EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS **Recommendation Report**

DATE: October 20, 2015

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Funds for 2016-2017 Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program

ORIGINATOR: Angela Anderson, Managing Director, Human Resources

RESOURCE STAFF: Renée Thomson, Bonnie Zack

REFERENCE: *Teachers' Collective Agreement – September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2016*, Clause 23

ISSUE

It has been a long-standing practice in the District to bring to the Board of Trustees at a public board meeting in the fall, a request for an allocation of funds from the subsequent year's budget for the purpose of granting Professional Improvement Program leaves and/or tuition support to teachers as per Clause 23 of the *Teachers' Collective Agreement – September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2016*.

BACKGROUND

For many years, Edmonton Public Schools has recognized the importance of supporting teachers in accessing professional development opportunities. As early as 1946, the District granted leaves with pay to teachers participating in a limited number of professional learning activities. In 1952, access to professional development was expanded and a fixed allowance in lieu of salary was introduced for teachers on a leave for study purposes. In 1971, the fixed annual allowance was replaced with one based upon years of experience. The current practice of providing tuition support, in addition to paid professional improvement leaves, for teachers undertaking professional development through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program was introduced in 2003.

The District recognizes that professional development for staff is a critical aspect in supporting successful outcomes for students, as well as for succession planning. The Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program is in direct support of Board Policy GE.BP - Organization for Instruction, which states that "effective teachers who have strong knowledge of pedagogy and subject content knowledge, make a significant difference to student learning and achievement. The program is also in direct support of District Priority 2, Goal Three, which states that throughout their careers, all staff members are to be "provided opportunities to enhance their professional capacity and leadership within a culture of collaboration."

RELATED FACTS

- The Professional Improvement Program is guided by Clause 23 of the Teachers' Collective Agreement.

- Clause 23.2 outlines the conditions under which leave for professional improvement may be granted for a school year or portion thereof, upon application, to a teacher.
- Clause 23.6 specifies that tuition support for professional improvement may be granted, upon application, to a teacher on continuing contract and with two or more years of service with Edmonton Public Schools.
- Clause 23.7 states the maximum amount the District may allocate for the Professional Improvement Program as "3/4 of 1% of the annual grid costs, calculated as of the preceding November 30". From 2003 to 2012, the maximum allocation amount exceeded two million dollars; it has exceeded three million dollars since 2012-2013 (Attachment I).
- The approved allocation was $1,200,000 from 2003 through 2008 and from 2010 through 2013. In the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, the allocation was increased to $1,300,000 (Attachment I). For the 2013-2014 school year, the allocation was reduced to $1,000,000 and has remained at that amount for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years.
- To address potential increases to leave allowance costs, anticipated increases in tuition fees in the next academic year, as well as fluctuations to the exchange rate which would impact tuition fees paid to international post-secondary institutions, it has been an administrative practice to maintain a holdback of a percentage of the allocation. The holdback for the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program was 3.78% in 2015-2016.
- In order to operationally facilitate the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program, it is necessary to begin the application, review and approval processes as outlined in Attachment II almost a year in advance of the period of support. The program relative to support available during the 2016-2017 school year is scheduled for announcement to district teachers at the end of October 2015. Applications will be accepted until January 8, 2016. Background information related to each applicant's eligibility for tuition and/or leave support will be compiled from January 11 – 29. Applications will be reviewed and assessed by a panel of district leadership staff from February 1 – 8, and the recommendations from the assessors will be compiled and forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools for consideration before February 19. By February 26, 2016 the completion of these processes will be signaled by the Superintendent's approval of the tuition and/or leave support for successful applicants, including details related to the distribution of the allocated funds.
- Access to and support for professional development has been a significant bargaining issue in negotiations with the Alberta Teachers' Association.

RECOMMENDATION

That an allocation of $1,000,000 from the 2016-2017 operating budget for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and/or tuition support for the 2016-2017 school year be approved.

OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered as the most admissible:

1. The allocation of funds for 2016-2017 remains at $1,000,000.
2. The allocation of funds for 2016-2017 is increased.
3. The allocation of funds for 2016-2017 is decreased.

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS

The number of teacher requests for tuition and leave support through this program has remained relatively consistent over the past several years, while tuition and leave allowance costs continue to increase. With a reduced allocation of funds, the number of staff who could be supported through this program would potentially decrease (Attachment II).

Of the 71 requests for support through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program for the 2015-2016 school year, 38 teachers were granted what they requested and were eligible to receive, 33 were granted partial support and one was not granted support.

In addition to the support available through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program, tuition support for coursework related to core subject areas, second languages and selected priorities established by the District will continue to be available to district teachers through the Teacher Development Program.

The Teachers' Collective Agreement (September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2016) includes a Letter of Understanding entitled *Pilot Project on Staff Development Fund*. Through this pilot, the District has committed to providing $500,000 annually in 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 to Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37 of the Alberta Teachers' Association to administer and distribute funds in support of professional development activities or resources related to teachers' individual professional growth plans.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this recommendation, the attached timeline related to communication and processing of applications will be followed (Attachment III).

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I Professional Improvement Program History
ATTACHMENT II Comparison by Year of Successful Teacher Certificated Applicants
ATTACHMENT III 2016-2017 Professional Improvement Program Timeline

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ATTACHMENT I

PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HISTORY

YEAR	FUND MAXIMUM AS PER CLAUSE 23.7	APPROVED BUDGET	% OF MAXIMUM	APPROVED TOTAL LEAVE FTE	ACTUAL $ GRANTED FOR LEAVES	ACTUAL $ GRANTED FOR TUITION	TOTAL ACTUAL $ GRANTED FOR LEAVES & TUITION
2006-2007	2,307,846	1,200,000	52%	15.76	934,471	169,269	1,103,740
2007-2008	2,342,776	1,200,000	51%	15.46	938,042	150,920	1,088,962
2008-2009	2,392,026	1,300,000	54%	11.67	763,271	274,958	1,038,229
2009-2010	2,504,746	1,300,000	52%	6.54	382,159	349,969	732,128
2010-2011	2,774,936	1,200,000	43%	12.19	756,640	306,366	1,063,006
2011-2012	2,899,830	1,200,000	41%	15.65	768,459	316,283	1,084,742
2012-2013	3,005,090	1,200,000	40%	12.48	785,786	296,530	1,082,316
2013-2014	3,062,822	1,200,000	39%	11.56	706,110	354,758	1,060,868
2014-2015	3,019,266	1,000,000	33%	7.20	517,762	367,680	885,442
2015-2016	3,111,487	1,000,000	32%	8.03	561,457	400,757	962,214

ATTACHMENT II

PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS BY YEAR		
YEAR	**TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS**	**NUMBER SUCCESSFUL**
2006-07	67	51
2007-08	68	45
2008-09	53	50
2009-10	64	64
2010-11	60	58
2011-12	87	84
2012-13	71	70
2013-14	87[1]	76[2]
2014-15	75[3]	73[4]
2015-16	78[5]	77[6]

[1]82 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 5 Exempt staff

[2]73 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 3 Exempt staff

[3]70 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 5 Exempt staff

[4]68 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 5 Exempt staff

[5]72 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 6 Exempt staff

[6]71 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 6 Exempt staff

ATTACHMENT III

2016-2017 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

Activity	Date
2015-2016 Professional Improvement Program information and application package are communicated to district teachers and made available online	October 30
Information meetings for interested staff (4:15 - 6:00 p.m. Conference Centre, Centre for Education)	November 24, 30
Obtain data to calculate maximums as per Clause 23.5 of Teachers' contract	November 30
Due date for applications	January 8
Processing of applications • Check for completeness • Acknowledgement letter • Compile background – previous paid leaves, degrees, grid placement, years of service, summary of request, projected costs • Applications prepared for review by committee of leadership staff	January 11 - 29
Facilitate review by assessment committee of leadership staff	
• Prepare packages for review	January 11 - 29
• Conduct assessment workshop	Week of February 1 (due back February 8)
Compile background information with input from assessments	February 8 - 12
Prepare recommendation to the Superintendent	February 19
Approval of Leaves and tuition support by the Superintendent	February 26
Communication of approvals	
• Phone calls from Staff Development to principals or supervisors of teachers	February 29 – March 4
• Phone calls by assistant superintendents to principal applicants	February 29 – March 4
• TM to Board	March 9
• Staff Update communicated on Staff Room	March 11
• Letters and agreements sent to all successful applicants	March 11