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**Event Summary Report**

October 22, 2013

Toronto Congress Centre

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Professional Writing

and Editing Services



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# Executive Summary

*Connecting Educators* was a one-day event organized by Landscape Ontario in conjunction with the 2013 Garden & Floral Expo trade show and conference. The event brought together delegates from education, industry and government. The purpose was to connect educators from all levels of education with industry, and to work together to attract the brightest and best talent to fill the critical skilled labour gap in the industry.

Speakers discussed how industry and educators can work together to attract new generations of skilled workers, through programs like the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program and Ontario’s apprenticeship program. Participants learned about new growth areas in agriculture that offer exciting career opportunities. They heard about multiple ways for educators to connect with each other and with industry: the Canadian Association of Diploma in Agriculture Programs is an example of an organization that successfully connects 13 post-secondary institutions across Canada; the AgriPathways and AgriTalent online tools offer information on career awareness and educational pathways; and the “Agriculture More Than Ever” campaign is an industry effort to build public awareness.

A key highlight of the day was the student panel, where SHSM students and graduates shared their insights, experiences and advice regarding the program. The day concluded with an interactive round table discussion session, where participants broke into groups to discuss the role of educators in relation to the industry, the role of Landscape Ontario and what it could do to facilitate and support educators to connect better with industry, and the next steps for this event. Participants recommended that Landscape Ontario create an organization that includes all relevant educators from across Canada. Its role would be to connect educators, parents, students and employers; and to assess road blocks, open doors, create dialogue and raise awareness.

Participants made a number of recommendations for future events:

* Provide more time for questions, discussion and networking—a more dynamic and interactive approach—and have more round table discussions (employers meeting with educators; educators meeting with educators; educators meeting with the Ministry of Education; and educators meeting with colleges).
* Promote attendance within high school guidance departments.
* Include more SHSM students and ensure that they are representative of the diversity of SHSM programs and students.
* Discuss co-op opportunities for high school students.
* Involve post-secondary institutions and speakers (e.g. landscape, arboriculture) and foster more discussion between educators and industry.
* Get direct input from teachers regarding topics of interest and impact.
* Offer awards for teachers.
* Spend more time on forward thinking and direct connecting.
* Be solution-focused, with idea sharing and rotation of discussion among focus areas.
* Include representatives from every chapter or sector group.
* Involve non-profits as funding partners for internships/scholarships.
* Provide website resources for educators on each of the SHSM sectors.

# Welcome and Opening Comments

## Moderator: Michael Pascoe, Fanshawe College

Michael Pascoe referred to the report, “Landscape Ontario and its Role in Education: Long Term Human Resource Planning.” He explained that one recommendation of that report was the creation of events like today’s session, geared towards connecting educators and moving everyone’s agenda forward. The purpose of this session is to inspire connectivity amongst all levels of education and to work together to attract youth to this flourishing and growing industry.

# Keynote: If it’s to be, it’s up to me…

## Gail Smyth, Skills Canada Ontario

*Gail Smyth shared some of her experiences as Executive Director of Skills Canada Ontario and highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnership in preparing Ontario’s youth for careers in the skilled trades and technologies.*

Educators in the field of landscaping and horticulture have been granted “an awesome and exciting responsibility” to encourage young people in Ontario to pursue a career that will help them find meaningful employment, pursue dreams, support their families and create a strong work force in Ontario, said Gail Smyth.

She discussed how, with support from the federal and provincial governments, she had taken Skills Canada Ontario from a $375,000 debt in 1997 to a thriving organization today, based on a positive attitude, hard work and solid strategic planning. In 2004, with support from Union Gas, Skills Canada Ontario opened offices in Northern Ontario. It now has 11 offices throughout the province, over 2000 affiliated educational institutions and numerous offerings, including seven Qualifying Competitions and 125 individual workshops.

The introduction of the Ontario College of Trades, created to govern trades in Ontario after extensive input from employers, employees and representatives of the skilled trades, will be a “game changer.” There are many reasons to encourage more youth to consider careers in skilled trades and technologies

“If Skills Canada Ontario is successful today, it’s because of your involvement and that of young people across Ontario,” she concluded. “If it’s to be, it’s up to me” means that if one works hard enough, anything is possible—but no one can do it alone. The mantra to keep in mind going forward should be “if it’s to be, it’s up to us.”

# Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) 2013 Update

## Aldo Cianfrini, Ontario Ministry of Education

*Aldo Cianfrini discussed the advantages of the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program and challenged educators and employers to work together to strengthen both student interest and industry involvement in the program.*

Aldo Cianfrini challenged SHSM teachers, students, colleges and employers to work toward getting more young people involved in the horticulture, landscaping and forestry sectors. One concern is that parents and guidance counselors and not aware of the opportunities in the horticulture, landscaping and forestry sectors, and parents do not have a favorable impression of these sectors. The challenge is to “turn that around” and get more young people involved. There are currently 26 SHSM programs in horticulture and landscaping, 23 in agriculture and just four in forestry—compared to 202 in arts and culture and 242 in health and wellness.

Successful programs require a strong in-school team and a strong sector advisory committee. “How many of you sit on a sector advisory committee for a school in your community?” asked Mr. Cianfrini. He noted that the ministry provides funding to boards to establish and cultivate advisory committees. The ministry will be updating certifications and there will be opportunities to nominate new certification and training programs.

The SHSM program is being enhanced with innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship (ICE) pilot programs, experiential learning and career exploration activities, and reach-ahead opportunities for students to experience their selected post-secondary pathway. The Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) helps students track and document the skills they develop. Students who complete the SHSM program get a Red Seal on their secondary school diploma. Completion of the SHSM program (by sector) is indicated on and recognized by college and university application forms (and some post-secondary institutions are offering scholarships for those students). Students in “green industry” streams such as horticulture and landscaping are showing lower completion rates than in other sectors, perhaps because they are having difficulty finding co‑op placements.

During the discussion, it was noted that while most co-op placements have a fixed address, horticulture and landscaping businesses are mobile, making it more difficult to connect with students. Mr. Cianfrini said that the SHSM program now allows a student to substitute a cooperative education credit for another credit, which should make it easier to accumulate necessary credits. Also, students have the option of doing the co-op placement in the summer after grade 10. It was agreed that there are not enough co-op placements for students in green industries. Not enough programs have great sector advisory committees and good relationships with the local sector.

# Tools for Educators: Guiding student career exploration in Canada’s multi-faceted and ever-expanding agriculture industry

## Portia MacDonald-Dewhirst, Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC)

## Victor Santacruz, Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA)

*Portia MacDonald-Dewhirst and Victor Santacruz discussed CAHRC’s findings on the national agricultural labour market, and presented some career awareness tools and resources available to educators and students. It was noted that Agriculture includes Ornamental Horticulture.*

## Agriculture and agri-food is a booming, growing industry in Canada. It includes edible agriculture, horticulture and arboriculture, encompasses many sub-industries and has a strong focus on innovation, science and growth. The industry is growing, but the workforce is aging and there is a shortage of employees. One challenge is the issue of “seasonality.” Yet, while many jobs in the sector are seasonal, there are also many full-time jobs.

CNLA and CAHRC offer tools to help students find their pathways, including a video that can be shown in schools, promoting agriculture as a career. Another tool, AgriPathways ([www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/agri-pathways](http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/agri-pathways)), is an interactive online tool where students can access information about agricultural career options. Each specific pathway includes an overview page, a list of typical jobs, frequently asked questions, and information on how students can progress. AgriTalent ([www.agritalent.ca](http://www.agritalent.ca)) is a national online database of training institutions and programs for students and learners at all levels. The database is searchable by institution, province, and duration of course and course topic. It will soon be expanded to include workshops, conferences, events and seminars.

During the discussion, a participant highlighted arboriculture as a significant industry with many large companies operating in Ontario—one that needs fit healthy young people. He noted that one way of attracting new employees is to hold skills competitions and showcases at trade shows. Discussing the seasonality of some jobs, another speaker said that some businesses have their employee’s bank hours during the busy season and draw a salary throughout the year.

# Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow: learning the horticulture trade from the ground up

## Mark Burleton, National Capital Commission

*Mark Burleton offered a UK perspective on training and apprenticeship as a comparison to the Canadian experience, speaking from his personal experience in both countries as a trainee, instructor and employer.*

There is a need for more skilled workers with practical, hands-on training. The aging workforce and the difficulty in recruiting youth is an issue in both the UK and Canada. In spite of the opportunities available in the horticulture sector, a UK survey showed that 70 per cent of adults didn’t have horticulture highlighted to them as an opportunity when completing their education, and nearly 80 per cent of under-25-year-olds are not interested in a career in horticulture.

Mark Burleton discussed the UK horticultural industry’s support of workplace education and training through colleges and universities, the National Proficiency Testing Council (which is very safety-oriented), City and guild examinations boards, the Royal Horticultural Society and Royal Botanic Gardens (which have programs that engage school children), and a number of other organizations that offer training, certificate and apprenticeship programs. UK Apprenticeship offers 12 apprenticeship streams in the land-based and environmental sectors.

In Canada, the National Capital Commission (NCC) has a summer program for student gardeners that prepares them well for future work. Training and certification programs are available through Landscape Ontario. Universities and colleges offer innovative programs that apprentices can fit into their schedules; and the Red Seal program is available for apprentices. The International Society of Arboriculture (Ontario Chapter) offers certification. The Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association offers training and industry support throughout Canada.

# Agriculture More than Ever

## Richard Gruener, Farm Credit Canada (FCC)

*Richard Gruener discussed “Agriculture More Than Ever,” an industry initiative to improve perceptions and create positive dialogue about agriculture—an important step in attracting young people to careers in agriculture.*

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is a crown corporation that is run like a business and is self-sustaining. FCC lends money to farming sectors, from small and medium enterprises to agri-business. It has over 100,000 customers across Canada.

The agriculture and agri-food sector which, in addition to edible agriculture, includes ornamental horticulture. is one of Canada’s largest employers—a $135 billion industry contributing eight per cent of Canada’s GDP. There are three jobs waiting for every agriculture graduate in Ontario, including innovative work in electronics and robotics.

To improve the image of agriculture, FCC started the “Agriculture More Than Ever” cause—an industry-wide initiative involving about 250 partners, including Landscape Ontario. The first task is to spread the word within the industry and link together the various associations and initiatives. FCC got the initiative rolling, and more and more partners are getting involved. A key goal is to encourage those of us in the industry to speak up and speak positively about our industry. The website, [www.agriculturemorethanever.ca](http://www.agriculturemorethanever.ca), includes personal stories of people giving testimonials about why they are in agriculture. Social media is also being used to get the message out.

# Planting Seeds of Safety in the Green Industries

## John Aird, Workplace Safety and Prevention Services

*John Aird discussed the important role played by both educators and employers in training workers to ensure workplace safety.*

New and young workers are four times more likely to be injured on the job, with 70 workers injured every day in Ontario. The specific challenges faced by young workers include inexperience and unwillingness to admit that they do not understand something.

Employers have specific responsibilities and liabilities. Due diligence means taking all reasonable precautions to prevent injury and illness, and is the only defense if charged. Educators also have responsibilities in relation to the hands-on practical programs in a school. To reduce risk, employers and educators can raise awareness, reinforce safe practices, start the learning early (in schools, placements and apprenticeship programs), prepare students before they start working, create an environment that encourages new workers to seek assistance, and supervise closely when workers first get started. New workers will learn better if information is presented in short pieces and feels relevant to them. Employers should give hands-on demonstrations of new tasks.

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services offers programs and support through a network of health and safety experts across the province. There are flexible options for education and training, tailored to the specific needs of sectors and workplaces. Industry and alliance partners, including Landscape Ontario, offer self-serve resources, sessions and presentations.

# Agriculture Solutions for Society

## Gord Surgeoner, Ontario Agri-Food Technologies

*Gord Surgeoner highlighted the many growth areas in agriculture that involve Ontario companies, noting the opportunities for innovation and exciting new careers in areas such as the creation of new drugs, vaccines, fuels, biodegradable plastics, engine oils, hydraulic fluid, wildlife habitat and new benign chemistry.*

Traditional areas of agriculture such as “food, feed and ornamentals” (including floriculture and landscaping) provide huge value to society, but as Canadian businesses seek to expand markets, it is important not to “cannibalize” the industry by competing with each other in traditional markets. Instead, businesses should seek new opportunities, such as those offered in fuels, plastics, fibres and other industrial uses. Producers should also think globally and seek new markets internationally.

Many innovative developments are occurring in the field. Research is being done to reduce the environmental footprint of the agriculture industry and to reduce the input costs for producers. For example, nitrogen-fixing micro-organisms are being developed to enhance plants naturally. Innovative uses of agricultural products have led to great success for some firms. An Ontario firm has been awarded US$1.8 million to develop medical countermeasures against chemical threats through plant-based production of a specific enzyme; federal funding is supporting a program to produce HIV antibodies using tobacco plants; and producers are finding uses for every part of the corn kernel and for the by-products of ethanol production. Other growth areas include quinoa, succinic acid, soy-polyol foam for automobiles and “competitive green technologies” like soybean engine oil and bio-composite storage bins made from post-consumer waste.

The *Game Changers in Agriculture* video series, produced by Ontario Agri-Food Technologies, showcases companies that are moving forward rapidly with new technologies. The videos are available at [www.biotalk.ca](http://www.biotalk.ca), a website that serves as a forum for conversation about Canada’s bioeconomy. Mr. Surgeoner showed part of Episode 2, featuring an innovative producer of miscanthus-based bioresin. The company is taking technology developed at the University of Guelph's Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre to a commercial scale application, mixing the bioresin with recycled plastic to produce flower pots.

The three key ingredients to success in any innovative aspect of agriculture are “performance, price point and supply.” While it is not possible to predict the future, it is important to think strategically and work toward future developments and demands. The industry must do a better job of engaging students from diverse backgrounds regarding future direction of agriculture and the many areas of growth and opportunity.

# Canadian Association of Diploma in Agriculture Programs (CADAP): A model for connecting educators

## John Zandstra, University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus

*John Zandstra discussed how CADAP connects educators by holding annual meetings where discussions revolve around enrolment and recruitment, teaching strategies and future trends; providing annual Teaching Excellence Awards, Student Travel Study Scholarships, and student Public Speaking Awards; maintaining close contact with national agricultural organizations including Farm Management Canada, and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council; and fostering industry support for activities and awards.*

The Canadian Association of Diploma in Agriculture Programs (CADAP) is an association of post-secondary educational institutions offering diploma programs in agriculture. It involves 13 institutions across Canada. CADAP’s mission is to promote excellence in agricultural education. The association does that through four routes: awards; an annual conference; networking amongst educators; and promotion of careers in the industry.

CADAP gives out awards for teaching and public speaking. In partnership with Farm Management Canada, CADAP also offers an excellence award that provides three small scholarships to students based on videos about their farm management education. CADAP’s annual conference takes place in a different institution each year. Institutions share enrollment and program information and discuss common issues. CADAP facilitates networking from school to school, peer to peer, and partner to school, and is seeking to expand to the instructor level. The organization has also launched various campaigns to promote career pathways in agriculture, including a social media contest for high school students.

Although CADAP has corporate support, it is a grassroots organization with low administrative costs. CADAP gives members the ability to network with each other and with industry. A future possibility may be to expand the CADAP model to include horticulture

Perhaps the horticulture industry and programs could benefit from establishing a similar organization.

# Overview of Apprenticeship in Ontario

## Robin Henry, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

*Robin Henry gave an overview of Ontario’s apprenticeship programs and discussed recent changes in how the programs are administered.*

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) administers Ontario’s apprenticeship programs under the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act (OCTAA). To become an apprentice, one must be 16 years of age or older, have a grade 12 diploma or equivalent and provide proof of the required education. Options can be found on the Ontario College of Trades website. Applicants must become a member of the College of Trades. Employers must also meet specific requirements, including allowing the apprentice time off to attend in-school training. The Employment Training Consultant (ETC) monitors apprentices throughout the program.

After completing the program requirements for a trade or occupation, an apprentice will receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship or a Certificate of Qualification, or both. Workers who successfully complete a Red Seal trade examination receive a Certificate of Qualification with a distinctive red seal that is recognized across Canada.

There are a number of provincial financial incentives for apprentices and employers; and the federal government offers an apprenticeship job creation tax credit to employers. The MTCU offers several programs for individuals interested in apprenticeships: the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP); the Co-op Diploma Program (Co-op); and the Pre-apprenticeship Training Program (Pre-app).

# Modernizing and Promoting the Skilled Trades: An introduction to the Ontario College of Trades

## John Poirier, Ontario College of Trades

*John Poirier described the newly created Ontario College of Trades (OCOT), an independent, industry-driven body that is raising the profile of, and promoting involvement in, skilled trades, and making the system of apprenticeship training more responsive to the evolving skills and training needs of Ontario employers and consumers.*

Skilled trades are the backbone of the economy, and Ontario will face serious skilled trade shortages in the near future. Meanwhile, many Ontarians are in need of stable employment. A series of government reports dating back from 2007 recommended creating an institution like the Ontario College of Trades (OCOT), which officially opened its doors in April 2013.

OCOT is a new, self-governing, industry-driven regulatory body that oversees more than 150 skilled trades. OCOT offers several benefits to the skilled trades system in Ontario: protection of the public interest; modernization of the skilled trades; and promotion of the skilled trades. In Ontario, there are 156 regulated trades, including 22 compulsory trades (where one must be a member of the College to work legally) and 134 voluntary trades (where membership is voluntary but offers good value).

The College develops and updates examinations, training and curriculum standards; promotes skilled trades and apprenticeship; works with other bodies on the interprovincial Red Seal program; investigates complaints against members; and disciplines as required. The OCOT board is structured by industry, with four divisional boards representing the construction, industrial, motive power and service industries. OCOT also has individual trade boards, which include equal numbers of employers and employees.

OCOT protects the public interest and modernizes and promotes the skilled trades. The College investigates complaints about the practice of its members, has the authority to issue fines and lay charges, and is actively educating members about their responsibilities under OCTAA.

# Student Panel: What do students think of the SHSM program?

## Moderator: Aldo Cianfrini, Ministry of Education

*The student panel was made up of six students, ranging from SHSM Horticulture and Landscape students and graduates to business owners. Moderator Aldo Cianfrini asked a series of questions, the panel members responded, and Mr. Cianfrini made additional comments.*

## Tell us about your experience with the SHSM program and what you’re currently doing?

One student said that he was learning about hydroponics and hoped to have his own greenhouse as a future business owner. A panelist who was already a business owner said that he was using many skills from the SHSM program.

“The SHSM program provided my first exposure to different components of the horticulture industry,” said another panelist: “the program opened my eyes to the opportunities, and I have many new skills.”

Another speaker said that the SHSM program had given him a foundation.

## What part of the SHSM program did you or do you enjoy the most (e.g. certifications, co-op placements, the in-school projects, etc.)?

Panelists listed the following aspects of the SHSM program as the most rewarding:

* The job placement component, where you learn job-related skills and gain real-life experience.
* The different styles of learning, including learning skills through hands-on work in the school greenhouse. For some students, hands-on experience is the best way of learning.
* Learning something interesting that you want to learn.
* Hands-on work with students in junior primary schools (e.g. teaching young students how to plant, working on community gardens, taking food from garden to table).
* Getting credit at Humber College before high school graduation (Dual Credit).
* Certification and co-op placement (which helps in getting a job outside the program).

Mr. Cianfrini commented that one key to getting more students interested in the sector is to introduce them at the elementary school level. He also mentioned the dual-credit program, where high school students have the opportunity to take courses at a college of applied arts and technology, for which they get secondary school credit and college credit at the same time.

## In your opinion, what should a school or board do to encourage more students into an SHSM program in horticulture and landscaping or agriculture?

There should be greater focus on students at the elementary school level, panelists said. Children should have the opportunity to “find their horticultural instinct” at a young age. Representatives should visit students before they enter high school, to tell them what is available. In grade 10, students should be offered an overview of all facets of horticulture.

The scope of the SHSM program is too small, said one panelist: “When I graduated, a big world opened up.” Students don’t always know about all the career options available in agriculture, horticulture and landscaping. Seminars and field trips could be used to show students more of the sector. Events should be advertised to students, who should receive free admission. This could influence their goals.

Awareness is a key issue. The general public and parents do not understand the sector. “Nine out of 10 people thought I’d be a farmer when I went into agriculture,” said one panelist. University of Guelph statistics suggest there are four jobs for every undergraduate and six for every graduate student.

Mr. Cianfrini noted that the ministry has launched a career education initiative, to start in grade one. Young people can gather a record of their experiences and knowledge in an electronic portfolio to help them make career decisions in high school. Parents are the missing link: they are the biggest influence on a young person’s career choices. It can be a “hard sell” to convince parents that this sector provides strong career opportunities.

## Was there a trigger that gave you an “aha” moment, or was your interest in this sector a gradual development?

Panelists listed several inspirations that prompted them to pursue careers in this sector: seeing friends and older students entering the field; seeing many landscaping job listings online; and using aquaponics to grow lettuce in a greenhouse in grade 11.

It was noted that when parents evaluate different career areas for their children, they look at salaries but not employment rates. For graduates of ornamental horticulture programs, employment is close to 100%. This sector also has the advantage of offering lower-stress jobs that are better for health because people are able to work outside and stay active.

Mr. Cianfrini remarked that awareness is key. More concentrated, organized approaches are needed to spread awareness, including efforts that involve social media and school board communication with parents. Skills Canada Ontario plans to launch an initiative to inform parents about opportunities for young people in the skilled trades and technologies.

## What advice do you have for the Ministry of Education that would improve the SHSM program?

Panelists made the following recommendations:

* There should be more emphasis on plant biology in school, and less time spent on subjects like general biology or mathematics, which are not directly relevant to future careers. There should also be more greenhouse time and more hands-on work.
* The SHSM program needs more support from the rest of the school. It must be backed by the administration—not seen as a last-resort class for students who are “not doing well.”
* Red Seal certificate requirements should be laid out more clearly on a checklist. The administrative requirements for the Red Seal certificate can be difficult to understand and fulfill while also keeping up with school.
* Guidance counselors should be educated so that they can guide students with regard to the credits needed.
* National advertising is a great idea for raising the profile of this sector.
* Students in grades 9–10 should be informed about the program and all the requirements for a career in this sector.
* Students should have opportunities to gain experience in hardscaping (e.g. paving and interlocking). Industry partners are needed in this area.
* Sponsorships are needed to get programs started.

## What can industry do?

“Some of my best learning occurred when industry people came in to talk about what they do every day,” said one panelist, adding that this helped him understand the specifics of the job more realistically, including the challenges and future prognosis of a specific career path. Panelists also said that there should be a program to help high school and landscaping students get in touch with companies, so that they can gain experience and get a job.

# Interactive Round Table Discussion

*Participants gathered in small groups to discuss the role of educators in relation to the landscape horticultural industry, the role of Landscape Ontario and what it could do to facilitate and support educators to connect better with industry, and the next steps for this event and whether Landscape Ontario should consider developing a unified presence for secondary and post-secondary diploma, degree and apprenticeship programs. They listed their key recommendations on sheets (see Appendix for transcription). The responses are summarized below.*

## Role of educators in relationship to students

* Educators engage and prepare students in multiple ways:
	+ They follow the SHSM curriculum.
	+ They lead school trips to places like nurseries and garden centres.
	+ They teach students about health and safety, essential and specific skills, and codes of conduct, respect and professionalism.
* Educators introduce students to employment and education opportunities, mentor them and often influence them as much as parents do.
* Educators can help to inform parents and raise awareness about career opportunities in the industry.
* “Big-picture teaching” is needed:
	+ Educators must understand and engage young people from diverse backgrounds.
	+ Educators must help students understand the opportunities and the performance level expected of them.

## Role of educators in relation to the landscape horticultural industry

* Educators reach out to industry; bringing guest speakers into the classroom and helping students find ways to remove barriers to success.
* Educators are a conduit for information exchange with industry and local employers, working in partnership with industry to create dialogue, identify gaps and find solutions.
* Educators have an important role in staying connected to the sector’s needs and keeping training current.
* It is recommended that educators attend chapter meetings.
* There should be more communication and promotion, with program flexibility for better links between industry and schools.

## Landscape Ontario: Connecting educators with industry

* Landscape Ontario should create an organization similar to CADAP—one that includes all horticultural educators and industry leaders from across Canada.
	+ This could be a network, an association or even a think tank.
	+ Its role would be to connect educators, parents, students and employers and to assess road blocks, open doors, create dialogue and raise awareness.
* Landscape Ontario could also help institutions book travelling workshops, with industry volunteers, at high-profile sites (with no fees for students).
	+ These educational, interactive workshops could be integrated with existing community events.
	+ These workshops could raise awareness among parents and inspire young people.
* Other suggestions for Landscape Ontario include the following:
	+ Organize a career awareness campaign, connect with schools and use social media.
	+ Promote SHSM to industry at the Landscape Ontario Congress, perhaps through an SHSM day, and connect SHSM educators with regional chapters.
	+ Promote the Landscape Industry Certified Landscape Technician CLT program and careers to the general public and offer free CLT testing to industry and students.
	+ Hold a meeting like today’s session at least once a year, and include students and educators.
	+ Connect more with the public and do advertising (perhaps on television).
	+ Encourage industry participation in advisory committees and boards for college and university.
	+ Be a resource for educators and provide updated information on changes in the industry.
	+ Offer easier access to Landscape Ontario courses.
	+ Encourage the creation of industry advisory boards.
	+ Develop a mentoring tool that students can access online throughout the year.

## Landscape Ontario: Strengths and gaps

Strengths:

* Landscape Ontario has a strong presence and is doing a good job linking industry and educators. It should continue its work in building relationships with all parties.
* The Adopt-A-School program is a success.
* Landscape Ontario is helpful in offering project time and equipment, guest speakers and its weekly newsletter.
* The organization’s focus on professionalism, certification and continuing education is strong.

Gaps:

* There is a gap with regard to wages, which are too low. Landscape Ontario could encourage more discussion of wages, because a better starting wage would attract more employees.
* A performance measurement scale would also be a helpful tool.
* The organization’s network is strong in the GTA, but less so in Eastern Ontario. Landscape Ontario should do more to promote education across the province—not just centrally.
* Linking industry to educators is the first step.
* Landscape Ontario could be more aware of the students’ point of view, and not just that of educators. A good step would be to engage parents more, to change or clarify career messages.
* The job is large and more resources are needed, perhaps through contracts or partnerships.

## Unified presence for education and apprenticeship programs

* Developing a unified presence for secondary and post-secondary diplomas and degrees and apprenticeship programs is an excellent idea. A group should be identified to help coordinate this project.
* There is also a need for a Canada-wide strategy for horticulture education from primary school onwards.

## Next steps for the Connecting Educators event

A number of possible enhancements are suggested for this event:

* Interactive workshops
* More peer-to-peer connections and networking opportunities
* An SHSM booth at Congress
* Inviting guidance counselors to the event
* More student involvement in the event

Other suggested events include:

* A parents’ weekend event, including workshops for parents on career paths
* A career fair of employers, sector speakers and colleges and universities, where students are invited from high school onwards

# Closing Remarks

Tony DiGiovanni, Landscape Ontario, commented on the benefits of getting together, networking and working together as a team. He added that there is a long-term plan for education: “all we have to do is prioritize and act on it.” Victor Santacruz, Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (CNLA), thanked attendees and promised that CNLA would use its resources to create a network that will offer leadership and guidance. The industry is also happy to provide information and resources to share with parents and colleagues.

Michael Pascoe closed the day-long event by thanking all participants for their dedication to the horticulture industry and education. He indicated that the final report would be distributed to all attendees following the event. The committee would review the report and survey feedback to determine next steps. Mr. Pascoe confirmed that there would be next steps.

# Appendix: Participants

[Shelley Peterson](https://epic48.com/showreg.php?command=View+Registration&showID=104&registrationID=55372), Guelph

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# Appendix: Interactive Round Table Discussion Sheets

| ***Respondent*** | ***Question 1:****Considering the opportunities within the landscape horticultural industry, what do you think the roles of educators are in relationship to this industry?* | ***Question 2a:****How can Landscape Ontario further facilitate and support educators to connect better with industry?* | ***Question 2b:*** *What does Landscape Ontario do well presently, and what are the gaps?* | ***Question 3:*** *What are the next steps for this event, and should we consider developing a unified presence for secondary and post-secondary diploma, degree and apprenticeship programs?* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Direct link, they have just as big an impact on students as their parents do. If a teacher is able to engage a student in a topic or field, it can determine their success. | Bring in sponsors to further develop classroom opportunities. Put together event days, like the OTSC, but at a non-competitive level. Have designated field trip locations as well as professional mentors. | I believe they do have a strong presence but could be more aware of where students stand and not just the educators. | Absolutely, developing a unified presence for secondary and post-secondary diplomas and degrees. |
| 2 | * Raise awareness
* Conduit for information exchange with industry and local employers
* Facilitate introduction for students to employment and education opportunities
 | * Social media / website / exchanging young people in career opportunities
* Connect educators (SHSM) with regional chapters at regional events
* Landscape Congress: promote SHSM to landscapers/exhibit
* Outreach from 10 subsectors—career opportunities
 | * Adopt-A-School program
* Weekly newsletter: Landscape this Week
 |  |
| 3 | * To educate, flexibility in programs to better link between industry & schools
* Work in partnership with industry to create dialogue, identify gaps and start providing solutions
* School trip to nursery / garden centre
 | * Create a network and support it
* Provide LMI to educators, etc.
* Be a resource for educators
 | Link industry to educators—this is step one | Yes, decide on a group to help establish this organization, coordination and information |
| 4 | More career promotion | * Free CHT testing?
* More promotion of the CHT program and careers to the general public
 | Sally Harvey is awesome! She does a great job—pay her more money! | Interactive workshops? |
| 5 | * Big-picture teaching
* Progression
* Better exposure at all levels of education
* Demonstrate potential
* Colleges MUST be realistic about job expectations
 | * Annual at least meeting like today’s session
* More public connection—advertising
 |  | What about a Canada-wide strategy for horticulture education from primary to high school competencies? |
| 6 | * Mentorship
* Advocate for industry
* Instruct students so they are prepared to go into industry
 | * Industry participation in advisory committee / boards for college and university
* Updated info on changes in industry
 | Promote education across provincial, less central  | * More connections among peer to peer
* Unified presence for sure
* Awareness within industry and out in public
 |
| 7 | Connectors, advocates | Provide opportunities for them to meet together |  | More public discussion |
| 8 | To understand and engage young people from diverse backgrounds with the career benefits and inspirational opportunities across our 10 sectors to create sustainable green spaces and local food | Think tank is needed to connect educators, parents, students and employers to each other—assess road blocks, open doors, create dialogue and awareness | * Keep doing: building relationships with all parties
* Start doing: engage parents—change/clarify the career message
 | This is so multi-layered, confusing, complex and complicated that it’s all broken and not working. Peel back all the layers and start over to figure out how to connect students (and parents) to career engagement, and to jobs that lead to “life work” opportunities. |
| 9 | * Should be more communication and promotion
* Active mentors
 | Travelling workshops—book—for high-profile sites—no fees for students | * Discuss wages—increase starting wages—will attract
* Have a performance measurement scale
 | This was a good start. Educators also need to meet guidance counselors to explain pathways better. |
| 10 | * Health, safety, respect, skills
* Promote the industry
* Career opportunities in the industry
* Career exploration
 | * Social media
* Workshops
 |  |  |
| 11 | * Expose students to all career possibilities in the horticulture and landscaping industry
* Prepare engaging in lessons/activities
* Follow green industries curriculum providing SHSM for our school, which opens more doors
 | Continue being the link between industry and teachers of the industry (i.e. industry needs) | * Does well: Link between industry and educators
* Gaps: Regional differences
 | Yes |
| 12 | * Promote and prepare
* Educate parents as well as students
 | * More school connections
* Easier access to Landscape Ontario courses
 | Good behind-the-scenes work, shows, etc. | Yes, a unified voice would help |
| 13 | Critical, conduit, partnership, support, guest speakers and products, timing for co-ops works well | * Connect this day with students, educators (kids)
* Expand Landscape Ontario sites with many links
* Make Landscape Ontario more aware
* Funding networks available
 | * Adopt-A-School program helped with project time and equipment, guest speaker, weekly newsletter, funding flexibility
* Funds are thin
* Contracts or sponsorship
 | * Attendance or event at congress
* SHSM booth at Congress
* Database on Landscape Ontario site
* More time to connect at next session
 |
| 14 | Act as mentors to students, advocates of the industry, and help to connect dots and resist creating silos that simply serve to drive us apart instead of bringing us together | * Communicate and encourage the creation of industry advisory boards and continue to create events like today
* A SHSM day at Congress would be great
 | * Great connections in GTA
* Poor in Eastern Ontario
 | Yes—everyone working together can get much more done and the benefits will be expedited |
| 15 | * Health and safety
* Code of conduct: respect, professionalism
* Outline career opportunities
 | Marketing (TV ad) | * Does well: professionalism, certification, continuing education
* Gaps: wages (low)
 | Invite or include guidance counselors to this event |
| 16 | * Find ways to remove barriers to success
* Reach out to industry
 | * Find members who are interested in helping at local school
* Start association
* Provide resources and government relations
* Administrative support
* Organize a career awareness campaign
 | Job is large—more resources | * Create the association
* Focus on improving image
* Get to students at elementary level
 |
| 17 | * Advocates of industry
* Engage students
* How to maintain connection with industry and educators
* Educators going to chapter meetings
 | Based on feedback from the students, suggest a mentoring program (“connecting with an expert—watchable online”) that students can connect with to get questions answered throughout the year—not just an industry day |  |  |
| 18 | * Explain earning journey
* ID career acceleration
* Provide opportunity to explore
* HR issues
* Respect
* Essential skills
* HS
* Support the industry and identify careers
* Keep the training current
* Keep connected to the sector’s needs
 | * Keep connected to us
* Advertise
* Travelling workshops in areas
* HS recruiters
* No fees
 | * Does well:
	+ A good organization
	+ Promote professionalism
* Gaps:
	+ Address wages
 | * Host a career fair of employers, sector speakers and colleges and universities—but invite students in either a HS or first-year program
* Include a parents’ weekend event
* Invite guidance
* More students
* Parent workshops on careers
 |