

DATE: October 18, 2016

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Funds for 2017-2018 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 to 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*.

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, upon application, leave for professional improvement may be granted for a school year or portion thereof 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”. Since 2012-2013, the allowable maximum allocation has exceeded three million dollars (Attachment I).
- Since 2013-2014, the approved allocation has been \$1,000,000 (Attachment I).
- 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 5 per cent in 2016-2017.
- 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 2017-2018 school year, is scheduled for announcement to District teachers at the end of October 2016. Applications will be accepted until January 13, 2017. Background information related to each applicant’s eligibility for tuition and/or leave support will be compiled from January 16 to January 27. Applications will be reviewed and assessed by a panel of District leadership staff from February 2 to February 10, and the recommendations from the assessors will be compiled and forwarded to the Superintendent for consideration before February 24. By March 3, 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 \$1,100,000 from the 2017-2018 operating budget for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and/or tuition support for the 2017-2018 school year be approved.

OPTIONS

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

1. The allocation of funds for 2017-2018 is increased to \$1,100,000.
2. The allocation of funds for 2017-2018 remains at \$1,000,000.
3. The allocation of funds for 2017-2018 is decreased.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

The recommendation for a modest increase to the allocation for the 2017-2018 Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program acknowledges a number of factors:

- a significant increase in the number of requests for support in 2016-2017 over previous years; the uncertainty of whether this increase is an anomaly or a trend
- the resulting need to modify the individual level of support provided for 2016-2017 in order to be able to address the increased demand
- increasing costs associated with post-secondary education
- the increased cost of leaves with an allowance due to increases in overhead costs.

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 and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I	Professional Improvement Program History
ATTACHMENT II	Comparison by Year of Successful Teacher Certificated Applicants
ATTACHMENT III	2017-2018 Professional Improvement Program Timeline

RT:sh

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
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
2016-2017	3,286,102	1,000,000	30%	9.40	577,248	371,809	949,057

ATTACHMENT II

PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS BY YEAR		
YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL
2007-2008	68	45
2008-2009	53	50
2009-2010	64	64
2010-2011	60	58
2011-2012	87	84
2012-2013	71	70
2013-2014	87 ¹	76 ²
2014-2015	75 ³	73 ⁴
2015-2016	78 ⁵	77 ⁶
2016-2017	95	90

¹82 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 5 Exempt staff

²73 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 3 Exempt staff

³70 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 5 Exempt staff

⁴68 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 5 Exempt staff

⁵72 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 6 Exempt staff

⁶71 through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program and 6 Exempt staff

2017-2018 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

Activity	Date
2017-2018 Professional Improvement Program information and application package are communicated to District teachers and made available online	October 28
Information meetings for interested staff (4:15 - 6:00 p.m. Conference Centre, Centre for Education)	November 22, 28
Obtain data to calculate maximums as per Clause 23.5 of Teachers' contract	November 30
Due date for applications	January 13
Processing of applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 16 - 27
Facilitate review by assessment committee of leadership staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare packages for review • Conduct assessment workshop 	January 16 - 27 February 2 (due back February 10)
Compile background information with input from assessments	February 13 - 17
Prepare recommendation to the Superintendent	February 24
Approval of leaves and tuition support by the Superintendent	March 3
Communication of approvals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone calls from Staff Development to principals or supervisors of teachers • Phone calls by assistant superintendents to principal applicants • TM to Board • Staff Update communicated on Staff Room • Letters and agreements sent to all successful applicants 	March 6 - 10 March 6 - 10 March 15 March 16 March 16