York/Simcoe Language Training Partners Meeting February 22nd, 2017

YORK/SIMCOE LANGUAGE TRAINING PARTNERS MEETING
Minutes of Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, February 22nd, 2017

LOCATION: Vaughan Welcome Centre – 9100 Jane Street, Vaughan

ATTENDEES: Karen McNeil (Chair), Geraldine Ortiz (Recorder), Cara Wallace, Donna Thomas, Tatyana Krystynko, Jacqueline Jeffers, Regina Chan, Mourad Mardikian, Athra Walied, Adelina Bridi, Susie Nunes

Via voice conference: Isabel Oliveira, Linda Schut, Carolyn Langdon, Lia Kisel, Angela Jacewicz, Patricia Whittington

REGRETS: Pixie Cohen, Maria Tonon, Mitch Litvack, Grace Scire, Edie Albisser, Helen Crouch

Pre-meeting summary:

- Per previous meeting agreement in December 2016, Susie Nunes composed and sent a letter to TESL Ontario and TESL Canada making suggestions about providing PBLA in course curriculum and post-certification programs on behalf of the York Simcoe LTP. Renate Tilson, Executive Director from TESL Ontario replied to email stating, "Thank you for your communication of January 11, 2017. We appreciate the feedback you sent and will put this issue on the agenda for our next meeting of the TESL Ontario Accreditation Standards Committee. I will be in touch with you after the meeting.” We have not heard back from TESL Canada. The letter will be shared (please note that this is now posted on the new Language Partnership portal).

HARTs

Some questions were raised regarding HARTs:

- Is HARTs able to develop a way to make it easier for language training providers and instructors to extract information on the total hours of instruction attended by learners and the total available hours of instruction for a period specified?
- Is HARTs able to develop a way to track student hours, as opposed to days attended or days absent?

These questions are to be raised with the funders/MCI when the general meeting commences

PBLA

- PBLA Progress Reports and Conference Summary Reports updates were requested. MCI is working on this so that teachers can enter comments and be able to print out report.
- An update was requested on program/course developed to get PBLA trained instructors to become lead trainers and not need to do the full course.
- The last 2 workshops on the PBLA Cohort 2 are to be rolled out. Material is available in the CCLB website and provided through the PBLA Teacher.
CLARS Language Assessment Centre

- CLARS Language Assessment Centre will research and plan to purchase a teleconferencing system as proposed and agreed to by all those attending.
- On the Language Assessment Report, the different types of referrals are categorized separately such as ELT and OSLT. If there are no numbers to report, it will not appear on the chart in report.
- Assessments have taken place consistently in Alliston for the past 5 months, although a more regular location is yet to be determined.

In reply to HARTs and PBLA, issues brought up in the pre-meeting, Mourad Mardikian from MCI stated the following:

HARTs

- The ability to track partial attendance in HARTs is being looked into.

PBLA

- School boards will receive a copy of the PBLA Progress Report Template on an Excel file, it includes instructions and a learner tab. Some information need only be entered once and it will automatically populate in corresponding reports. For the time being this excel template will still serve as a manual attendance report for instructors tracking attendance.
- MCI will be working with the HARTs team to incorporate similar PBLA Progress Report calculation of attendance hours and make this information available on HARTs.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Meeting called to order and roundtable introductions completed by attendees. Previous meeting minutes were reviewed and approved by all present.

Action Items from Previous Minutes:

- Sharing of the service referral template for York/Durham was provided through LASS to share with coordinators in other regions.

- In responses to the request to look into reasons for assessment/re-assessment, data was obtained from HARTS. In HARTS there are two drop down areas; one is the reason for assessment or re-assessment and the other is for pending and deferred registration. In York Simcoe, the following numbers represent from April 2016 to date: 744: Need more time to consider options 421: Are not ready to start 307: Need to discuss with family first 86: Just wanted to know their CLB’s 19: referred to WSIB 14: Employment 5: May attend non-funded training

  Mourad indicated that these numbers seem to be proportionally consistent across most other regions.

- A way to prioritize assessment appointments for those that are ready to begin classes right away was suggested. As a serious delay to book an appointment is not being experienced, it was agreed that this is not a concern to look into at this time.
Some clients arrive for a language assessment after first visiting a language training provider and already know where they want to attend classes. Settlement Workers can guide pathways to learning and clients are referred to existing services throughout the language assessment process.

Other:

- The LTP Webpage is up and running with minor updates to be completed. A link and a password will be provided to all. Past and upcoming meeting agendas, minutes and language assessment reports as well as the Terms of Reference documents will be accessible.
- There is currently no need for Saturday and weekend classes in Barrie, as not many clients have made requests for this class time.

FUNDER UPDATES

- IRCC; No updates available at this time.
- No questions were brought forth to be forwarded to IRCC.

MOURAD MARDIKIAN –MCI

- MCI is at the tail end of the last PBLA cohorts and lead instructors are doing the training of classroom instructors. MCI is working with CCLB to provide PBLA online training with the aim to convert instructors to the role of Lead Instructors more quickly. This is particularly important to those who have lost their Lead Instructors.
- The self-directed online PBLA training course is almost complete. Once this is available it will be easier to direct newly-hired or soon to be hired classroom instructors to take this training - first to become familiar with PBLA as well as completing the PBLA Bootcamp. This could be a condition of hire.
- Several projects underway; one with Ottawa-Carlton and one with CCLB on developing additional PBLA task resources not only limited to school boards but for everyone in Ontario to access and use. It will help instructors avoid spending a lot of time on class preparation and investing work hours outside of the classroom.
- A project team is developing a next generation of Quartz 2.0. In addition to some of the other components it will have more PBLA specific task development that will be able to connect to the courses or lesson content and identify appropriate tasks that can be applied.
- E-learning pilots are underway in several regions. MCI is trying to figure out how to handle the world of assessments for entrance into E-learning courses. It would be easy if these courses were close to an assessment location but it is more complicated if it is fully virtual. Currently working with TCET to take the online self-assessment and apply the results to access the E-learning courses. As these courses get developed and piloted the hope is by the 2018/19 school year E-learning course options will be added to HARTs.
- Negotiating with IRCC on CLARS agreements for the next 3 years.
- Rolling out remote assessments with the focus on priority regions where a gap exists is being worked on. For instance, there are no French assessment services in the Windsor Region or in the Northern Ontario Region where there is French programming. MCI wants to focus on the regions where there are considerable time delays before an itinerant assessment is being scheduled based on the conditions. Over the next 2-3 years, remote assessments will be an available CLARS service but it will be done in phases based on priority regions first.
• Syrian refugee information continues to be tracked. At the end of January 2017 there were over 7500 adult Syrian refugees assessed. Out of those, over 2900 have attended provincial programs to date. MCI is tracking from November 2015 onward. MCI is also starting to collect Syrian Refugees’ success stories as there is a lot of interest to what happens to them on month 13. One of the growing areas of interest is the development of language training programing in the workplace for Syrian refugees with limited language skills. It presents a whole range of challenges because it is very difficult to get into training at CLB 1-2 related to the workplace. Health and Safety and Understanding their Rights as Employees would be some areas of interest to be taught.

• In regards to mentoring or individualized training being considered, it was stated that only traditional training is being considered due to cost constraints.

• Workplace programs are offered to all immigrants with language gaps including all refugees.

• IRCC also funds similar programs through COSTI for employers in York Region. The challenge has been to find enough eligible clients in one area/employer to run a class.

• As of February 21, 2017 there are 1154 clients waiting to get into ESL/FSL programs across the province. Out of those, 734 are first time initial placement clients who have never accessed language training programs. 69 are in class either in Federal or Provincial are on a waitlist to get into alternate ESL/FSL courses. In York region there are 65 clients waiting to get into YCDSB or YRDSB (out of the 1154 total) 49 are Syrian refugees, none of whom live in York Region.

• A communique has been released in regards to the introduction of I/E. It will not to replace N/A. I/E will become a new option to represent “insufficient evidence”.

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT SERVICES REPORT  
CARA WALLACE

An updated Language Assessment Services Report was sent by email to attendees prior to the meeting. The statistics were presented and the following additional points were discussed:

• Additional assessments were added to Markham South to accommodate the need.

• Additional assessments at different sites will continue into 2017 as demand continues to increase.

• To deal with wait times clients are called two days in advance of their appointment and if necessary appointments are double booked.

• A question was raised in regards to clients who live south of Steeles (in Toronto), but want to take classes in York Region. It was stated that although the assessors in Toronto have access to the classes in all regions, clients are usually advised to call the Language Assessment Centre in York Region for referral assistance.

• A question was raised in regards to the outreach performed in Simcoe County and if there is a need for ESL classes in Collingwood or Midland. It was stated that the purpose of the outreach was to raise awareness of the program and does not necessarily represent a need for classes or assessments in any specific area.

Action Item:

A request for assessors to try and track the number of those requesting classes in certain areas to determine if there is sufficient demand for a class to be set up.

CMAS NEWS  
DONNA THOMAS

• In 2016/2017, CMAS worked with all agencies to put an emergency plan into place. CMAS is asking all agencies to implement that plan in the 2017/18 contract year.

• All 2016/2017 agency assessments have been completed across the country and CMAS is in the process of composing and sending letters to IRCC in the next 3 weeks.

• In the last couple of months, there have been agencies with long wait lists who have contacted CMAS for assistance with Syrian refugee children. There is now plan in place to support Syrian refugee children. Those that require this assistance can contact CMAS.
OTHER UPDATES, NEWS OR BUSINESS

- Susie Nunez mentioned that her portfolio has increased at the Bette Stephenson Centre and that she is now the contact person for additional programs such as: International Languages and Education.

Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held at the **Vaughan Welcome Centre**:  
Tuesday, May 16th, 2017

- 9:30 A.M. Pre-meeting discussion
- 10:10 A.M. Funders join meeting and there will be a recap of pre-meeting discussion