



Nova Scotia School  
for **Adult Learning**

## **Community-Based Literacy**

**Consultation 2004**

### *What We Heard*



Department of Education  
Ministère de l'Éducation



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## Introduction

In the spring of 2004, the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) consulted with representatives of community learning organizations across the province. Seven sessions were held with over 85 participants.

This document summarizes the results of these community consultations. The appendices include lists of participants and comments received during the sessions.

**The following pages contain written comments provided by participants in the consultation process. These comments do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Department of Education.**

## Setting the Context

### Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning

The School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) is an adult learning initiative within the Department of Education and under the umbrella of the Skills Nova Scotia Framework, which coordinates educational programs for adults, ranging from basic literacy up to high school completion. The goal of NSSAL is to enhance the employability and well-being of Nova Scotians by providing the essential skills, knowledge and educational credentials required to make successful labour market transitions and to participate actively in the home, the community and the workplace. Community-based programs are an integral part of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning.

In addition to receiving funding from the Department of Education, the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning also receives funding support from the Department of Community Services and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSD). The School provides funding and supports to colleges, school boards and community-based literacy organizations to provide educational services and programs to Nova Scotians.

Through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, the Department of Education provides supports to community-based learning organizations to deliver adult literacy and upgrading programs to Nova Scotians. Programs funded include Levels I, II and III of the Adult Learning Program Curriculum (ALP) and the French language version, *Formation générale des adultes (FGA)*. Program models include one-on-one tutoring and classroom settings.

Adults may enter and exit the educational continuum at different times and at different levels. Programs provided may serve as bridges to the world of work; to improved self-sufficiency and personal development; to community engagement; to further training; and to high school completion or equivalency.

The Department's goals for community-based literacy programs are to:

- deliver quality literacy and upgrading programs throughout Nova Scotia by providing a coordinated delivery model for adult learners;
- promote awareness of the important role that literacy and life-long learning play in the development of healthy and sustainable communities;
- facilitate the development of partnerships within communities that support life-long learning for adults; and
- contribute to the social and economic development of Nova Scotia by increasing the literacy and other essential skills of adult Nova Scotians.

### **Community-Based Literacy Consultation**

Community-based literacy programs were first funded by the Province of Nova Scotia in 1994 through the establishment of the Community Learning Initiative. The Initiative was a response to the need at that time for a continuum of literacy and upgrading programs for adults in the province. Through the ten year life span of the CLI, the Adult Education Division has provided funding, resources and supports to thirty community-based networks and other learning organizations for the delivery of literacy programs. These programs have in turn provided learners with access to programs in their own communities through which they can upgrade their academic skills. Other positive outcomes include increased self-confidence, increased access to further education and training, and the acquisition of new skills for employability and self-growth.

With the tenth anniversary of the Community Learning Initiative in 2004, many groups are facing challenges presented by increasing demands and financial pressures. The Department considered this an opportune time for the government and community-based literacy groups to work together to lay the foundation for a program delivery system in 2005 that will be effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable in the decade ahead.

The rationale for the review is as follows:

- ❑ The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Community Learning Initiative and community-based funding provides an opportunity for the Province and our partners to pause and take stock.
- ❑ In the last ten years there has been a tremendous evolution within the community literacy sector, and as a result, priorities, policies and trends have shifted.
- ❑ Over recent years, the non-profit sector has experienced new challenges related to governance, security and legal responsibilities.
- ❑ Recent funding pressures, such as the expiration of federal contracts and rising operational costs, have placed stress on the delivery system.

- While overall provincial funding to community literacy has increased steadily over ten years, the number of learners served has not always increased.
- The return for learners and taxpayers on the Province's substantial investment in community-based literacy needs to be substantiated and validated.

As a first step in the review, NSSAL undertook a series of seven consultations with community partners in five regions. Consultations were held as follows:

March 31, 2004: CLI Advisory Committee, Halifax

May 6, 2004: Northern Region, Truro

May 7, 2004: Strait and Cape Breton Regions, Port Hawkesbury

May 12, 2004: Halifax Region, Halifax

May 14, 2004: Southwestern Region, Shelburne

May 17, 2004: Valley Region, Lawrencetown

May 29, 2004: Acadian Community, Dartmouth

Invitations were extended to board chairs outlining the goals of the consultations and inviting two board members and one staff member from each organization to the session in their region. Sessions were hosted by Carmelle d'Entremont, Director, Adult Education Division, Jean Smyth and Bobbi Boudreau, Managers, and by the regional Adult Education Coordinators.

The consultation sessions were designed to allow sufficient time for discussion of the theme topics. The sessions were structured as follows:

- 1) Presentation by department staff providing background information on NSSAL and the review process, followed by a question and answer period.
- 2) Discussion was generally coordinated and documented for this report around three primary themes:
  - Board governance
  - Learner progress
  - Policies and guidelines.
- 3) Sessions were evaluated by participants.

## **What We Heard**

Through the discussions that took place at each the community consultations under the key topics of Board Governance, Learner Progress, and Policies and Guidelines, there was a confirmation that, regardless of the region, community-based board members and program coordinators share common concerns.

### **A) Board Governance**

In the area of Board Governance, participants in different consultations spoke with one voice of the challenges facing boards in an increasingly complex environment. The value-added aspect of volunteer hours contributed by boards was emphasized. Participants raised concerns regarding the composition of boards, the difficulty of recruiting and retaining board members, and the need for more opportunities for board development, and for the sharing of existing expertise and resources. They are also seeking direction and clarification in areas such as liability and other types of insurance.

### **B) Learner Progress**

In regard to Learner Progress, participants generally agreed that learners today have higher needs than those served ten years ago when the CLI began. Areas of concern were lower levels of literacy and numeracy, younger ages and hence less maturity, higher frequency of learning disabilities, mental health issues, behavioural issues, lack of motivation, and increased family responsibilities. These higher needs place greater demands on the time and expertise of program staff, particularly coordinators, in assessments and referrals to appropriate agencies when required. This time should be captured in reporting to the Department of Education. As well, staff need more opportunities for professional development in areas where they identify that they lack expertise.

Groups agreed that, regardless of duration in a program, there is a range of outcomes that could be met by learners beyond the traditional quantitative measures. There was agreement that there needs to be a way to identify this range of outcomes and to record these outcomes as positive measures of program and student success. The GED is seen as one measure of success, and there were common concerns and stated need for clarification about where the GED fits within the Adult Learning Program and NSSAL.

### **C) Policies and Guidelines**

Concerns were expressed generally about the volume of Department of Education reporting requirements and about the schedule of reporting, including deadlines. This reporting responsibility also results in additional time commitments for program coordinators. There was also agreement that there needs to be clarification of the terms that are used in the reporting process so that there is a common understanding across the province of these terms (e.g., program, withdrawal, completion).

## **D) Funding**

Although funding was not one of the themes identified for discussion in the consultation, the topic of funding surfaced through all the sessions and was an underlying theme of the entire consultation process. Many of the issues raised throughout the province under each of the theme topics will require increased funding and/or more strategic use of funding to organizations in order to address these concerns.

## **E) Other Issues**

Among other issues that arose at particular consultation sessions were the following:

- transportation barriers for learners (Northern, Southwestern)
- need for community-based Level III's (Southwestern)
- needs of ESL learners (Southwestern)
- need for broader community partnerships (HRM, Strait, Cape Breton)
- increasing costs (HRM)
- more strategic use of, and equity in, Department of Education funding (Southwestern, HRM)
- tutor training costs (Southwestern)
- need for ALP materials and resources (Southwestern)
- need for more funding support from other NSSAL partners, such as Community Services (Valley)
- need for program locations that are comfortable for learners (Valley)
- need to encourage learner and alumnae responsibility (Valley)
- copyright issues regarding literacy materials (Équipe)
- need for funding as a coalition (Équipe)
- issue of funding French as a first language vs. French as a second language (Équipe).

# Consultations

## Community Learning Initiative Advisory Committee

**Organization:** CLI Advisory Committee

**Date:** March 31, 2004

**Location:** Halifax

**Number of Participants:** 12

### A) Learner Progress

The group indicated that there has been an increase in students who are mentally challenged and also in students who have mental health issues. There has also been an increase in referrals from Justice, with related issues such as security concerns for network staff and volunteers.

With present funding levels, organizations are struggling to integrate these learners with higher needs and provide the best level of service to them. The point was also made regarding the need for appropriate referrals by justice and mental health professionals who need to be educated that a literacy program may or may not be the best choice for a client.

The group pointed out that these challenges result in a need for professional development for practitioners on specialized topics that they might not have any previous expertise in, such as mental health issues. It was suggested that Literacy Nova Scotia might play a role in providing this type of professional development.

Regarding whether Level I learners are able to progress academically, the group responded that some learners do, while some do not. There are ethical issues in providing programs when the learners are not able to progress and are simply maintained in programs, versus accommodating all who come. How does an instructor determine that a learner has reached a plateau? How does the instructor identify what steps to take next? One approach suggested for these learners was a different type of program delivery to support the development of life skills, such as reading circles. Another view could be that programs are described as academic, with academic expectations and outcomes, without a special needs component or accommodation.

### B) Level III Curriculum Revision Impacts

Concerns were expressed about the challenges for instructors in delivering the revised and expanded Level III curriculum, which is currently being piloted. Some subject areas might involve more expertise than an instructor currently has. The availability of adequate resources for Level III was also a concern. The group's view was that funding would have to be found to cover the cost of these resources.

Questions were raised about learners' goals in taking Level III. Do they plan to move on to Level IV, take the GED test, or improve their employability skills? It was agreed that, while Level III can prepare people for the GED, the Level III is more than GED preparation and provides learners with more options. Whether or not a student opts to take the GED depend on his/her individual situation and needs.

The point was made that in some areas of the province, Level III students may face barriers in accessing Level IV because of wait lists or distance. There also might not be an adult high school option (e.g. Guysborough and Antigonish). The only option available to them may be the GED.

The question of whether we need to design and offer different types of Level III? One model might be a partial Level III program (e.g. Math and Communications only), rather than offering all the curriculum components. If such a model was offered, what options would it provide to learners?

### **C) Governance and Service Delivery**

When asked to identify the pressures in these areas, the group stated that there is now an additional layer of board responsibility. This layer includes issues of risk management, security and liability, and the need for the development of related policies. Boards are all at different stages of development on these issues. In addition, scheduling of meetings and travel distances also contribute to making it difficult to attract and retain volunteer board members.

Regarding liability insurance and insurance in general, the group is looking for some direction. It was stated that at a time of increasing insurance and other costs, funds are being increasingly drawn away from program delivery. There is a need for clarification regarding what aspects of insurance (fire, theft, liability, multi-site, etc.) should be covered under which fee. There is also a lack of understanding regarding who and what is protected under the Volunteer Protection Act.

Some organizations have implemented strategies to deal with some of these issues. For example, some are requiring security checks on staff, and also instituting policies to protect staff. In some cases, learning/behaviour contracts are being instituted with disruptive students. Learners are no longer being driven on field trips, or tutored in their homes. The latter strategies result in other challenges, such as finding public space for tutoring.

One suggestion was that the Department of Education clarify its expectations regarding insurance under the service agreement to which the groups commit. Other suggestions were that Literacy Nova Scotia provide some professional development on board governance and on liability insurance, and that there be opportunities for information exchanges on effective strategies. The development of a policy and procedures manual was also suggested. Close to the end of the meeting, the question arose as to whether there was another way to structure groups, so that everyone does not have to do everything.

## Northern Region

**Organizations:** Colchester Adult Learning Association (CALA)  
Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading (CANU)  
Pictou County Continuous Learning Association (PICCOLA)  
East Hants Adult Learning Association (EHALA)

**Date:** May 6, 2004

**Location:** Truro

**Number of Participants:** 12

### A) Policies and Guidelines

#### Data Collection

There was considerable discussion regarding the amount of information requested by the Department and the schedule of reporting. It was suggested that the October and February reports provide sufficient information on which to project future funding. There was some discussion around the use of software and technology for reporting. In the end, the group concluded that technical capacities of the networks are too varied to pursue this option.

All participants noted that networks provide useful services in the area of learner referrals and interviews but that this service is not documented to the department. The organizational administrator may spend five minutes or several hours with one inquirer, depending upon whether the adult has any information about what is available in the community. Adults are often assessed and sent on to other, more appropriate, organizations in the community. Networks consider this to be a valuable service to the adult learning community, but note that this aspect of their role is not captured in reports to the Department of Education.

#### Terminology

The group agreed that their understanding of a program is that students take all subjects of the Adult Learning Program, not just components of it. The group discussed the need to have consistent understanding of report terms among all networks and the Department (e.g., enrolled, completed, discontinued). It was recommended that a task team be formed involving the community-based coordinators for the purpose of suggesting reporting schedules and common definitions.

### B) Learner Progress

#### Duration in Program

Network representatives agreed that there were positive outcomes of student mobility that are not captured in documentation to the Department of Education. An adult may stay in a program for four or five weeks prior to entering Nova Scotia Community College. When indicating that the students have left the community-based program, there should be a means of reporting a progressive move as opposed to an exit. Exit implies that the student dropped out of the program. There were questions concerning the length of time students could attend a program.

Should students have a minimum and a maximum duration in a program? The group recognized that there are human rights issues to be considered before moving a learner out of a program.

### Measuring Progress

There was a lengthy discussion about quantitative and qualitative success. Concerns were mentioned relating to counting, how to count, whom to count, and the value of counting at all. The group acknowledged the government's need to be accountable for grants, but related examples of significant and positive changes in learners' quality of life as being most important, but these outcomes are not quantifiable results of participation in foundational literacy programs.

### Rural Programs

Questions were raised about addressing the literacy needs in rural areas. There is a decreased population spread over greater distances, but nonetheless a need for literacy programming. Networks feel challenged to meet the literacy needs in rural areas because there must be a minimum number of participants in a given area in order to provide programming. This, paired with the lack of public transportation in rural areas, results in too many obstacles for individual learners in smaller communities.

## **C) Board Governance**

### Recruitment

Discussion entailed strategic recruitment of potential board members. Boards need to know what skills current members bring to the table, and what other skills their board requires. Boards need to learn how to attract those with the needed skills. Literacy is a multi-dimensional issue touching upon health, education, and poverty. Because these issues interconnect, boards have to do a better job of recruiting from the wider community. Boards need to promote themselves not as literacy organizations, but as community organizations with a literacy focus.

### Development

The group agreed that there needs to be an opportunity for board members from many or all the community-based networks to exchange ideas. Many boards operate differently from one another and, given an opportunity to assemble, could learn much from collective experiences. It was suggested that perhaps Literacy Nova Scotia could take on such a project with the help of the Department of Education. There are issues that boards need to discuss such as recruitment, policy guidelines, and liability, to name a few. There is currently no formal mechanism in place for boards to exchange information and ideas. The group felt it was important to emphasize that the agenda for such a gathering would have to be determined from the bottom up.

## Halifax Region

**Organizations:** Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia  
Bedford-Sackville Literacy Network  
Preston and Area Learning Skills  
Cunard Learning Centre  
Dartmouth and Area Literacy Association (DALA)  
Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley Network  
Western HRM Community Learning Network  
Halifax Community Learning Network  
Black Educators Association

**Date:** May 12, 2004

**Location:** Halifax

**Number of Participants:** 23

### A) Board Governance

#### Board Support

The feedback received on this topic emphasized that these are challenging times for boards, and as a result it is often difficult to recruit new board members. The group clearly identified the need for support for existing boards, including the sharing of particular expertise through workshops. The point was made that it takes a long time for a board to develop into a unique entity. Through that process, many networks have developed detailed policies, guidelines and bylaws on different aspects of their operation. These could serve as valuable resources to others, and could be shared. It was suggested that the department or Literacy Nova Scotia pull some of these existing board resources together for sharing with other networks. The department could also develop templates or samples, similar to the job descriptions that are provided in the community-based guidelines. The group also emphasized the need for opportunities to get together to share any existing resources.

Boards should reflect the changing landscape of the literacy community. The suggestion was made to broaden the expertise on boards to include financial, legal and other expertise.

Other resources were suggested during the discussion. These included courses provided by Henson College under their Non-Profit Sector Leadership Program. The United Way was also suggested as a resource, as was the Internet.

#### Partnerships

Because workforce literacy skills contribute to a healthy economy, business and industry are seen to have an important role to play in the literacy community. Some corporate bodies are already involved and may serve as models for businesses supporting learning. Further partnerships with business and the corporate sector should be explored. The HRM Regional Development Authority was suggested as a potential partner. The group also stated that there should be stronger links between the community-based sector and the Workplace Education Initiative of the Department of Education.

## Voluntary Contribution

The value of the volunteer hours contributed by board members and other volunteers was emphasized. Reference was made to the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative, which identifies the importance of the volunteer sector to Canadian society, as the third pillar along with the public and private sectors. It was stated that this contribution to community-based literacy should be identified and quantified by the department when it is collecting data.

## Other Concerns

Other concerns raised during the discussion included increasing costs, such as liability insurance and rent.

## **B) Learner Progress**

Each organizational representative at the table provided an overview of the programs they offer and the varied types of learners served by these programs. Many of these programs include learners with challenges, from learning disabilities to global delays. Some learners may never have been identified as having a learning disability, and resources are often lacking in this area. Student progress varies, depending on the learner's situation. Other factors that impact on learner progress include the duration of contact hours with tutors or instructors, and program breaks over the summer which interrupt the flow of learning and often set learners back.

Many learners move on to Level III in community-based or community college programs. Some are seeking to upgrade their skills for employment purposes.

## **C) Policies and Guidelines**

### Data Collection and Reporting Schedules

In regard to the department's gathering data on the community-based sector, the group pointed out that the full range and extent of what is being accomplished in programs is not captured. For example, one important component of coordinators' work that is not captured is the time-consuming counselling and referral of learners. Another area mentioned was the creation of partnerships. This all needs to be recorded and validated.

Concerns were expressed regarding reporting schedules, deadline dates, and funding notification. The point was also made that we need common terminology and a common understanding regarding the data to be collected. It was suggested that a task team be formed regarding policies and guidelines, understanding that the department views some aspects as non-negotiable.

### Measuring Success

The question of how we measure success was asked. Is it the completion of a level, acquiring the GED or the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults, gaining employment, or reaching personal goals? The group advised caution regarding the definition of student success since there can be a range of positive outcomes.

### Meeting Community Needs

The point was made that the Department of Education needs to invest its annual grants strategically in regions. If new partners became involved in the delivery of programs, the funding would be spread more thinly. The department needs to clearly identify the client base and the services required to meet those client needs.

The role of the Department of Community Services was also raised as an issue, since many DCS clients are served in these programs. What is the organization's responsibility in maintaining data on these DCS clients? Is there a possibility that DCS can support the networks in this process?

## **Strait and Cape Breton Regions**

**Organizations:** Cape Breton Literacy Network  
Guysborough County Adult Learning Association (GALA)  
Port Hawkesbury Literacy Council  
Richmond County Literacy Network  
Antigonish County Adult Learning Association (ACALA)  
Community Learning Association North of Smokey (CLANS)  
Inverness County Literacy Network

**Date:** May 7, 2004

**Location:** Port Hawkesbury

**Number of Participants:** 17

Because of the smaller number of organizations in Cape Breton Region, the Strait Region and Cape Breton Region were combined in one consultation session.

### **A) Policies and Guidelines**

Insurance and Board liability dominated the discussion, with these costs placing great stress on CLI Networks. There is inconsistent information and varying experience of organizations regarding board liability. Issues of cost, board stress, lack of policy and direction were expressed by networks. No one seems to be able to confirm what board liability actually covers nor whether one-stop shopping is appropriate or can be achieved. One network wanted a blanket policy supported by the Department of Education. The department's response was that it could not endorse or recommend a specific set of insurance policies. One board member suggested a return to a community education model under the school boards, which have liability coverage. A consistent view was that amalgamation was not an option for any groups at this time. Groups were more concerned about preservation of their networks and community profiles.

### **B) Board Governance**

Board members stated that they were tired and frustrated by on-going crises. Financial challenges such as insurance and rental costs were priorities for them. The issue of sustainability for boards seemed more of a long-term goal than an immediate concern. Sustainability is still equated with "core" funding, not fundraising. Boards will try to maintain the level of programs with existing monies as they always do. Governance of organizations is recognized to be a stressful and high-risk involvement for volunteers. It was stated that volunteers do not want to become board members who are under stress.

The Strait Region members suggested that the Department of Education take a lead in forging relationships with the school board and other government departments to support literacy organizations. It was also noted that board members do not want to join a voluntary board to become fundraisers. It was stated that there is inconsistency in the attendance of board members at CLI Network meetings, and as a result the views of partner organizations may not always be represented. A creative idea was presented regarding the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and the Federation of Municipalities. In order for a municipality to freely allocate financial

support to CLI Networks, the 1% budget restriction needed to be lifted. This avenue is being pursued one of the participating networks.

### **C) Learner Progress**

Three main areas dominated this discussion. One issue was the need for clarification regarding CLI programs and GED service delivery. The department clarification was that GED preparation is being addressed through the ALP Level II and III. The level of success is determined by individual and personal goals. Hence, an individual pursuing GED completion through an ALP program and acquiring the GED credential is an appropriate indicator of success. CLI Networks do not advertise GED preparation programs nor does the Department fund GED preparation programs per se.

The second area of discussion was how to measure success. The group stated that the department and CLI Networks need to articulate what is viewed and accepted as a measure of success.

The third issue that was identified is a shift in the age of program participants. There is a notable increase in learners below the age of 25, specifically 18-20. The answer to the question of who we are serving includes a broad range of learners. The increase of younger individuals results in program participants who were less motivated due to their lack of maturity.

There is also a notable increase in adults who may have specific learning challenges or disabilities. Networks state that there is a lack of referral resources to support these learners' needs. It was also stated that there are people remaining in lower level programs rather than moving to the next level. Learner needs in Level I and II ( whether financial or other needs) are not being met by partners or referral agencies. Besides irregular attendance, there are safety and mental health issues that are carried into programs. Issues of transportation, daycare and income support for learners were also identified by the group. Lastly, the need was stressed for better coordination of appropriate counselling, assessment and referral services for learners with special needs by relevant agencies.

## Southwestern Region

**Organizations:** Lunenburg County Adult Learning Network  
Queens County Learning Network  
Shelburne County Learning Network  
Yarmouth County Learning Network

**Date:** May 14, 2004

**Location:** Shelburne

**Number of Participants:** 8

### A) Board Governance

#### Liability Insurance

It was stressed that this is an important matter for all network boards. It was suggested that the province should accept responsibility for this cost as it is great for each group. One participant asked if an umbrella policy could be arranged with one insurer that would cover all the networks in the province. There was uncertainty about the optimum level of coverage required.

#### Equity in Funding

Concern was expressed about the apparent inequity in the level of funding among the networks in the province, and between the networks and the other deliverers under NSSAL. All networks are being asked to do more, yet additional financial resources are not being made available to support this increase in responsibilities.

#### Retention and Recruitment of Board Members

The significant increase in responsibilities and commitments now shouldered by network boards has made it difficult to retain and recruit members. Also, a broader range of expertise is now required on most boards. In addition to those with skills in the area of adult education and literacy, boards now also require members with legal and accounting skills. One participant summed up this dilemma by stating that the "...responsibilities for board members are greater than they expected or can handle." The group wondered if having fewer boards is an option for future consideration.

### B) Learner Progress

#### Community-based Level III Programs

The need for community-based Level III programs was endorsed. With the introduction of the new curriculum, consistency in delivery in programs across the province will be expected. Participants stressed the need for in-servicing of Level III instructors in all subject areas, and for the provision of the resources necessary to support the delivery of the new curriculum.

#### Transportation Needs

Participants made two salient points regarding transportation matters:

- (1) Liverpool is 30 miles away for the NSCC, Lunenburg Campus in Bridgewater. Lack of transportation for many learners is a major concern. It is a significant barrier for those who want to study outside of Queens County. If the Level III is

discontinued in Liverpool, students will have access only to the adult high school program.

- (2) Adult learners can use the school bus if they attend the adult high school program in Liverpool, but can not use the bus if they attend the community-based Level III program. Policies regarding the use of school buses by adult learners are inconsistent in Queens County.

### GED

Consensus among participants was that learners are aware of the GED option, but that many may not always be fully informed as to how it differs from the high school diploma and from the high school diploma for adults. Factors such as time, course choice, NSCC waiting lists, employer preferences and learner goals are all critical to consider before choosing the GED credential or either of the other two credentials. Having ready access to information that will enable learners to make informed choices about the credential that will best support their learning goals is critical.

### Other Observations:

“There has been a change in the needs of learners we now see in our programs. Their needs are greater than those of the learners supported ten years ago. Today learners are younger, have never been in the work force, and are often learning disabled. Pressures are greater on the student and on the instructor.”

Upgrading programs are now being asked to assist learners who have their high school diplomas but who do not have high school leaving levels in reading, writing and math skills.

Some learners could benefit from attending evening programs.

## **C) Policies and Guidelines**

### Tutor Training

Participants felt that the program is too intense for volunteers, and that each volunteer does not need to have his/her own manual, and that the cost of the manuals is too great. It was suggested that other models of delivery should be explored to reduce the intensity of the program. Perhaps the networks could manage a supply of a few manuals that volunteers could access as needed.

### ESL

Some networks receive many requests to help ESL learners. Programs cannot meet this need.

### Length of Time in Programs

Questions were raised about the length of time learners should remain in programs, and under what circumstances they should be moved on or released. Learners who need to develop social skills often require longer periods of time in the classroom at the lower levels.

### Resources

Concern was expressed about the pressure all programs face having to stretch limited learner resources.

## Valley Region

**Organizations:** Annapolis County Learning Network (ACLN)  
Kings County Learning Association (KCLA)  
Hants Learning Network Association  
Digby Area Learning Association

**Date:** May 17, 2004

**Location:** Lawrencetown

**Number of Participants:** 10

### A) Policies and Guidelines

The Valley group expressed concern about conveying in their funding application to the Department of Education the real needs in their communities. They stressed the need for base-line funding and stated that the current applications do not always reflect good programming or area priorities. A question was raised about the possibility of increasing the Department of Community Services contribution to NSSAL.

The group stated that there must be a way for the Department of Education to capture the often lengthy time spent by coordinators in consultation with learners, in counselling, and in referral. They stressed that programs must admit learners at the point that they are ready and interested in participating. We also need to decide how to document success – not necessarily quantitative (e.g. number of completions) but successes like a learner being able to read aloud in church. Videos documenting student success in programs are more moving and eloquent since they put a human face on the statistics.

### B) Board Governance

The group emphasized the challenges facing boards today regarding their systems of governance, challenges that require almost daily involvement of board members, some of whom are learners. Pressures to seek more funding, better qualified staff, and so on, all lead to burn-out among board members. These factors also lead to difficulty in recruiting new board members. There is a funding issue regarding the developmental work that boards need to carry out regarding hiring practices, performance planning, etc.

There is no one board model across the province. There are many different structures, e.g., one organization or network with one board; an umbrella group with a board encompassing different organizations, each with boards. Some models work well for accessing funding but some make it difficult to retain coordinators and to provide a continuum for learners. Questions were raised regarding whether there are too many people involved in delivery and ways we can work more efficiently.

The group talked about the diversity of the population across the province (e.g., rural and urban populations) but stated that although the enrollment numbers differ from network to network, the

challenges are the same. There are major changes facing boards which need to be successfully navigated (e.g., by using a more business-like model), but funding is needed to acquire and retain qualified people to work in programs. Board members stated that coordinators' hours (which can range from 15-30 hours) are an issue. Many of these are unpaid volunteer hours. Their view was that there are not enough hours or funds for coordinators to run programs properly.

Participants also identified the need for the Department of Education to share existing board policies and guidelines with other boards. They would also like to see common understandings regarding the terminology used in gathering statistical data on programs. A set of provincial guidelines based on the components of the service agreement with the Province would be useful to all community-based organizations. As well, participants suggested that a session in which board resources could be shared would be of value, provided the supports are provided to facilitate attendance.

### **C) Learner Progress**

Because of the increased profile of networks and programs in communities, more learners are accessing programs. The group agreed that the major difference in learners today is that they have many needs beyond educational needs. Learners may need more basic literacy and often lack life/social skills. Learners are sometimes not able to maintain friendships; they may lack self-esteem and social skills, and sometimes have unpredictable behaviour. As a result some networks have developed codes of conduct to address learner behaviour and issues of staff security.

The learner's personal and family support system sometimes is not accepting of the person's growth. Since these issues cannot be ignored if the learners is to progress academically, a considerable amount of additional time is required of coordinators in assessment and in dealing with these issues. Providing this time to assess, support and encourage learners is viewed as being very important by the group.

The importance of professional development was emphasized, both for Level I and II curriculum aspects and to assist in dealing with learners' special and varied needs. Coordinators and staff may not have the necessary specialized skills. The point was made that there is a fine line between support and counselling, in knowing when one's comfort level has been exceeded, i.e., when to refer a learner to the appropriate professional.

The group agreed that the classroom setting is sometimes not a comfortable experience for learners. Many learners prefer one-to-one tutoring, especially when they see it working for others. Some learners are capable of Level II work but are more comfortable in a one-on-one setting. The point was made that the community college setting is intimidating. Some learners never come forward to take programs for this reason, however those who do enter programs come to like being on campus.

Other challenges include lack of motivation among some sponsored students. Lack of progress may be addressed through student conferences with Employment Support counsellors, instructors, and coordinators. Learners may need a referral to a Work Activity Program, or to

some other appropriate option. The point was made that someone might not be making academic progress, but may still be improving him/herself and contributing to the program. However, because of other issues some learners may not be able to take advantage of this “second chance,” and are forced to drop out.

The group agreed that education and social development are intertwined and inseparable. The general benefits for learners of being in a program fit under our broader definition of literacy. We need to have other outcomes identified beyond academic outcomes, such as social outcomes. We also need to have alternate programs for learners who may not progress academically (e.g., reading circles). We need to provide these opportunities in rural areas – such programs add to learners’ quality of life and benefit their children and their families.

## Acadian Community

**Organization:** Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse

**Date:** May 29, 2004

**Location:** Dartmouth

**Number of Participants:** 5

### A. Policies and Guidelines

The discussion was dominated by the challenges involved in the administration of a provincial network, Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse, with distance creating difficulties in terms of report and contract completion, provision of support to instructors, and increased costs for travel, rent and insurance.

#### Funding

Board members expressed the opinion that as a coalition for the Francophone community, the Équipe plays a similar role as that of Literacy Nova Scotia, but without the support the coalition receives from government. As the group representing Francophones in Nova Scotia at the national level, the Équipe faces an overwhelming number of requests from organizations and external agencies for meetings, surveys, professional development training, and information sharing.

Also as a provincial network, the group considers that they are not funded at the same level as other provincial networks and they are curious as to what criteria are used by the Department of Education to determine funding levels.

Board members represent diverse Acadian communities across the province from Sydney to Pubnico. Consequently, although it is costly to hold a provincial meeting, such meetings are necessary from time to time. Since its inception, the network has been creative in meeting regularly through video-conferencing. Université Sainte-Anne has been very gracious in offering its video-conferencing system to the community for this purpose.

#### Copyright Issue

The Department of Education has signed a copyright agreement with Access Copyright for its school boards. The agreement enables teachers and school administrators to photocopy a certain percentage of a document. Unfortunately, this agreement does not cover literacy networks and groups funded by the Province. Équipe would like the Department to include literacy groups in the agreement regarding the copyright agreement on teaching materials.

### B. Board Governance

The Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse has started the reconfiguration of its network and Board of Directors. Until now, members of the Board were individuals interested or involved in adult literacy. However, it was felt that stronger regional representation was necessary in order to strengthen the network and its place in the Acadian Community, both at the provincial and at the regional levels. The network was able to ensure the involvement of regional community

groups on its Board of Directors and in turn, the organizations play a stronger role in literacy in their respective communities.

The group will also provide a series of professional development workshops for its new board members in the fall. Sessions to be held will include board governance, development of by-laws and guidelines, and staff supervision.

### **C. Learner Progress**

First, Équipe described the type of programs offered to learners. Small classes are offered on a part-time basis, rather than individual tutoring. All agree that few students from literacy programs continue to Levels III and IV, or to post-secondary programs. The coordinator reports that the motivation for current students to engage in community literacy classes is not to pursue post-secondary education or even to obtain a High School Graduation Diploma for Adults, but to improve their French language skills. Most of the Acadian learners have studied in English in the past, but French is now more important to them because of factors such as the Acadian World Congress, cultural awareness or community involvement. Other adults engaged in literacy activities are parents of children attending Acadian schools, or people who joined the classes for work or employment reasons.

An important issue that arose from the discussion is the ever present issue of language - French first language versus French second language. The network receives an increasing number of requests from adults who want to take French language classes. Some of these are English speaking parents of children in the Acadian schools system. Others are Anglophones who already speak French, but who would like to improve their skills. Through its community-based literacy initiative, the department funds Acadian community programs for French first language. Although the department does not fund French second language courses, it still wants to have some flexibility for "Francisation," i.e. individuals who at one point in their lives spoke French as a first language, but who have lost some of these skills.

### **Conclusion**

The consultation enabled the network to speak openly with the department, one of its funders, about important issues and concerns specific to its population and situation. The Équipe has built strong partnerships over the years, both with the community and key departments within government. Next steps for the group are to bring more organizations on board in order to promote the importance of education in French.

## Appendix A

### Consultation Participants

#### Department of Education

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Position</b>
Carmelle d'Entremont	Director, Adult Education
Jean Smyth	Manager, Adult Education
Bobbi Boudreau	Manager, Adult Education
Donna MacGillivray	Adult Education Coordinator
Barb Moreton	Adult Education Coordinator
Ann MacDonald	Adult Education Coordinator
Lynne Wells-Orchard	Adult Education Coordinator
Martha Shinyei	Adult Education Coordinator
Joëlle Désy	Adult Education Coordinator

#### CLI Advisory Committee

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Region Represented</b>	<b>Association Member</b>
Faye Fricker	Cape Breton Region	Community Learning Assoc. North of Smokey
Fred Popowich	Northern Region	Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library
Ann Guy	ESL Community	Metro Region Immigrant Language Services
Ann Marie Downie	Literacy Nova Scotia	
Shirley Shot	Southwestern Region	Queens Learning Network
Kathryn MacCuish	Laubach Literacy of Canada	Cape Breton Literacy Network Association
Tina Boutilier	Metro Rural Region	Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley Literacy Network
Tylor McDuff	Metro Urban Region	Halifax Community Learning Network
Patricia Helliwell	Valley Region	West Hants Learning Network
Grail Sangster	Strait Region	Guysborough Adult Learning Association

Shirley Vigneault	Acadian Community	Équipe d'alphabétisation - Nouvelle-Écosse
Dwayne Provo	African-Canadian Community	Black Educators Association

### **Northern Region**

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Mark Mason	Colchester Adult Learning Association
Wendy Robichaud	Colchester Adult Learning Association
Jerry Randall	Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading
Frances Newman	Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading
Beth Smith	Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading
Mary MacDonald	Pictou County Continuous Learning Association
Vivian Farrell	Pictou County Continuous Learning Association
Dave Freckelton	Pictou County Continuous Learning Association
Rob MacLellan	East Hants Adult Learning Association
Linda Coolen	East Hants Adult Learning Association
Susan Webber	East Hants Adult Learning Association
Anna Parks	Colchester Adult Learning Association

### **Strait and Cape Breton Regions**

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Murdock Moore	Cape Breton Literacy Network
Jacqueline Holmes	Cape Breton Literacy Network
Kathy MacCuish	Cape Breton Literacy Network
Helen MacPhee	Guysborough County Adult Learning Association
Elizabeth MacInnis	Port Hawkesbury Literacy Council
Karen Malcolm	Richmond County Literacy Network

Mary Lou Nunn-Brenton	Antigonish County Adult Learning Association
Lana MacLean	Port Hawkesbury Literacy Council
Grail Sangster	Guysborough County Adult Learning Association
Kim Stockley	Community Learning Association North of Smokey
Faye Fricker	Community Learning Association North of Smokey
Walter Procter	Antigonish County Adult Learning Association
Shirley McNamara	Richmond County Literacy Network
Millie Hatt	Richmond County Literacy Network
Anna Lee MacEachern	Inverness County Literacy Network
Judy Cairns	Antigonish County Adult Learning Association
Raylene Bowman	Antigonish County Adult Learning Association

**Halifax Regional Municipality**

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Melba Blunden	Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia
Eleanor Morse Taylor	Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia
Joyce Power	Eastern Shore & Musquodoboit Valley Network
Denise Morley	Bedford-Sackville Literacy Network
Josh Judah	Bedford-Sackville Literacy Network
Kathy Boutilier	Western HRM Community Learning Network
Tracey Jones	Halifax Community Learning Network (Halifax Public Library)
Laura Cain	Preston & Area Learning Skills
Tylor McDuff	Halifax Community Learning Network
Gayle Cromwell	Dartmouth & Area Literacy Association (DLN)
Dave Rideout	Cunard Learning Centre (HRDA)
Kim Welsman	Dartmouth & Area Literacy Association
Eleanor MacDonald	Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia
Norma McNiven	Preston & Area Learning Skills
Don Parker	Eastern Shore & Musquodoboit Valley Network
Allister Johnson	Preston & Area Learning Skills
Frank Gibson	Dartmouth & Area Literacy Association (DWAS)
Carolyn Fowler	Black Educators Association
Ben Bishop	Black Educators Association
Carson Fancy	Cunard Learning Centre (HRDA)
Cathy Gaudette	Cunard Learning Centre
Barb Allen	Western HRM Community Learning Network
Deborah Ratcliffe	Western HRM Community Learning Network

**Southwestern Region**

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Gina Freeman_____	Lunenburg County Adult Learning Network
Marlene Duckworth	Queens County Learning Network
Shirley Shot	Queens County Learning Network
Martha Holmes_____	Shelburne County Learning Network
Janet O’Connell	Shelburne County Learning Network
Virginia Smith	Yarmouth County Learning Network
Jennifer Gavel	Yarmouth County Learning Network
Eric Tetford	Yarmouth County Learning Network

**Valley Region**

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Organization</b>
John Lee	Annapolis County Learning Network
Kathy Witherly	Annapolis County Learning Network
Lisa Hammett Vaughan	Kings County Learning Association
Wendy Hudson	Hants Learning Network Association
Karen Marsh	Hants Learning Network Association
Peter Gillis	Kings County Learning Association
Garry Brown	Annapolis County Learning Network
Patricia Helliwell	Hants Learning Network Association
Rod Franklin	Digby Area Learning Association
Tina Cleaves	Digby Area Learning Association

**Francophone Community**

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Manon Cardey	Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse
Carole Aucoin	Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse
David Maillet	Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse
Anne-Marie d'Entremont	Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse
Shirley Vigneault	Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse

## Appendix B

### Consultation Evaluations

#### Northern Region Consultation

1. How would you rate this consultation?	<b>5</b> <b>extremely useful</b>	<b>4</b> <b>very useful</b>	<b>3</b> <b>useful</b>	<b>2</b> <b>somewhat useful</b>	<b>1</b> <b>not useful at all</b>
Comments:	5	6			
2. What, if any, additional comments do you have on each of the discussion topics?	<p><i>Policies and guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Concerns stated today - useful to derive local documents and perhaps consult back with this group to share. <i>(respondent had indicated this comment covered both the policies and guidelines and governance topics).</i></li> <li>▶ I believe that having policies and guidelines is critical for board members in order to run an effective network. It is also important to follow these policies.</li> <li>▶ Highlighted need to have guidelines/standards for board operation - also need for all to feel a part of the whole. Look forward to further meeting(s) on these topics <i>(respondent had indicated this comment covered both the policies and guidelines and governance topics).</i></li> <li>▶ Need to be reviewed to better reflect data.</li> <li>▶ Important that the DOE clearly identifies terms can be used to identify student status, such as “enrolled”, “exited” or other terms.</li> <li>▶ The present procedures are not difficult to complete.</li> <li>▶ We need to be dialoguing about adult literacy using the same meanings to the vocabulary we speak to each other.</li> <li>▶ Very good discussion.</li> </ul> <p><i>Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Hot topic, collectively there appears to be a lot of interest in this area.</li> <li>▶ Agree that we need an opportunity to meet with boards from other areas to discuss governance issues.</li> <li>▶ Good discussions.</li> <li>▶ A meeting to share a set of guidelines may prove useful.</li> <li>▶ What are we missing in board governance to be effective?</li> </ul>				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Interesting discussion pertaining to Board constituents. Perhaps a suggested template could be created.</li> </ul> <p><i>Learner progress</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Note: Due to time constraints, the group did not discuss Learner Progress. This will be a topic for network coordinators to explore at a later date.</i></li> <li>▶ Tabled.</li> <li>▶ Would love the chance to discuss this topic. Definitely on the agenda for next time.</li> <li>▶ I need to gain more information about learners in our programs.</li> <li>▶ N/A (x 3).</li> <li>▶ It is a new attitude in the classroom that needs re-evaluating.</li> </ul>
<p>3. What do you see as key issues and/or priorities for future discussion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Learners in excess of the funding available to provide a service to them.</li> <li>▶ Funding!</li> <li>▶ Liability and partnerships.</li> <li>▶ Board governance appears to be a hot topic.</li> <li>▶ Learning progress issues. We didn't get into this during the session but would like to have a chance to discuss this.</li> <li>▶ I believe board members could benefit from getting together and sharing information. I would like to discuss other funding options that networks use including fundraising.</li> <li>▶ Recruitment of learners.</li> <li>▶ Professional development for instructors.</li> <li>▶ Challenges facing the organizations.</li> <li>▶ Importance for policy makers to see adult literacy as a major social issue - worthy of significant focus and funding.</li> <li>▶ Best practices for all networks to follow.</li> <li>▶ How do we deal with administering programs with the same level of funding?</li> <li>▶ Sustainability of network structures.</li> <li>▶ The learners we are meeting have numerous learning, social and employment issues.</li> <li>▶ Board development.</li> <li>▶ Standards for classroom reporting.</li> <li>▶ Opportunity to share information.</li> <li>▶ Reporting information.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Best practices - regarding policies and practices.</li> <li>▶ Efficient delivery of programs.</li> <li>▶ Partnerships.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Is there anything you would change about the consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Shorter agenda - task teams sound good.</li> <li>▶ No, I felt this format was fine. It possibility could be longer 9:00-3:00.</li> <li>▶ It would have been beneficial to have this longer so there was more time for discussion.</li> <li>▶ More time for discussion - I'd rather spend another hour here than have our discussion time cut off.</li> <li>▶ Enjoyed the information giving session very much. Did not have a good understanding of NSSAL before. Also enjoyed the discussion in pm. Good balance.</li> <li>▶ Too many items on the agenda.</li> <li>▶ More time for discussion, less time on presentations.</li> <li>▶ Not this one, but in future stay away from history and background and deal more with present issues.</li> <li>▶ Shorter intro - as much of the information was a review.</li> <li>▶ A half hour more time.</li> <li>▶ More dialogue: but I understand background had to be provided.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Do you have any additional comments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Was a good day. We just had too much to discuss. A more interactive session where we each had a better opportunity to share some concerns, opinions, strategies and even perhaps had data and documents would be even more useful.</li> <li>▶ I feel that today was extremely useful, thanks for giving us the opportunity to get together.</li> <li>▶ I found the morning very informative, the information will be helpful to me as a board member.</li> <li>▶ Very worthwhile.</li> <li>▶ Thanks.</li> <li>▶ Good start!</li> <li>▶ This is a <u>positive</u> process.</li> <li>▶ A good start, please continue.</li> <li>▶ Very respectful, friendly environment.</li> </ul>

## Halifax Region Consultation

1. How would you rate this consultation?	5 extremely useful	4 very useful	3 useful	2 somewhat useful	1 not useful at all
Comments:	1	9	5	2	
<p>2. What, if any, additional comments do you have on each of the discussion topics?</p>	<p><i>Policies and guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ I like the idea of providing best practice policy documents to boards.</li> <li>▶ Templates can be provided to assist all in covering their basis.</li> <li>▶ Need to continue to be under review as they are -</li> <li>▶ I didn't find the consultation very useful, but I think the session was good for the Dept. of Educ.</li> <li>▶ Additional clarification...</li> <li>▶ The number of one to one instructions policy is a major challenge when the students in a class are at different levels of different subjects.</li> <li>▶ Need more time to do this. Need seminar/in house training.</li> <li>▶ Sharing through the department may be the best way. Time for training session is a real issue.</li> <li>▶ Like the idea of policy framework to guide us.</li> <li>▶ Need more time on this one- maybe not priority- but good to know what are "Policies" for us? "Guidelines" for us?</li> <li>▶ Early information on grants.</li> <li>▶ It is very important to follow and stick to the policies and guidelines once they established.</li> </ul> <p><i>Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Lots of resources available. I will send some useful URL's.</li> <li>▶ Some more entrenched organizations are able to assist those just trying to establish themselves.</li> <li>▶ An area that could be looked at more closely, but these volunteers probably are satisfied with the small time commitment of 2-3 hours a month - it works for us as is...</li> <li>▶ Recruiting and keeping good board volunteers. If we have too many meetings, we will not be able to keep them.</li> <li>▶ As a new board member on a new board, I would like to see the structural, developmental and model information made available.</li> <li>▶ Groups should be informed that the Registry of Joint Stock</li> </ul>				

	<p>Companies has a template of by-laws under the Societies Act that can be used. They are open to group modifications that stay within the legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Insurance issue - concerns with expensive cost! Need seminar to do this?</li> <li>▶ The variety of models is interesting - further discussion may be helpful.</li> <li>▶ Longer discussions relating to who should be on a board. We are burning out being on the board plus same group on all the project teams.</li> <li>▶ Vision of what board governance is - duties. How it works - help to see the whole picture of “Real” board that lend to develop literacy successfully. More discussion/workshop a suggestion.</li> <li>▶ More information on liability insurance costs.</li> <li>▶ Government grants: need clarification regarding accountability of chair, vice chair and secretary.</li> <li>▶ Board members should be offered some financial contribution (though slight to offset their travel expenses) and also have ongoing professional development.</li> <li>▶ Liability Insurance costs*** Sharing of policies for other boards.</li> <li>▶ Barbara Allen forwarded documents used in Terence Bay as reference for Board development. The HRDA link will lead to lots of on-line resources for non-profit Board work. <a href="http://www.hrda.ns.ca/Halifax">Http://www.hrda.ns.ca/Halifax</a> Regional Development Agency. The Women’s CED network produced a workbook a few years back. Attached is a description of that publication. It is very basic and was designed to encourage and assist individuals with low literacy levels to participate at the Board level. <a href="http://womenscednetwork.org/Tea you can trot a mouse on...">Http://womenscednetwork.org/Tea you can trot a mouse on...</a>The elements of Community-based Economic Development. This is also a good resource.</li> <li>▶ It would be nice to have some general guidelines from the department.</li> </ul> <p><i>Learner Progress</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ I would like to learn about innovative recruitment strategies for learners. Better recognition of Community Learning Networks from DCS.</li> <li>▶ One-on-one tutoring is a <u>very</u> slow process and it realistically <u>will</u> take years to see progress —</li> <li>▶ Learning challenged people are difficult to work with because we don’t know what their learning challenge is and have volunteer tutors who are not properly equipped to work with these people.</li> <li>▶ In rural area(s) more outreach programs and partnership relationship sharing of information...supports. I would echo the need for better evaluation processes. Need for more tutor</li> </ul>
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	<p>recruitment and training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Indirect benefits to the labour market needs to recognize and accept as goals also.</li> <li>▶ Good to learn what other groups do in their learner consumers taking literacy - good overall.</li> <li>▶ Update achievements on learners and follow up.</li> <li>▶ Was a very good topic, but would like to learn more from different organizations, also ways to do more for learners who are in a program for a very long time, and what to do to end it.</li> <li>▶ There is a need to offer more support to concrete assessments around identifying learning needs of participants. Re learning disabilities levels of adult learners. There are costs and a network or organization is normally unable to afford this.</li> <li>▶ Very interesting - common concerns among networks.</li> </ul>
<p>3. What do you see as key issues and/or priorities for future discussion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support for community based networks to access additional funding options.</li> <li>▶ Collaboration. Inventory Resources and determine the best need.</li> <li>▶ More of the same.</li> <li>▶ Level I and II materials are just as expensive or more in comparison to Levels III and IV. Workbooks cost at least \$20.00 each. One hundred dollars will purchase about five books (low level readers).</li> <li>▶ Program sustainability, resources, accountability.</li> <li>▶ I feel that the NSSAL or LNS should venture into purchasing a group insurance policy for all community adult education groups.</li> <li>▶ To develop policy, rules for board governance and be trained and become familiar with them. Need to identify and recognize LD to give proper lesson plans and also prepare assessment tool.</li> <li>▶ More of an understanding of similarities and differences across the Province.</li> <li>▶ Sustainable funding, partnerships, overall structure that can be used by all networks: policies, hiring, firing etc.; recording system - numbers of learners, repeats, those who progress to the next level and funding should reflect this.</li> <li>▶ Board liability? Not comfortable as a volunteer board member being responsible to fire an employee who is paid. From federal grants - get new computers, etc. No money to pay for insurance to keep the equipment? Ironic?</li> <li>▶ Policies - workshop/discussion - how to develop a better policy for administration "Whose Policies" - one (Dept.) Or man (Org. own policy)?? More focus on staff, adm, board members - strategy, teamwork etc. of literacy organization.</li> <li>▶ Making sure that the needs of community are addressed. Met with positive attitude.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Programming and to focus more on the learners. Maybe bring in a few learners to hear their view on the program.</li> <li>▶ Funding that relates to outcomes. Guidelines re policy development - what policies, common policy structure.</li> <li>▶ Financial support from other major partners is DCS and HRSDC.</li> <li>▶ Greater partnering with school boards to access space. Safe environment for learners and tutors. Incentives to keep students in school/general courses/vocational training/Apprenticeships - equivalency certificate. Support for learners - gas, childcare, tax breaks. Liability Insurance - self insurance.</li> <li>▶ Funding issues. Communicating concerns re: program delivery.</li> <li>▶ Development of some standardized guides/resources for programs (for learners, tutor training).</li> </ul>
<p>4. Is there anything you would change about the consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Have a room with more windows or fresh air or lengthen time line to provide for outdoor breaks.</li> <li>▶ Not long enough - but this was identified at the outset.</li> <li>▶ Greater time allowances.</li> <li>▶ Very good consultation, a bit rushed at the end. More info on contacts.</li> <li>▶ No.</li> <li>▶ No - perhaps more time.</li> <li>▶ No. Informative discussions among stakeholders is the key.</li> <li>▶ No.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Do you have any additional comments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Find ways to capture more work of staff, volunteers and board as in kind contribution. Should hold winter session on at least annual basis.</li> <li>▶ I am on an Eastern Action Steering Committee. One of the things we are going to work on is transportation; the other is childcare. As a part of a larger group, I hope to see some action of these issues that hinder learners accessing our programs. <b>Carmelle:</b> Come to the Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley and tour our region to get a better idea of the challenges we face.</li> <li>▶ Thank you.</li> <li>▶ As we progress we will continue to meet the needs of those we help. More meetings are needed.</li> <li>▶ Would be nice to see some of our government body come in to speak.</li> <li>▶ Please continue to dialogue with us. Thanks to you.</li> <li>▶ I appreciate the hard work that you are doing and the constraints of budget and policy that must be recognized. Thanks for this commitment. A well-organized event. Kathy Boutilier.</li> <li>▶ I just wanted to thank you for the consultation this morning with community partners. It was nice to see and meet our partners in</li> </ul>

	<p>literacy and to get a perspective of their programs, concerns and learners. I think it was beneficial for us all to make the connection with each other's program so we can better understand how each one works because each network has similarities and differences. Lunch was really good also!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Wondering what the relationship is between public libraries and community based literacy programs - related to issue of space for programs/partnerships. (Spring Garden Admin.)</li><li>▶ Barbara Allen provided information regarding boards as well as links to both the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative (CVI) and the NS branch of CVI: <a href="http://www.novascotianetwork.org">http://www.novascotianetwork.org</a> <a href="http://www.volunteer.ca/index-eng.php">http://www.volunteer.ca/index-eng.php</a></li></ul>
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## Strait Region and Cape Breton Region Consultation

1. How would you rate this consultation?	5 extremely useful	4 very useful	3 useful	2 somewhat useful	1 not useful at all
Comments:		2	8	3	
2. What, if any, additional comments do you have on each of the discussion topics?	<p><i>Policies and guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Allow more time.</li> <li>▶ Need more time for discussion.</li> <li>▶ Said it all!</li> <li>▶ No time.</li> <li>▶ Fewer meetings.</li> <li>▶ More regular consultation sessions that brings people of all levels together.</li> <li>▶ Please review certification for Levels I,II,III.</li> <li>▶ Would like to have gotten some here!!!</li> <li>▶ Too much accountability required for volunteers to carry the load.</li> <li>▶ Determining fall program details - locations, number of hours in the spring is too difficult. Allow networks to determine specific details later.</li> </ul> <p><i>Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Allow more time.</li> <li>▶ Needs to be explored beyond this point; boards need to be clear as to what the Department's expectations are of Boards.</li> <li>▶ Question: Do we really need Boards (non-profit) to ensure that adult learning stays community based?</li> <li>▶ What are we responsible for? Board insurance is a huge concern. If Department of Education requires a board, then they should advise and support the running of such board.</li> <li>▶ Need more time for more discussion of all issues.</li> <li>▶ There will be no real satisfaction until we figure out a way to partner with HRSDC again.</li> <li>▶ If you created the board governance model you must provide whatever supports and resources are required to maintain that board structure.</li> <li>▶ I think it's time to explore the possibility that CLI's be delivered under the DOE as opposed to Boards if we are going to continue to institutionalize.</li> </ul>				

	<p><i>Learner progress</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Allow more time.</li> <li>▶ What is formula for dividing money among NSSAL deliverers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSCC- 1900 per student</li> <li>Sainte Anne 5000 per student</li> <li>School Bds 1400 per student</li> <li>CLI 1200 per student</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Clearer guidelines.</li> <li>▶ We believe that we <b>cannot</b> service all the gaps that exist in the community.</li> <li>▶ I think we have had lots of success here - more reports? - need to have the administration staff to do that - we don't have it after end of June.</li> <li>▶ Need more time for more discussion of all issues.</li> <li>▶ We are serving the needs of our communities to the best of our abilities. That is our board's mandate. We do not counsel or offer any other services; we have never had the luxury of providing that service.</li> </ul>
<p>3. What do you see as key issues and/or priorities for future discussion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The CLI program itself as the DOE seems to only want to deal/discuss the programs that they implement.</li> <li>▶ We exist to provide literacy training (education) not jobs for instructors; however one cannot have programs without instructors. Not being secure-ones job deteriorates from enthusiasm. We must concern ourselves with stability.</li> <li>▶ Clear development of policies/procedures - reporting, etc.</li> <li>▶ Recruiting board members in an area that is social/economically depressed.</li> <li>▶ Guidelines that will help CLI networks decide how and if they can/should continue as an organization? Therefore continue to deliver community based programs under the present structure.</li> <li>▶ Board development; board insurance; recognition of the dedicated staff working "overtime" for the betterment of these students.</li> <li>▶ Coordination.</li> <li>▶ What does the DOE sees as basic standards for classroom situations: student/instructor ratios; physical classroom environments.</li> <li>▶ Specific expectations of community organizations by the DOE.</li> <li>▶ Expectations community organizations can have of Dept. staff re: services provided.</li> <li>▶ More discussion about what learners to serve and how to make those decisions.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Programs and core services provided by Department: what can networks expect from our Adult Education Coordinators? Does the Dept. have a long term vision for community based programming.</li> <li>▶ Funding.</li> <li>▶ Structure.</li> <li>▶ Short-term planning for the interim period.</li> <li>▶ Get rid of the bureaucratic elephants and offer more programs and/or program hours.</li> <li>▶ We still are not receiving the direction we need on how to restructure as organizations. Since we know we are not getting more money, then what expectations/responsibilities will the DOE remove from Networks? (Meetings, committees, tracking, reports)</li> </ul>
<p>4. Is there anything you would change about the consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Less introduction to the process and allow more time for us to talk.</li> <li>▶ It's obvious that management although expensive is necessary to provide quality and standardized outcomes; staff supervision and program promotion and client screening are necessary.</li> <li>▶ More time.</li> <li>▶ Agenda prior to when we did receive it.</li> <li>▶ I really appreciated Carmelle's input; her honesty and tact were very helpful.</li> <li>▶ Delete intro (what's new?) And give time to our discussion.</li> <li>▶ Add another hour to the length of the day.</li> <li>▶ More opportunity for discussion.</li> <li>▶ Specific discussion questions provided several days in advance would have been an advantage.</li> <li>▶ It would have been nice to have a shorter drive to attend the meeting.</li> <li>▶ More emphasis on discussion.</li> <li>▶ Make the room cooler!</li> <li>▶ As a first session it was appropriate.</li> <li>▶ Less opportunity for Networks to talk about individual issues is needed. If no increase in funding, what will networks do?</li> </ul>
<p>5. Do you have any additional comments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Our goal, I presume is to serve as many people who require literacy training as possible. Therefore we must concentrate on making programs conveniently available in locations close to the clients. This means community programs are most important and must be promoted. Facilities must be centralized to offer programs, they must be as permanent as possible - rent money must be a factor in budget consideration.</li> <li>▶ I found the whole session very enlightening in many ways. The presentations were good - I appreciated having copies of all</li> </ul>

	<p>information. The input by the Board members and coordinators was very valuable also. I'm looking forward to the work the Richmond group is doing and hoping it might be useful to us also in our search for funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ HRDC and DCS should fund those attending CLI programs.</li><li>▶ NSSAL funding should be more fairly directed to support Levels I,II,&amp; III at community-based level.</li><li>▶ Overall, this was a good day. We need to have much more consultations, especially for board members. DOE has already responded positively to many issues that we have identified. Keep working hard to address these complex issues.</li><li>▶ Today provided a chance to discuss some issues to DOE, it was disappointing that we didn't come up with strategies or coping mechanisms. You really didn't offer any sort of help - just reiterated funding situation. It was a good opportunity to communicate but now we need working sessions where you help us find solutions.</li><li>▶ Thank you for asking for our opinions.</li><li>▶ Thanks for doing this.</li><li>▶ Looking forward to getting to solutions. Thank you for listening!</li><li>▶ Who will the DOE contact for stats/needs assessment info if Board members are saying they can't do more, coordinators are gone. I have so many questions, but I'll look forward to consultation with our Adult Ed. Coordinator.</li></ul>
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## Southwestern Region Consultation

1. How would you rate this consultation?	5 <b>extremely useful</b>	4 <b>very useful</b>	3 <b>useful</b>	2 <b>somewhat useful</b>	1 <b>not useful at all</b>
Comments:		5	2		
2. What, if any, additional comments do you have on each of the discussion topics?	<p><i>Policies and guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ We need more guidelines from CLI re: policies about student promotion. How long should we keep a learner who is progressing, but not quickly, who is not supported financially by anyone to be there, and who is doing it solely for their own satisfaction?</li> <li>▶ We need more guidelines re: grant application.</li> <li>▶ Issues of Learning Networks are complex. We could probably take another week to discuss. There are problems with volunteers that were not discussed like the cost of travel (gas) and materials.</li> <li>▶ Written documents for boards to follow.</li> <li>▶ Volunteers should not be expected to pay for training, most volunteers are paid a stipend for their service.</li> <li>▶ Better defined reporting sheets.</li> </ul> <p><i>Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Equality in coordinator hours for similar networks. Why do some networks have full time coordinators and others not. Office staff for some of us is an unreachable dream.</li> <li>▶ Well covered. Liability issues will grow. Concerned about whether NSCC will continue allowing programs in their buildings without change.</li> <li>▶ Could funding be over 2-3 year block?</li> <li>▶ Board members are busy people and are not always able to take time off.</li> <li>▶ Where is the support and professional development for staff and board?</li> <li>▶ Provide adequate motivation in terms of funding, pd, benefits to sustain the present dedicated Level I/II instructors.</li> <li>▶ Address the liability insurance issue for board and programs.</li> <li>▶ Adequate funding for resources and instructional costs for community-based programs.</li> </ul> <p><i>Learner progress</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ These issues seem to be similar across the province.</li> <li>▶ How long is too long for a student?</li> <li>▶ Talk to learners.</li> </ul>				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicate more completely to funding agencies how learning disabilities affect lengths of programs as well as various factors that impact learner progress. This needs to be done at the provincial/federal level as well as community level.</li> <li>▶ Understanding of the challenges that learners have, but also the need for government to value community-based literacy the same as NSCC and public school programs on a funding basis.</li> </ul>
<p>3. What do you see as key issues and/or priorities for future discussion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Funding; equality; consistency.</li> <li>▶ Learner materials; costs of resources; and wages and rental costs.</li> <li>▶ Equality throughout the province.</li> <li>▶ Tutor training costs.</li> <li>▶ Review of tutor training - costs, length, etc.; training of volunteers; Level III curriculum.</li> <li>▶ Money; make Levels I/II more equal to Levels III/IV in resources, funding, salaries and benefits for staff.</li> <li>▶ Future of Level III, community-based programs; length of stay in programs; best use of short, financial resources.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Is there anything you would change about the consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ I thoroughly appreciated this opportunity to speak openly.</li> <li>▶ You have planned this well. Ongoing, regular consultation is important.</li> <li>▶ More time. We are rushed with too many problem areas.</li> <li>▶ Not everyone had the opportunity to comment on discussions.</li> <li>▶ No. It was a casual and relaxed atmosphere. This made you feel comfortable.</li> <li>▶ More focus on the issues as per the agenda.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Do you have any additional comments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Thank you very much.</li> <li>▶ I am involved as a volunteer with my own financial capabilities. Volunteers living on modest means are finding that it is expensive to volunteer (cost of gas, materials, time). We would like another tutor training course in Yarmouth with the expansion of the prison system and several untrained tutors in Yarmouth.</li> <li>▶ Very worthwhile. Informative and good support for our problems. Good job. Thank you.</li> <li>▶ Not long enough for discussion. It's a beginning.</li> <li>▶ Lunch was great. Presentation was good.</li> <li>▶ Make sure the information is shared and effects policy and program delivery.</li> <li>▶ Thanks for your honest dialogue about this important issue. Your operations are becoming more transparent. That will lead to improved, learner and community-centred programs and services.</li> <li>▶ It was great to have tea available.</li> </ul>

## Valley Region Consultation

1. How would you rate this consultation?	5 extremely useful	4 very useful	3 useful	2 somewhat useful	1 not useful at all
	4	1	2		
Comments:	<p>Vital for Dept. of Education to hear from networks – especially when there is NO Regional Adult Education Coordinator!</p> <p>Extremely useful for Dept. of Education.</p>				
2. What, if any, additional comments do you have on each of the discussion topics?	<p><i>Policies and guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Needed more time on this one!</li> <li>▶ Keep them broad to allow networks to create services/programs that are appropriate for their communities, address learners' needs. Consider helping networks database their stats – upload network databases to central Dept. of Education database – get a good statistical picture of what's happening province-wide – share back the data to networks.</li> <li>▶ A provincial code of conduct for learners may prove helpful.</li> <li>▶ Can use some help here with certain policies, etc. – legal, fair hiring, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ More discussion on what partnerships might be formed b/w networks, what can we do together? (Fundraise? Write grants? Run joint projects?)</li> </ul> <p><i>Learner progress</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Take learners' goals into consideration – their goals are not always as cut and dried as “Level II” or “high school diploma” – may be “to be able to read to my children”, to be able to fill out forms at work</li> <li>▶ Needs to be a way to keep learners moving – i.e. there are waiting lists that prevent learners from continuing – it imposes a gap in their learning cycle.</li> </ul> <p>Comment for all 3 topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Carmelle and Jean, I enjoyed today's session. You both showed understanding, empathy and flexibility that is rare in civil servants. I appreciate more the challenges as well as the successes. Success often breeds problems. Those who are in power must recognize that success, especially in endeavours that revolve</li> </ul>				

	<p>around people, is often measured in small victories resound much later. Thank you again for your thoughtful, measured presentation. Let's keep asking the right question.</p>
<p>3. What do you see as key issues and/or priorities for future discussion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ More on partnerships.</li> <li>▶ More on federal = provincial funding and contracting criteria.</li> <li>▶ Success indicators of programs/networks – and program evaluation based on those success indicators.</li> <li>▶ Best use of Dept. of Education \$ to support community learning initiatives – is it possible that funds could be used to mobilize corporate and private funders to put \$ into community programs? (rather than limited govt \$ going to programs – use govt \$ to build awareness of each network's need for \$ for literacy programming, i.e. support local fundraising efforts).</li> <li>▶ Meeting the true needs of the learners in an effective, efficient and economical way.</li> <li>▶ Baseline funding (enough for 2 instructors, 1 coordinator).</li> <li>▶ Increased awareness and resources for network coordinators (this needs to be a full-time position, i.e. 35 hrs/week).</li> <li>▶ More timely determination of budgets/approvals.</li> <li>▶ See question #2.</li> <li>▶ Funding.</li> <li>▶ Personnel policy.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Is there anything you would change about the consultation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ No – do more!</li> <li>▶ Have them more often! In our group we had a couple of people who needed more time to consult with Dept. of Education staff.</li> <li>▶ No.</li> <li>▶ No – it was excellent – very open and frank.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Do you have any additional comments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Skilled and personable facilitators sure make the process go smoothly – Bravo! and thank you.</li> <li>▶ Thank you for the opportunity to meet – to receive the overview was very helpful.</li> <li>▶ Much of the discussion was enlightening, and without time for reflection it is difficult to provide constructive or informative comments. I apologize if this is not helpful.</li> <li>▶ This was extremely valuable, and I would like to see a follow-up where the report–conclusions and recommendations are presented using this same kind of format.</li> <li>▶ Thank you both so much for <b>your</b> time and consideration to our concerns! This was a very productive day!</li> </ul>

## Acadian Community Consultation

1. How would you rate this consultation?	<b>5</b> <b>extremely useful</b>	<b>4</b> <b>very useful</b>	<b>3</b> <b>useful</b>	<b>2</b> <b>somewhat useful</b>	<b>1</b> <b>not useful at all</b>
	2	3			
2. What, if any, additional comments do you have on each of the discussion topics?	<p><i>Policies and Guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Very important to evaluate on a regular basis.</li> </ul> <p><i>Learners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Adults need to be able to speak French before they can take literacy courses - French First Language.</li> <li>▶ Need to direct / refer English speaking learners to the right programs.</li> </ul>				
3. What do you see as key issues and/or priorities for future discussion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Promotion of Nova Scotia for Adult Learning.</li> <li>▶ To encourage adults to pursue their education in French.</li> <li>▶ Follow-up of learners once they have finished literacy programs.</li> <li>▶ To identify priorities for both the Équipe and the Department.</li> </ul>				
4. Is there anything you would change about the consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ No, it was very informative.</li> <li>▶ No, it was very good.</li> </ul>				
5. Do you have any additional comments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Thank you, it is appreciated.</li> <li>▶ Additional funding requested by the Équipe is reasonable and needed.</li> </ul>				