

Statistical Report

Guelph-Wellington 2021-2022

Project READ Literacy Network

October 2022



Project READ
Literacy Network



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Program Statistical Information for 2021/22

Introduction

The Guelph-Wellington statistical report is a summation and analysis of all statistics from 4 funded literacy sites:

Community Based:

- Action Read Community Literacy Centre of Guelph
- Wellington County Learning Centre

School Board:

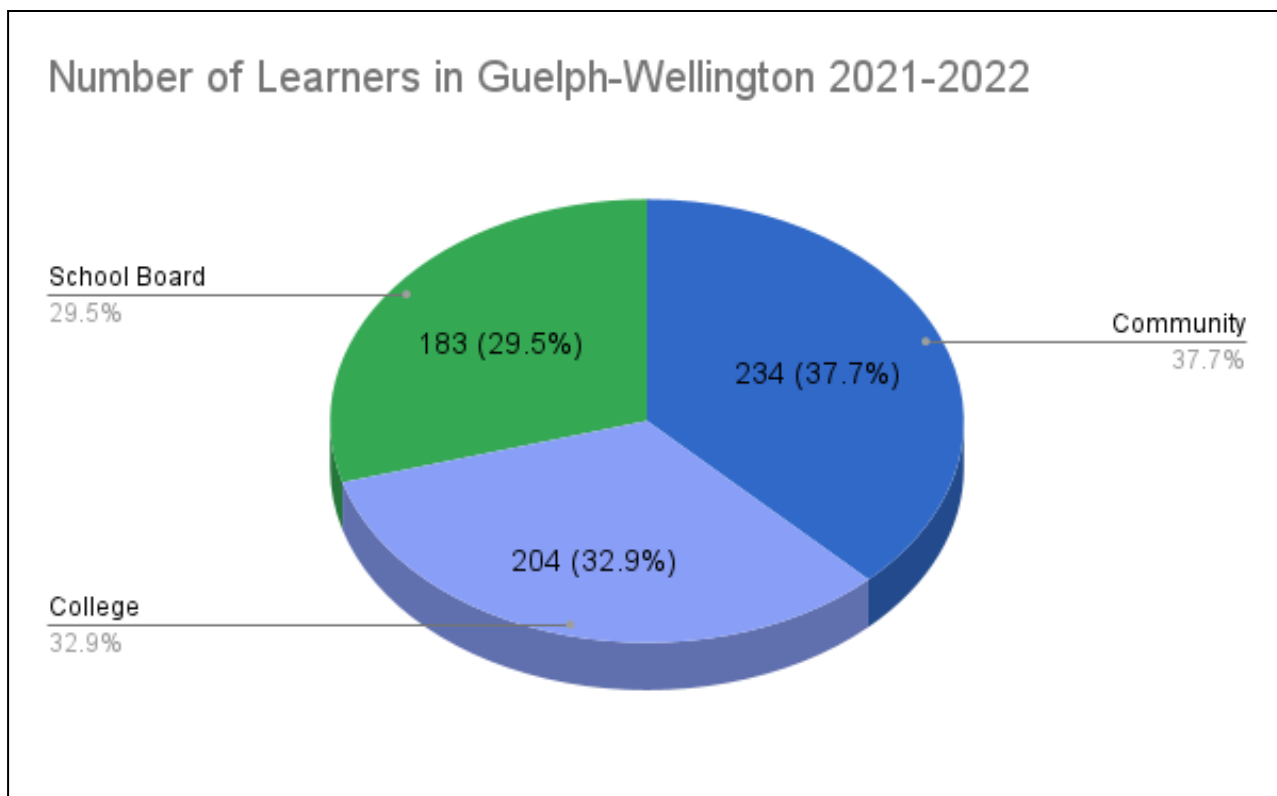
- Skills Upgrading Program – Wellington Centre for Continuing Education

College:

- Conestoga College – Guelph

Number of Learners in Guelph-Wellington

In 2021-2022, community agencies in Guelph-Wellington had the largest number of learners with 234 learners in their programs, followed by 204 college level learners and 183 learners upgrading in school board programs.

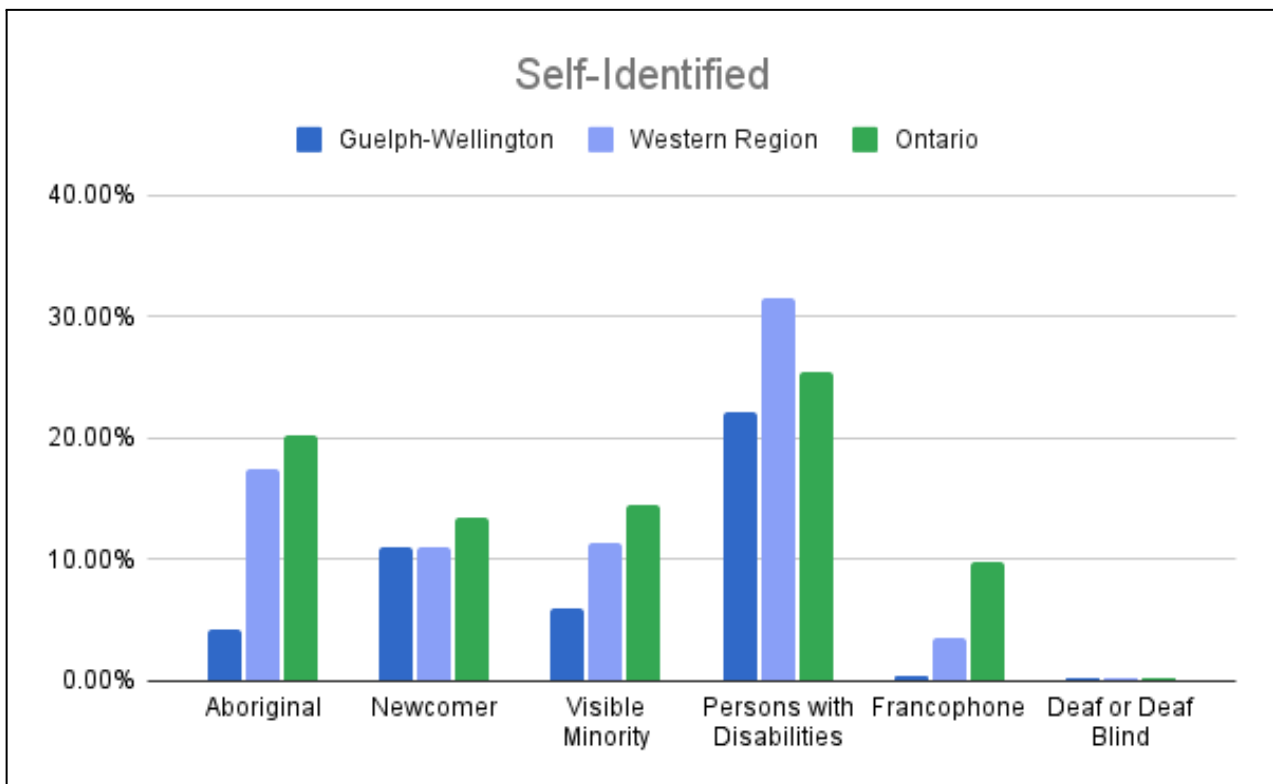


Self-Identified

The number of learners identifying as female and male in Guelph-Wellington is consistent with the Western Region and Ontario numbers for this year with female learners making up 63.6% and male learners making up 35.1% in our programs.

It is interesting that the number of people self-identifying as a person with a disability is dramatically lower in Guelph-Wellington than in the Western Region and Ontario, when previously, this number was much higher than the province and the West. Does this indicate that people with disabilities were left behind due to pandemic restrictions? Did the limited options to connect with programming during the pandemic affect this number? It's difficult to understand why this number is comparatively lower in this region than across the province and other regions.

Newcomers seem to be the most comfortable self-identifying, while other groups may not be as comfortable sharing this information, or it may not be getting captured by program staff. Guelph-Wellington does not have programs available for the aboriginal or deaf communities, and limited francophone programming, as a result the numbers in these areas are lower than in other regions.

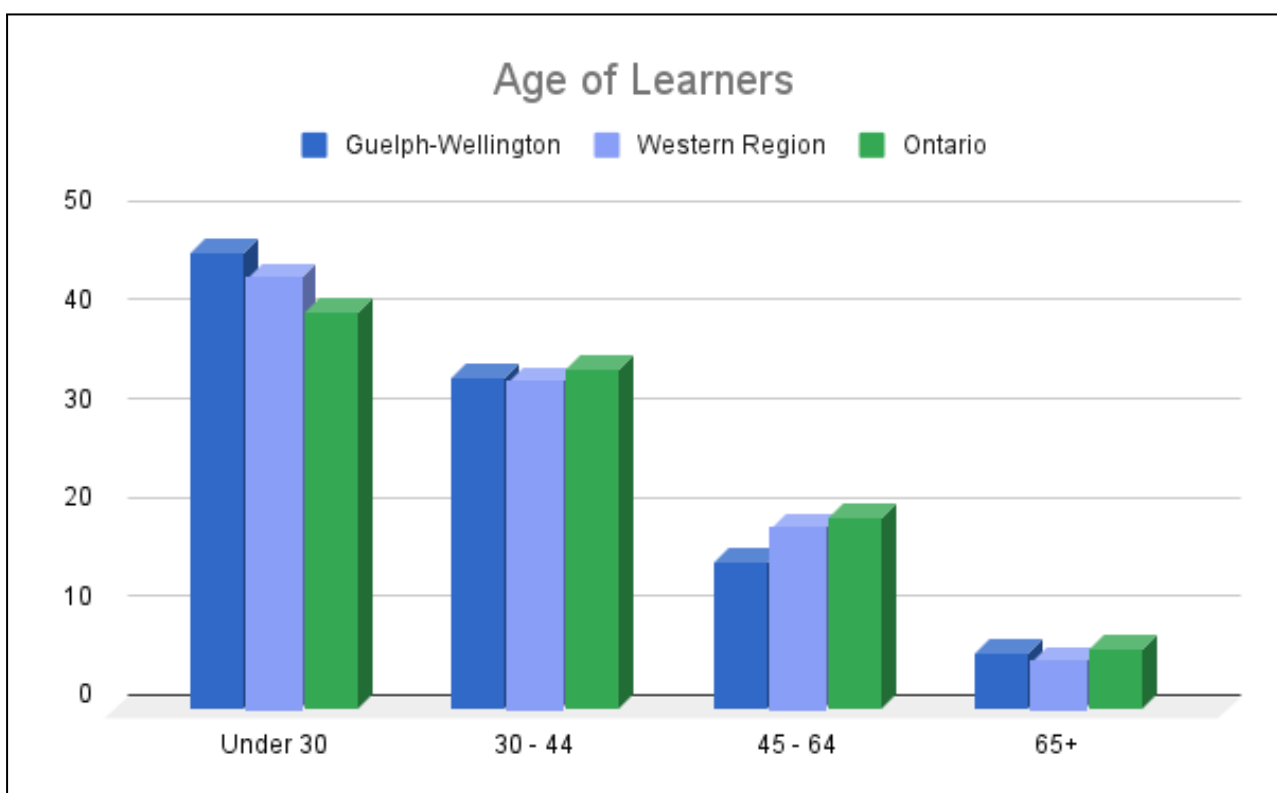


Age

In 2021-2022, the Guelph-Wellington Region had more youth in its programs compared with the Western Region and Ontario. Learner numbers in Guelph-Wellington have continued to show an increase with the under 30 year old group representing the largest percentage of learners at 46.1%. 30-44 years olds are the next largest group of learners at 33.5%. Combined, these two groups make up the majority of the learners being served in our programs. Almost 80% of learners served in this region were between the ages of 18 and 44. Our programs are doing a good job of connecting with this age group but are not serving the same number of learners as the West and Ontario in the older age groups. With program numbers below the Western Region and Ontario for 45-64 year olds, it may be time to develop new marketing strategies to reach this group to improve program Service Quality Standard numbers.

The median age in the city of Guelph is also lower than in Wellington County. The older average age of learners in Wellington County added to the difficulty rural programs had re-starting programming due to the lower digital skills of a slightly older population, as well as lack of available, dependable internet in rural areas. The younger population are generally more comfortable using digital technology and living within the city of Guelph would have provided more dependable access to the internet.

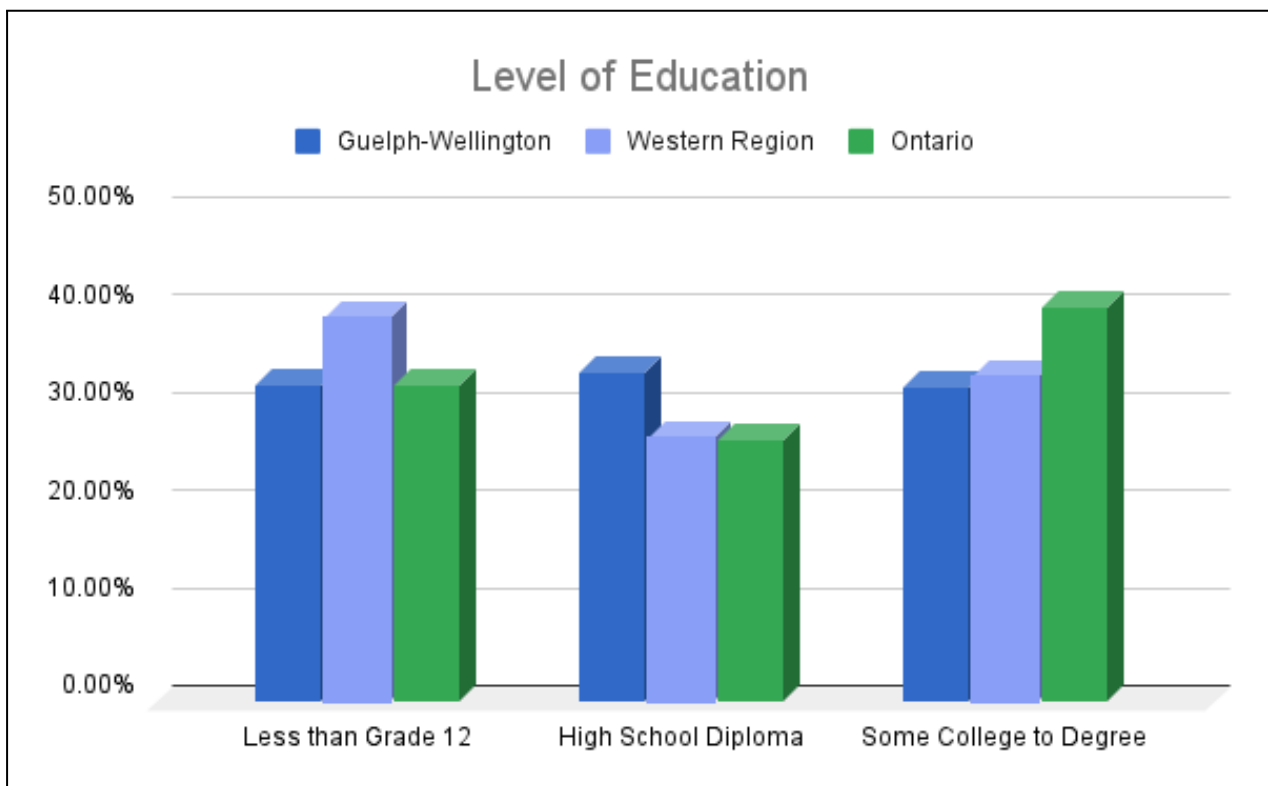
It is important to keep in mind that programs were still shut down for a portion of this year due to pandemic restrictions. Community-based programs faced challenges connecting with lower level learners that did not have the digital literacy skills to attend classes using computers, and all programs struggled with face-to-face tutoring delays due to social distancing restrictions.



Level of Education

Guelph-Wellington had a slightly higher percentage of learners (32.5%) with less than a grade twelve education compared to all of Ontario at 31.7%. This region also had a significantly higher percentage of learners with a high school diploma (33.7%) compared to the Western Region (26.6%) and Ontario (26.1%). This could indicate that graduates in this region are not leaving highschool with the skills they need to adapt to changing technology and the evolving job market. This could also indicate difficulty with provincial math testing and the mandatory literacy testing at the highschool level. Are students graduating with the skills they need for life-long learning, training opportunities to maintain steady employment?

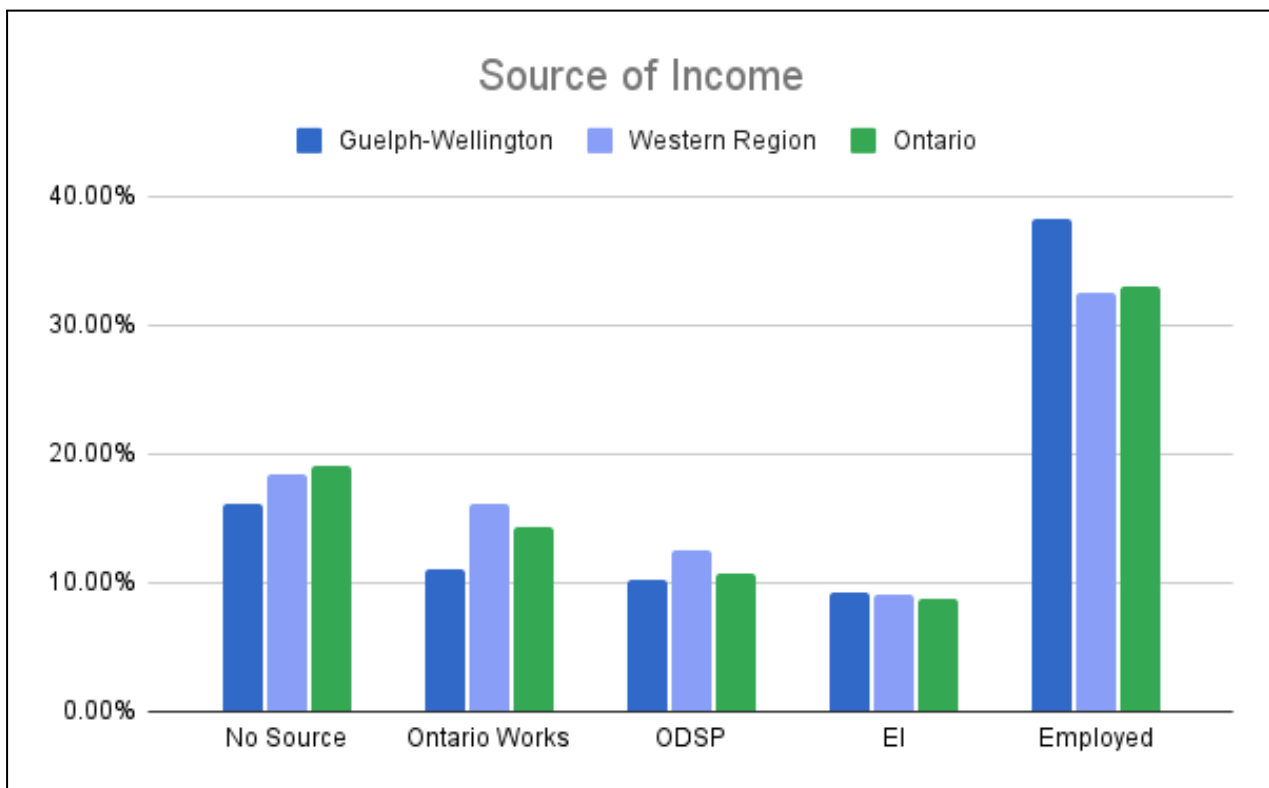
30% of adult learners in this region were employed full-time, compared to 19.5% for the Western Region and 21.2% for Ontario. This aligns with Guelph-Wellington's employment rate consistently being one of the lowest in the country and also indicates that the learners in this region want to retain their employment while at the same time wanting to continue building their skills for future training and opportunities. The number of learners in this region with less than grade 12 dropped substantially (9%) this year and the number of learners who have completed some college to post-secondary has increased by 4.1% from last year which further demonstrates their awareness of the need for further training and education.



Source of Income

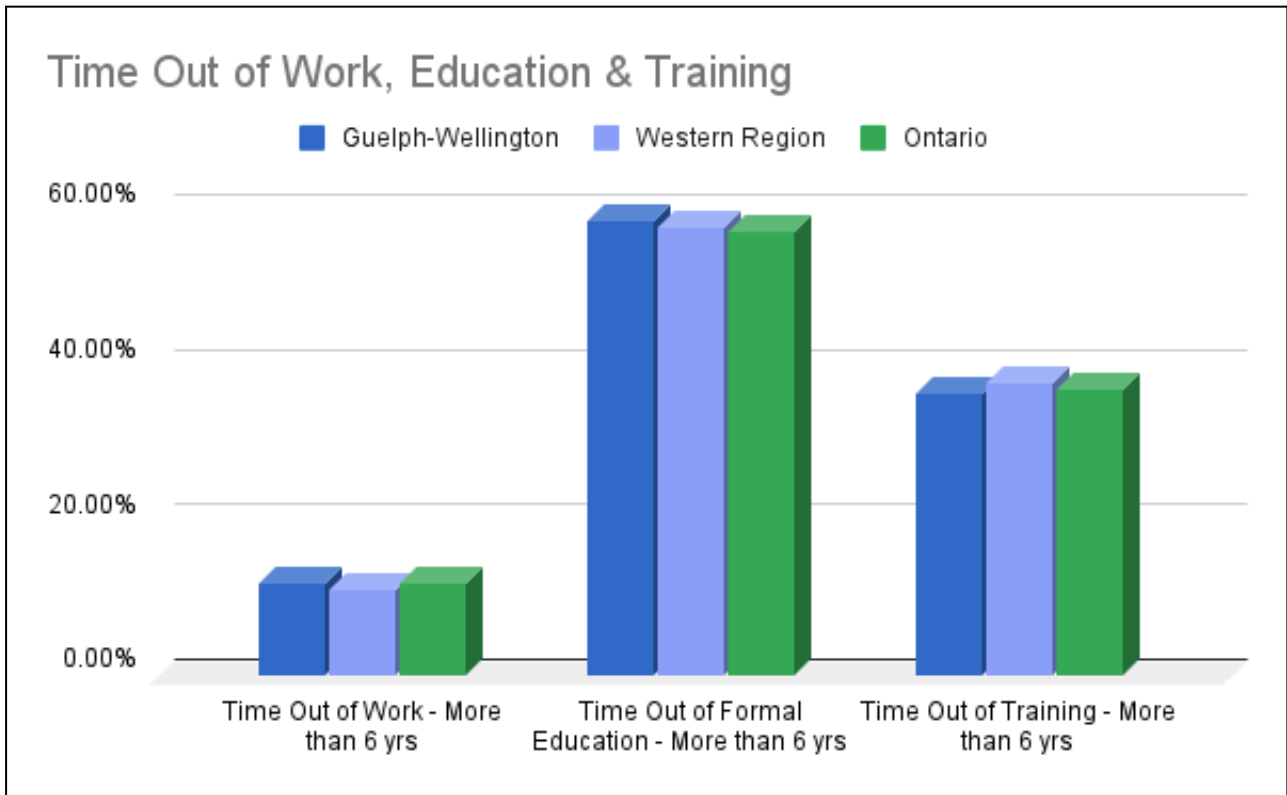
Guelph-Wellington is serving a lower percentage of the most vulnerable learners receiving OW, ODSP or having no income, when compared with both the Western Region and Ontario. However, the higher number of employed learners previously mentioned is also very clearly shown here, with Guelph-Wellington serving 38.2% employed learners as compared to the Western Region at 31.9% and Ontario at 32.3%. Guelph has always had one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada, and as a result, will recover faster coming out of the pandemic than other regions. It is important to note that learners are not asked to disclose their wage and may be the working poor, which would include them in the vulnerable population. They may have chosen to work while upgrading because it is a faster route forward to their future employment goals.

Compared with last year's numbers, there was a 4% decrease in learners with no income. More learners are working while upgrading or receiving EI benefits (5.5% increase in learners on EI). Again, this number suggests that people are trying to maintain some employment, yet have realized that they need to build their skills to stay relevant for future employment. 8% more learners were employed this year while upgrading. There was a significant drop in OW learners (10.6%) and ODSP learners (2.9%). These numbers were possibly affected by the extended pandemic shut downs and restrictions which included limited personal contact with caseworkers. This could have affected the number and success of referrals to programs. Lack of in-person options continued to make accessing services difficult for people with lower skill levels, or lack of digital literacy skills, in spite of the best efforts of all of our programs to connect with people. In Guelph-Wellington alone the number of employed FT learners has increased greatly by 9.7% from last year and the number of under-employed learners has decreased by 10.6% this year. This number also suggests that people are trying to maintain some employment while trying to build their skills for future employment.



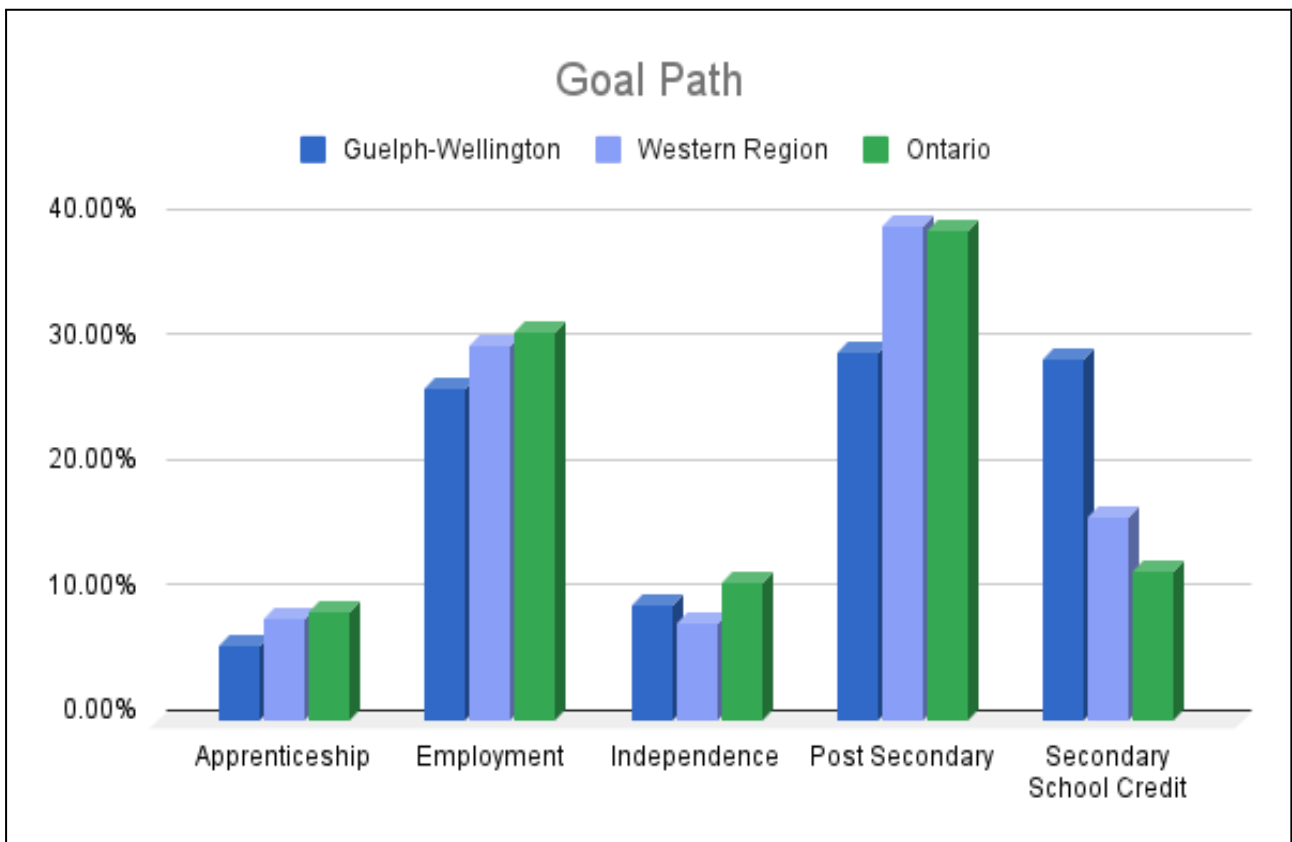
Time out of work, Formal Education and Training

Most learners in Guelph-Wellington, like the rest of the province, are out of formal education and training for more than 6 years. However, in this region, there are less learners than in the West that have been out of training for more than 6 years. This seems to indicate that continuous training opportunities and upgrading opportunities can create stable employment. Marketing our upgrading programs using this information may help to recruit new, and possibly older learners.



Goal Path

All learners in LBS programs have the option of 5 goal paths. Although learners across this region are divided fairly evenly between Community, School Board and College programs, Guelph-Wellington has a substantially larger percentage of learners working on their highschool credits to reach their goals. It is also interesting to note that the employment (26.6%), post-secondary (29.5%) and secondary school credit (28.8%) goal path numbers are all comparable for this year. Compared to last year in this region, there was a decrease of 4% of learners seeking employment down to 26.6% from 30.6%, an increase of 3% of learners in post secondary path to 29.5%, up from 26.5%. This may indicate an awareness in the learners that building their skills will lead to more long-term employment opportunities in the future. The apprenticeship path, secondary school credit path and independence path numbers stayed quite consistent. When added together, 84.9% of learners were working toward the goal of finding long-term employment through the secondary school credit, post secondary and employment pathways.

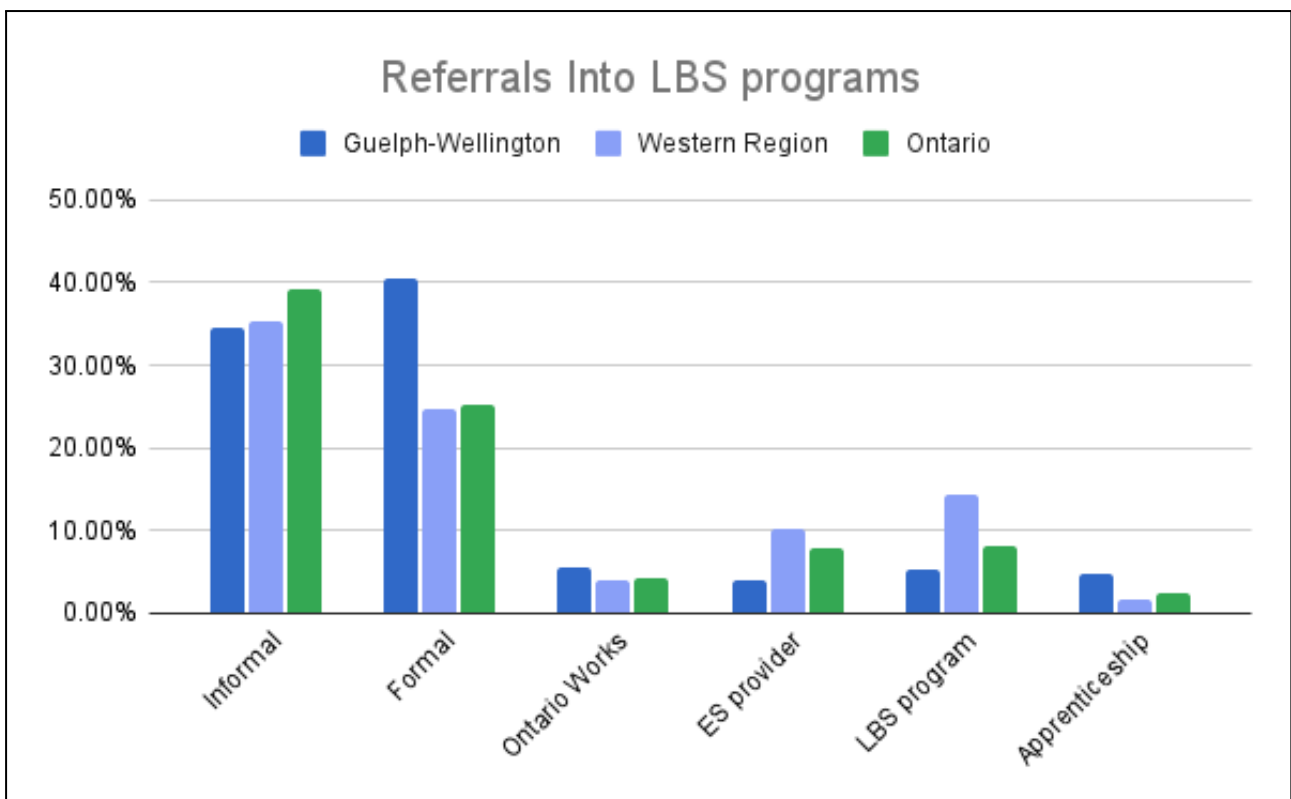


Referrals In

Referrals through formal referral processes are much higher in Guelph-Wellington than the rest of the province at 9.4% higher than the Western Region and province. Referrals In that count towards Service Quality Standard (SQS) in Guelph-Wellington equal 59.3% for this year which is higher than both the Western Region and Ontario.

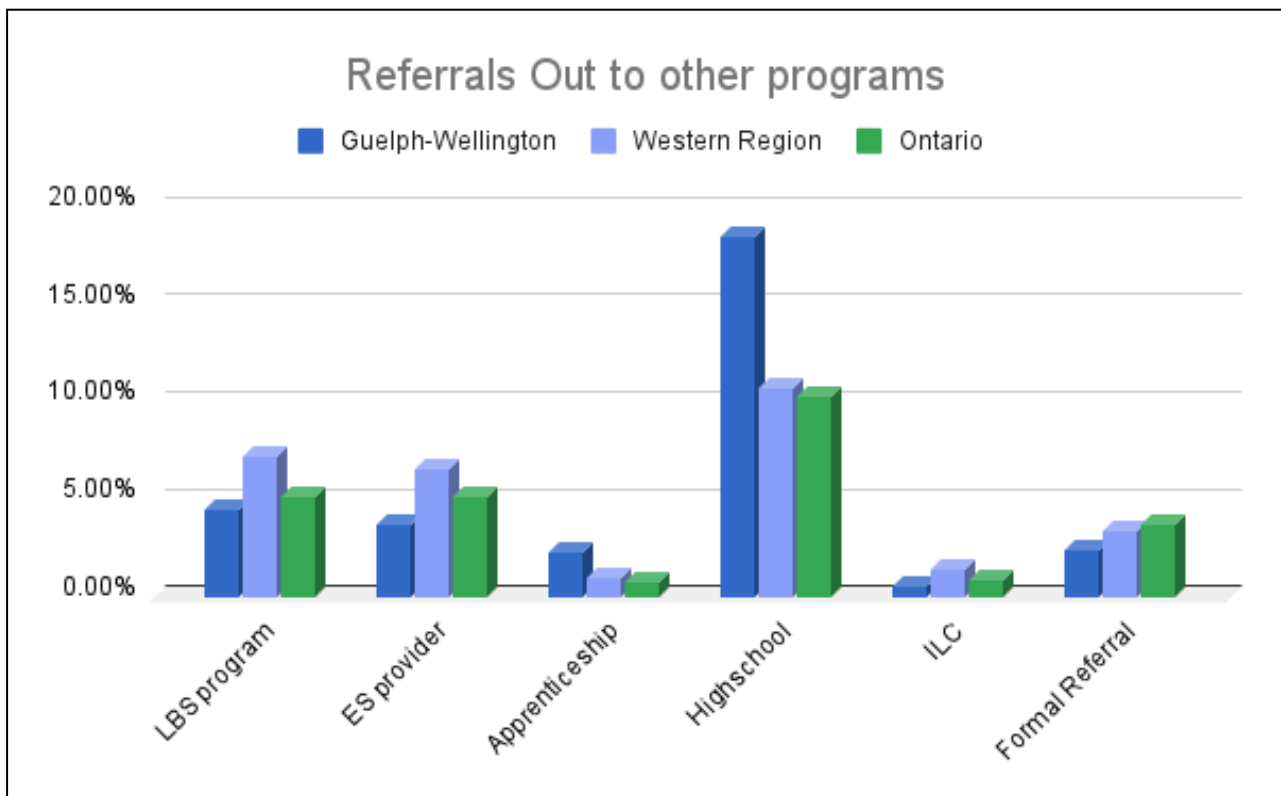
The number of Structured/formal referrals has increased significantly in Guelph-Wellington this year to 40.6% and is much higher than the Western Region (24.4%) and Ontario (24.6%). Action Read alone has almost 4 times the number of OW referrals than the other programs in this region combined. They have worked really hard to increase these referrals and have helped to raise this number above both the Western region and Ontario referral numbers.

Structured/formal referrals and Informal word of mouth referrals/media make up 75.2% of referrals into our programs for this region. This is an overall increase of 4.5% of Referrals In over last year and some of the referral source numbers have shifted. OW #s have decreased by 5.6% but continue to remain higher than the West and the province. ES provider referrals decreased by 4.3% for the year. These ES referral numbers need to be monitored, and continued efforts need to be made to work with ES agencies to stay connected before SSMs arrive in the region. Other referrals in (including ILC & language assessment) have increased by 3.5% over last year. All other sources of referral numbers remain fairly consistent to last year. It is important to note that in non-profit work, most referrals are Informal/Word of Mouth referrals. It is also clear that programs have met the needs of their clients when they refer friends and family members to programs that they have attended.



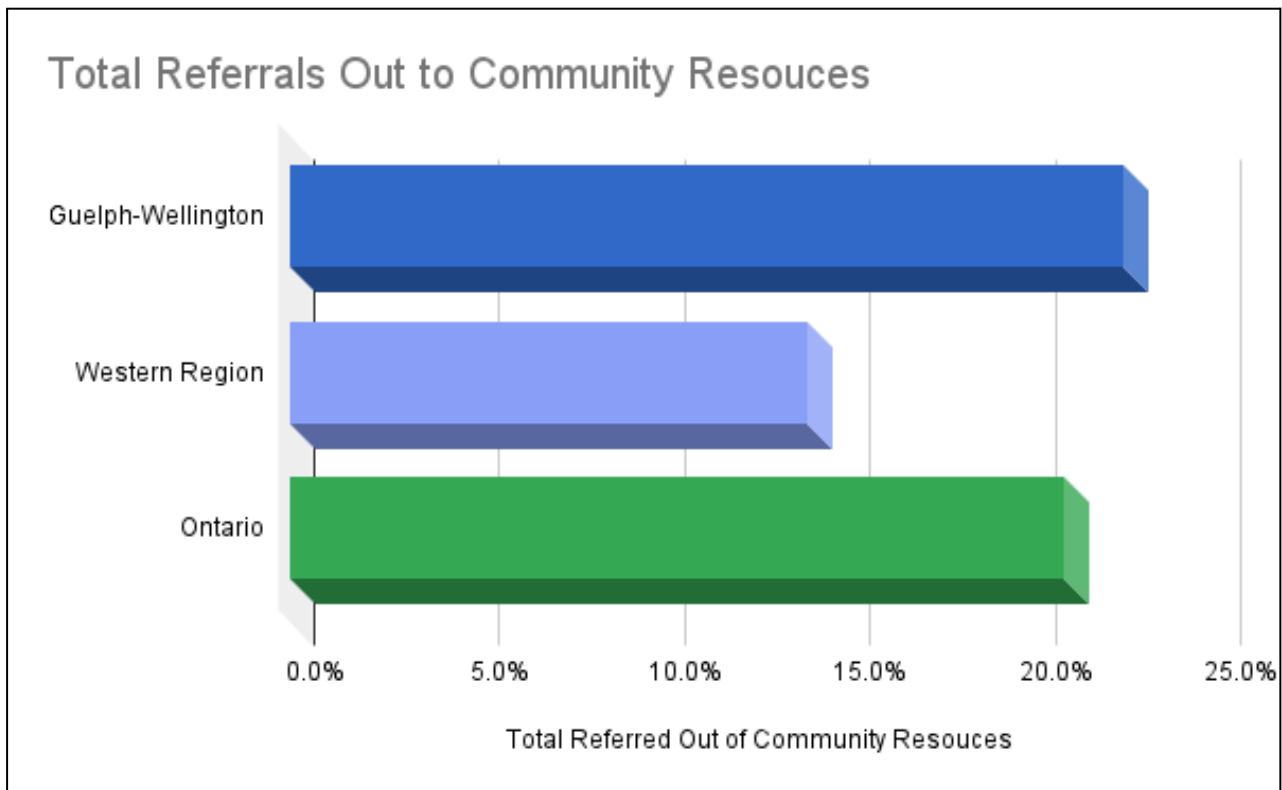
Referrals Out to Other programs

The direct link from UGDSB's Skills Upgrading Program to adult credit programming resulted in Guelph-Wellington's Referrals Out number being quite high at 18.5%, compared to the Western region at 10.5% and the province at 10.1%. All other referrals out are substantially lower with the exception of Apprenticeship referrals in Wellington region. Although not large percentages, they are still higher for overall Referrals Out than the Western region and Ontario. There was a small decrease in referrals out by LBS providers (1.8%). Programs would benefit from building referral connections to ES services to increase referrals to ES agencies. This should perhaps be discussed as a network in our LSP meetings to develop and build best practices in referring to ES since the number of these referrals is not high in Waterloo Region for this year either.



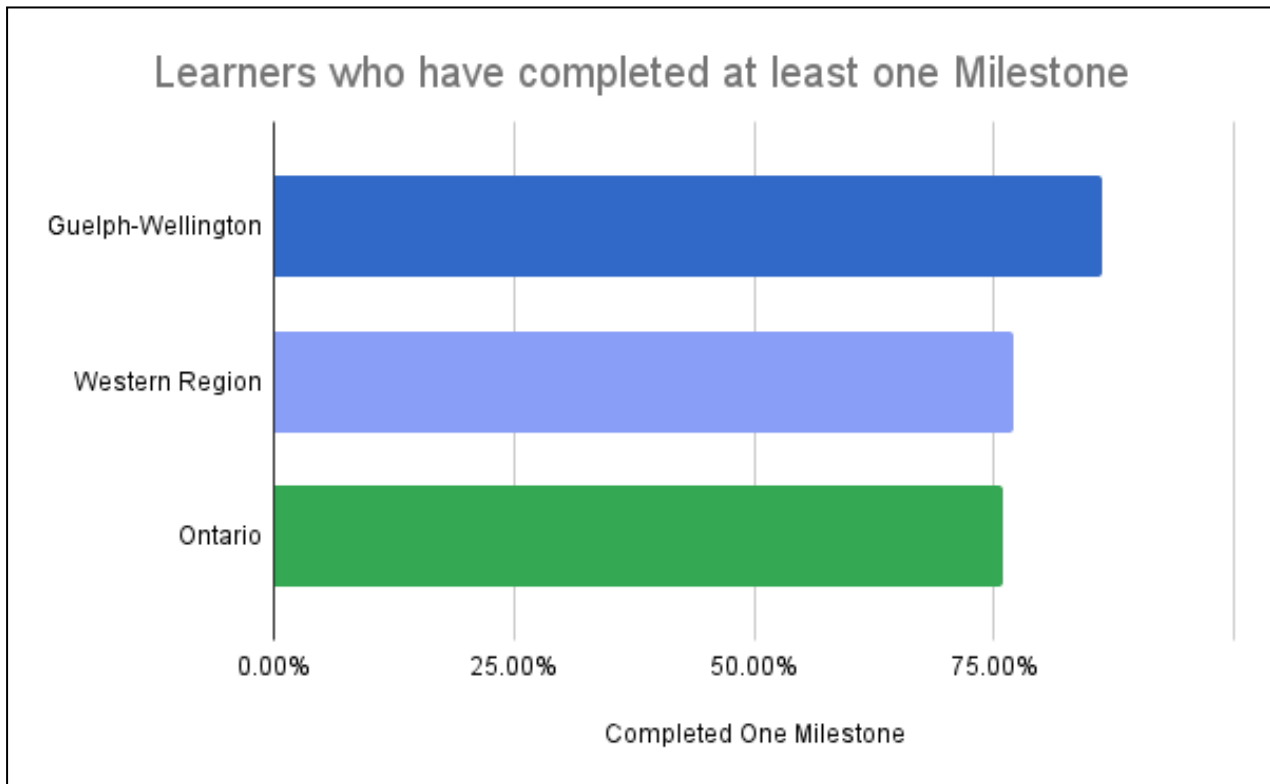
Referrals out to Community Resources

Referrals out to Community Resources in Guelph-Wellington (22.5%) are higher overall than the Western Region (14.0%) and Ontario (20.9%) due to the significant referrals that Conestoga and Wellington County Learning Centre make to educational and academic services. Keeping track of referrals to wrap around services for learners is clearly valued by our programs even though it is not counted towards each program's Service Quality Standard numbers.



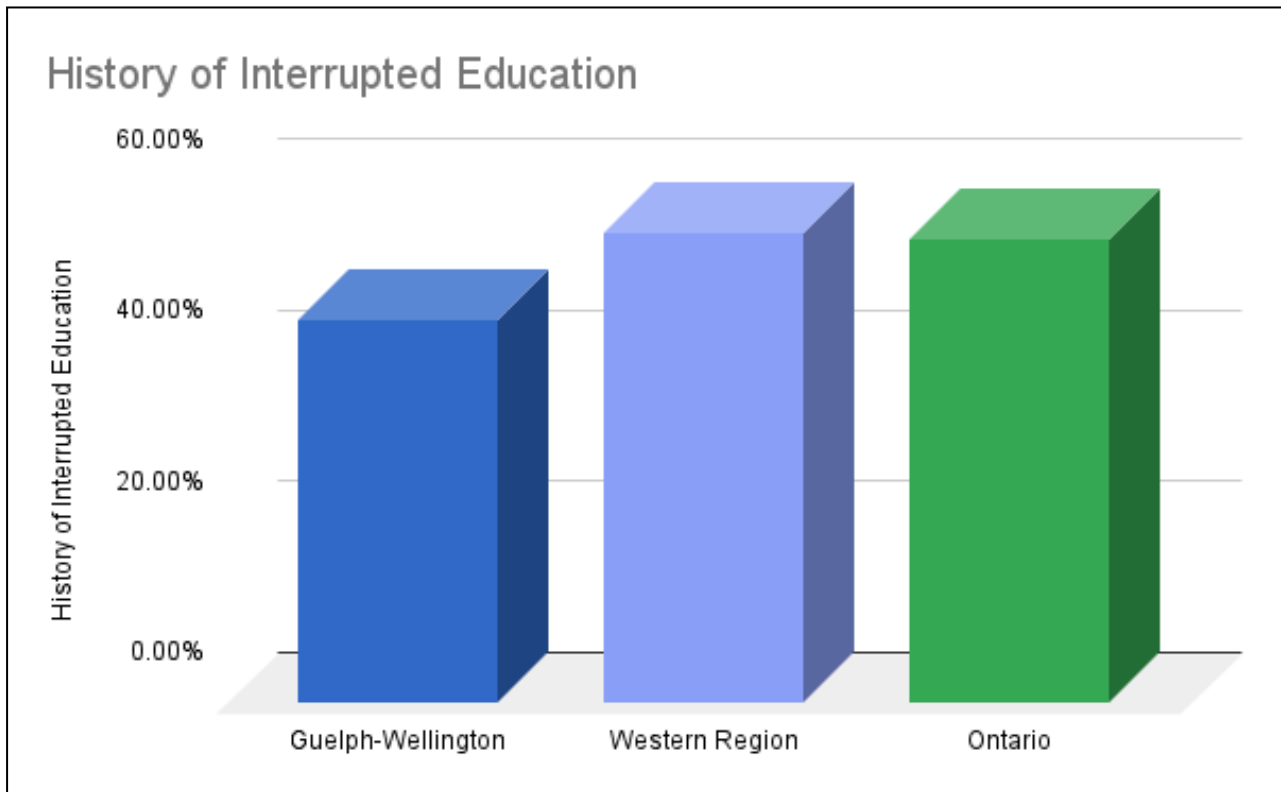
Milestones Completed

LBS providers in Guelph-Wellington have done excellent work demonstrating learner growth through the completion of learner milestones again this year. Guelph-Wellington programs are 8.2% higher than the West and 9.2% higher than the province at 86.2% of learners having completed at least one milestone. Guelph-Wellington and Waterloo Region providers have continued to work together to build a consistent process for using Milestones for remote learning. This may have positively affected the number of milestones successfully completed.



History of Interrupted Education

The number of learners reporting a history of interrupted primary or secondary education in Guelph-Wellington this year is 44.9%. This number seems to be trending downward over the last couple of years, decreasing substantially this year by 11.6% and by 4.5% in the previous year. This is much lower than both the Western region at 55.1% and Ontario at 54.3% of learners reporting a history of interrupted primary or secondary education. It is very common that adults that struggle with literacy skills have had a more sporadic history with the education system. This change could indicate a shift in the type of learners that the LBS programs are serving. People with a history of learning issues and barriers are still being served but there may be a growing number of learners attempting to keep up with current employer skill needs and digital skills in today's ever-changing workplace environment.



Summary

Overall, in Guelph-Wellington, the number of youth continues to grow in our programs. This includes learners aged 18-29 years old and 30 - 44 year olds looking to build their skills for sustainable employment, career changes and future training while employed. However, the number of older learners in our programs is decreasing more every year. It is these older learners that we need to focus our efforts on. Our programs would benefit from some research into why we aren't reaching these learners to be able to target them with our marketing plans and increase their participation in our programs.

This region is doing well building connections and increasing formal referrals into LBS programs from other programs and services in the region. However, work needs to be done on reciprocating referrals out to ES providers. With Service System Managers coming in the next year, it is more important than ever to continue to work on building lasting connections and stronger referrals out to ES programs to solidify the role of LBS within ES services.

This year the pandemic continued to affect our programs and population. Community-based programs had difficulties restarting programs due to pandemic restrictions, lower learner levels and limited internet access for rural area learners. The College program did well serving learners by remaining online. This removed the barrier of travelling for many learners and the College could serve a large number of learners regardless of their geographic location.

As learner needs shift this year, our programs do their best to pivot and serve them and work towards finding a new normal in LBS programming.

It will be important to see what the trends are for the coming year in Guelph-Wellington and the statistical results, now that we are coming out the other side of the COVID 19 pandemic. How will things change? Will they change? What will the SSM do for LBS marketing and programming?