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Adult and Continuing Education Business Model Review

October 2010

Key Terminology used in the presentation:

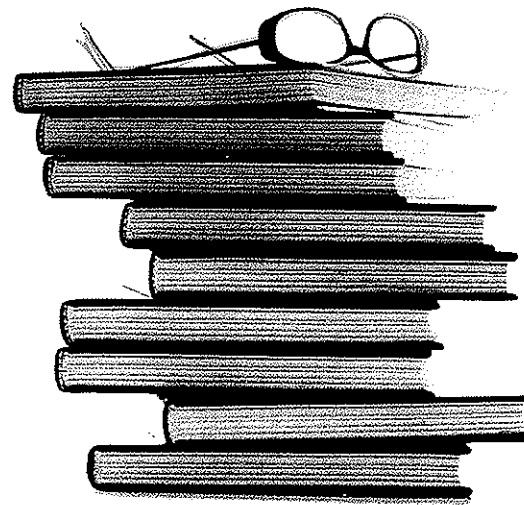
A&CE= Adult and Continuing Education

DSB= District School Board

SO= Supervisory Officer

SBO= Supervisory Business Officer

PD= Professional Development



Overview

Objective: To review Adult and Continuing Education business models across a sampling of Ontario School Boards and describe the key factors that contribute to a viable adult and continuing education credit program business model that makes use of *existing resources* and operational processes. The Adult and Continuing Education funding model was not part of this review.

Scope:

Adult Credit Programming including

- Adult Day School
- Adult Continuing Education Day School
- Night School
- Summer School
- Correspondence/self-study including e-learning
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for mature students

Key Messages

- The most successful Adult and Continuing Education programs operate in DSBs that have made a cultural shift away from a concern with delivering adult and continuing education at “no cost to the board”, towards putting students first in a fiscally responsible way. This has resulted in a focus on the contribution adult and continuing education makes to student success by supporting learning pathways for all students will facilitate increased sharing of resources within the board.
- A cultural shift of this type requires the support of senior administration, in particular through cooperation between the Director of Education, the SO Champion of A&CE, and the A&CE leader.
- It was apparent over the course of the review that the most successful and viable A&CE programs had a close working relationship with the regular day school system. Cooperation with internal partners was identified as the most important factor contributing to the viability of A&CE programs.
- By strengthening A&CE programs through supportive system practices and procedures for A&CE and system leaders and through critical system-wide leadership, DSBs will also strengthen their communities’ confidence in the public education system.

1. Leadership

Valuable Practice: The DSB promotes a leadership focus on how A&CE programs contribute to meeting ministry objectives, address community needs and the needs of students (over and under 21), support student success, and provide learner pathways for all students.

Recommendations:

1. DSBs should ensure consistent messaging from senior administration that A&CE is a valuable and additional resource for meeting student and community needs. DSBs should have a demonstrated commitment to A&CE as a vehicle that supports the DSB's vision, mission, and mandate through its role as part of a continuum of learning designed to provide learner pathways for all students. Leadership at the school, board, and provincial levels is integral to achieving this objective.
2. The SO Champion should keep the A&CE file for a minimum of three years in order to develop a deep understanding of A&CE that will assist in championing this file at the senior administration level.
3. SO Champions should attend one Ontario Association of Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA) conference each year to develop a greater understanding of A&CE.
4. The SO Champion of A&CE should work closely with the SO of Student Success to share resources, new ideas, and innovative approaches to helping all students graduate from high school.
5. DSBs and SO Champions should recognize the unique skill set of adult and continuing education leaders (managers and principals) as being key to managing adult and continuing education programs in a fiscally responsible way and integral to managing the relationship between the DSB and the adult and continuing education program.

2. Partnerships- Internal and External

Valuable Practice: Strategic partnerships, both within the board and in the greater community, leverage expertise, supports, and resources for adult and continuing education programs and provide students and adults with a complete learner pathway.

Recommendations:

6. A&CE should maximize back-office efficiencies with the DSB in the area of information and communications technology.
7. The DSB Facilities department should support A&CE in planning to meet its infrastructure needs and in developing a facilities model that reflects local factors on the ground. This support should include a review of current facilities and of facilitating relationships that are in place between K–12 schools and A&CE programs. The results of this review should be incorporated into the three-year strategic plan. The Facilities department should also provide custodial support to A&CE for programs taking place in DSB facilities and provide support to A&CE in developing and managing lease agreements for programs taking place off site.
8. A&CE should develop a formal marketing plan to establish a consistent brand identity, position, and presence in the community. Where available, DSB communications staff should provide A&CE with marketing and communications assistance to ensure consistency in the overall marketing of the DSB in the community.
9. A&CE and the DSB should facilitate communication between guidance counsellors at the secondary and A&CE levels. Good communication will assist counsellors in providing a clear and coordinated pathway and referral process for the learner and will also assist boards in determining future student need.
10. A&CE should work with contiguous and coterminous boards to maximize current resources for service delivery and to coordinate programs in order to make the most effective use of public resources. To the extent possible, A&CE should use these partnerships to share program dollars in order to broaden the range of adult programming in underserved regions and should collaborate in program planning to minimize duplication of services.
11. A&CE should partner with organizations that offer other government programs, such as LBS, academic upgrading in colleges, non-credit ESL/FSL, and LINC, in order to provide a complete learner pathway and offer an optimum continuum of supports for student success and well-being.
12. A&CE should partner with community-based agencies to integrate wrap-around social services in order to provide a full set of supports to the adult learner. Where feasible, this should be done through co-location and coordinated delivery.
- 12 Final Report Presentation

3. Annual and Strategic Planning

Valuable Practice: A&CE leaders (managers or principals) develop and communicate an annual plan and a multi-year strategic plan incorporating academic and non-academic components, including HR, finance, capital, staffing, and IT needs.

Recommendations:

13. A&CE leaders should develop an annual plan with clear linkages to the DSB's Board Improvement Plan, Operating Plan, and Strategic Plan. The annual plan should include goals, actions, responsibilities, timelines, and budget. A&CE should also develop a three-year strategic plan to assist in planning for future needs. These two plans should be developed in consultation with staff, the SO Champion, coterminous boards, colleges and universities, and the community.
14. A&CE should fully utilize current data tracking tools. Data tracking will enable A&CE to track and report progress in achieving its goals throughout the year, increase transparency and accountability in the system, and demonstrate a clear linkage between A&CE programs, the DSB's core business, and the ministry's core priorities.
15. A&CE leaders and the SO Champion should annually report to the Board of Trustees on the status and outcomes of the annual plan. Annual reporting will help increase the visibility of A&CE in the system and demonstrate the value added by A&CE in helping provide complete learner pathways and building public confidence in the public education system.

4. Key Personnel

Valuable Practice: A&CE programs have knowledgeable administrative support in four key areas: financial analysis, information management, guidance counselling, and HR analysis.

Recommendations:

16. A&CE should be supported by a financial analyst with a solid understanding of registers, grants, fee-paying programs, and ways of using flexible programming to meet student needs. This position is integral to maintaining sound financial management while maximizing the revenue that can come from this program.
17. A&CE should be supported by an information management specialist who can track enrolment data, work with the DSB's IT system to capture graduation numbers, and manage reporting to the ministry and funders.
18. A&CE should be supported by guidance counsellors who, as an integral part of A&CE programming, will provide assessment and referral services that support a complete learner pathway .
19. A&CE should be supported by an HR analyst. This position is integral to providing the flexible staffing arrangements required by A&CE programming in ways that respect local collective agreements.

5. Professional Development

Valuable Practice: The DSB actively supports professional development for all A&CE staff.

Recommendations:

20. DSBs should recognize the importance of professional development for all A&CE staff and should include A&CE staff in DSB professional development opportunities.
21. DSBs should include A&CE staff as part of their succession and talent development plan.
22. All A&CE staff should develop annual learning and training plans.
23. A&CE should leverage internal resources and collaborate with the DSB's Student Success, Curriculum Development, and Instructional Assessment Strategies units to develop PD opportunities tailored to A&CE staff needs as identified through a staff needs survey.
24. A&CE should leverage e-learning resources (e.g., the provincial Learning Management System, the Ontario Education Resource Bank, and ILC course material) as a PD resource for staff.
25. DSBs should involve A&CE leaders in forums that bring them together with secondary school principals and vice-principals. This involvement will lead to increased understanding, communication, transparency, and knowledge transfer on the part of the K–12 senior administrators regarding A&CE.
26. A&CE staff should participate actively with CESBA in forums for learning and sharing best practices.

Feedback and Next Steps

- Discussion and High level feedback
- Who are the key stakeholders to whom the report should be disseminated?
- What opportunities are there to present findings to key stakeholders?
- How could you picture using this in your board to further improve adult and continuing education?