



Recognizing Abilities & Possibilities

44th Annual TESL Ontario Conference

A CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

ELEVENTH ANNUAL PANEL DISCUSSION
Building on Foundations...Framing the Future
November 25, 2016

Eleventh Annual Panel Discussion: Building on Foundations . . . Framing the Future

- Panel: **Yves Saint-Germain**, Director, Language Policy, Francophone Communities and Performance Measurements, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
Mourad Mardikian, Manager, Language Training Unit, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)
Jen Liptrot, Director, Programs Branch, Strategic Policy and Programs Division, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)
Pauline McNaughton, Manager, Adult Education and Equity Unit, Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education (MEdu)
- Moderator: **Renate Tilson**, Executive Director, TESL Ontario

Overview

To date, Canada has resettled 34,000 refugees and has worked hard to support them through the coordinated work of several ministries.

IRCC continues to expand the Syria refugee program and is focused on welcoming more immigrants and ensuring family reunification. They have done this by providing integration support and working with provinces to develop an action plan that brings together ministers at all levels of government.

MCI has been redesigning Ontario's ESL/FSL training program over the past five years and has introduced a number of new initiatives, including Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA), new Ontario Curriculum Guidelines for ESL/FSL and an online course planning tool for instructors (Quartz), and a specialized language training stream supporting the labour market. MCI has also launched a number of e-learning projects to develop and pilot new online course content which will contribute to the development of a national e-learning strategy.

MEdu has designed a plan to ensure adult learners have access regionally to consistent, high quality programs and services. Goals include finding a standardized way to serve learners; promoting innovation, accessibility, and collaboration; and designing more flexible and responsive programs for adults with other demands. The plan is slated to be completed by 2019.

MAESD's work focuses on transformation of employment and training services, developing a highly skilled workforce, and continuing to update its literacy and basics skills program.

Context

Panelists representing different government entities discussed how their current and planned priorities and programs are serving the country's fast-growing immigrant

population. These include resettlement resources, language training, adult education, and efforts to build a highly skilled, resilient, and adaptive workforce to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

Yves Saint-Germain spoke about Canada's commitments to expanding its refugee program and its immigration action plan.

To support Canada's 34,000 refugees resettling in Canada, IRCC committed to broad-reaching changes.

To date, Canada has resettled more than 34,000 Syrian refugees and will continue resettlement efforts in 2016 and 2017. To support the increasing number of refugees, IRCC has made the following commitments:

- Repealing the provisions in the Citizenship Act which gave the government the right to strip citizenship from dual nationals.
- Restoring the interim federal health program.
- Providing more funding for resettlement and settlement service providers, including transportation subsidies.
- Adding 7,000 seats for language training classes where wait times were especially long, such as in Surrey, BC, and Southern Alberta.

"While planned admissions of resettled refugees will decrease a bit when compared to the extraordinary target of 2016, they will continue to remain among the highest in Canada's history and will be more than double the target we had . . . in 2015."

— Yves Saint-Germain

To support the refugee population that arrives in Canada with little or no English or French language skills, which is the majority of immigrants, IRCC launched a Welcome to Canada video, Your First Two Weeks in Canada, in Arabic. In March, it also launched its existing language training for Canada video in Arabic to continue to raise awareness of the importance of visual language skills for settlement and to get

workers, newcomers, and prospective immigrants started on improving their language skills.

In fulfilling its commitment to welcome more immigrants, IRCC has expanded the number of resettlement assistance program centres outside of Quebec to 31 communities. It has also committed to resettling 300,000 new permanent residents in 2017—more than double its 2015 target. Canada will also be increasing the number of permanent residents selected in economic programs. And in keeping with its commitment to family reunification, the 2017 plan will see an increase in family class levels.

Providing integration support on such a vast scale presented significant challenges to IRCC.

These challenges for IRCC include:

- Recognizing that language is an essential predictor of a post-migration labour market as well as social outcomes, and needs to be taken into account in managing resettlement.
- Learning a new language takes time, so it is important that immigrants begin learning it as soon as possible.
- Finding and recruiting instructors and building community capacity also takes time, particularly during surges in demand.
- Although newcomers arriving in Canada may have years of professional experience and skill trade, some still need target interventions to access the labour market.
- Ensuring that all newcomers make the connections they need to improve their skills while they are working or ensuring they can access the support they need to settle in their communities.

Canada's new immigration action plan reveals a broad and long-term perspective.

In a recent meeting in Winnipeg, Canada's ministers from all levels discussed keys points of the future of immigration. These included:

- How immigration can support sustainable, long-term economic growth across the country while celebrating diversity and encouraging the inclusion of all newcomers.
- The need for a more responsive immigration system that attracts and retains global talent that can deliver economic benefits to the jurisdiction.
- The need to work together to explore improvements to the settlement programs. The goal is to ensure that newcomers are supported in their settlement and equipped to participate in the labour market.
- The importance of foreign qualification recognition.
- The role of Francophone immigrants in contributing to the vitality of Francophone communities across the country

IRCC's Settlement Program

Assists immigrants, including refugees, to overcome barriers specific to the newcomer experience (such as a lack of official language skills and limited knowledge of Canada) so that they can participate in social, cultural, civic and economic life in Canada.



Canada is making progress in shifting to a results-oriented approach in its programs.

A new culture of measuring, evaluating, and promoting innovation in new programs needs to be open and transparent. The Treasury Board of Canada has introduced a new policy about a results-oriented approach, which means looking beyond activities and outputs, focusing on actual results for newcomers, and understanding and investing in what works for the results everyone cares about.

There is progress toward a results-oriented approach, but more needs to be done. While there are signs of progress, as demonstrated by IRCC's funded organizations, such as the iCARE system, the primary focus is still on input activities rather than outputs. To advance toward better outcomes and to improve on programming, IRCC is working closely with provinces and territories towards its strategy. IRCC is focused on improving coordination of English and French language policy and program design. The organization is also offering a common framework for federal, provincial, and territorial governments to facilitate dialogue and cooperation and articulate common vision and strategic objectives.

Towards a Pan-Canadian Language Strategy



The IRCC's key goals are that immigrants: 1) be aware of their language ability in relation to the level of proficiency required for their intended settlement goals; and 2) have access to learning opportunities they need. To achieve this, IRCC needs to work in partnership with provinces and territories.

Currently, IRCC's strategy is focused on articulating its work in some tricky areas:

1. *e-Learning*. Work includes making sure there are tools to improve programming reach and flexibility, and to increase consistency of the e-learning offering.
2. *Employment-related language training*. Activities involve making sure there is consistency in language training focused on labour market outcomes for different workplace models.
3. *Literacy*. Important questions to be addressed include what kind of framework do we have? Are we equipped to deliver on literacy? Are we addressing all the needs of literacy learners?

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)

Mourad Mardikian discussed the evolution of Ontario's Adult Non-Credit English/French as Second Language training program—also known as ESL/FSL—its redesign, and achievements to date.

In redesigning Ontario's ESL/FSL training program, MCI developed program guidelines and objectives focused on learners.

In 2006, when Ontario's ESL/FSL program was moved from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, there were limited guidelines and objectives. Developing these was a focus of the Language Training program redesign, with five key identified objectives. These objectives include:

- Making sure immigrants have access to language training.
- Introducing accountability and standards.
- Focusing more on labour market programming, also known as specialized language training.
- Coordinating objectives with of the federal government.
- Ensuring that funding and program design are flexible enough to deliver the range of courses offered.

"We did have a foundation, but the house hadn't been built yet."
— Mourad Mardikian

Key Redesign Achievements to Date

Objective	Achievements
1. Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Developed online search tool to provide ESL/FSL course locations across Ontario ✓ Clarified and expanded learner eligibility to adult immigrants whose first language is French ✓ Implemented an Instructor Standard for teaching Adult Non-Credit ESL ✓ Feasibility study completed on integrating e-Learning into the ESL/FSL program
2. Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conducted annual survey of learners to gather critical program data, including learner satisfaction ✓ Introduced a Language Training Certificate to confirm proficiency levels of learners following training (can also be used to confirm minimum language requirements for Citizenship applications) ✓ Developed online professional training modules for Adult Non-Credit FSL instructors ✓ Supported ESL/FSL instructor attendance at critical professional development conferences ✓ Adopted Canadian Language Benchmarks and the National Language Placement and Progressions Guidelines as frameworks of reference for the program
3. Labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Piloted and adopted workplace-specific Specialized Language Training into the ESL/FSL program ✓ Developed new course resources supporting language-readiness for the labour market
4. Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CLARS – consistent approach to language assessment and referral to both provincial and federal language training programs ✓ Adopted/adapted the HARTs course and learner database to help track learner progress through training ✓ Joint development, piloting and coordinated implementation of PBLA
5. Funding Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Automated Average Daily Enrolment (used for funding program) calculation process to accurately determine actual enrolment of ESL/FSL course participants for Final Reports ✓ Introduced detailed financial reporting requirements for funded school boards ✓ Introduced new SLT stream, based on smaller, specialized classes with top up funding

MCI continues to redesign core elements of its program through innovation.

Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA), another element in MCI's redesign, will provide a consistent basis for measuring learner progress in all MCI funded courses, regardless of their length and objective. All courses will be task-based, with learner progress measured and tracked based on their demonstration of CLB competencies. PBLA will also apply to courses that are too short to generate a sufficient number of tasks to determine learner progress. In these cases, the tasks learners complete will still contribute towards an eventual assessment of their progress.

The fact that the entire program now aligns with the Canadian Language Benchmarks is a key milestone in MCI's redesign. This alignment makes it easier for learners to move between programs, between providers, between cities, and also between provinces.

MCI has also recently launched its new Ontario Curriculum Guidelines for ESL/FSL. The new Guidelines are supported with a new online tool—called Quartz—where instructors can design new courses or add components to existing courses. The first version of Quartz has been launched and work is already underway on Quartz 2.0, incorporating additional components based on feedback received from users including greater connection with PBLA.

A specialized language training stream (SLT) has also been introduced. This part of the program covers language training both for the workplace and in the workplace. In the first case, it helps immigrants become language-ready for their occupations of choice. In the second, it works with employers to help improve the language skills of immigrants already in the workplace, but who may have language or communication gaps.

e-Learning will improve access to language training.

In filling yet another gap in its program, MCI is working with other provincial partners, as well as with the federal government, to develop a national e-learning strategy. While some new e-learning projects have been launched, within the next two years, the program will be offering a significant inventory of online courses. These may be self-directed, instructor led, or supported online, as well as hybrid courses

(delivered partly online and partly face to face in classrooms) greatly expanding MCI's language training program options. MCI anticipates that by the 2018-2019 school year, they will be offering a range of e-learning courses that will improve access to language training in Ontario.

"The focus of our work is the learner, front and centre."

— Mourad Mardikian

Adult Education and Equity Unit, Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education (MEdu)

Pauline McNaughton discussed MEdu's goals and action plan for improving access and opportunities for adult learners.

The future demand for highly skilled workers presents MEdu with an awesome challenge.

The Adult Education and Equity Unit of the MEdu is facing a significant challenge. In Ontario, 700,000 adults between the ages of 25 and 64 have no high school diploma, yet 70% of all future jobs will require some form of post-secondary education. Of these 700,000 adults, 46% of adults in credit programs are immigrants, including many who are highly educated. Some may be referred by employers or postsecondary education institutions that require a Canadian high school diploma or prerequisite courses. Against this backdrop, the MEdu is interested in working with its partner ministries to explore pathways. While this presents a challenge, it affords MEdu the opportunity to revisit and explore how it can best serve adult immigrants as they move on from language training to whatever their next step might be.

successfully transition to post-secondary education training or to the workplace.

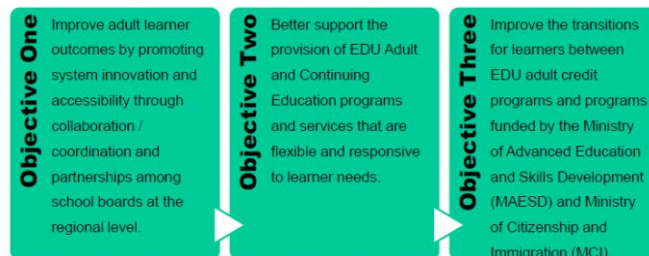
The MEdu wanted to find a more consistent standardized way to serve learners throughout the province and increase access to learners who may not be physically able to get to a classroom.

"Transitioning from post-secondary education and training to the workplace is a pretty critical component of what we try to support in the adult credit world."

— Pauline McNaughton

MEdu's strategy has three key objectives:

- Promote more innovation, accessibility, and collaboration.
- Design more flexible and responsive programs so working adults and adults with other demands on their lives are able to access programs.
- Develop an integrated approach among adult credit programs and programs funded by other ministries, such as MAESD and MCI, to improve transitions between various programs.



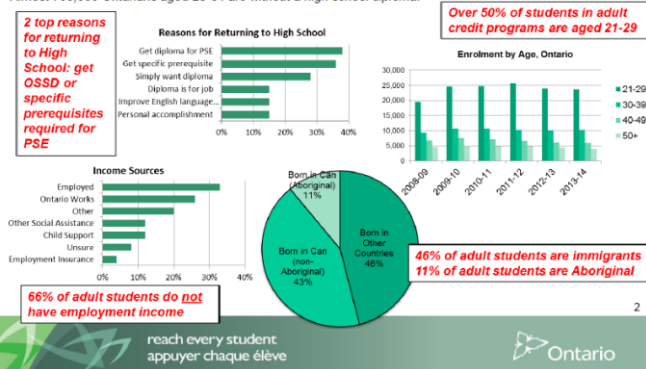
To deliver its strategy, the MEdu developed a three-phase action plan.

- Phase 1 (2015-2016): Extensive regional consultations with school boards.
- Phase 2 (2016-2017): Development of regional school board partnerships and regional strategic plans to achieve coordination.
- Phase 3 (2017-2019): Implementation of regional strategic plans. Assessment of outcomes and recommendations.

Adult Learners in EDU Credit

Increasing demand for more highly skilled individuals:

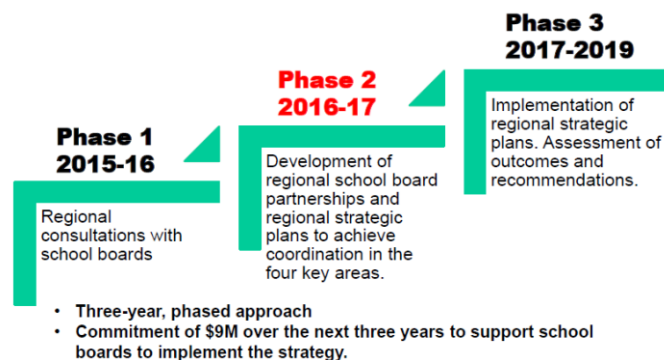
70% of all future jobs will require some form of PSE, yet . . .
Almost 700,000 Ontarians aged 25-64 are without a high school diploma.



To meet this challenge, the minister of education announced a provincial adult education strategy.

The purpose of the strategy, announced in 2014 and referenced in the Ministry's Achieving Excellence vision document, is to ensure the adult education system provides better support to adult learners in their efforts to finish high school. The vision also includes helping adult learners

Plan of Action



Phase 1 has been completed. Based on surveys with school boards, the number one thing learners are asking for is more robust guidance and career counseling.

Phase 2 is in process. To date, six regional groupings are in place and coordinators are either in place or being hired in each region. A seventh region of the French School Boards is also close to being finalized. MEdu is ready to move ahead with extensive environmental scans of each region. Strategic planning will follow.

Phase 3, which is a two-year process, involves implementation of the strategy for each region.

EASTERN REGION
Algonquin & Lakeshore Cath DSB
Cath DSB of Eastern Ontario
Hastings & Prince Edward DSB
Limestone DSB
Ottawa Catholic DSB
Ottawa-Carleton DSB
Renfrew County DSB
Upper Canada DSB

CENTRAL REGION
Bluewater DSB
Bruce-Grey Catholic DSB
Durham Catholic DSB
Durham DSB
Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB
Peterborough Victoria
Northumberland Catholic DSB
Simcoe County DSB
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB
Trillium Lakelands DSB

TORONTO AND AREA REGION
Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB
Halton Catholic DSB
Halton DSB
Peel DSB
Toronto Catholic DSB
Toronto DSB
York Catholic DSB
York Region DSB

NORTH WEST REGION
Keewatin-Patricia DSB
Kenora Catholic DSB
Lakehead DSB
Northwest Catholic DSB
Rainy River DSB
Superior North Catholic DSB
Superior-Greenstone DSB
Thunder Bay Catholic DSB

SOUTH WESTERN REGION
Avon Maitland DSB
Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB
DSB of Niagara
Grand Erie DSB
Greater Essex County DSB
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB
Hamilton-Wentworth DSB
Huron-Perth Catholic DSB
Lambton Kent DSB
London Dist. Catholic School
Niagara Catholic DSB
Thames Valley DSB
Waterloo Catholic DSB
Waterloo Region DSB
Windsor-Essex Catholic DSB
Upper Grand DSB

NORTH EAST REGION
Algoma DSB
DSB Ontario North East
Huron-Superior Catholic DSB
Near North DSB
Nipissing-Parry Sound Cath DSB
Northeastern Catholic DSB
Rainbow DSB
Sudbury Catholic DSB

"As part of the adult education system, it is critical that we pay attention to what's happening in each of the three ministries and that we are aware of what is on offer and what is being built. We all sort of have a piece of that pie and it's really important that we find more ways to dialogue."

— Pauline McNaughton

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)

Jen Liptrot gave an overview of two of MAESD's main initiatives: Transformation of Employment and Training Services and Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy, as well as a recap and update of its Literacy and Basic Skills program.

MAESD's new minister has brought a new perspective to its initiatives, programming, and strategies.

MAESD, formerly known as the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (TCU), recently brought in a new minister with a portfolio of experience. This new minister is changing how MAESD understands its programming, policy work, and strategies.

Deputy Premier, Chair of Cabinet, and Minister Responsible for Digital Government, the Honorable Deb Matthews brings a long-term, outcomes-based approach to MAESD's work. She has encouraged the entity to take a step back and ask, "What do we really know about the long-term service impact of our programs?"

"This is a very exciting time for MAESD to be part of cross-government conversations."

— Jen Liptrot

The Drummond Report resulted in several new programs.

MAESD acted on the findings and recommendations of the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services (the *Drummond Commission*), which had questioned the effectiveness and efficiency of a range of government programs. One of the recommendations was to examine cross-government programs to identify any duplication of efforts and gaps, and to better integrate cross-government employment and training programs. One example, the Youth Job Connection program, was launched through a successful integration of four youth employment programs delivered by four ministries: MAESD, and the ministries of Northern Development and Mines, Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and Children and Youth Services. Year-round, the Youth Job Connection program provides youth experiencing complex employment barriers with intensive employment services, including: pre-employment training, job coaching, mentoring, and job placements.

Transformation of Employment and Training Services.

The goals of this initiative are to:

- Get people back to work through light touch interventions and/or by re-skilling for sustainable employment.
- Build people's long-term employability by building adaptability to the changing labour market.
- Broaden access to labour market participation. People for whom access is limited include: contract workers; people with disabilities; and newcomers whose previous credentials do not match labour market needs.
- Reduce social assistance caseloads.

Transformation Program Goals

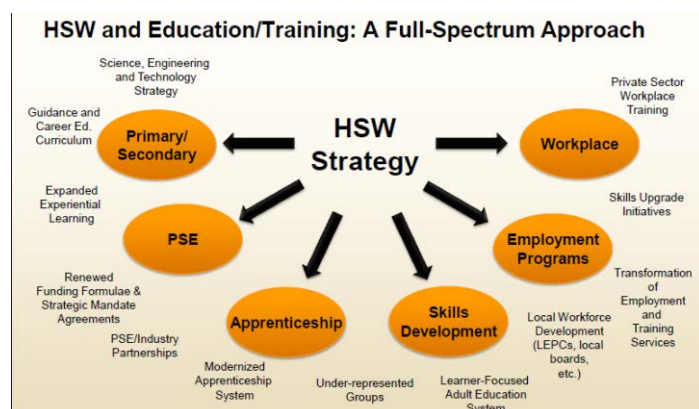


"Our transformation goals really are quite straightforward in terms of getting people back to work and reskilling for sustainable employment, with emphasis on sustainable."
— Jen Liptrot

To get the most value from transformation of employment and training services, MAESD is investing in people who are farthest away from the labour market and who need the most support.

Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy

Recently, the Premier appointed the Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel to develop a strategy that takes into account the horizontal, cross-government work that will be required longer term, and that can keep pace with a technology-driven knowledge economy. One of the goals of the strategy is to "Enhance literacy and basic skills for youth and adult learners by shifting focus away from solely measuring traditional credentials—particularly degrees and diplomas—toward better recognizing skills and competencies for the workplace." While MAESD is the lead for developing the strategy, it is working in collaboration with partner ministries.



Literacy and Basic Skills Program

The core purpose of the program is to support adult learners who want to improve their literacy or essential skills. It consists of four streams: Anglophone, Francophone, Indigenous, and Deaf. Many program participants are also involved in ESL/FSL training because they may have language proficiency issues as well as foundational literacy and basic skills challenges.

LBS program overview (cont'd)

- In 2015-2016, the ministry invested \$85.3M in the LBS program, serving over 42,000 learners. 73% of learners who exited the program went on to employment or further education and training.

Demographic data:

- 22% of LBS learners reported being employed or self employed
- 25% of the LBS learners reported Ontario Works (OW) as the source of income
- 17% of the LBS learners reported Ontario Disability Support Program as their source of income
- 30% of the LBS learners were under the age of 30
- 61% of the learners were female

- The LBS program e-Channel uses web-based learning to improve access for learners (especially those in rural and remote communities, or persons with disabilities). Services are available in all streams: Aboriginal, Francophone, Deaf, and Anglophone.
- In 2015-16, the Ministry invested \$4.0M (included in the \$85.3M total investment in LBS) in the e-Channel to serve over 4,400 learners.

In the last few years, there have been several changes to the program, including implementation of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF), the introduction of the Performance Management Framework, and further development of online literacy training (e-Channel). The Ministry has conducted an evaluation to understand the effects of these changes. The final report is under review.

To further support the LBS program, the Learner Gains Research Project is underway. The goal of this research is to find an assessment mechanism to measure a learner's progress both pre- and post-intervention and to better understand their overall experience with the program.

Biographies

Jen Liptrot, *Director, Programs Branch, Strategic Policy and Programs Division, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)*

Jen Liptrot is Director of Programs Branch in the Strategic Policy and Programs Division of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). In this role, Jen leads the design and evaluation of several Employment Ontario initiatives, as part of the Ministry's ongoing modernization and transformation its employment and training program programs. Key files Jen has supported include: design of the Canada-Ontario Job Grant and UpSkill, Customized Training and SkillsAdvance Ontario models which are currently being piloted; design of the new suite of youth employment programs, including Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Link; and launch of the new Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation. Before joining the Ministry's policy division, Jen also worked for several years in MAESD's Employment and Training Division supporting direct operations and delivery, as well as working in the voluntary sector, supporting the delivery of community-based employment and training services for women.

Mourad Mardikian

Manager, Language Training Unit, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)

Mourad Mardikian has been with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's (MCI) Language Training Unit almost since its inception in May 2006 as the unit's first Team Lead and more recently as its Manager. He is responsible for the management of the MCI's language training program - the Adult Non-Credit Language Training Program - which happens to also be Ontario's and Canada's largest language training program geared to adult immigrants. With input from the Ministry of Education, he helped develop and implement the internal processes to ensure the smooth transition of the Adult Non-Credit Language Training program to MCI over 10 years ago. He works with colleagues at the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (formerly Training, Colleges and Universities) on adult education initiatives related to improving pathways for adult learners accessing programs. Mourad also worked very closely with the federal government (now called Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - IRCC) on the development and implementation of the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (called CLARS) in Ontario and continued coordination of language programming in Ontario. Prior to joining the Ontario Public Service more than 10 years ago, he worked in the private sector in management consulting and business consulting focusing on developing self-employment training programs geared to both adult and youth entrepreneurs and helping new businesses start-ups.

Pauline McNaughton, *Manager, Adult Education and Equity Unit, Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education (MEdu)*

Pauline McNaughton is Manager of the Adult Education and Equity Unit in the Student Achievement Division of the Ministry of Education. This Unit is responsible for adult education policy, initiatives to support student achievement of Children and Youth In Care, as well as School College and Work Initiatives including Dual Credit program. The Unit is also responsible for provincial implementation of the Adult Education Strategy, announced in late 2014, and works closely with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development to support the development of a stronger adult education system. Pauline has worked in the field of adult education for over twenty years, the past nine of which have been with Ministry of Education. Prior to this she was Executive Director at the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmark, Field Team Manager for AlphaPlus Centre, and a teacher in the Continuing Education department of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board in adult literacy and adult ESL program areas.

Yves Saint-Germain, *Director, Language Policy, Francophone Communities and Performance Measurements, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)*

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain holds an M.A. (Political Science). Since 2007, Mr. Saint-Germain is Director, Language Policy, Francophone Communities and Performance Measurement, Integration Branch-FCRO, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. He is responsible for establishing directions for the settlement program including: language training program policy, leading the implementation of IRCC contribution to the Roadmap for Official Languages 2013-2018, and leading the work on funding issues such as annual settlement allocations and Performance Measurement reporting through Annual Project Performance Reports and iCARE data.



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