

# Nova Scotia Apprenticeship System

Reference Group's Report on Employer Engagement in Apprenticeship



Prepared for:

Minister's Advisory Panel  
on Apprenticeship

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## **Reference Group Findings on Increasing Employer Engagement**

The Minister's Reference Group on Apprenticeship comprised of employers, employer associations, sector councils, union representatives, NSCC and department officials met to discuss employer engagement in Apprenticeship. Where does this issue stand currently? What is the potential? What factors impact employer participation?

An apprentice is an employee who is employed in a designated trade for which an apprenticeship pathway exists and whom the employer has agreed to train. Employer is defined in the apprenticeship act to be a person, corporation, partnership, unincorporated association or a municipal, provincial or other public authority and includes the parties to a recognized joint apprenticeship training committee. To proceed successfully through an apprenticeship, the employment must continue and the opportunity must be available to participate in scheduled technical training. The right combination of work experience combined with technical training positions the apprentice to challenge, in most cases, an interprovincial Red Seal exam. In Nova Scotia, too few apprentices are completing this process, too few are successfully challenging their exams and too few are completing within the ideal timeframe of four to five years. This is the reality of our current apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia and it is of great concern to the members of the Reference Group.

### **Strategic Context**

Apprenticeship, with its direct connection to the labour market, is the ultimate labour market information system. Unlike most other Canadian jurisdictions, the Apprenticeship System in Nova Scotia relies heavily on entrants with community college training and has few apprentices using the direct entry option. The heavy reliance on pre-apprenticeship training shifts the dialogue on apprenticeship to include discussions of the relevance and capacity of the pre-apprenticeship training and its linkage to the labour market and to employers.

As Nova Scotians, we understand we are facing some difficult challenges. Our economy is on the verge of significant growth but employment numbers currently lag. We are getting older and our most skilled trades people are beginning to retire in significant numbers. We are small provinces in Atlantic Canada, maintaining national standards for training and certification across 60+ designated trades is challenging and, in Nova Scotia, we don't even have the capacity to operate a full slate of programs. Many of our businesses are small, rural based enterprises which makes access to training programs problematic for apprentices who have 'to come to the city' for 6-8 weeks of in-class training and for employers who may lose these apprentices in the process when they do not return to their community.

In the face of these challenges, we also have new industrial opportunities within Nova Scotia such as the shipbuilding contract and the Maritime Link project as well as opportunities to participate in significant industrial and energy development projects in other parts of Atlantic Canada. We will need our society to value opportunities in the skilled trades unlike ever before and yet investment in the apprenticeship system is not even keeping pace with current demand.

We have learned from each other through our discussions - one size does not fit all. Sector by sector, industry by industry, trade by trade, business by business - the capacity varies greatly, affecting our ability to be engaged in apprenticeship to support apprentices and to contribute to what we believe to be a valuable system. We discussed the investment and institutional structures (associations, committees, collective agreements and funding) that support and have led to successful apprenticeship experiences within many of the commercial/industrial construction sector trades. We explored the Boat Builders model with its employer and apprentice supports and alternative approaches to technical training. We also discussed the difficulties employers encounter when navigating in the system without these kinds of supports.

Technology is ever changing. The demands of a given trade are constantly evolving. The need for direct dialogue, effective and timely decision making are critical to a successful apprenticeship system. Whether the program elements are career exploration, bridging programs, pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship, we need to be connected as employers and as a system responsible for delivering the skills on which our economic future will be built.

For the majority of the Reference Group, our successes at influencing apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship are few. Employers are frustrated by decision making processes that seem disconnected from each other and like a black box to the rest of us. Budget allocations and schedule changes don't seem to connect to industry demand for training and services. In some cases, there are too many pre-apprentice seats, while too few sections of apprenticeship technical training are available. Many employers register an apprentice and, to them, it is really the end of their job as far as they are concerned, leaving the rest up to the apprentice. If the apprentice complains about some aspect of their experience, employers may become reluctant to continue participation in the system. Change seems to take a very long time to someone from the outside looking in.

How to engage employers? Realign decision making structures. Employers make decisions every day and we do not want to wait years to see a trade regulation through the process. We do not want to go back to a college Program Advisory Committee meeting where our voices had no weight. We will be reluctant particularly in a non-compulsory trade to release an apprentice to attend a technical training after a previous bad experience.

All is not broken, but the system is struggling. Where do we go from here?

### **Strategic Recommendations on System Governance**

The Reference Group after considerable deliberation and having considered models of apprenticeship delivery and governance in other Canadian jurisdictions has concluded that Nova Scotia should:

- Establish a governance model that increases accountability and industry involvement in strategic planning, oversight, resource allocations and program outcomes. Delegate regulatory authority to the corporate board, trade and ad hoc committees.

- Create a system of Trade Committees where industry has the authority to exercise a sense of control and autonomy over what is going on in their specific trade relative to training.

We understand that in recommending a new approach to system governance that apprenticeship will continue to be a shared responsibility with accountability to all Nova Scotians for the system's ability to contribute to the economy and society; to government for funding and policy; and to journeypersons, apprentices and employers practicing their trades to ensure an effective, responsive and accountable system of training and occupational regulation.

The new apprenticeship governance must incorporate representation and accountability to each of these three participants- industry and society as a whole; government and specific trades. This should be achieved through representation at the corporate board level and through the use of trade and ad hoc committees. A specific discussion of the details of a possible governance model is presented later in this report.

The Reference Group recommends the new governance structure and its mandate should be guided by the following vision, desired outcomes and guiding principles.

## **A New Vision**

An industry-led apprenticeship system that builds and maintains a highly skilled and diverse workforce contributing to the economic success of Nova Scotia through changing economic times.

## **Desired Outcomes**

- An apprenticeship system driven by excellence that responds to the labour market needs of the Nova Scotia economy, remaining flexible and adaptive to changing economic and industry conditions.
- An apprenticeship system where employers actively engage as leaders in the full continuum - from labour market planning to post-journeyperson training, from governance to a skilled labour force.
- A re-defined apprenticeship system inclusive of trade career decision making, youth exploration and bridging programs that engage historically under-represented groups (women, African Canadians, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and those living with disabilities), assessment including prior learning assessment, pre-apprenticeship, technical training and on the job training – both for apprentices and journeypersons.
- An apprenticeship system that acknowledges and provides for the different needs of the different trades, establishing relevant and integrated training pathways and enabling trade direction/advice regarding each program.

- An apprenticeship system that provides meaningful opportunities for all population groups, living throughout the Province.
- An apprenticeship system that takes advantage of promising practices from other Canadian jurisdiction and is harmonized at the program level with the three other apprenticeship systems in Atlantic Canada.
- An apprenticeship system that uses technology to significantly enhance the delivery of the system to all partners, coordinating multifaceted training approaches, optimizing administration, and addressing geographic issues and that operates as an extension of the workplaces that it serves.
- An apprenticeship system that is sufficiently funded to move apprentices along their journey without interruption, achieving higher completion rates through more effective conversion to apprentices of pre-apprenticeship, youth and bridging program participants.

## **Guiding Principles**

The Apprenticeship System should be:

- Industry led and industry driven
- Built on successes already in the system; focused on quality
- Funded and resourced linked to the demand for services - As registrations increase, so must funding to ensure an opportunity for completion
- Focused on the employer and the apprentice - Before they engage in the journey they should be guaranteed access to system supports and training that will ensure their success, including bridging programs and essential skills programming
- Focused on labour market alignment, embracing the need for diversity, recognizing the need to encourage entry into a much wider range of trades
- Leveraging Atlantic synergies/efficiencies, maintaining high standards while optimizing program delivery
- Accountable and transparent to all stakeholders for decisions, resource allocations and performance
- Establishing standards and accountabilities for all participants- apprentices; employers; joint registration agreement participants; training providers and service providers
- Making decisions with industry, based on a comprehensive view of the trade and all aspects of programming relevant to the particular trade

- Flexible, responsive and innovative, open to multiple solutions and recognizing that one size will never fit all

## **Strategic Recommendations on System Operations**

The following recommendations embrace several themes that developed over the course of our discussions - employer engagement and labour market connectivity are integrally linked; system responsiveness is essential for continued engagement; optimizing resources, utilizing technology and Atlantic synergies as well as focusing on quality and results are action we believe will draw employers into the system.

We recommend the following actions:

- Redefine the scope of the apprenticeship system to be a more comprehensive system, spanning youth trades initiatives; bridging programs; pre-apprenticeship; apprenticeship; and post journey certification.
  - While the core obligations of the new structure would be the operation of the apprenticeship and certification system, we believe it is important that Apprenticeship be mandated to provide policy input, guidance and possible program participation in a broader context such as youth and P-12 programming; equity group bridging initiatives and regulatory activities that impact specific occupations.
- Assess the current allocation of resources across the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship systems by designated trade and determine a more effective utilization of resources on a go forward basis; work with trade committees to review and optimize program delivery and training pathways, and align trade training capacity with the labour market, ensuring that each potential apprentice is supported through the full journey, beginning at pre-apprenticeship.
  - Rigorously engage industry in establishing labour market outlooks for designated occupations as well as ensuring that pathways are appropriate and training remains relevant to industry needs and standards.
  - Compile labour market information from relevant government and industry stakeholders and ensure a balanced, objective assessment of labour supply-demand conditions for all trades persons. Ensure the requirements of the labour market are reflected in the capacity of the apprenticeship system through multi-year program planning for both pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship technical training; ensuring appropriate training, staff and administrative capacity and recommending to government the financial requirements to achieve labour market alignment.

- Explore the feasibility and suitability of reallocating current government funding for the delivery of pre-apprenticeship programs to enhance the delivery of apprenticeship technical training by designated trade.
- Provide information in partnership with other organizations to parents and potential apprentices regarding the opportunities, pathways and employment potential for designated trades.
- Develop and carry out a comprehensive quality initiative, setting service delivery standards and monitoring performance to ensure industry and apprentice needs are being met in all training aspects of the system- administration, assessments, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship technical training, on-the-job mentoring and enforcement.
  - Establish specific performance measures and service delivery standards through stakeholder consultations on system wide issues as well as an individual trade level.
  - Individuals need help;—before enrolling in a pre-apprenticeship program—in making more-informed decisions about the training and, subsequently, the trade they are considering pursuing. Establish either a pre-screening test or offer a self-assessment tool that explores their suitability for a trade.
  - Value innovation; alternative and multiple program delivery options leveraging technology and partnerships including at the Atlantic level where ever possible to maximize the opportunities for apprentices and to streamline program delivery costs, improve accessibility for both apprentices and employers.
  - Report annually to stakeholders on the on actual performance as well as seeking input on the need to adjust or alter the measures and standards.
- Create and implement a system of supports for pro-active employer engagement by sector/trade that better defines the employer role and responsibility, engages those not currently participating and provides the appropriate and relevant forums for participation, leveraging existing industry associations and sector councils.
  - Establish clear duties and responsibilities for each party to the system- employer including joint apprenticeship training committees; apprentice; journey person; training provider and apprenticeship board. Hold each participant accountable for compliance with these duties.
  - Establish an appeal or ombudsman function to allow for complaints to be investigated when one of the parties believes these duties have not been fulfilled.
  - Develop program and regulatory linkages that reinforce the value to employers of hosting apprenticeship whether this is through the

procurement system; workers compensation system or business licensing requirements.

- Recognize that employers in specific sectors, regions or trades may require more program supports than currently exist to ensure that they are able to comply with program delivery standards.
- Position employer engagement in apprenticeship as an investment and benefit in terms of dollars and time, as opposed to as an expense; develop strategies to encourage apprenticeship as the preferred pathway for employers to fill their human resource requirements.

### **Specific Recommendations regarding Governance Structures and Accountabilities**

The Reference Group has discussed key attributes of a governance system which we believe if implemented as outlined will significantly enhance employer engagement throughout the apprenticeship system. The critical components of the proposed governance model include:

- **Mandate:** Under the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Act* the new governance structure is responsible to:
  - create a relevant, accessible and responsive apprenticeship training and certification system to meet employers' and employees' needs and priorities
    - Apprenticeship training to be defined to include formal pre-apprenticeship as well as apprenticeship technical training and on the job training
  - support employer and employee participation in learning, skills development and certification
  - designate trades, remove designated trade's designation, recognize former designated trades and regulate designated trades
  - assign and recognize industry sector groups
  - develop approaches in apprenticeship training and certification that support increased access, participation and completion by members of under-represented groups
  - administer and issue certificates, permits, endorsements and identification cards respecting the training, certification and registration of apprentices, tradespersons and journeypersons
  - participate in interprovincial apprenticeship initiatives that are necessary to maintain the apprenticeship and trade certification program in good standing with respect to the Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) Program; for training and certification and related matters
  - create and contribute to an understanding of the labour market needs of industry and society
  - influence decisions that impact the apprenticeship system and to build linkages to strengthen apprenticeship in such areas as youth programming and education; occupational regulation and business licensing and regulation

- work collaboratively with apprenticeship partner agencies to provide programs and services that further the goals of the Board
- harmonize its apprenticeship programs in tandem with its Atlantic counterparts as committed to by the four Atlantic Premiers in April 2013.
- Composition
  - A Board of Directors comprised of up to 15 members from which the members elect the Chair and Vice-Chair.
  - The majority of the Directors equally representative of employers and employees should be selected by industry based on industry sector group nominations.
  - Industry sector groups should be allocated seats proportionally in relation to the level of apprenticeship and certification activity in their sector.
  - Other board members are selected by the Minister Responsible and represent additional stakeholders in the system including government, training providers and equity groups.
  - The Board should ensure a broad representation of industry interests is reflected in its composition, including large and small businesses and geographic regions of the province.
  - The Board should also balance industry organization nominees and representatives with individual employers and journeypersons, ensuring a broad range of opinions and perspectives.
  - Director competencies
    - The Directors should contribute to the Board through their knowledge, skills and experiences. Required Director competencies include: leadership experience; industry sector knowledge; governance experience and financial literacy. Desired Director competencies include: accounting/audit; advocacy/communications; stakeholder relations; human resource management; diversity; performance management; information technology; marketing; legal/regulatory; labour relations; government relations; operations; project management; strategic planning and critical thinking.
  - Nomination process
    - Taking into consideration the competencies, skills and other interests/needs of the Board, the industry sector groups will be requested to present nominations for the industry representation on the board.
    - Government seats to the board will meet the normal requirements for appointments to agencies, boards and commissions for voting members.
    - Ex-officio representatives will be appointed by the Minister Responsible.
  - Compensation
    - Directors should receive some form of compensation, recognizing the fiduciary and strategic responsibilities associated with the new Board.
- Authority
  - Legislation will establish the authority of the Board and extent of its independent authority.

- The Board should be able to set or advise on budgets, financial allocations, human resources, user fees and enter into contracts.
- The Board should have ability to create policies and to approve regulations including the designation or removal of designation of the trade.
- Human Resources
  - Executive Director/CEO shall report to the Board and may be selected by the Board of Directors.
  - The regular employees of the new structure will be members of the civil service, participate in civil service collective bargaining, benefits and pension plans.
- Finances
  - The Board will be responsible to account for and report on its operations subject to independent audit and/or review by the auditor general for Nova Scotia.
  - The Board will present an annual budget and business plan for approval of the Minister.
  - An annual report will be tabled with the Minister Responsible within three months of the fiscal year.
- Corporate Structure
  - The Board would operate with three standing committees- Finance/Audit; Governance and Human Resources.
  - The Board would have the authority to create trade advisory committees for designated sectors as well as to create ad hoc committees.
- Industry Sector Groups
  - The Board would recognize industry sector groups comprised of employers and employees and their respective organizations, for organizing of designated trades in the Construction; Motive Power; Industrial (manufacturing) and Service sectors.
  - Industry Sector groups would be responsible to nominate representatives to the Board.
  - The Industry Sector group network will form the primary stakeholder group providing industry input and feedback to the apprenticeship system.
- Trade Committees
  - Comprised of employers and employees and their respective organizations, journeypersons, apprentices, training providers, regulators, and equity group members in a designated trade or for a trade being considered for designation.
  - Provisions to provide for cost recovery of wages and reasonable expenses should be made to ensure that no individual is penalized or prevented from participating in a trade committee.
  - The Committees will be responsible to:
    - create multi-year human resource plans for the trade
    - make recommendations to the Board with respect to:
      - training program capacity and delivery
      - assessment and prior learning requirements
      - apprenticeship pathways
      - entrance requirements for apprentices
      - curricula for courses for pre-apprenticeship as well as apprenticeship training
      - matters related to the regulation of the trade including ratios
      - programs to support employer engagement
      - And other matters that the Board may request

- harmonize with their Atlantic Counterparts in areas identified by the respective Premiers.
- Ad Hoc Committees
  - Committees created by the Board are accountable to carry out work related to a specific mandate and time frame.
- Government Regulatory Authority
  - Make regulations defining the roles and accountabilities of the Board.
  - Final authority over the compulsory certification or removal of compulsory certification of a designated trade.
- Accountability
  - The Board will hold an annual general meeting and plenary session with industry stakeholders inviting from the complete list of industry sector group representatives as well as the public at large. The Board will report on its strategic goals, objectives and performance as well as seeking input and guidance on future priorities, issues and planning.

## Next Steps

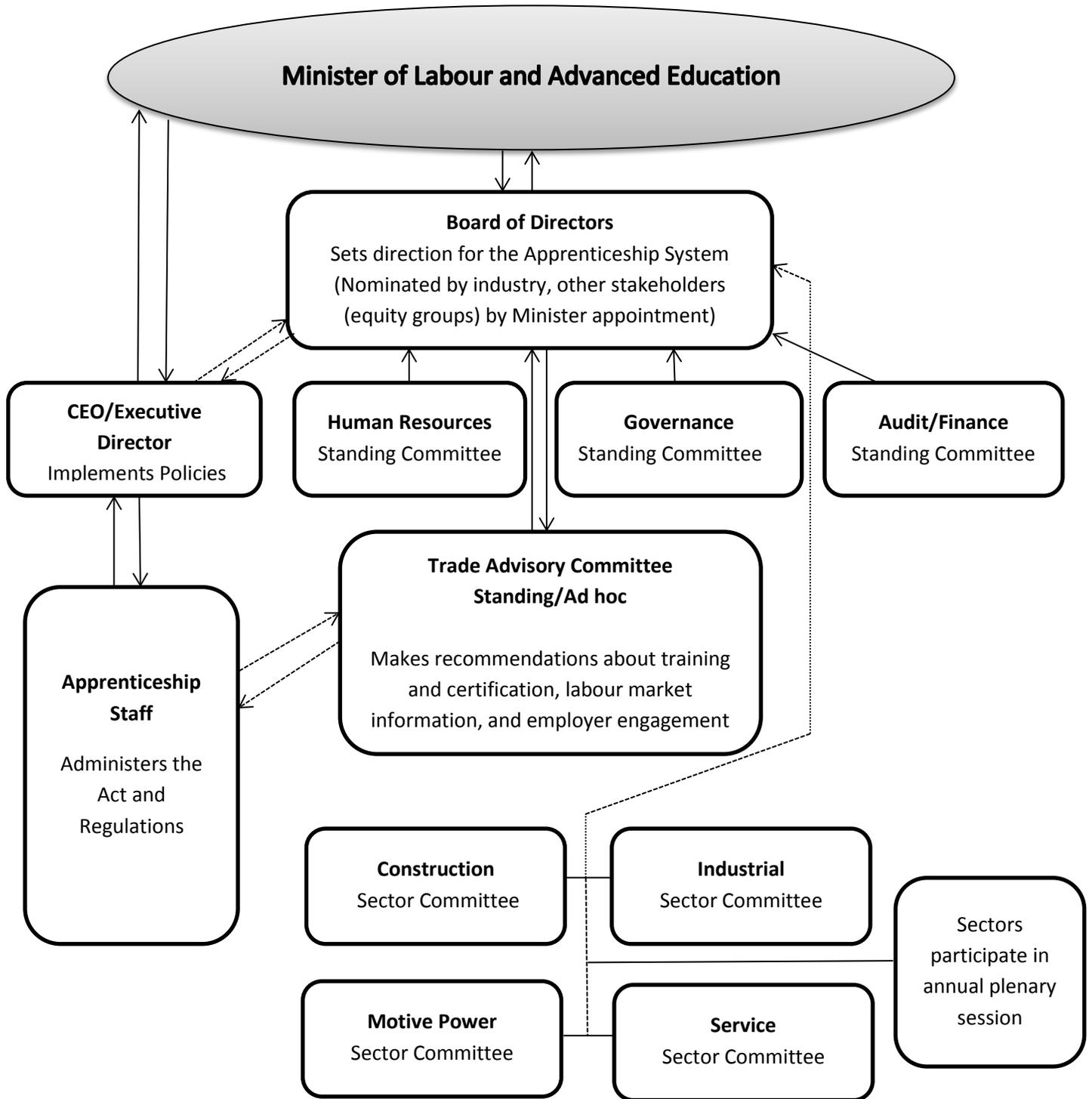
The Reference Group understands we are recommending significant change. We understand that a tremendous amount of work will be required on many fronts to move the apprenticeship system from its current level of performance to the state we envision. We offer the following thoughts on the next steps:

- Board detailed definition phase
  - A more detailed and comprehensive description of the Board will be required including the governance framework, relationships with industry sectors, government and NSCC, accountabilities, budgets and business plans.
  - A critical balance needs to be achieved between the future board and its ability to influence its own future and the detailed planning within government in preparation for the transition including the legislative changes as well as government budget processes for 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- Industry validation:
  - We anticipate that this report and its recommendations will require validation with all stakeholders and with the public at large.
  - Reference Group members are prepared to continue to serve as a resource to government as both the consultation and definition phases proceed and until such time as an interim board is appointed.
- Transition planning
  - Dedicated resource at the volunteer and staff level including a budget will be required to support the transition so as not to distract from the current operations of the Apprenticeship Training Division.
- Ongoing system investments and operational planning
  - Integral to the success of the new governance framework for the apprenticeship system is increased funding whether as new allotments or as a reassignment of existing funds within the existing systems. The importance of adequate funding of the system to ensure apprentices

complete within five years and to provide for growth in both registrations and completions cannot be overstated. Investments in system capacity are required immediately.

- A number of the recommendations including the quality and information technology initiatives we believe should begin immediately.
- Atlantic cooperation including industry engagement should also be supported as a priority.
- Industry consultation on performance standards, labour market requirements should not wait until the new structure is up and running to be begin anew. We recommend that, as part of the transition, resources be allocated to allow the Apprenticeship Training Division through the current Apprenticeship Board in partnership with training providers to establish four industry sector groups (Construction; Motive Power, Industrial and Service) to begin the following work.
  - Detailed definition of the sector groups network including the specific trades to be included within each sector and the employer and employee organizations to be recognized
  - Review the existing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs available; assess the labour market needs of these sectors; conduct a gap analysis; and make recommendations on the priorities for re-alignment of training program delivery, options for apprenticeship pathways and opportunities to improve employer engagement
  - Make recommendations on the priorities within the sector for setting up of active trade committees, including the appropriate representation on these committees.

# Nova Scotia Governance Model



—————> Indicates direct reporting relationship

- - - - -> Indicates communications/working relationship

## Appendix One

Six key questions were referred from the Panel to the Reference Group for consideration. The following summary highlights key elements of the conversations that resulted.

**1. If you could have the perfect apprenticeship model for Nova Scotia 3 to 5 years from now, what would it look like taking into consideration the following components? (Pre-employment training; workplace training; technical training; advisory responsibilities-trade advisory committees, Board, trade associations; program administration-compliance, information management and client processing; and other)**

- create a true apprenticeship journey that reflects workplace realities and demands for each trade; places value on continuity of labour force attachment with a high level of conversion from bridging, youth and pre-apprenticeship and successful apprenticeship completion
- engage industry in comprehensive dialog on labour market outlook for each trade; program design and delivery ; employer supports; delegate authority to industry committees to mandate change and monitor system performance
- align labour market needs and practices through each phase youth apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship delivery including candidate selection; appropriate screening including aptitude testing; scheduling and technical training delivery to become an extension of the workplace
- encourage and support multiple pathways through the system; bridging programs; innovation and the application of technology
- resource the system to ensure apprentices in all trades can complete within 5 years of registration

**2. What do employers need or need to do to become full participants in Nova Scotia's apprenticeship program?**

- a) **What should employers be expected to do?**
- b) **What current government supports to employers could be changed? (training; financial; modified pre-apprenticeship?)**

- employers need a meaningful role, where there is a link between inputs and outcomes
- employers must come to the table ready to take on much of the responsibility for system and individual apprentice success – a bit less about what government and training institutions are going to do and more about what employers need to do, i.e. - active participation on trade advisory committees with associated decision making responsibilities
- clearly established expectations for employers allowed to host apprentices; employers are not one size fits all; program supports for direct entry or that a first time host employers may require greater system support; joint registration agreements; industry associations, sector councils should all be involved to improve completion and conversion rates
- incentives may be required to ensure employers register a full range of apprentices from youth to final year; government programs such as procurement or licensing activity should value/require apprentice registration
- ease of apprenticeship system access with multiple points is critical to all participants including 'my account' concept; online registration; records updating; training registration

over multiple year; contemporary communications system that can target messages to groups of employers or apprentices; knowledge management system to optimize system efficiency and operating capacity

- need to reform EI practices for the purpose of reducing or eliminating participation barriers

### **3. How can employers and employer/labour associations contribute to effectively plan apprenticeship programming?**

-active participation in trade committees; providing input on trade practice changes and technologies; reviewing and guidance on program effectiveness; identifying solutions/options to program access, changes in labour market conditions affecting registrations; labour market demand in the short and longer term

-valuing the apprenticeship journey by supporting apprentices; planning access to technical training; obtaining feedback the training and cycling this back into the system; celebrating conversions, registrations and completions and encouraging journeypersons who become mentors

### **4. How can government, industry associations and training providers work better together to educate employers and promote careers in apprenticeship trades?**

-leverage existing programs wherever possible, development common themes and high level messages targeted individually at potential apprentices and potential employers

-coordinate efforts regionally and nationally where possible

-recognize that a successful program with high conversion and completion rates will market itself

### **5. How can employers and industry associations create an environment where under-represented groups have the opportunity to fully participate in the apprenticeship system?**

- ensure a sustained focus on shifting the culture and the lens from which the industry and system operates; working in stages; creating experiences for employer/employees to connect with under-represented groups

-develop accommodation supports and awareness for both apprentices from under-represented groups and employers and to develop an overall understanding of diversity and its benefits

### **6. What legislative and/or regulatory changes are needed to support participation? (ratio; other issues?)**

-implement an independent governance structure with oversight of youth; bridging; pre-apprenticeship; apprenticeship and post journey programming and employer support

-harmonize regulations and program delivery at the Atlantic level

-devolve appropriate decision making authority to new apprenticeship board and to trade committees

## Appendix Two

The Reference Group on Apprenticeship in Nova Scotia (“the Group”) was formed to provide diverse perspectives and a broad context to central issue of employer engagement in Apprenticeship. Six key questions were posed to the Group for response and feedback, as well as an opportunity to provide additional thoughts and advice. The Group held six full day meetings with the support of facilitator Wayne Woodard. Presentations from the Apprenticeship Training Division; NSCC, Carpenters and Millwrights Training Centre and the Atlantic Workforce Initiative assisting in rounding out the discussions. A number of senior officials from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education also participated in the discussions including Sandra MacKenzie, Marjorie Davison, Elizabeth Mills, Joe Rudderham and John Alan Brown.

Members of the Reference Group are:

- Scott Blakeney, Atlantic Dodge
- Heidi Boudreau, Port Hawkesbury Paper
- Douglas Campbell, Michelin (Granton Plant)
- Greg Cole, Colebuilt
- Chip Dickison, Nova Scotia Boat Builders Association
- Kevin Gerrior, Nova Scotia Community College
- Darlene Grant-Fiander and Lynn McDonagh-Hughes, Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
- Peter Greer, Carpenters Millwright and Allied Workers
- Tom Griffiths, IBEW Local 625
- John Kelly, UA Local 56
- Norm Kemp, Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board
- Carol MacCulloch, Landscape Nova Scotia
- Rhonda Marks, Techtronics Machine Works Limited
- Bill McLellan and Mike Kydd, MERIT Contractors Association
- Clifford Murphy, Cape Breton Island Building and Construction Trades Council and Mel Gillis, Business Manager, UA Local 682
- Doreen Parsons, Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- Brad Smith, Mainland Nova Scotia Building Construction Trades Council

