Meeting Summary:

The Minister's Early Learning Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET)

Meeting 12: September 20, 2025 from 9:00am – 4:00 pm (In-person)

Summary

The twelfth meeting of the Minister's Early Learning and Child Care Engagement Table (ELCCET) was held on Saturday, September 20, 2025.

The meeting focus was:

- **Digital Services:** The service provider portal prototype demo was the highlight of the day. Members of the table were excited to see how the new portal will help centralize information, streamline processes, and reduce paperwork.
- **Health Association Nova Scotia (HANS) Presentation:** Update on payroll and benefits roll out was presented by HANS. The Table members were also provided an overview of HANS services and strategy and how they can benefit the sector.
- **Vision for School Aged Care in Nova Scotia**: Table members worked in small groups to discuss what they perceived to be the biggest challenges and opportunities related to school aged care programming and expansion.

Agenda

1. ADM Remarks
2. Sector Pulse - Sharing from Sector leaders
3. Health Association Nova Scotia (HANS) Presentation
4. Sector Development Updates & Discussion
5. Vision for School Aged Care in Nova Scotia
6. Digital Services: Prototype Demonstration
7. Sector Engagement and Feedback
8. Other Updates - Operational Funding Model

ADM Remarks

Associate Deputy Minister Mark Peck welcomed the new members of the engagement table. He expressed his appreciation for the work of table members alongside their work in the sector. He expressed his openness to listen firsthand from the members regarding good news as well as challenges of the sector.

Sector Pulse - Sharing from Sector Leaders

The Engagement Table members took the opportunity to share some good news about the sector and highlight some challenges for the ADM. Members shared good news including new centers opening, expansion of different centers, and hiring male ECEs to increase sector representation. Members also shared challenges related to inclusion support, ratios, mental health, and pay for staff working in NS BAP.

Health Association Nova Scotia (HANS) Presentation

Health Association Nova Scotia (HANS) representatives presented an update on payroll and benefits rolled out last year. Members shared feedback on how their group benefits and payroll services are helping. HANS also shared other member benefits they can offer to regulated and funded providers. Table members also provided feedback on HANS' strategy and other supports that may benefit the sector.

Sector Development Updates & Discussion

Engagement table members had a discussion on what would help providers improve financial planning and management, and their perspectives on the most impactful opportunities to consider. The primary themes were that training and education would be helpful; admin support, and ease of accessing and editing online forms would speed up processes.

Vision for School Aged Care in Nova Scotia

Departmental staff provided an overview of the current system. Table members worked in small groups to discuss what they perceived as the biggest opportunities to be considered, and challenges that need to be addressed, as spaces are increased in school aged care. The opportunities were identified to work towards a seamless day for the children, leveraging school infrastructure, and increasing accessibility through increased operating hours. Some challenges were brought forward as shared space in schools, staff recruitment, fee structure etc.

Digital Services: Prototype Demonstration

The prototype demo of the service provider portal was the highlight of the day. Members were excited to see how the proposed functionality will help centralize information; increasing efficiency and reducing paperwork. Members also noted that it will be very helpful in preparing annual reports and budget forecasting. Members expressed appreciation for work and provided some suggestions to improve the user experience.

Sector Engagement and Feedback

Members were invited to discuss ways the Department could engage providers across the sector to support them to provide informed and meaningful feedback. The discussion was

organized around engagement and communication methods, meeting frequency, and groups that can help share information.

Other Updates - Operational Funding Model

Members were curious to hear an update on operating funding model. The status summary of the project was provided, and they were informed that further updates will be communicated when available.