

**DATE:** October 18, 2016

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Funds for 2017-2018 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program

**ORIGINATOR:** Angela Anderson, Managing Director, Human Resources

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Renée Thomson, Bonnie Zack

**REFERENCE:** Response to Staff Group Budget Presentations, 2012-2014

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## ISSUE

An allocation of funds from the 2017-2018 operating budget is requested to support a second year of the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program Pilot, through which exempt staff members would be able to access tuition and leave support for post-secondary coursework.

## BACKGROUND

There has been a long standing practice in the District to consider applications from exempt staff for tuition and leave support using the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program processes and application package, which is embedded in the Teachers' Collective Agreement. Surplus funds from the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program allocation were used to support the professional growth and development of exempt staff.

Since 2012, the annual information report to the Board of Trustees entitled *Response to Staff Group Budget Presentations* has included a commitment from the Administration to review the implementation of a professional development fund for exempt staff.

In April 2015, the Superintendent approved the concept of a pilot application process designed specifically for exempt staff. In keeping with the District's commitment to exempt staff, an application process was drafted with input from Exempt Liaison Committee members. The pilot was announced in early December 2015, followed by an information session for prospective applicants. The deadline for applications was January 8, 2016.

In March 2016, the Board approved an allocation of \$150,000 from the Central surplus for tuition and professional leave support for five exempt staff members for coursework undertaken in 2016-2017 (Attachment I). Two applicants were granted their full request and three were granted partial support.

## RELATED FACTS

- The implementation of the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program Pilot is aligned with the District's cornerstone values and supports Priority Two, Strategic Goal Three which is to enhance the professional capacity of District staff.
- The Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program Pilot ensures that exempt staff members across the District have access to opportunities that would serve to enhance their professional capacity and allow them to stay current with industry standards and trends.

- It is anticipated that support for professional development would assist in the attraction and retention of exempt staff to the District.
- An allocation of \$150,000 for a second year of the pilot would allow for a five per cent holdback of funds to address potential increases in tuition fees, international exchange rates for coursework undertaken through universities outside Canada, as well as salaries for pilot program participants on leave with an allowance.
- In order to operationally facilitate a second year of the Exempt Professional Improvement Program Pilot, 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. With approval of an allocation, this program pilot would be announced to District staff at the end of October 2016. Applications would be accepted until January 13, 2017. Background information related to each applicant's eligibility for tuition and/or leave support would be compiled from January 16 to January 27. Applications would be reviewed and assessed by a panel of District leadership staff from February 2 to February 10, and the recommendations from the assessors would be compiled and forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools for consideration before February 24. By March 3, the completion of these processes would 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.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That an allocation of \$150,000 from the 2017-2018 operating budget for a second pilot year of the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program be approved for the purpose of granting exempt staff professional improvement leaves and/or tuition support for the 2017-2018 school year.**

## **CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS**

Considering the ratio of teachers to exempt staff, a commitment of \$150,000 is aligned with the request for support for teachers through the Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program.

Providing a dedicated program to support exempt staff professional development would honour commitments the District has made in response to budget presentations and would ensure that related processes are transparent.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT I	Professional Improvement Program – Successful Exempt Applicants by Year
ATTACHMENT II	2017-2018 Professional Improvement Program Timeline

RT:jw

<b>PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL EXEMPT APPLICANTS BY YEAR</b>		
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS</b>	<b>NUMBER SUCCESSFUL</b>
2013-2014*	5	3
2014-2015*	5	5
2015-2016*	6	6
2016-2017	5	5

\* Applications from exempt staff were assessed using Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program application processes.

### 2017-2018 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

Activity	Date
2017-2018 Professional Improvement Program information and application package are communicated to District exempt staff and made available online	October 28
Information meetings for interested staff (4:15 - 6:00 p.m. Conference Centre, Centre for Education)	December 8
Due date for applications	January 13
Processing of applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for completeness</li> <li>• Acknowledgement letter</li> <li>• Compile background – previous paid leaves, degrees, grid placement, years of service, summary of request, projected costs</li> <li>• Applications prepared for review by committee of leadership staff</li> </ul>	January 16 - 27
Facilitate review by assessment committee of leadership staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare packages for review</li> <li>• Conduct assessment workshop</li> </ul>	January 16 - 27 Week of January 30 (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"> <li>• Phone calls from Staff Development to supervisors of exempt staff</li> <li>• TM to Board</li> <li>• Staff Update communicated on Staff Room</li> <li>• Letters and agreements sent to all successful applicants</li> </ul>	March 6 - 10 March 15 March 16 March 16