one student (Student 1, School Board C) shared, “...what led me to come in? I worked for an inventory company for just about a year when I kind of figured out that I wasn’t really getting anywhere...” The student expanded “I think that kind of comes with age, too, because when I moved I thought I was smart, ‘I know everything kind of thing right’ and I guess wrong.” This student had in fact attended “a couple of different schools and none of them really, I guess, gave me the information that I needed or not in a way that made any kind of sense as far as what was available to me.” At board C, the difference was that the guidance counsellor had taken the time to:

“...outline all that stuff instead of trying to rush me out, and getting to know the person kind of thing, that made a big difference because I think it was a good 3 or 4 hours that we talked until we kind of figured out a plan for me and that was something that I never got before.” (Student 6, School Board C)

In the School Board D, a student described feeling that “quite a few times I thought I shouldn’t be here at school, it is not worth the struggle, but I want to be the first person in my family to get a HS [High School] diploma.” (Student 1)

For some students, having their own children proved to be a significant motivating factor in their decision to return to school. One student described making the decision to go back to school “because I wanted to do something with my life, I wanted to have a good career, I have a 1 ½ year old so it’s pretty important to me to go somewhere to be able to do that now” (Student 1, School Board D). Another student in board D shared this motivation, “I am a young mom, you grow up quickly when you are a mom, I now am focused on school and want to go to post-secondary” (Student 2). A further student in School Board A reported:

“...it was because of my kids [that I came back to school]...I wanted to prove to my kids that I could do it and I have two kids that are struggling in school and they would throw it in my face saying, ‘Dad, well you don’t have a Grade 12 so you never graduated’ so that really made me determined me to do it.” (Student 2)

For one student, attempting to help others in similar situations was a significant driving factor. He explained how as a refugee himself, “when the Syrian refugees came to Canada and this school, I found myself unconditionally supporting them, because I speak fluent Arabic.” He clarified that his “tribe in Somalia spoke Arabic.” This, he viewed as a mutually beneficial form of support, as the Syrian refugees “in turn, motivate me to come to help them as a fellow refugee, some of them feel the same way I did when I first came to Canada. They help me emotionally and I help them”. (Student 7, School Board A)

In one school board, a member of staff highlighted how a purposeful motivator for students was to obtain the relevant paperwork needed for eligibility of social assistance. He stated that “many of our under 21’s that are in our alternative sites are there because they need the letter so that they can get OW [Ontario Works] or ODSP [Ontario Disability Support Program] (or whatever social assistance they need) [and they have] to be registered full-time.” The staff member further explained how this also applied to many older learners “some of them are in the same position too, but many of them they are going somewhere, they’ve got a goal” (Staff 1, School Board C).

Resilience: Our final sub-theme, resilience, was seen as the ability to persist and overcome significant life challenges, and was spoken about by staff in two of the boards. In one board, a member of staff described how overwhelming it was to hear about some of the students prolonged efforts to complete their AE process, explaining that:

“...to hear the stories that people overcome to return to school is humbling...what these people have endured and the resiliency they have, and the passion they have, to make their lives and the lives of their families better, is just very uplifting.” (Staff 2, School Board A)

In all eight of the boards students described how returning or re-entering school was difficult. One student stated “re-learning the learning process was really tough. There’s a few times that I wanted to give up because I just couldn’t

understand it. I could read something and think I understand it, but I didn’t, so it was a real struggle.” The student elucidated how eventually, “I spoke with my teacher, like I would come in Tuesday night and I would, you know, stay a little longer than I was supposed to and he would help me through it...” In addition to help from the teacher, this student had also talked with his son who had graduated:

“...I would ask him, ‘can you read this for me and maybe explain it to me? Like you know’... and he did, that’s when he would give me his feedback and it was great... so I was getting help... it was tough for me because I’ve always had a learning disability so I’m more of a hands-on type of person... It was a struggle, but a healthy struggle and I’m proud.” (Student 2, School Board A)

Another board A student, explained:

“...with all the difficulties I have in my life, with my job, taking care of my sister, being here [in Canada] alone [without parents], and doing some little things like groceries, anything else that I have to do I am still so lucky to be here and have another chance to study.” (Student 3)

The student reported feeling that she wanted to continue to “do my best even though I don’t do good enough sometimes, because sometimes I can’t focus because of bipolar disorder...” She felt it was important to continue to focus on her long-term goal saying:

“I’m just focusing on school. My goal is to become a psychologist... [my parents] just helped me whenever I need it and they were always there to support me, even though



they're far and I talk to them like maybe twice a week... they're still there to support me even though there's a big distance between us". (Student 3)

A student confirmed that he was striving :

"...to reach the light; I want to touch the light. Every time I think about it, I say that to me, but I get it from my life. There is a tunnel, a dark tunnel, there is a light, but the tunnel is long. In the tunnel there are steps, like stairs, and step by step I have to go up. Sometimes I fall. But then I go up". (Student 2, School Board E)

Key Findings from the Vulnerable Populations Interview Theme:

- Staff and student participants in each of the eight district school boards acknowledged that adverse/traumatic life circumstances had a significant impact upon adult students' participation and learning achievement
- Mental health issues can prevent adult learners from reaching their learning goals
- There is no designated funding available for Special Educational Needs yet adult learners do not 'outgrow' their learning disabilities
- Adult learners often have many competing priorities (e.g., work, financial, family obligations) that take precedence over academic goals as they navigate their AE learning experience
- Economic and financial issues impact upon adult learners' ability to access programs of learning (e.g., those on social assistance can't afford internet, some students cannot afford to travel to school)
- Some students make multiple attempts at entering adult learning programs
- Adult learners have different motivational contexts for entering adult learning, including (but not exclusively) being a role model to their own children, making career progression or change, resettling in a new geographic area, gaining grade 12, obtaining a prerequisite for further or higher education
- Adult learners are resilient through life experiences and they develop resiliency through attending AE

STUDENT STORIES >>

Early School Leaver

As a teenager, Carolyn was raped seven times. At the age of 16, Carolyn became pregnant, eventually raising her child by herself. School back then just wasn't a priority for Carolyn. A few decades later Carolyn's life started to slow down and she started thinking about going back to school to obtain her high school diploma. Her daughter had been attending a local adult education program and encouraged Carolyn to also enroll in the program. Her daughter explained that the teachers in the adult program were supportive and there were other older adult students in the program. Carolyn eventually decided to try adult education and she reported that the entire adult education experience was very supportive. Carolyn gets depressed often, but when attending school she says that her depression subsides because she feels "at home" at school. Carolyn also suffers from anxiety, a condition that worsens when she has to drive for long periods of time. Thus, Carolyn was particularly pleased that the adult education program was only a short distance from her home. Carolyn received her OSSD last spring but has re-enrolled in the program this year to take a trigonometry course.

10 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

In this section of the report, findings from the analysis of the three main data sources for the Environmental Scan of Adult and Continuing Education are presented. First, aggregate region-wide Adult Education quantitative data (i.e., enrolment numbers, credit accumulation, and graduation numbers) is represented. Second, results from the Adult Education School Board survey are reported. Third, thematic analysis of AE interview data is described.

Service, Range, and Scope of Adult Education Quantitative Data

▼ Table 7.
▼ Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education – Service Range and Scope Credit Programs

BOARD NAME	Adult Day School Day Classes	Adult Day School eLearning	Independent Study	Adult Continuing Education Day School	Night School Credit Classes	Correspondence/Self-Study Courses	Continuing Education eLearning	PLAR for Mature Students
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic DSB	•	•				•		•
Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario				•	•		•	•
Hastings and Prince Edward DSB					•	•	•	•
Limestone DSB	•			•		•		•
Ottawa Catholic SB	•							•
Ottawa-Carleton DSB	•			•	•	•	•	•
Renfrew Catholic DSB								
Renfrew County DSB	•	•		•		•	•	•
Upper Canada DSB	•	•			•	•	•	•

Note: Adult Native Instruction Classes are not included in this table because none of the school boards in the Eastern region currently offer this program.

<< Table 7 reports the service range and scope of Adult Education credit programs in the Eastern RPAE. Five school boards in the region offer Adult Day School with day classes, four school boards provide Adult Day School eLearning, no school boards currently offer Independent Study, two boards have Adult Continuing Education Day School Classes, five boards provide Night School Credit Classes, six offer Continuing Education Correspondence Self Study, six offer Continuing Education eLearning Classes, and all eight provide and administer PLAR to eligible students.

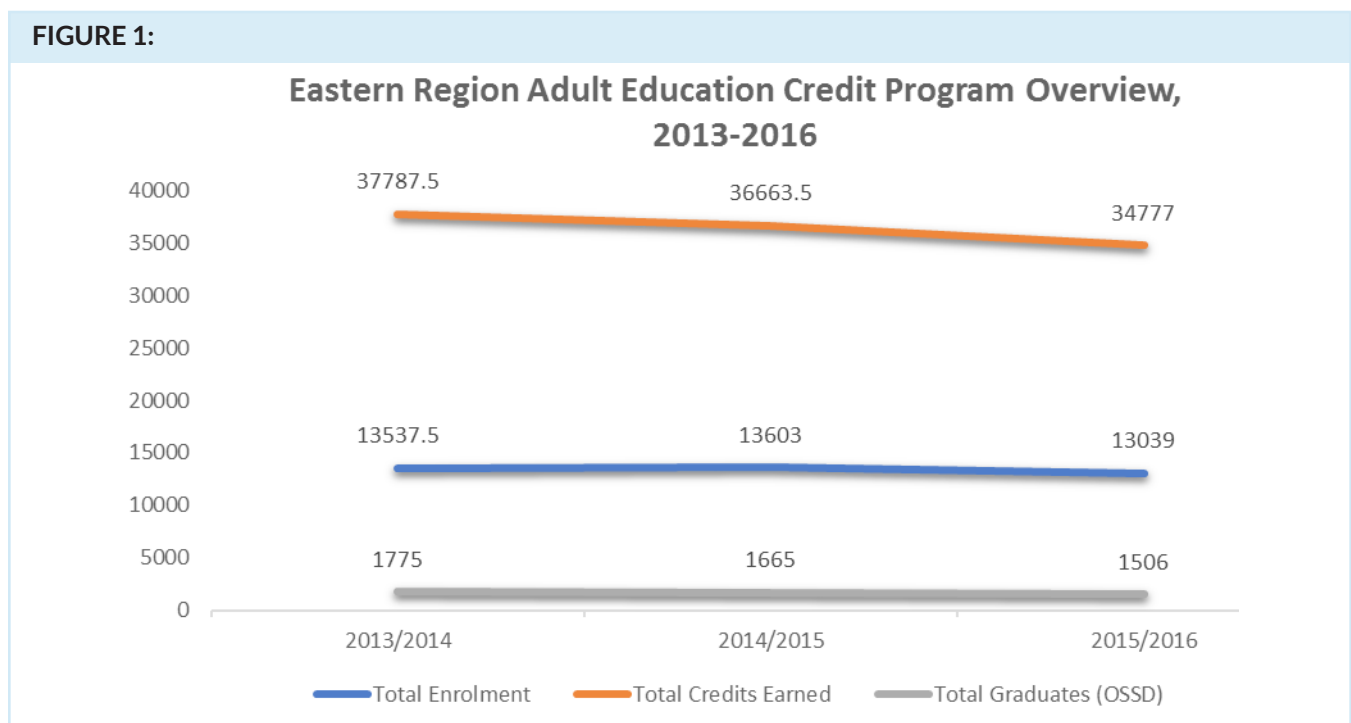
Table 8 identifies the service range and scope of Adult Education non-credit programs in the Eastern RPAE. Two school boards provide Literacy and Numeracy classes, six school boards provide LBS funded by MAESD, six school boards offer Adult ESL funded by MCI, and four school boards have Adult ESL funded by IRCC.

Table 8.
Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education – Service Range and Scope Non-Credit Programs

BOARD NAME	Literacy and Numeracy Classes	LBS funded by MAESD	Adult ESL funded by MCI	Adult ESL funded by IRCC
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic DSB		•	•	•
Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario				
Hastings and Prince Edward DSB				
Limestone DSB	•	•	•	
Ottawa Catholic SB		•	•	•
Ottawa-Carleton DSB	•	•	•	•
Renfrew Catholic DSB				
Renfrew County DSB		•	•	
Upper Canada DSB	•	•	•	•

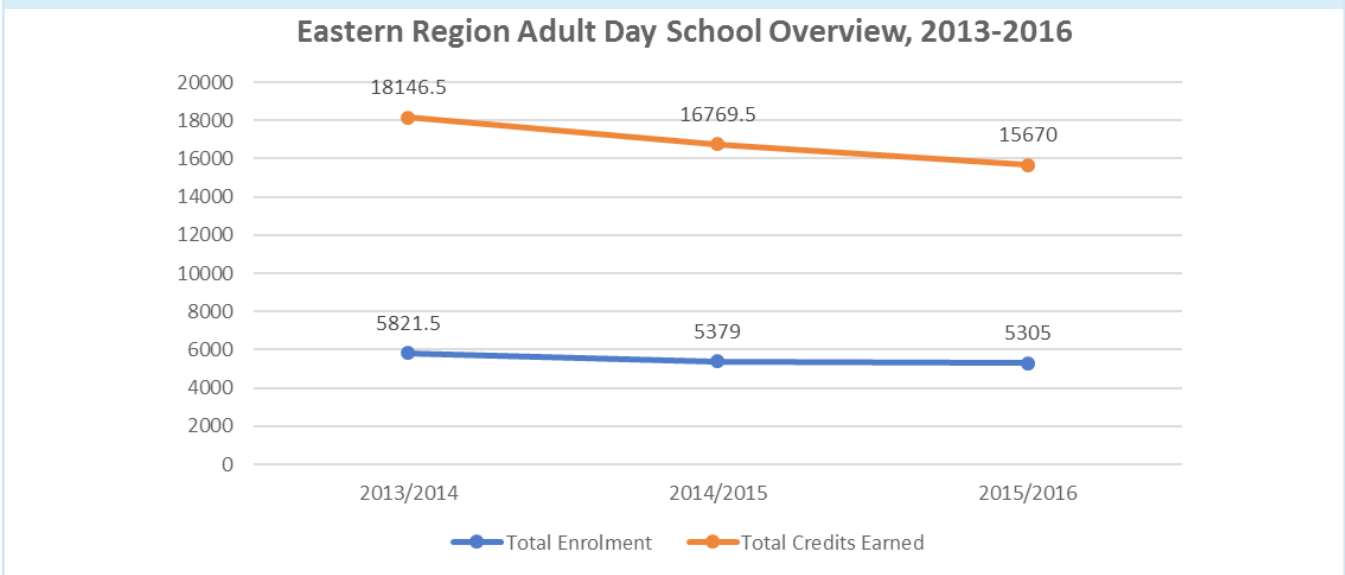
QUANTITATIVE SCHOOL BOARD DATA

This section begins with an overview of aggregate data representative of adult education credit programs in the Eastern region. Next, aggregate data for each adult education program is presented in the form of an overview, a breakdown of enrolment by age category, and a breakdown of credits earned by age category. The for-credit data is followed by Eastern region aggregate data for non-credit adult education programs. This includes an overview of enrolment by non-credit program type and a breakdown of enrolment by age category for each program. This section concludes with a summary of key findings in relation to Eastern region aggregate adult education data.



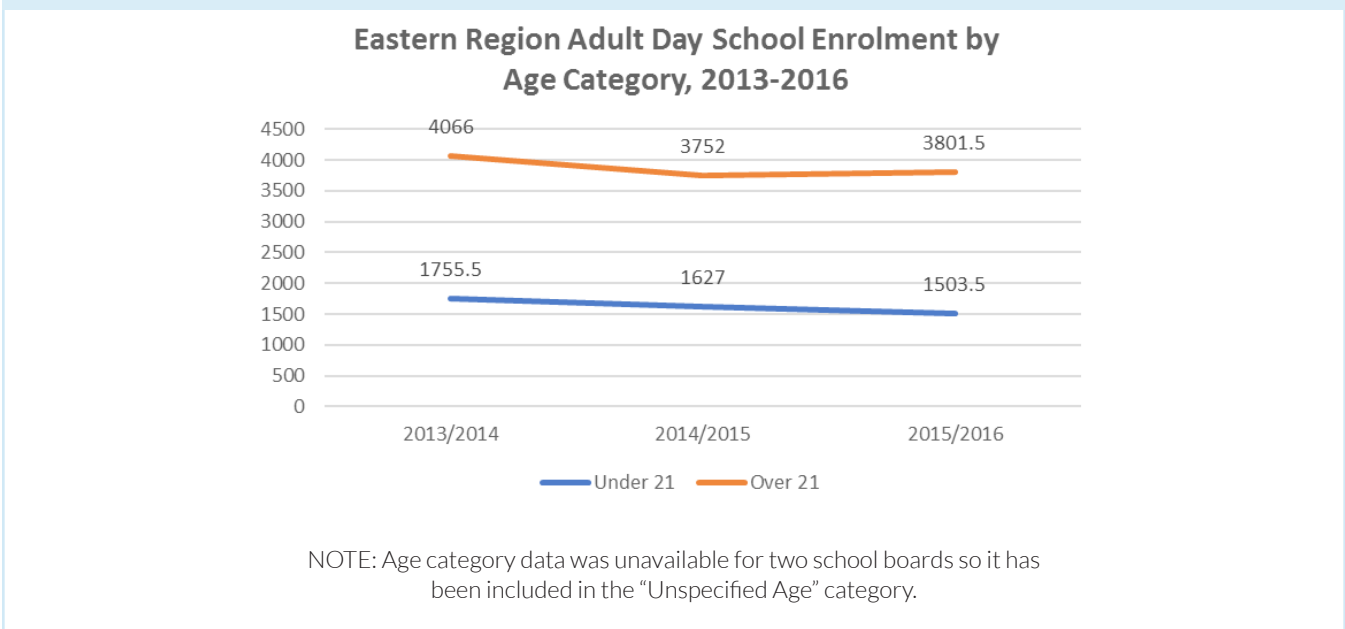
Total enrolments, total credits earned, and total graduates in Adult Education Credit programs in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, there was a slight decrease in total enrolments, total credits earned, and total graduates over these years. Adult learners enrolled in Adult Education Credit programs in the Eastern region earned an average of 2.5 credits each.

FIGURE 2:



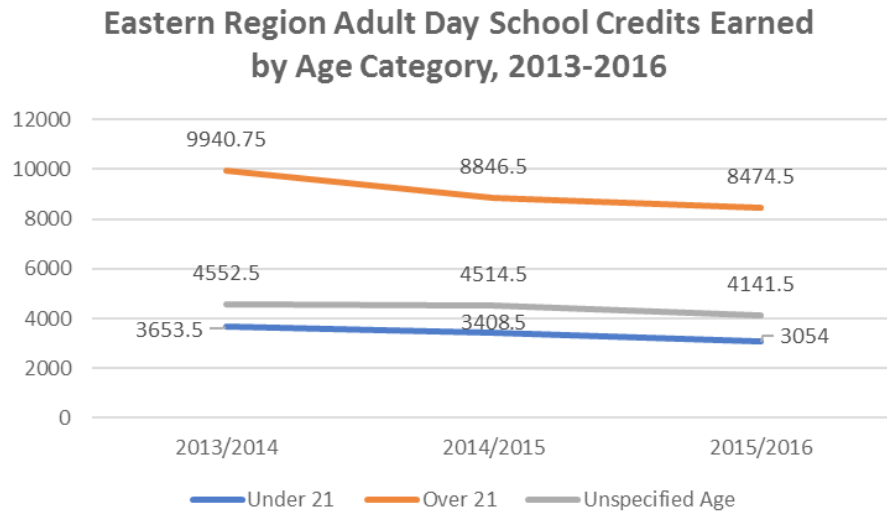
Total enrolment and total credits earned in Adult Day School programs in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, there was a slight decrease in total enrolment and total credits earned. On average, adult learners enrolled in Adult Day School in the Eastern region earned 3 credits each.

FIGURE 3:



Enrolment by age category in Adult Day School in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, there was a slight decrease in enrolment for each age category. There were approximately 2.5 times more Adults Over 21 enrolled in Adult Day School than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 4:

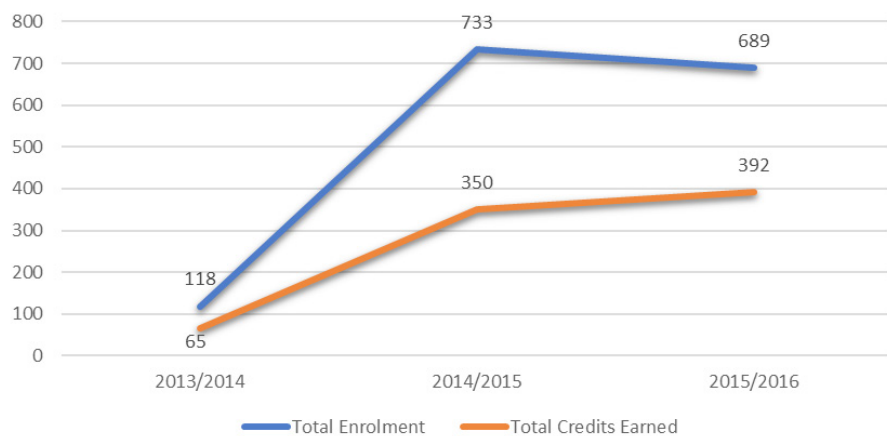


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Credits earned by age category in Adult Education Day School in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, there was a slight decrease in credits earned for each age category. Adults Over 21 enrolled in Adult Education Day School earned approximately 2.5 times more credits than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 5:

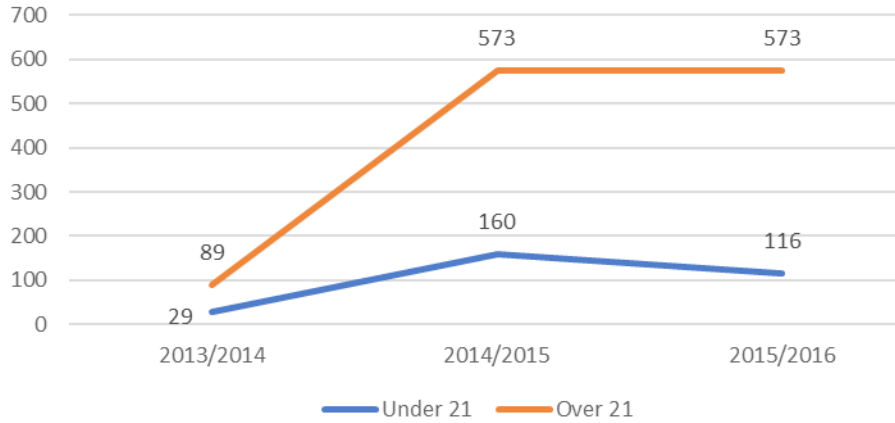
Eastern Region Adult Day School eLearning Overview, 2013-2016



Total enrolment and total credits earned in Adult Day School eLearning in the Eastern region has increased from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, adult learners enrolled in Adult Day School eLearning earned 2 credits each.

FIGURE 6:

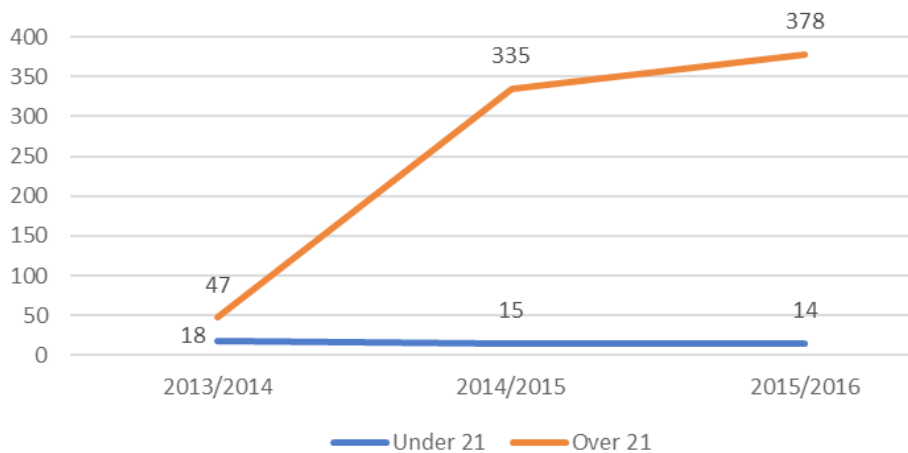
**Eastern Region Adult Day School eLearning
Enrolment by Age Category, 2013-2016**



Enrolment by age category in Adult Day School eLearning in the Eastern region became more differentiated between 2013/2014 and 2015/2016. By 2015/2016, there were approximately 5 times more Adults Over 21 enrolled in Adult Day School eLearning than Adults Under 21.

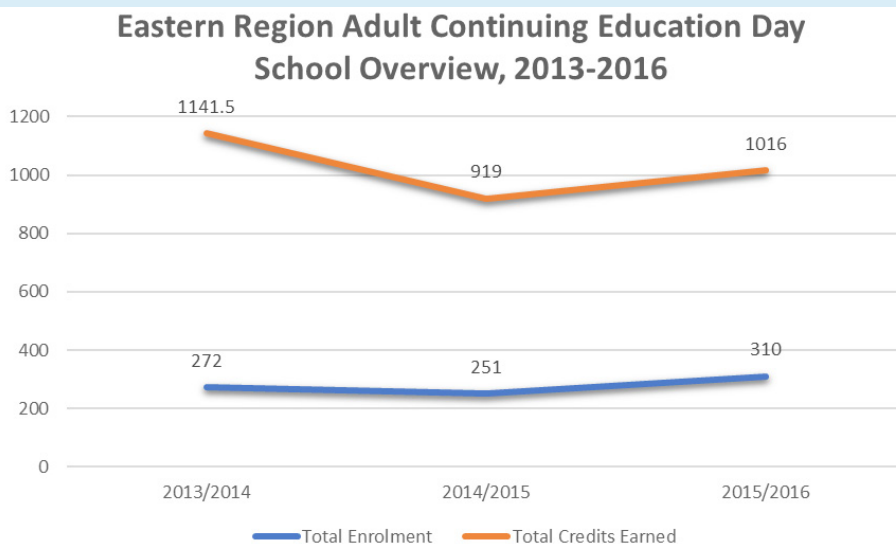
FIGURE 7:

**Eastern Region Adult Day School eLearning
Credits Earned by Age Category, 2013-2016**



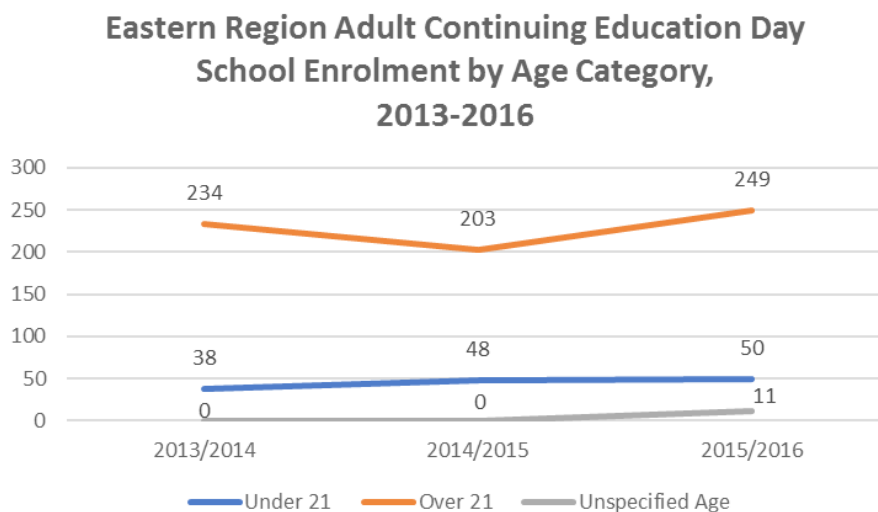
Credits earned in Adult Day School eLearning in the Eastern region by Adults Under 21 remained consistently low from 2013/2014 to 2015 to 2016, while credits earned by Adults Over 21 consistently increased over those years. In 2015/2016, Adults Over 21 earned approximately 27 times more credits than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 8:



Total enrolment and credits earned in Adult Continuing Education Day School in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, there was a slight increase in total enrolment and a slight decrease in total credits earned. On average, adult learners enrolled in Adult Continuing Education Day School earned 3.5 credits each.

FIGURE 9:

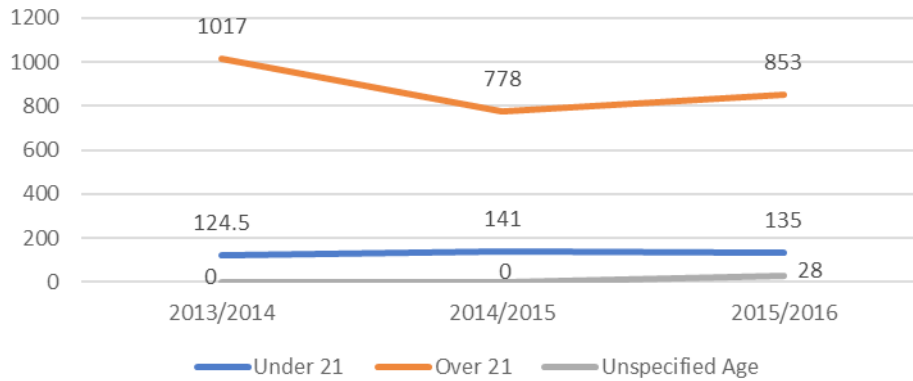


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Enrolment by age category in Adult Continuing Education Day School in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. There were approximately 5 times more Adults Over 21 enrolled in Adult Continuing Education Day School than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 10:

Eastern Region Adult Continuing Education Day School Credits Earned by Age Category, 2013-2016

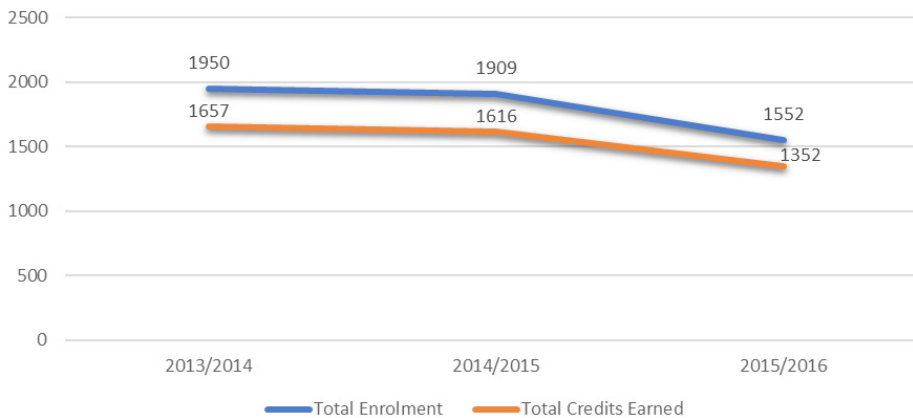


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Credits earned by age category in Adult Continuing Education Day School in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, there was a slight decrease in credits earned by Adults Over 21. On average, Adults Over 21 enrolled in Adult Continuing Education Day School earned 6.5 times more credits than Adults Under 21.

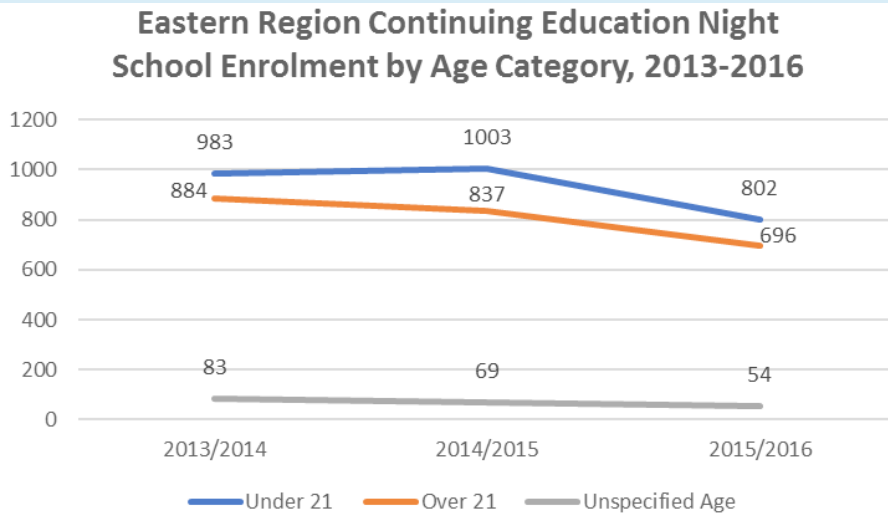
FIGURE 11:

Eastern Region Continuing Education Night School Overview, 2013-2016



Total enrolment and total credits earned in Continuing Education Night School in the Eastern region are marked by slight decreases from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, adult learners enrolled in Continuing Education Night School earned just under 1 credit each.

FIGURE 12:

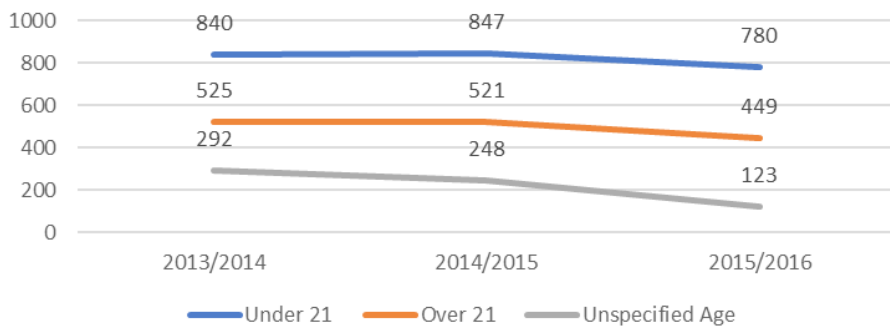


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Enrolment by age category in Continuing Education Night School in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, there was a slight decrease in enrolment for each age category. The number of Adults Under 21 enrolled in Continuing Education Night School was slightly higher than Adults Over 21.

FIGURE 13:

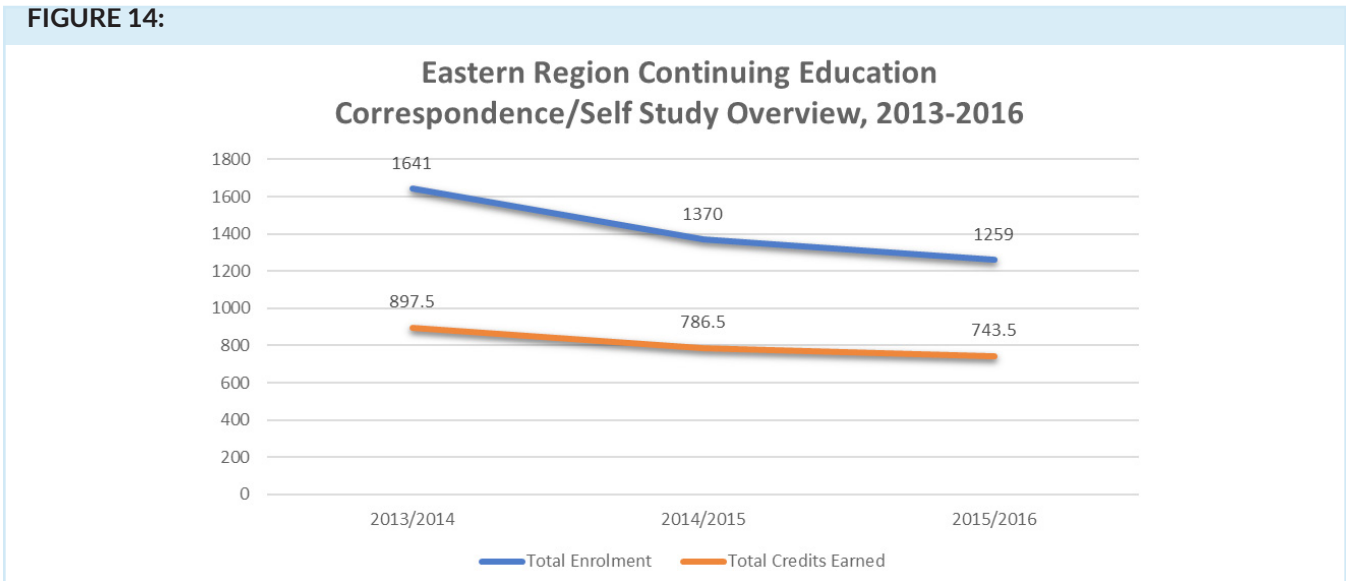
Eastern Region Continuing Education Night School Credits Earned by Age Category, 2013-2016



NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

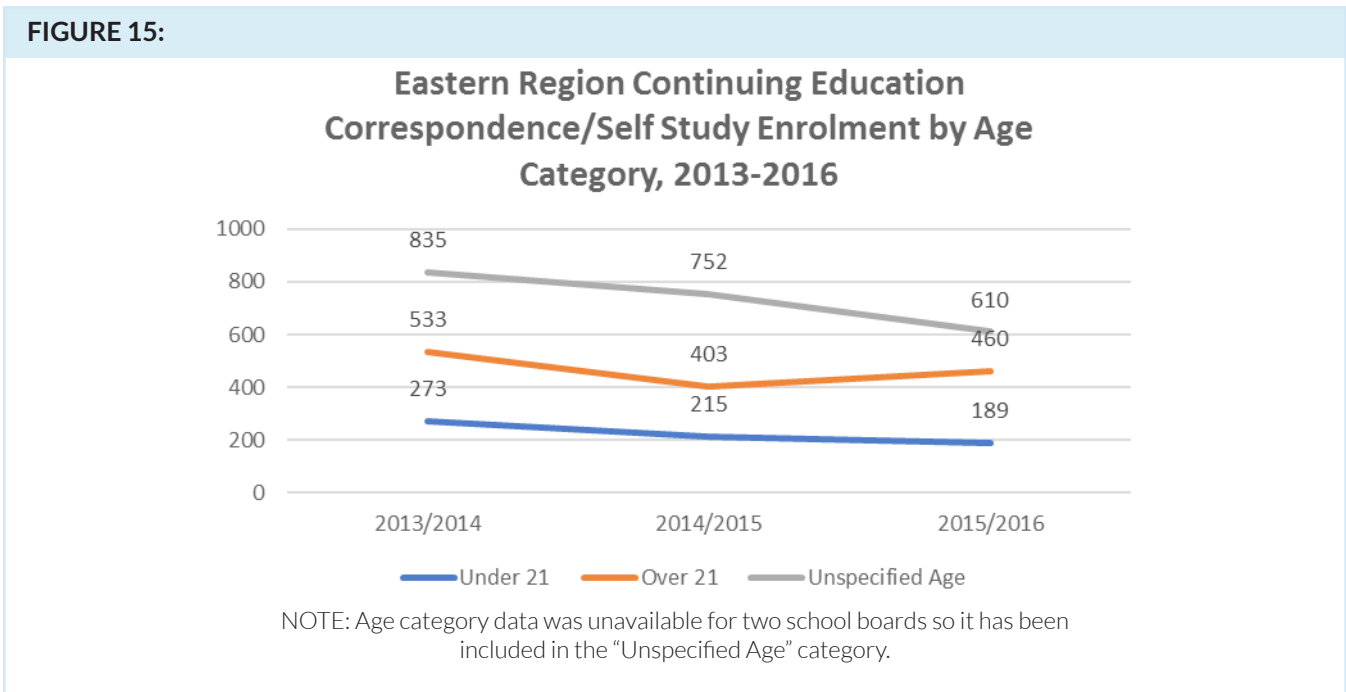
Credits earned by age category in Continuing Education Night School in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, adults Under 21 enrolled in Continuing Education Night School earned 1.5 times more credits than Adults Over 21.

FIGURE 14:



Total enrolment and total credits earned in Continuing Education Correspondence/Self Study in the Eastern region are marked by slight decreases from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, adult learners enrolled in Continuing Education Correspondence/Self Study earned ½ a credit each.

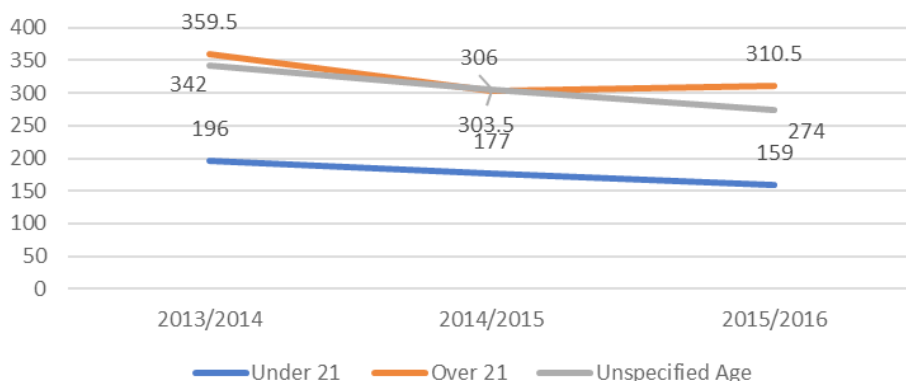
FIGURE 15:



Enrolment by age category in Continuing Education Correspondence/Self Study in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, there was a slight decrease in enrolment for each age category. On average, there were twice as many Adults Over 21 enrolled in Continuing Education Correspondence/Self Study than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 16:

Eastern Region Continuing Education Correspondence/ Self Study Credits Earned by Age Category, 2013-2016

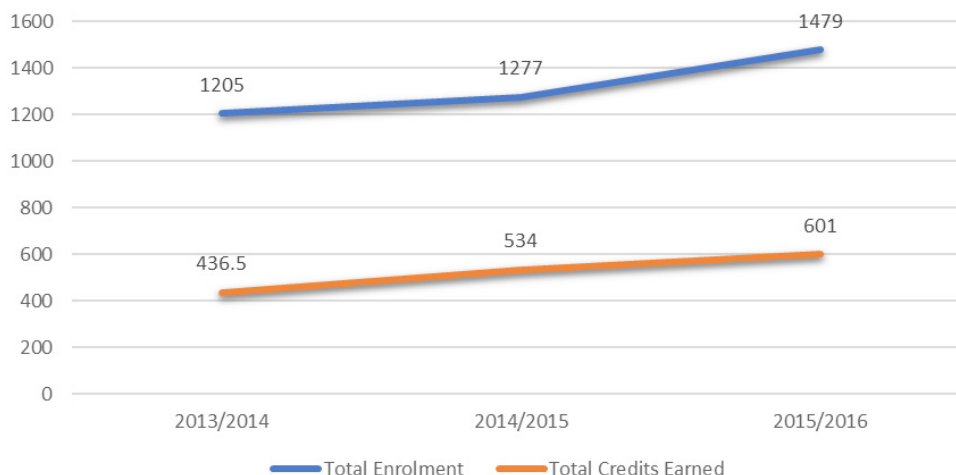


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for two school boards so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Credits earned by age category in Continuing Education Correspondence/Self Study in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, Adults Over 21 enrolled in Continuing Education Correspondence/Self Study earned twice as many credits as Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 17:

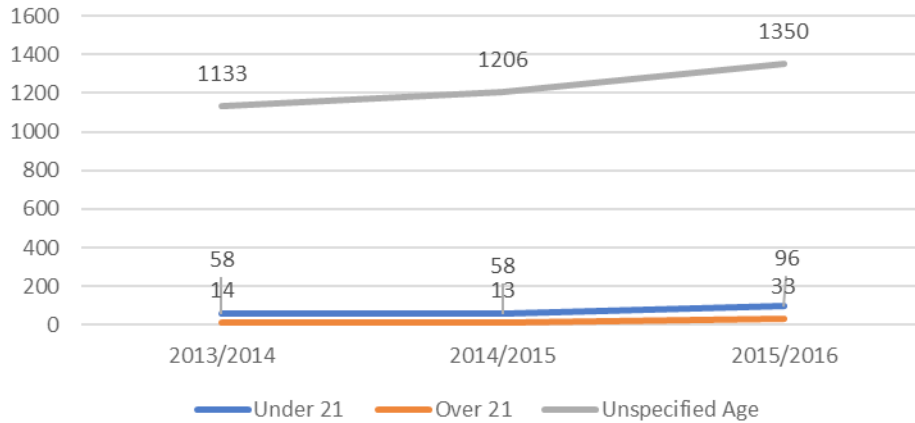
Eastern Region Continuing Education eLearning Overview, 2013-2016



Total enrolment and total credits earned in Continuing Education eLearning in the Eastern region are marked by slight increases from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, adult learners enrolled in Continuing Education eLearning earned under ½ a credit each.

FIGURE 18:

**Eastern Region Continuing Education eLearning
Enrolment by Age Category, 2013-2016**

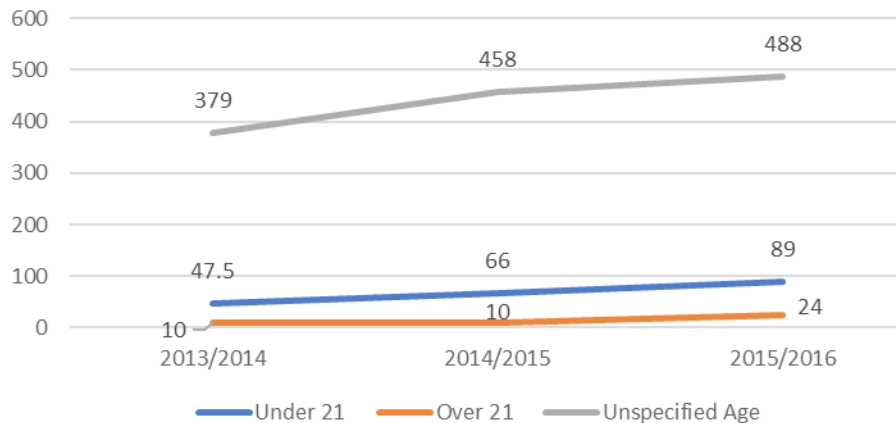


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Enrolment by age category in Continuing Education eLearning in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, there were 4 times as many Adults Under 21 enrolled in Continuing Education eLearning than Adults Over 21.

FIGURE 19:

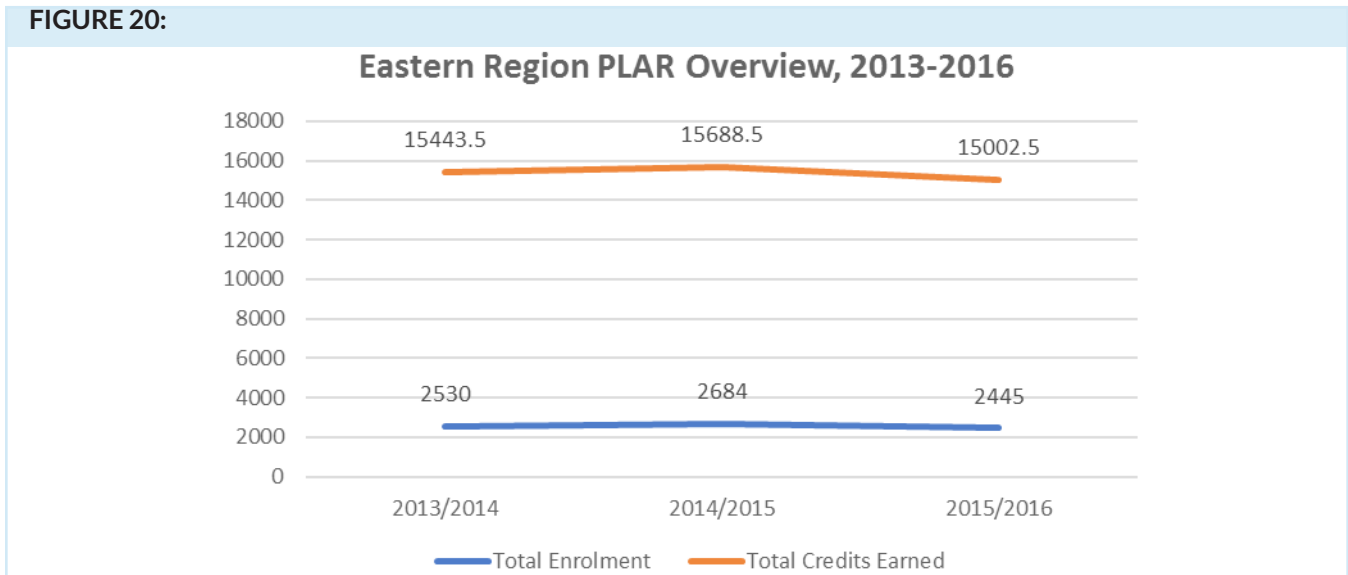
**Eastern Region Continuing Education eLearning
Credits Earned by Age Category, 2013-2016**



NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

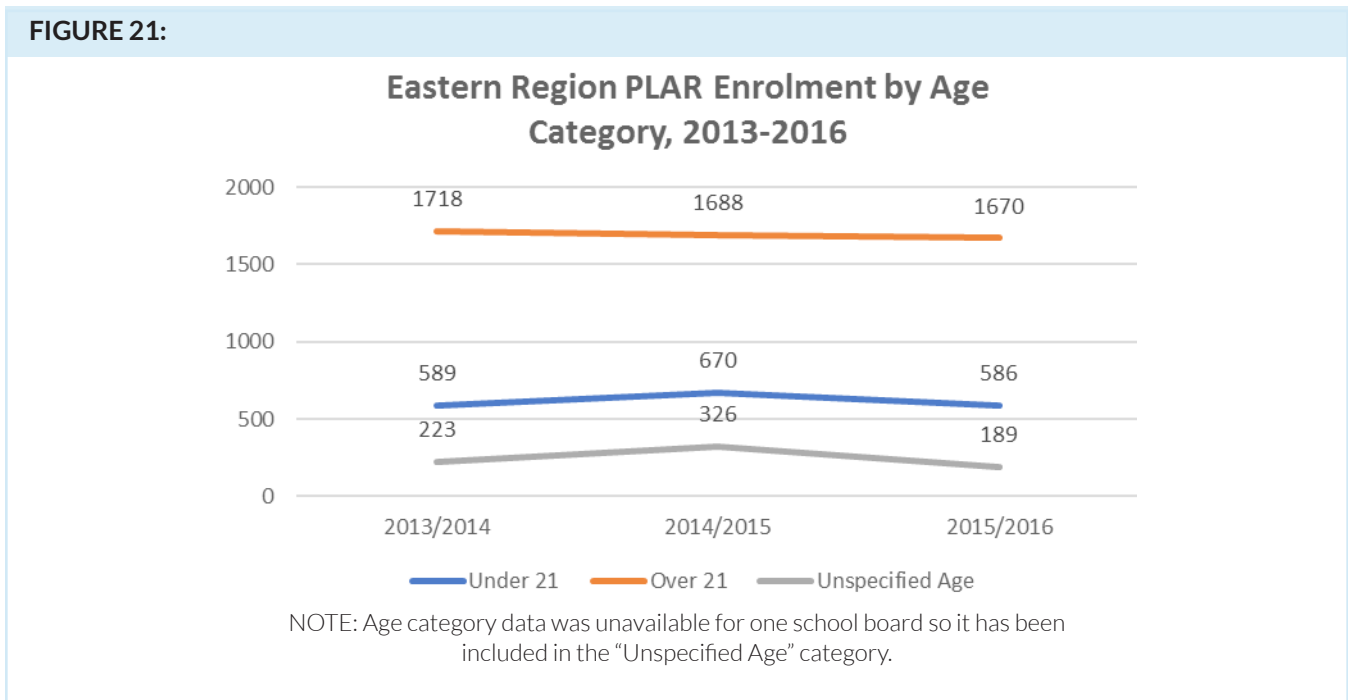
Credits earned by age category in Continuing Education eLearning in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, adults Under 21 enrolled in Continuing Education eLearning earned twice as many credits as Adults Over 21.

FIGURE 20:



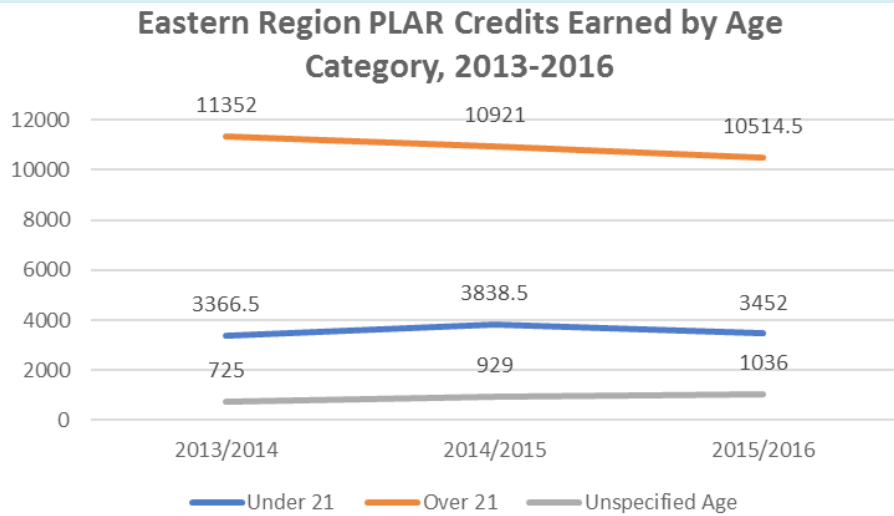
Total enrolments and credits earned in PLAR in the Eastern region remained stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. Adult learners enrolled in PLAR earned an average of 6 credits each.

FIGURE 21:



Enrolment by age category in PLAR in the Eastern region remained stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, there were three times as many Adults Over 21 enrolled in PLAR than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 22:

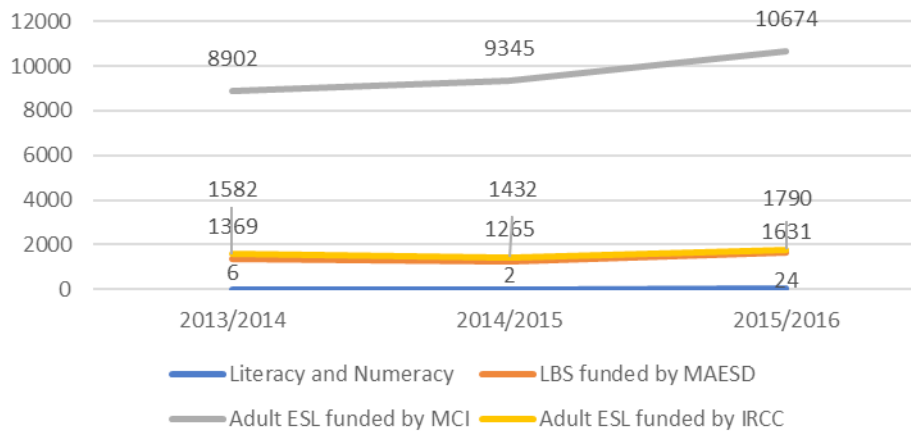


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

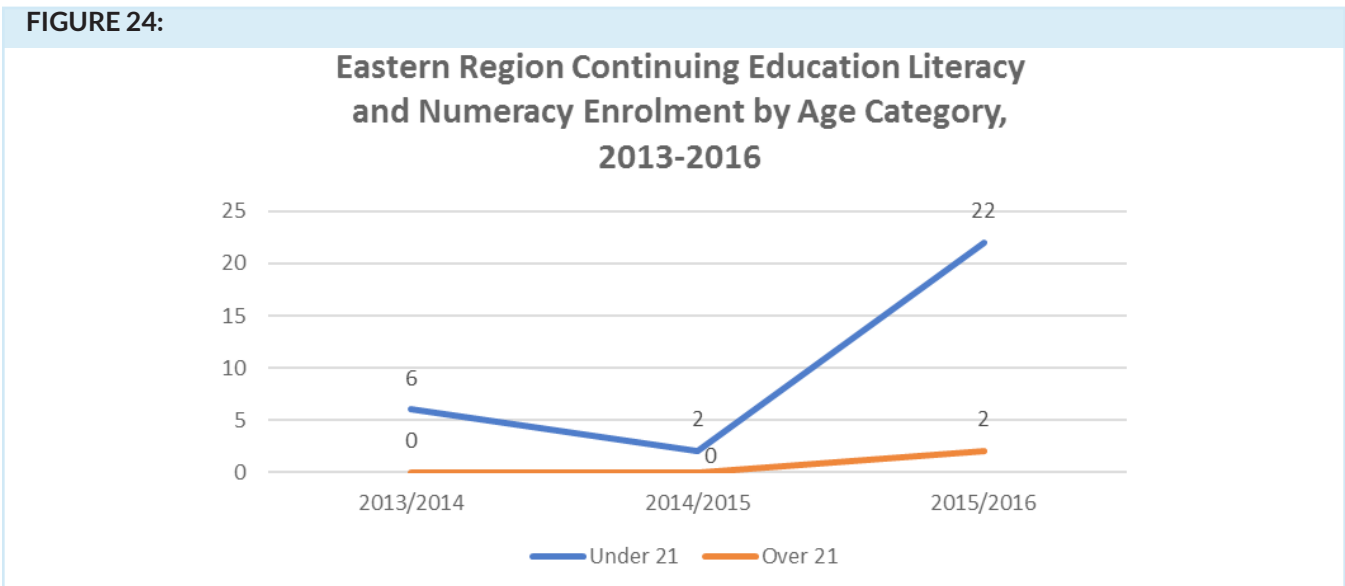
Credits earned by age category in PLAR in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. On average, adults Over 21 enrolled in PLAR earned three times as many credits as Adults Over 21.

FIGURE 23:

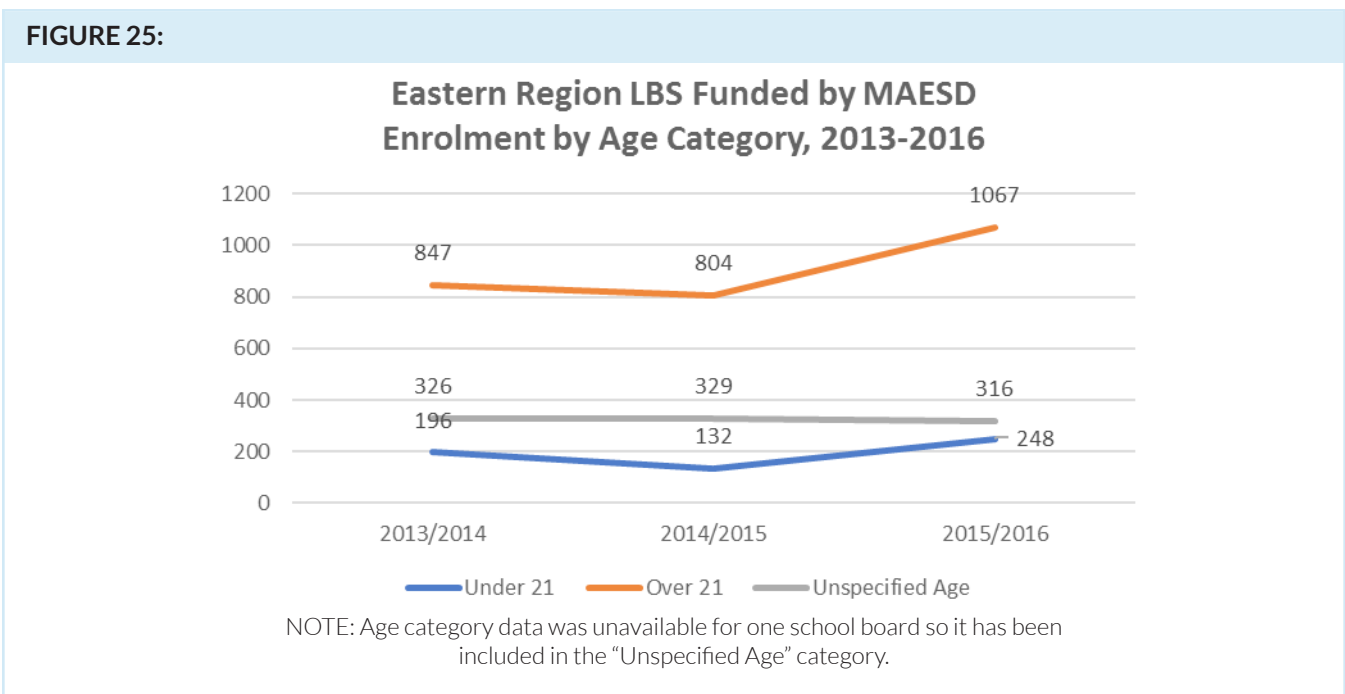
Eastern Region Non-Credit Adult Education Program Enrolment, 2013-2016



All four Non-Credit Adult Education programs are marked by increases in program enrolment from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. The Adult ESL funded by MCI has experienced the greatest increase in enrolment over those years.



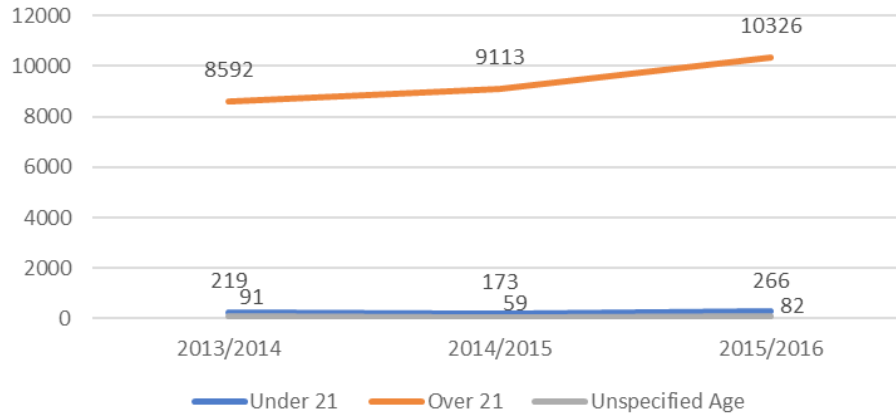
The majority of adult learners enrolled in the Literacy and Numeracy program in the Eastern region are Adults Under 21.



Enrolment by Adults Under 21 in LBS funded by MAESD in the Eastern region remained stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, there was a slight increase in enrolment by Adults Over 21 in 2015/2016. On average, there were 4.5 times as many Adults Over 21 enrolled in LBS funded by MAESD than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 26:

Eastern Region Adult ESL Funded by MCI Enrolment by Age Category, 2013-2016

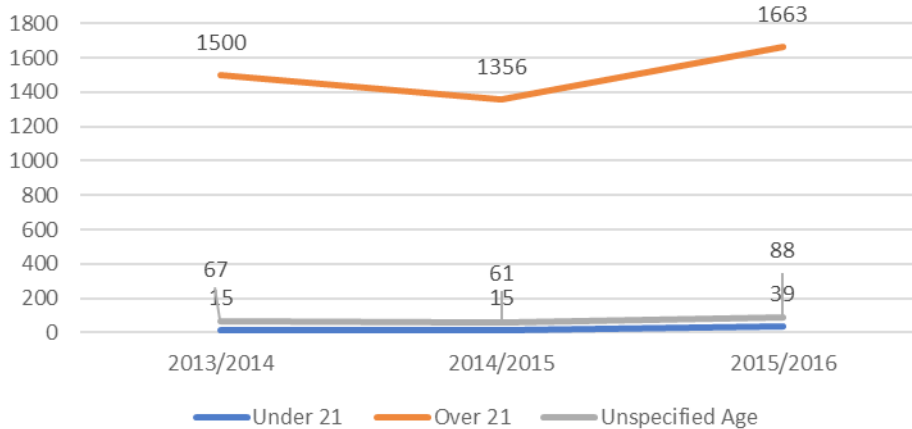


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Enrolment by Adults Under 21 in Adult ESL funded by MCI in the Eastern region remained stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, over those years, enrolment by Adults Over 21 increased. On average, there were 43 times as many Adults Over 21 enrolled in Adult ESL funded by MCI than Adults Under 21.

FIGURE 27:

Eastern Region Adult ESL Funded by IRCC Enrolment by Age Category, 2013-2016

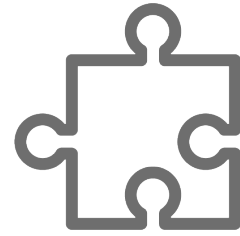


NOTE: Age category data was unavailable for one school board so it has been included in the "Unspecified Age" category.

Enrolment by Adults Under 21 in Adult ESL funded by IRCC in the Eastern region remained fairly stable from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016. However, enrolment by Adults Over 21 experienced a slight dip in 2014/2015 and then an increase in 2015/2016. On average, there were 77 times as many Adults Over 21 enrolled in Adult ESL funded by IRCC than Adults Under 21.

KEY FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE SCHOOL BOARD DATA

- Enrolment, credit accumulation, and grad numbers for the Eastern Region Adult Education Credit programs have remained fairly stable from 2013-2016, with some programs experiencing a slight decline in enrolment and credit accumulation and eLearning programs experiencing a slight increase in enrolment and credit accumulation
- Some AE programs have better rates of credit accumulation than others – this may be the case because some learners who require more credit accumulation enrol in particular programs and/or adult learners may need more support in particular programs to be successful
- PLAR is a powerful credit accumulation program that may be underutilized by some school boards
- There is recent growth in non-credit Adult Education ESL programs
- The Eastern RPAE should decide on the type of data they would like collected for the AE programs and develop and collect consistent measures



The use of various student information systems across the Eastern RPAE makes regional data collection and data analysis challenging. Although the Ontario Student Information System (OnSIS) integrates with all student information systems, retrieving data from OnSIS for regional purposes can be cumbersome. To move forward, the Eastern RPAE should work closely with local and Provincial Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) representatives to assist with data collection related to Adult and Continuing Education programs.

STUDENT STORIES >>

Newcomer

Nadir was born in Somalia. As a young child he witnessed the deaths of his entire family during war. His aunt from Canada managed to evacuate Nadir out of Somalia and made arrangements for him to be temporarily relocated to an orphanage in Malaysia. Nadir spent 4 years at the orphanage before he could immigrate to Canada. Nadir arrived in Canada in 2010 and was enrolled in an ESL program. He did well in the ESL program and eventually transferred to the high school credit program. However, Nadir struggled to understand his childhood experiences and became depressed. In order to cope with his depression, he turned to drugs and alcohol. His addictions prevented him from attending school with any sort of regularity. He would become sober for a period of time, re-register in school, but then succumb to his addictions and end up not attending school. This pattern continued for several years until Nadir was able to get help for addictions from a community agency. He is no longer using (drugs or alcohol) and is now fully committed to obtaining his high school diploma. Nadir is deeply motivated to help others and explained how he is currently working with Syrian refugees. The Syrians “motivate me to come to school to help them as a fellow refugee, some of them feel the same way I did when I first came to Canada. They help me emotionally and I help them.” Nadir eventually wants to go to University or College to do something related to renewable energy.

ADULT EDUCATION SCHOOL BOARD SURVEY RESULTS

In this section, the main results of the Adult Education School Board Survey (online) completed by eight of the Eastern RAPE district school boards are presented. Some school board surveys were filled out by one individual staff member (usually an administrator), while other surveys were completed collaboratively as a staff team. Where individual boards offered the same programs, survey responses from multiple boards were combined. In a number of cases, school boards responded similarly about identical programs. Survey results identify AE staffs’ perceptions about the strengths, challenges/barriers, and areas for improvement for AE programs. Results are presented by AE program; credit programs are presented first, followed by non-credit programs. At the end of this section, key findings from the survey are highlighted.

Table 9. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of ADULT DAY SCHOOL- DAY CLASSES

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of community developed from shared space and regular interactions • Face-to-face teaching and support of grid teachers • Opportunity for career and guidance support • Access to board programs like Dual Credit and School Within a College (SWAC) • Supports a community hub approach in which adult learners can access multiple services (e.g., Settlement Services, Mental Health Services, Medical Services) • Opportunity for shared space with LBS so students can transition from non-credit to for-credit programs • Increased graduation rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs are higher; there is less funding for over 21 than under 21 • No special education funding • Challenge to enroll students because of documentation required • Low student enrolment in some courses • Lack of flexibility for some students • Students may not be prepared for for-credit courses (e.g., low literacy levels, lack self-esteem or confidence) • Students may have complex needs not addressed by the program (e.g., poverty, mental health issues, addiction, etc.) • Lack of transportation for students • Teachers tend to lack an understanding of the principles of AE and English Language Learners • Insufficient PD for teachers • Collective agreement language does not acknowledge the difference in AE and regular K-12 programing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funding to address financial needs in terms of guidance counsellors, administration, and operating budget • Provide funding for special education, like Educational Assistant (EA) support • Provide more PD for teachers • Changes to collective agreement to allow for more suitable staff and more flexible delivery models • Increased community hub model of program delivery to meet the complex needs of adult learners • Increase cross-ministry dialogue to support the needs of adult learners

✓ **Table 10. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of**
✓ **ADULT DAY SCHOOL - eLEARNING**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased accessibility to course credits • Flexible program delivery • Opportunity for continuous intake • Can do multiple courses at once • Large variety of courses available • Reduced operational costs • The opportunity to provide regular in-person teacher help to support eLearning • Opportunity to provide students with access to technological requirements (e.g., lending students a computer or giving them access to a computer while they are in the program) • Opportunity for career and guidance support • Taught by grid teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is less funding for over 21 than under 21 • Insufficient technology resources (e.g., computers, reliable internet access, software) • Students may not have the skills needed to participate in eLearning (e.g., technological skills, literacy levels) • Students may have complex needs not addressed by the program (e.g., poverty, mental health issues, addiction, etc.) • Online delivery model is a challenge for some students and they would prefer face-to-face interaction with a teacher • Lack of differentiation for students • Collective agreement language does not acknowledge the difference in AE and regular K-12 programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funding for technology resources • Support for students new to eLearning (e.g., Orientation, Help line available) • Make guidance and career support available for all adult learners • Improve course development to meet the needs of adult learners and scaffold learning • PD for teachers on eLearning and how to differentiate instruction in an eLearning environment • Changes to collective agreement to allow for more suitable staff and more flexible delivery models

Table 11. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of Adult Continuing Education - DAY SCHOOL CLASSES

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to use co-op to earn credits and gain work experience • Opportunity for specialty programs that can be combined with earning a high school diploma • Connections with community partners • Continuous graduation dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge in the community that these programs exist • No special education support • Students may have complex needs not addressed by the program (e.g., poverty, mental health issues, addition, etc.) • Insufficient funding • Can be a challenge to find co-op placements • Cannot apply previous work experience to co-op credits • Instructors are not grid teachers • Collective agreement restrictions to hiring grid/non-grid teachers • Attendance can be an issue • Lack of transportation or students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of programs • Increase available funding • Make special education support available • Partnering with more social agencies • Providing employment opportunities and access to resources collaboratively with other schools/school boards • Pre-registration for specialty programs would be helpful so adult learners are eligible for available funding • PD for instructors

Table 12. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of NIGHT SCHOOL CREDIT CLASSES

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased accessibility to course credits • Provides additional courses for timetabling gaps • Learner can maintain day employment and/or child care responsibilities • Can reduce overcrowding in some day schools • Can provide opportunities for courses of interest where there is insufficient enrolment in day schools • Opportunity to earn co-operative education credit for paid employment • Continuous graduation dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student retention is a challenge which impacts funding • Lack of special education funding/supports • Students may have complex needs not addressed by the program (e.g., poverty, mental health issues, addition, etc.) • Insufficient enrolment • Small class sizes are cancelled • Program audit requirements are demanding • Classification on register is not flexible • Lack of public awareness of the program • Lack of transportation for students • Constraints from collective agreements around what time courses can be offered • Collective agreement required hiring surplus teachers first, which may result in staff less suited to teach in AE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to support transportation in rural areas • Small class size adjustment funding to prevent classes from being cancelled • Better software/dialogue sharing of what's happening in programs in the school board • Compatible student management systems between boards to foster better screening of students' strengths and prerequisites • More promotion in the community • Allow flexible scheduling for delivery – e.g., after-school and weekends • Revisions to collective agreement about hiring practices

Table 13. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of CORRESPONDENCE/SELF-STUDY COURSES

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for flexibility of delivery • Provides students with courses where there is an needed gap in provision • One way to accommodate for very small class sizes • Safe way to return to learning • Qualified grid teachers • Opportunity for the provision of guidance and career counselling • Taking advantage of opportunity to provide free tutoring sessions/ in- person help from teachers • Continuous intake • Students can complete a course over an entire school year • Opportunity to develop community-based partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding to support this model alone • Low completion rates • Lack of upgrading opportunities • Course content is not always relevant for adult learners • Inconsistent teacher support and feedback in some courses/programs • Little to no prompting from teachers to complete work • Students may not be prepared for this delivery model (e.g., low literacy levels, lack motivation, lack of self-confidence) • Students may have complex needs not addressed by the program (e.g., poverty, mental health issues, addition, etc.) • Fewer and fewer courses available • Declining enrolment • Attendance • Paper/pencil delivery • Lack of transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make more upgrading opportunities available • Make course content more relevant for adult learners • Have more teacher support so students can be more successful • Funding support to update courses and make them more engaging • Provide assistive technology • Provide literacy and numeracy supports • Provide professional development for instructors • Continue to build community supports

✓ **Table 14. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of**
✓ **CONTINUING EDUCATION eLEARNING COURSES**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being part of an eLearning Consortium provides access to relevant course content and opportunities for discussion • Variety of courses offered • Flexibility of delivery • Students can complete a course over an entire school year; flexible deadlines • Prepares students for post-secondary learning formats • Continuous intake • Generates revenues • Provides course offerings where there is insufficient class enrolment • Students are all fundable • Supports learning over wide geographic regions • Opportunity to provide guidance and career counselling • Where students have access to their teachers if they need help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding to support this program alone • Not allowed to accept enrolment from day-school students, which is inequitable for students • Students may lack technological requirements (e.g., computer, internet access) • eLearning exams have to be done in person • Very low completion rate because there is no teacher feedback/support with this delivery model as it is a marker model • Little to no prompting for students to complete their work • Some students find eLearning a challenge • Staff require training • Content needs to be updated • Large number of students to support because of large enrolment numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small class adjustment funding so students can access needed courses • Add more courses • Funding to update courses • More support and feedback is required for students to be successful • Revisions to collective agreement to allow for teacher support • Provide satellite campuses where adult learners in eLearning can get in-person support • Develop courses geared more for adults

Table 15. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of PLAR

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps students to achieve their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) quickly by recognizing previous learning/ accomplishments • Life experience is respected and students are given an opportunity to achieve success and build self-confidence when they return to school • Results in credit accumulation • Great marketing tool to promote completion of OSSD • Results in more employable citizens who have their OSSD • Cost effective • Helps with re-engagement and retention • Improves graduation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sufficient funding to learn about PLAR and ensure consistency of assessments • Lack of trained professionals who know PLAR • Some students are unaware that they are eligible for PLAR • Obtaining necessary documents/ affidavits (e.g., foreign records, employment records) • Time to complete PLAR-assessments are time consuming • Some students may not be prepared to successfully complete PLAR (e.g., low literacy levels, lack self-confidence) • There are no accommodations for students who require additional support • Challenging to administer in rural areas • PLAR must be completed in person so transportation and time to complete assessments are an issue for some students • Hard to keep some students engaged in the process • Wait time for assessment completion • Complexity of PLAR results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consistency in regard to how PLAR should be administered and when it should be administered • More timely feedback • Access to online PLAR assessment • Additional funding to support PLAR outreach in rural communities • Providing PLAR testing after school hours and on weekends to accommodate adult students' schedules • Multiple sites for PLAR testing to increase accessibility • Not limiting eligibility to those students who turn 18 prior to December 31st in the year they register in a secondary school • Increased funding • Refer more learners for LBS support • Provision of a guidance position attached to each program for pathway • Funding for time required to help student prepare for PLAR

Table 16. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for Improvement of LITERACY AND NUMERACY CLASSES

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports students with literacy and numeracy in order to fill in learning gaps and improve achievement • Support from teachers • Opportunity to provide community and coordinated access to homework help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding teachers is a challenge because the classes are short and its inconvenient • Irregular attendance of students • The program occurs after school hours • Funding only covers adults registered in day school • Unable to support students enrolled in summer school, night school or Con Ed day school programs • Funding does not cover supports for day school students in senior-level classes • Challenge to find a convenient location for all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexible delivery times, possibly during the day • Provide equitable access to the program for all adult learners

Table 17. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for LBS FUNDED BY MAESD

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training opportunities for students not otherwise available to them • Helps transition students to credit programs, employment, and post-secondary training • Support for students to help them prepare for PLAR • Collaboration between credit and non-credit programs increases student success • Opportunity to assist adult students with finding employment through • Employment Service providers • Training is delivered using adult content and real-world tasks • Opportunity to offer the program in multiple sites to increase accessibility • Students can do LBS and for-credit courses simultaneously • Opportunity to provide LBS and for-credit courses in the same location and share resources (e.g., guidance staff, assistive technology) • Class sizes are usually small so there is individualized instruction • Highly skilled teachers who receive regular PD • Students receive feedback regularly • Face-to-face model to provide student support • Transportation provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding • You are not considered a “learner” until you can complete a task/test • Some students leave after the pre-test because they are discouraged • Students may have complex needs not addressed by the program (e.g., poverty, mental health issues) • Low attendance rate • Declining enrolment • Assessments at the end are not fair- hard and not meaningful • More funding is given when students complete the final task but this task is difficult and not meaningful • Increased workload needed to comply with MAESD documentation, registrations, exits, and follow-ups • Funding to hire administrative staff comes from a limited budget • Limitations on program delivery hours because of limited budget • Technological upgrades are needed • Transportation is covered but taxis can be quite expensive • More funding and resources needed to support diverse student needs • Program promotion is lacking • Negotiated benefit packages and salary increase for employee groups can increase cost of program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding to assist with meeting delivery costs • Provide funding for summer hours • More funding to upgrade technology (i.e., computers) • Change curriculum so that students have to progress through a pathway and attach funding to progress instead of a final task that most students do not complete because it is not meaningful for them • More childcare available to students • More updated resources • More resources • Provide more experiential learning opportunities to further develop employability skills • Develop an exit process to find out what brings students to LBS

Table 18. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for ADULT ESL FUNDED BY MCI

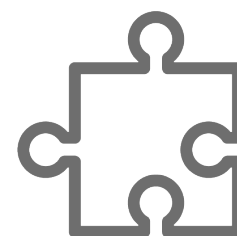
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training opportunities for students not otherwise available to them • Connects students to further employment and educational opportunities • Integration into Canadian society • Supportive network for newcomers • Opportunity to offer program at multiple sites • Opportunity to provide day and night classes • Opportunity to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) and for-credit courses in the same location and share resources (e.g., guidance staff, assistive technology) • Instructors are Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certified • Instructors are trained in Portfolio Based Language Assessment • Opportunity for strong partnerships with community agencies and services • All students complete an initial assessment • Smaller class sizes permitted • Continuous intake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is low • Funding is based on a minimum number of students, which means it is not accessible in some smaller rural areas • Low student numbers • Lack of transportation • Lack of childcare • Challenge to recruit qualified instructors • A large portion of funding goes to instructors' salaries and benefits • Challenge to provide viable space for all programs • Challenge to make sure that all courses are financially stable • Registration fee (although minimal) can be a barrier • Can be competition for ESL students with other service providers • School closures impact community hub structures especially because in-kind contributions by school boards are significant (e.g., HR, payroll, leadership support) • There are wait lists in some cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the funding model • Give special consideration for communities who have fewer than 8 students to allow for ESL to be delivered on a part-time basis • Provide online ESL opportunities to bridge the gap for rural communities • Provide funding for transportation • Provide more experiential learning opportunities to further develop employability skills • Offer workplace training to newcomers • Provide work experience placements • Access to child care spaces • Access to dedicated spaces

Table 18. School Board Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, and Areas for ADULT ESL FUNDED BY IRCC

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training opportunities for students not otherwise available to them • Connects students to further employment and educational opportunities • Integration into Canadian society • Homestudy is available for students with barriers to attending in person • Offers a supportive network for newcomers • Transportation and childcare supports are available • Ability to offer all programs “on-site” in school board owned buildings which lowers the overhead costs • Opportunity to offer the program at multiple sites • Flexibility- students can take courses in the evening or on weekends • Smaller class sizes permitted • Continuous intake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding does not reflect the true cost • Reporting is onerous • Access is limited for rural students • Half-day classes are offered because of funding limitations • Challenging to find TESL Ontario certified instructors • Challenge to provide viable space for all programs • Challenge to make sure that all courses are financially stable • The cost (although minimal) can be a barrier • School closures impact community hub structures, especially because in-kind contributions by school boards are significant (e.g., HR, payroll, leadership support) • There are wait lists in some cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust funding to reflect actual costs • Funding for capital costs, like computers • More funding to increase program offerings and locations • Access to dedicated spaces • Access to child care spaces

Key Findings from Adult Education School Board Survey:

- School board survey results identified strengths, challenges/barriers, and areas for improvement for all credit and non-credit AE programs in the region
- Adult learners were described by school board staff as having complex needs (e.g., poverty, mental health issues, addiction) that required the support of competent staff and wrap around services (e.g., child care provision, social services, health services)
- On-site AE programs provided an often-needed support network for adult learners with complex needs (e.g., poverty, mental health issues, addiction), but were less cost effective than other delivery modes. This support network usually included grid teachers, guidance and career counselling staff, and some wrap around services
- Programs that required students to complete work independently (e.g., eLearning and Correspondence) tended to be cost effective, but had lower completion rates. AE staff tried to improve the success rate of more independent-oriented programs through the availability of ongoing in-person teacher support or drop-in tutoring sessions
- There are staffing and funding restrictions that impact availability of programing
- All eight school boards recognized the benefits of PLAR in helping adult learners obtain credits for previous learning and life experiences. However, it was noted that there should be consistency in how and when (in a student's program) PLAR is administered across the region
- School boards commented on the value of non-credit programs in preparing adult learners for further employment and educational opportunities. Collaboration between non-credit and credit programs helped adult learners successfully transition from one program to the other
- There is no funding available to support adult learners working within secondary credit courses with Special Education Needs, even though these adults do not "outgrow" their learning disability





This report began with an overview of the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy and the subsequent objectives for the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (RPAE) project. The purpose of this environmental scan was to identify opportunities for innovation and collaboration, as well as programming and service gaps, in the delivery of Ministry of Education Adult Education programs and services in the Eastern RPAE region. In order to respond to this objective, we sought to answer the following questions

1. What and how are Adult and Continuing Education programs delivered by districts school boards in the Eastern RPAE region?
2. How many learners enroll in each of the programs offered and what are their graduation rates?
3. What do each of the eight district school boards perceive as the strengths, challenges/barriers, and areas of improvement for their Adult and Continuing Education programs?
4. Where are Adult and Continuing Education programs delivered across the Eastern RPAE region and how are they promoted?
5. How is Adult and Continuing Education programming addressed in district school board and school level planning?
6. What are the perceptions of staff working in Adult and Continuing Education?
7. What are the perceptions of students participating in Adult and Continuing Education?

To respond to these questions, we collected data from four sources; 1) quantitative data of enrolment and achievement of adult learners, 2) online survey responses from individual school boards outlining their AE provision, including strengths and challenges of programming, 3) interview data from staff and students involved in AE, and 4) collection of AE supplementary materials. We conclude this report by presenting key findings based on all data sources from the AE environmental scan in the Eastern region that address the Adult Education Ministry objectives as a starting point for strategic planning by the Eastern RPAE. Table 20 details these key findings.


Table 20
Key Findings in Relation to Overarching Adult Education Ministry Objectives

MINISTRY OBJECTIVE	KEY FINDINGS
<p>Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services (e.g., e-learning or hybrid delivery programs) that best meet adult learner needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionally coordinated access refers to equitable and harmonized access to programs across the region, there is a range of variability in the AE programs offered by school boards in the Eastern RPAE region, which could lead to inequitable access for adult learners • While some school boards have a wide-range of AE programs available, other boards have limited options for adult learners. • Some programs offer face-to-face teaching, while others require a lot of independent work from adult learners with flexible deadlines (and little accountability) • Given that there are low completion rates with programs that rely heavily on independent work, many school boards have adapted these types of programs to include the availability of ongoing in-person teacher support or tutoring sessions • It would be beneficial for students to have some sort of accountability checks in place when they undertake AE programs with a lot of independent work (e.g., a program advisor, mentor) • Hybrid courses may be a good option for some adult learners in that there is a balance between online learning and in-class teacher support • While many boards are expanding their eLearning programs, it is critical to remember that adult learners' available infrastructure (e.g., access to internet, technological requirements of a computer and software) and technological skills impact whether they can participate in such a program • Adult learners tend to be more successful with the support system that a "culture of care" provides (e.g., chapter 8, pp. 29-34) • There is no funding provision for adult learners with Special Educational Needs; however, many adults do not "outgrow" their learning disability • There was evidence of existing collaboration between some boards, which could be extended through the strategic planning process

MINISTRY OBJECTIVE	KEY FINDINGS
<p>Access to coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referrals at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the program or service that best meets their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people currently feel welcomed in AE, but there is no consistency or harmonization in regard to the intake processes • To make sure that adult learners are given the best available information about their options and potential pathways, guidance and career counselling should be available at intake and throughout their programming for all adult learners by qualified guidance staff • There would be benefits to having a common database used by all school boards in the Eastern RPAE region to easily access adult learners' past schooling experiences, AE goals, the prerequisites they need to achieve their goals, and their progress towards their goals; there is one school board that developed a database for their school board that could be a viable model for this
<p>Regionally coordinated access to consistent Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students working towards a high school diploma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLAR is delivered in all eight school boards, but there is inconsistency about how it is delivered and when it is delivered; the Eastern RPAE will need to develop best practices around this • Given the immense benefits of PLAR, students need to be told about PLAR at their initial intake session and follow this up about PLAR when appropriate • There should be consistency about when PLAR is administered because it may impact student success. If students are administered PLAR right away and it is a positive experience for them, it is viewed as a refresher. However, it can also be overwhelming for students who are not able to complete it successfully. Some school boards may wait until students demonstrates commitment to their program, but this could result in student leaving a program before they are made aware of the benefits of PLAR • Many school boards spend time preparing students for the PLAR process and should be compensated appropriately by Ministry funding • School boards require funding to train their staff on and to implement PLAR best practices • One PLAR best practice identified in the Eastern RPAE region was the active recruitment and administration of PLAR to eligible adult learners • One school board had monthly check-ins with their adult learners to discuss their goals and progress and we highlight this as a best practice

MINISTRY OBJECTIVE	KEY FINDINGS
Regional guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students working towards a high school diploma or seeking prerequisites for post-secondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There was variability in school boards as to whether students were provided with guidance support• Adult learners reported the pivotal role that guidance staff provided in terms of academic, career pathway, and personal support• AE programs with on-site delivery often had the support of guidance staff• AE programs with off-site delivery may need to be more intentional about providing ongoing guidance and career pathway support• Given the positive role that guidance plays in the lives of adult learners who tend to deal with complex issues (e.g., mental health, poverty, balancing school and employment), they should have access to ongoing support and guidance throughout their program• In one school board, adult learners had monthly check-ins about their academic and career goals to make sure that students were progressing towards their goals and receiving adequate support. We highlight this as a best practice model

Lastly, there are several examples of how public sector organizations share and coordinate their work to promote efficiency and provide better service to Ontarians. It is from this context that the Board members of the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education endorsed the concept of researching other public sector organizations to see if we, as a newly formed partnership, could learn from partnerships in other public sectors. See Appendix B for Examples of Shared Services and Coordination of Services.

LIMITATIONS

The thematic analysis charts included in this environmental scan are compiled from the data from our interviews. This does not mean that the “unchecked themes” are not present in all boards. The interview data is merely a sample, different staff and students may well have spoken to different themes that are not represented in our research.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: ADULT EDUCATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Sample Interview Questions for Staff

1. What is your current role? Can you kindly describe what you do in this role?
2. How long have you worked in this role?
3. a) Was this your first position in Adult Education? If no, how long have you worked (in total) in Adult Education?
b) Please describe your previous work experience in Adult Education.
4. What do you enjoy about working in Adult Education?
5. a) Do you have a background in career counselling?
If yes, then what specific training have you had in this field?
b) Please explain how you currently support Adult students with career information in your current role.
6. a) How do you know you are making a difference in Adult Education? Probes: can you give an example of student success or a specific project that made a difference to students.
7. What strategies do you use to motivate students to be successful?
8. What do you consider to be the most innovative practice(s) in Adult Education in your Board and/or program?
9. a) What do you consider to be the three most challenging facets of Adult Education?
b) If not touched on in A, then; What needs to be done differently in Adult Education?
10. If given unlimited funds, what would you do to improve Adult Education services?
11. What professional development opportunities would you like to access to enhance the work you do in Adult Education?

Is there anything not discussed in your answers that you would like to share?

Sample Interview Questions for Students

1. We realize that it is a big step to return to school. Can you please walk me through the process you have undertaken?
 - a) What made it easy?
 - b) What made it difficult?Probes can include: Intake/referral/initial assessment
2. Can you please tell me about your past school experience (*if not covered in previous question response*)?
3.
 - a) What program are you currently enrolled/registered in?
 - b) How did you find out about this program?
4. Why did you decide to enter this program versus another program?
5.
 - a) Did you participate in PLAR? If yes, then continue with b, c, d, e, and f.
 - b) How did you find out about the PLAR program?
 - c) Describe your experience with the PLAR process?
 - d) Did you complete the PLAR process?
 - e) What made the PLAR process easy?
 - f) What made it difficult?
6. How useful/practical is the content of the course you are currently taking?
Probes can include: do you find it relevant, meaningful, do you think you will be able to use what you are currently learning at a job or in future studies?
7. If you were to compare your current experiences at school with your past experiences, what is different? What has changed/not changed?
8. Please tell me what you enjoy about your current program?
9. If you could wave a magic wand, what would you change about your current program?
10. When you joined your current program, did anyone talk to you about your future goals, and if so, who and how?
11.
 - a) What do you plan to do after you complete your current program?
 - b) How did you come about this decision?
 - c) Who helped you to come to this decision?

We have now come to the end of the interview. Is there anything else you want to add or say?

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF SHARED SERVICES AND COORDINATION OF SERVICES

For the purposes of providing direction to the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education, the following public sectors were examined:

- Ontario Provincial Police Services
- Youth Mental Health Services
- Other Education Services

Policing Services

Responsibility/Mandate	Partnership Examples	How are shared services provided?
<p>Provincial responsibility for public order, crowd control, search and rescue, emergency management and patrol of King’s highway system – example 400 series highways.</p>	<p>O.P.P. has partnership agreements with other police services – e.g. city police services or smaller police services such as Ottawa, Cornwall, Brockville, Kingston, Belleville to provide specialty law enforcement or investigation that goes beyond the ability of a smaller police service to provide. e.g. helicopter, bomb disposal etc.</p> <p>O.P.P. also has established partnership agreements with RCMP. e.g. when a task force is established.</p>	<p>Various agreements and protocols exist for items like pursuit policy, cross jurisdictional crime investigation etc.</p> <p>Some protocols are part of the Police Services Act.</p>

Youth Mental Health Services

Responsibility/ Mandate	Partnership Examples	How are shared services provided?
<p>In Ontario, child and youth mental health services are provided primarily to children and youth from birth to 18 years of age under the authority of the <i>Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)</i>. These services are not mandatory under the CFSA, but are provided to the level of available resources.</p> <p>MCYS funds over 260 agencies which provide child and youth mental health services and supports, including approximately 90 dedicated children’s mental health centres which have concentrated their expertise in child and youth mental health.</p> <p>The range of services provided by mental health agencies funded by MCYS include: prevention, parent education and training, early detection and intervention, counselling and support, assessment and treatment, respite, out-of-home residential placements and treatment, and day treatment services and supports.</p> <p>MCYS also directly funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two child and youth mental health facilities (Toronto and London) • some hospital based children’s mental health outpatient programs • the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario • a telepsychiatry program serving rural and remote communities. <p>In addition, mental health services are provided to children and youth within the youth justice sector and through a range of prevention programs and residential services such as early years, child protection and well-being, and complex special needs.</p>	<p>Provincial ministries involved include: the Ministries of Education and Health and Long-Term Care, who also fund crucial services and supports for children and youth with mental health needs.</p> <p>Other ministries, including the Ministries of Health Promotion, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Community and Social Services, the Attorney General and Community Safety and Correctional Services, also support child and youth mental health through prevention, diversion and health promotion programs.</p> <p>Community mental health service providers</p>	<p>Government and community partners have different roles, but each shares in the responsibility for delivering child and youth mental health services and supports.</p> <p>Government ministries share responsibility for setting policy direction, improving cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration, and funding services.</p> <p>Community service providers share responsibility for meeting the needs of children, youth and their families/ caregivers, the efficient use of resources, the delivery of evidence-based services/ supports, and for the outcomes achieved.</p>
<p>This information was retrieved from Ontario’s Policy Framework for Child and Youth Services.</p>		

Other Education Services – Ontario eLearning Consortium (OeLC)

Responsibility/ Mandate	Partnership Examples	How are shared services are provided?
<p>The OeLC is a grass-roots partnership of Ontario School Boards who, since 2001, have worked together to deliver online secondary Ontario courses, develop resources, tools and procedures, perform quality assurance, support teachers, and increase learning opportunities for students.</p>	<p>Currently 21 Boards make up the OeLC. (7/21 Boards are also members of the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education).</p>	<p>Member boards pay a yearly nominal membership fee that supports the cost of hiring a Coordinator for the Consortium. Students attending any one of the 21 member Boards have access to another member Board's on-line courses. Course requests and registration are done through a special student information system (SSeS) that has been designed for the OeLC. No fees are associated with the exchange of students; however, the Consortium strives to have a yearly balance of student exchange. I.e # of students leaving a Board to take consortium provided online courses, must equal # of students that the Board registers from other Boards in their online courses.</p>

Other Education Services – School College Work Initiative (SCWI) and Partnering for Student Success (PASS) - Eastern Ontario Regional Planning Team for SCWI

Responsibility/ Mandate	Partnership Examples	How are shared services are provided?
<p>The School/College/Work Initiative is a cooperative effort of the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and the Committee of College Presidents (COP) and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. A Co-Management Team consisting of college presidents, school board directors, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities personnel manages SCWI and works with all district school boards and all colleges through 16 Regional Planning Teams, across the province. SCWI provides opportunities for district school boards and colleges to bring together faculty, teachers and administrators to work collaboratively to increase opportunities for student success. Working together, schools and colleges can better inform students and parents of the wide range of college and apprenticeship programs and the knowledge and skills essential for success in such programs. The building of common understandings and the sharing of expertise and resources contribute to clear pathways from secondary to college programs for a wide range of students. SCWI contributes directly to the increased capacity of boards and colleges to provide students with engaging programs and appropriate supports to ensure both secondary and postsecondary success.</p>	<p>Provincially – CODE and COP and the Ministry of Education and MAESD.</p> <p>Locally – Regional Planning called, PASS – Eastern Ontario Regional School Boards and Algonquin College, St. Lawrence College, Loyalist College partner.</p>	<p>Partnership provides opportunities for Gr. 7-12 students to experience College in a variety of ways – forums, open houses, special events, and the opportunity for senior high school students to enroll in a College course free of charge. If successful in the College course, the high school student receives a high school credit and a first-year college credit. This is called Dual Credit.</p>

NOTES
