

**DATE:** November 24, 2020

**TO:** Board of Trustees

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

**SUBJECT:** Funds for 2021-2022 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program

**ORIGINATOR:** Angela Anderson, Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Resources

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Trish Kolotyluk, Renée Thomson

---

## ISSUE

An allocation of funds from the 2021-2022 operating budget is requested to support the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program, through which exempt staff would be able to access tuition and leave support for post-secondary coursework. An allocation of funds to support this program is an investment that benefits our Division and builds capacity in our staff. This request for a commitment of funds is made well in advance of the distribution of the funds to accommodate application and post-secondary admission processes.

## BACKGROUND

Edmonton Public Schools recognizes that professional development for staff is a critical aspect in supporting successful outcomes for students, as well as for succession planning. The Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program is in direct support of Division Priority 2, Goal 3, 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.” This program is grounded in our Division’s cornerstone values of accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity.

Through this program, Division exempt staff have the opportunity to apply for tuition and leave support to participate in professional improvement activities that are aligned with the Division’s Priorities and areas of need. A comparison of successful applicants by year (Attachment I), as well as a synopsis of funds and support granted over the past few years (Attachment II) are included in this report.

## RELATED FACTS

- The Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program is aligned with the Division’s Strategic Plan and cornerstone values.
- The program ensures that exempt staff members across the Division have access to opportunities that would serve to enhance their professional capacity and allow them to stay current with industry standards and trends.
- Support for professional development assists in the attraction of exempt staff to the Division and in the retention of those employees.
- In order to facilitate application, review and approval processes for this program, it is necessary that they be initiated well in advance of the period of support (Attachment III).
- Exempt staff have the opportunity to apply for support in January for courses that take place between July 1, 2021, and August 31, 2022, or in September for courses that take place between December 1, 2021, and August 31, 2022, (Attachment III).

- The application process for this program is rigorous. Assessment of applications is completed by a committee of Division leadership staff who consider the alignment of applicants' proposed professional improvement plans with Division Priorities and identified needs. Additional considerations are the anticipated benefits to the Division, as well as connections to the applicants' professional growth plans and career goals.
- For the 2020-2021 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program, requests for support from exempt staff varied as greatly as their roles in the Division.
- It has been an administrative practice to maintain a holdback of a portion of the allocation to address potential increases to leave allowance costs and tuition fees in the next academic year, as well as potential fluctuations in the exchange rate for tuition fees paid to international post-secondary institutions.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That an allocation of \$140,000 from the 2021-2022 operating budget be approved for the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and tuition support to exempt staff for the 2021-2022 school year.**

## OPTIONS

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

1. The allocation of funds for 2021-2022 is decreased to \$140,000.
2. The allocation of funds for 2021-2022 remains at \$150,000.

## CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

Based on the number of applications we have received over the past few years, as well as the number of exempt staff in the Division, it is anticipated that maintaining the allocation of funds for this program near the current level would adequately cover the requests for support in 2021-2022. This school year, approximately 1.5 per cent of the just over 660 exempt staff working in the Division requested and were granted support through this program.

A selection of statements from staff members who were granted support through the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program has been included with this report (Attachment IV). Program participants reflected on the benefits of their professional learning and how it has been effectively integrated into their work responsibilities.

We acknowledge the importance of professional learning for exempt staff that continues to support skills and knowledge that benefit our students, schools and central decision units. In consideration of the challenging economic circumstances anticipated for the 2021-2022 school year, this recommendation is for a small reduction in the allocation of funds for this program.

## NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this recommendation, the program timelines for both the January and September application intakes will be implemented.

## ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| ATTACHMENT I  | Comparison by Year: Total Number of Applicants and Number of Successful Applicants |
| ATTACHMENT II | Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program History                              |

ATTACHMENT III 2021-2022 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program Timelines  
ATTACHMENT IV Selection of Reflective Statements: Benefits of Program Participation

RT:sh

### EXEMPT STAFF PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

#### COMPARISON BY YEAR: TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AND NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

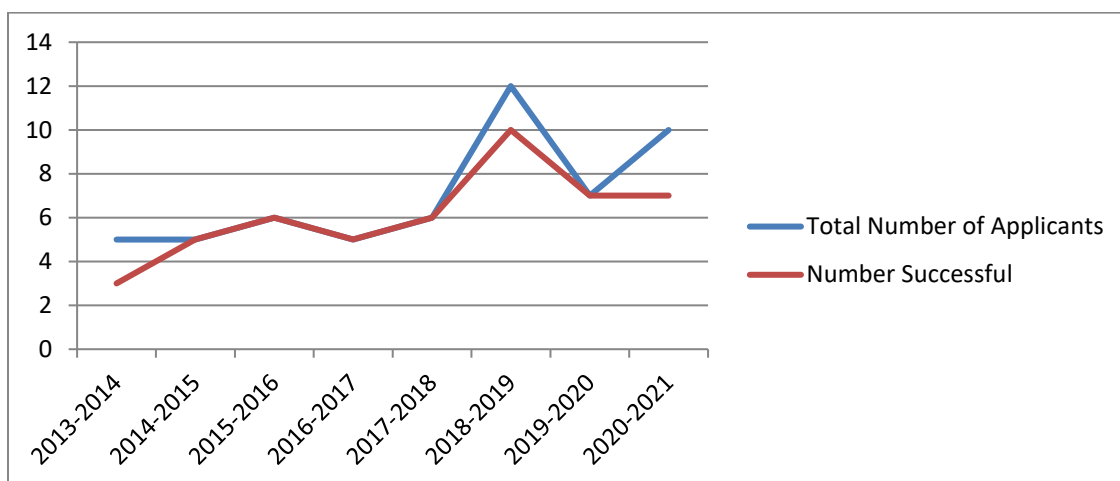
YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL
2013-2014 <sup>1</sup>	5	3
2014-2015 <sup>1</sup>	5	5
2015-2016 <sup>1</sup>	6	6
2016-2017 <sup>2</sup>	5	5
2017-2018	6	6
2018-2019	12	10
2019-2020	7	7
2020-2021	10	7 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Applications from exempt staff were assessed using processes outlined in the Teachers' Collective Agreement.

<sup>2</sup> The Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program was established.

<sup>3</sup> Three applications from the September intake are currently being reviewed.

#### COMPARISON BY YEAR: TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AND NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS



## EXEMPT STAFF PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HISTORY

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>APPROVED ALLOCATION</b>	<b>APPROVED TOTAL LEAVE FTE</b>	<b>ACTUAL GRANTED FOR LEAVES</b>	<b>ACTUAL GRANTED FOR TUITION</b>	<b>TOTAL ACTUAL GRANTED FOR LEAVES &amp; TUITION</b>
2016-2017	\$150,000	1.467	\$106,861	\$35,585	\$142,446
2017-2018	\$150,000	0.644	\$47,129	\$39,304	\$86,433
2018-2019	\$150,000	0.600	\$47,147	\$52,902	\$100,049
2019-2020	\$150,000	0.440	\$32,699	\$37,730	\$70,429
2020-2021 <sup>1</sup>	\$150,000	1.000	\$67,572	\$30,450	\$98,022

<sup>1</sup> Three applications from the September intake are currently being reviewed.

## 2021-2022 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

### JANUARY 2020 APPLICATION INTAKE

(for courses that take place between July 1, 2021 and August 31, 2022)

Activity	Date
Exempt Professional Improvement Program information and application package are communicated to Division exempt staff and made available online	October 30
Information meeting for interested staff (4:00 - 6:00 p.m., Google Meet)	December 3
Due date for applications	January 8
Processing of applications	January 11 - 29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receipt of applications confirmed</li> <li>• Background information compiled (previous 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>	
Review of applications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application packages prepared for committee review</li> <li>• Committee workshop conducted</li> <li>• Review of applications completed</li> </ul>	January 11 – February 8 February 9 February 16
Compile background information with input from assessors	February 17 – March 2
Recommendation to the Superintendent	March 3
Approval of leaves and tuition support by the Superintendent	March 10
Communication of support granted	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters and agreements sent to successful applicants</li> <li>• TM to Board</li> <li>• Division News announcement</li> </ul>	March 15 - 19 March 24 March 26

## 2021-2022 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

### SEPTEMBER 2021 APPLICATION INTAKE

(for courses that take place between December 1, 2021 and August 31, 2022)

Activity	Date
Due date for applications	September 17
Processing of applications	September 21-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receipt of applications confirmed</li><li>• Background information compiled (previous 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>	
Review of applications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application packages prepared for committee review</li><li>• Review of applications completed</li></ul>	September 20 - 24 October 4
Compile background information with input from assessors	September 28 - October 8
Recommendation to the Superintendent	October 15
Approval of leaves and tuition support by the Superintendent	October 22
Communication of support granted	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letters and agreements sent to successful applicants</li><li>• TM to Board</li><li>• Division News announcement</li></ul>	October 25 - 29 November 3 November 5

**Selection of Reflective Statements: Benefits of Program Participation  
2019-2020 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program**

**Amie Mangan, Athletic Trainer**

*University of Alberta - Master of Arts in Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation*

“New classes and projects opened my eyes to better ways to provide physical activity programs to all students and required me to think critically about how I am meeting the needs of those students who are more vulnerable. SPH 501: Social Determinants of Health forced me to examine how determinants such as socioeconomic status and race might be affecting the ability of students to lead healthier lives and participate in physical activity opportunities. This will impact how I create and run programs in the future to ensure that all students have access. In addition, KSR 530 Adapted Physical Activity allowed me to question how we can better support students participating in Adapted Physical Education programs.”

**Linda McFalls, Social Worker Consultant**

*University of Alberta - Doctor of Philosophy in Secondary Education with a focus on the interplay of social emotional development, trauma, mental health and neuroscience in educational settings*

“I hope to contribute to educational leadership development by supporting the 'uncovering (and discovering) of their not yet known parts of self' and the competing and compelling implications in their relationships with students, staff, parents, community and organizational structures within and outside of Edmonton Public Schools.”