

DATE: November 30, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Funds for the 2022-2023 Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff

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

RESOURCE STAFF: Trish Kolotyluk, Renée Thomson

REFERENCE: Teachers’ Collective Agreement-September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2020, Clause 9

ISSUE

An allocation of funds from the 2022-2023 operating budget is requested to support the Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff. Through this program, teachers can access tuition and leave support for post-secondary coursework as per clause 9 of the Teachers’ Collective Agreement. An allocation of funds to support this program is an investment that will benefit our Division in several ways, including improving student achievement, building capacity in our teaching staff and sharing knowledge and expertise through our Division’s model of professional learning. The request for a commitment of funds is made well in advance of the distribution of the funds to accommodate application and university 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 Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff is in 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 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, teachers have the opportunity to apply for tuition and leave support to undertake professional improvement activities that are aligned with Division 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 10 years (Attachment II) are included in this report.

RELATED FACTS

- The Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff is guided by clause 9 of the Teachers’ Collective Agreement.
- Clause 9.2.2 outlines the conditions under which, upon application, leave for professional improvement may be granted to a teacher for a school year or portion of the year.

- Clause 9.2.7 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 9.2.8 states the maximum amount the Division may allocate for the Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff as “3/4 of 1% of the annual grid costs, calculated as of the preceding November 30”.
- The Professional Improvement Program application process 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 programming needs. Additional considerations are the anticipated benefits to learners, the school and the Division, as well as connections to the applicants’ professional growth plans and career goals.
- Successful applicants agree to a return of service to Edmonton Public Schools of one year for tuition support and three years for a full-time leave with an allowance; part-time leaves are prorated accordingly.
- For the 2021-2022 Professional Improvement Program, support was granted primarily for courses and programs of study in the areas of leadership, counselling/mental health, curriculum studies, literacy and early learning.
- 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. The holdback for the 2021-2022 Professional Improvement Program was 2.7 per cent.
- The Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff is one of several ways that professional learning is supported for Division staff. The chart below outlines sources of support for professional learning.

Funds for Professional Learning	Details
School Budgets	Funds are allocated for staff professional learning within schools and catchments.
Decision Units	Central decision units allocate funds for the delivery of targeted professional learning courses and sessions for staff. These include sessions offered through Instructional Supports, Technology and Information Management and Human Resources, among others.
Division Programs: Teacher Development Program and Professional Improvement Program	Tuition support is available to teachers for post-secondary coursework related to core subjects and second languages, as well as for courses related to specific Division priorities through the Teacher Development Program. Tuition and leave support is available to teachers through the Professional Improvement Program for post-secondary coursework aligned with the Division’s Strategic Plan.
Alberta Teachers’ Association	The Teachers’ Collective Agreement includes a commitment of Division funds 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. Edmonton Public Schools will provide \$875,000 in 2021-2022 to Local 37 in support of the Teacher Development Fund.
Bursaries and Scholarships	Teachers are encouraged to access support through the provincial government’s bursary programs in the areas of mathematics and second language education, and to explore scholarship opportunities through their post-secondary institution and other community organizations

RECOMMENDATION

That an allocation of \$1,200,000 from the 2022-2023 operating budget be approved for the Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and tuition support to teachers for the 2022-2023 school year.

OPTIONS

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

1. The allocation of funds for 2022-2023 remains at \$1,200,000.
2. The allocation of funds for 2022-2023 is decreased to \$1,100,000.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

Student achievement is positively impacted by teacher professional learning and the application of new skills and knowledge within classrooms and school communities. Our investment in teachers to complete in-depth post-secondary studies through the Professional Improvement Program results in benefits that extend beyond those individual teachers and their students. Professional Improvement Program participants go on to share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues through a wide range of professional learning opportunities, including sessions held on designated professional development days, communities of practice, collaboration with colleagues, coaching and mentoring and post-secondary coursework. Through this comprehensive model of professional learning, our Division is focused on working together to build capacity and to continuously improve. Overarching this is our shared responsibility to support our students to achieve to their fullest learning potential within an environment that supports their health and wellness. For these reasons, Option 1 is considered most appropriate.

The in-depth learning acquired from post-secondary studies is a key tenet of the Division’s professional learning model. Focused study in university programs, that are aligned with our Strategic Plan and areas of need, results in significant benefits across the Division. A selection of reflective statements from staff who were supported through the Professional Improvement Program highlight this in Attachment IV. Several program participants explain that the integration of new strategies and perspectives, learned through their post-secondary studies, results in improved student academic success and wellness. Many participants reflect on the positive impact a deeper understanding of subject content and refinement of their teaching practices has had on their ability to meet the increasingly complex needs of students.

The Professional Improvement Program is grounded in all four cornerstone values. The cornerstone value of collaboration, however, is most evident in program participants’ descriptions of how they are sharing their learning and experience with colleagues. Professional Improvement Program participants are leveraging school and catchment professional development activities to build capacity and develop shared understanding. Those program participants who are consultants within the Division describe the ripple effect of learning that occurs when they share their knowledge, skills and experience with a broad

audience across the Division through sessions and targeted direct supports to schools. As well, staff in both informal and formal leadership roles explain how they are using their learning from post-secondary studies to inform how they guide and support their staff and students.

The number of teachers who request and receive support through this program is small relative to the total number of teachers in the Division. As we continue to build capacity by supporting a small number of teaching staff each year to participate in post-secondary studies aligned with our Division’s Strategic Plan, those teachers, in turn, work collaboratively with colleagues to support the academic success and wellness of our students. The chart below compares the total number of teachers over the past five years, the total number of Professional Improvement Program applicants and the number of applicants who were granted support.

Comparison of Total Number of Teachers and Number of Successful Applicants

Year	Number of Teachers	Number of Applicants	Number of Successful Applicants	Percentage of Teachers Supported
2017-2018	5518	103	99	1.79%
2018-2019	5737	137	104	1.81%
2019-2020	5832	144	112	1.92%
2020-2021	5614	110	94	1.67%
2021-2022	5651	117	99	1.75%

For several years, the number of teachers hired to the Division increased to keep pace with our growing student enrolment. This resulted in a consistent increase in the number of applications for support through the Professional Improvement Program. As a comparison, in 2014-2015, 70 certificated staff requested support through this program, while in 2019-2020, there were 144 requests for support. In 2020-2021, however, there was a shift in this upward trend and the Division experienced a decrease in both the number of teachers and the number of Professional Improvement Program applicants. In 2021-2022, we saw a slight increase in the number of teachers and the number of applicants (Attachment I). Of the 117 requests for support through this program in 2021-2022, based on the relative strength of the applications, 47 applicants were granted the support they requested and were eligible to receive, 52 were granted partial support, 15 were not granted support and three withdrew their applications.

Over the past decade, the gap between the maximum possible allocation and the approved allocation has widened. In 2012-2013, the approved allocation of \$1,200,000 was 40 per cent of the maximum possible allocation. The approved allocation of \$1,200,000 for 2021-2022 was 32 per cent of the maximum possible allocation (Attachment II).

While post-secondary professional learning is critical to building staff capacity and supporting student learning, we acknowledge the current economic climate. Last year, the allocation of funds for this program was reduced by \$100,000 (7.7 per cent) over the previous year (Attachment II). As the number of teachers in the Division continues to increase slightly and tuition costs continue to rise, maintaining the allocation of funds at the current level will allow a number of teacher certificated staff to develop a deeper understanding of educational theories and practice, curricula and subject content that is aligned with Division initiatives. Further, it will ensure that we continue to build capacity with our staff and in-house expertise to best support the complex learning needs of our students.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this recommendation, the program timeline will be followed (Attachment III).

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

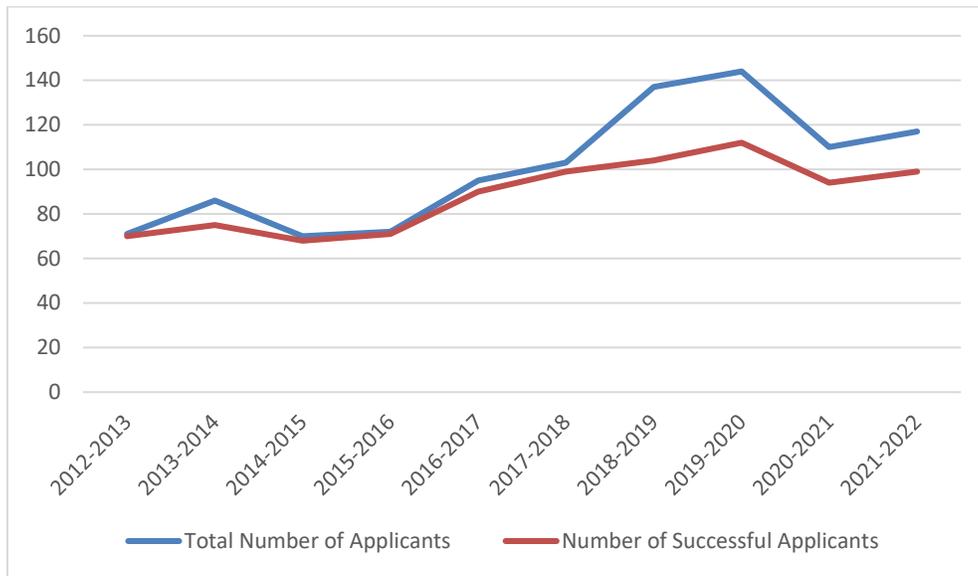
ATTACHMENT I	Comparison by Year: Total Number of Teacher Certificated Applicants and Number of Successful Applicants
ATTACHMENT II	Professional Improvement Program History
ATTACHMENT III	2022-2023 Professional Improvement Program Timeline
ATTACHMENT IV	Selection of Reflective Statements: Benefits of Program Participation

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**PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
COMPARISON BY YEAR: TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHER
CERTIFICATED APPLICANTS AND NUMBER OF
SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL
2012-2013	71	70
2013-2014	86	75
2014-2015	70	68
2015-2016	72	71
2016-2017	95	90
2017-2018	103	99
2018-2019	137	104
2019-2020	144	112
2020-2021	110	94
2021-2022	117	99

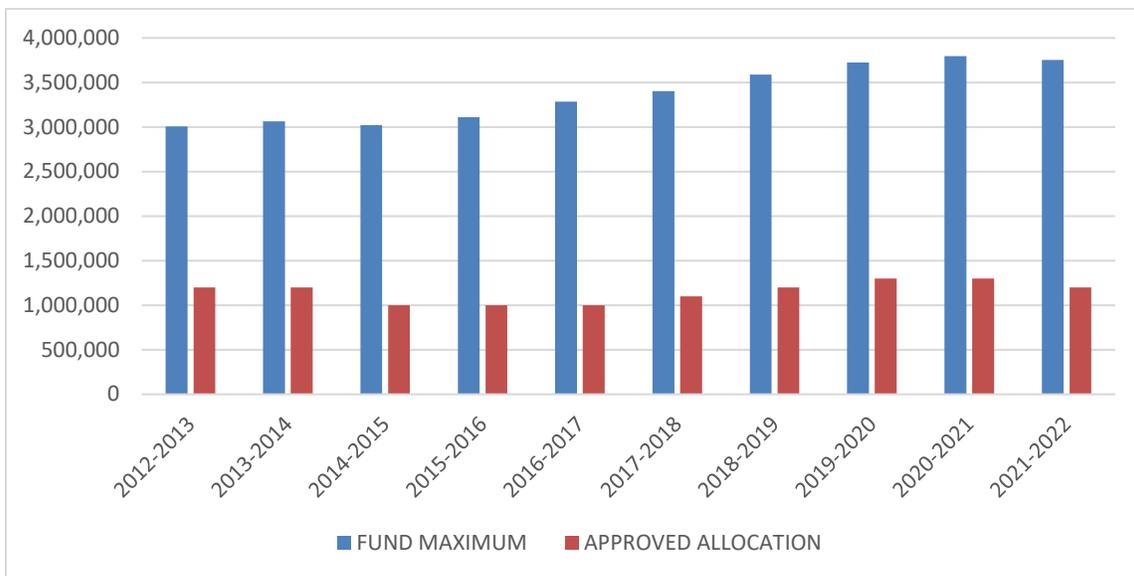
**COMPARISON BY YEAR: TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHER CERTIFICATED APPLICANTS
AND NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**



PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HISTORY

YEAR	FUND MAXIMUM AS PER CLAUSE 9.2.8	APPROVED ALLOCATION	% OF MAXIMUM	APPROVED TOTAL LEAVE FTE	ACTUAL \$ GRANTED FOR LEAVES	ACTUAL \$ GRANTED FOR TUITION	TOTAL ACTUAL \$ GRANTED FOR LEAVES & TUITION
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%	8.026	561,457	400,757	962,214
2016-2017	3,286,102	1,000,000	30%	9.40	577,248	371,809	949,057
2017-2018	3,402,751	1,100,000	32%	7.818	521,808	545,100	1,066,908
2018-2019	3,587,437	1,200,000	33%	8.09	589,115	581,762	1,170,877
2019-2020	3,725,511	1,300,000	35%	11.072	679,106	584,120	1,263,226
2020-2021	3,795,407	1,300,000	34%	8.478	621,109	641,150	1,262,259
2021-2022	3,754,228	1,200,000	32%	9.079	515,900	651,700	1,167,600

COMPARISON BY YEAR: FUND MAXIMUM AND APPROVED ALLOCATION



2022-2023 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

Activity	Date
Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff announced on Division Staff News and application available on Connect	October 29
Information meetings for interested staff (4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Google Meet)	November 23 and 29
Obtain data to calculate maximums as per Clause 9.2.8 of the Teachers' Collective Agreement	November 30
Due date for applications	January 7
Processing of applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of applications confirmed • Background information compiled (previous leaves, degrees, grid placement, years of service, summary of request, projected costs) • Applications prepared for review by committee of leadership staff 	January 10 – 31
Review of applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application packages prepared for committee review • Committee workshop conducted • Review of applications completed 	January 10 – February 7 February 8 February 15
Compile background information with input from assessors	February 15 – March 4
Recommendation submitted for approval	March 7
Approval of leaves and tuition support	March 14
Communication of support granted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants notified; letters and agreements sent to successful applicants • TM to Board • Division Staff News announcement 	March 15 - 18 March 23 March 25

**Selection of Reflective Statements: Benefits of Program Participation
2020-2021 Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff**

Alexis Renwick

University of Calgary, Master of Education in Interdisciplinary Studies

“I have been able to develop my skills in understanding literature to support evidence-based practices, and in turn help teachers and school staff apply what research tells us into the classroom to support student growth and achievement.”

Alyssa Prouty

University of Calgary, Master of Education in Interdisciplinary Studies with specializations in Teaching English as an Additional Language and Inclusive Education

“It is difficult to quantify changes to how one feels about a topic, but I am more passionate and driven than ever before to improve inclusive education. This permeates into all of my teaching and leading practices. I am appreciative of the support I received from the Division, and look forward to how I can continue to support success, one student at a time.”

Andrea Cooper

University of Portland, Doctor of Education in Learning and Leading

“All of this new and extended knowledge fits so well with the Division’s High Social Vulnerability Project. Being part of this committee allows me to share my knowledge and continue to build on our current culture of being welcoming and inclusive, while being responsive and supportive of the needs in our communities. I am gaining the knowledge to integrate school and community resources and support the success of all our students.”

Bethany Briones

Trinity Western University, Master of Arts in Educational Studies with a specialization in Special Education

“I have learned about diverse cognitive emotional, behavioural, and sensory needs and abilities that have not only helped me in my classroom, but I have used this knowledge to help my coworkers with other students in the entire school.”

Bethany Semotiuk

University of Alberta, Master of Education in Elementary Education with a focus on language and literacy

“As a result of my professional improvement, my students will benefit from the implementation of quality targeted reading, writing and oral language skills and strategies, and have access to effective interventions (if required). Literacy skills are foundational to learning in all subject areas, so by developing expertise in literacy my students will be better supported in all disciplines. Through collaboration with colleagues at my school and throughout the district, I believe that subsequently many more students can access support, which further expands the benefits of my studies.”

Chelsey Grant

University of Alberta, Master of Education in Elementary Education with a specialization in Curriculum and Pedagogy, Early Learning Cohort

“Another benefit that I am already experiencing is an improved understanding of relationships between schools, families, and communities. This improved understanding is already allowing me to build deeper relationships, or partnerships, with my families and the community in general.”

Quinton Stotz

Concordia University - Montreal, Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics

“I have gained valuable knowledge into how second languages are acquired so as to maximize the efficiency of classroom instruction. I have also gained the knowledge and skillset necessary to develop, maintain and improve language programming in ways that are rooted in international best practices and standards, and that reflect the latest findings emerging from research in the field of applied linguistics. I look forward to applying what I have learned to my own practice and aspire to increase the division’s capacity as a whole to teach languages.”

Rebecca Ho

City University of Seattle, Master of Counselling

“I have gained such invaluable insight, knowledge, skills, and techniques that will further support the mental health and academic achievement of our students. I currently utilize the knowledge and skills acquired by creating safer trauma informed classrooms, providing individual supports that cater more accurately towards student needs, and detect distress with a more informed lens.”

Shauna Paradis

University of Alberta, Master of Education in Elementary Education with a specialization in Curriculum and Pedagogy and a focus on literacy

“The Children's Literature course I completed challenged me to rethink my literature choices to ensure that students see themselves represented, particularly if they belong to a typically underrepresented group. This ties nicely with the division's focus on First Nation, Metis and Inuit culture, antiracism and inclusion of LGBTQ+ students. Whether I remain in the classroom, or eventually take on a leadership role, what I have learned this year will be beneficial to my classroom, school and the division.”

Suzanne Picard

University of Lethbridge, Master of Education in Teaching, Learning and Neuroscience

I am overwhelmed with gratitude and by the sheer breadth of constructive change that the Professional Improvement Program has opened up in my practice. It’s no secret that fostering lifelong growth, welcoming learning environments, and connective communication has been trickier than ever in our pandemic context. We know our schools are stretched; our colleagues, like our kids and their families, need inspiration and innovation to not only adapt but thrive in our cultural moment. The Professional Improvement Program offers authentic, concrete recognition of individual learning and how the agency and innovation of each of us strengthens our communal whole.”

Twyla Armagost

University of Alberta, Master of Education in Elementary Education with a specialization in Curriculum and Pedagogy, Early Learning Cohort

“My ability to see this type of program with a critical and thoughtful eye allows me to reimagine the way in which we do our work as early educators. I am now prepared to support teachers through instructional leadership that goes beyond the expected, and approaches the intricacies that we are faced with in our ever-diversifying communities. This includes redefining family engagement opportunities and creating space for the different kinds of knowledge children bring to our classrooms.”

Waishing Michael Lam

University of Alberta, Master of Education in Secondary Education with a specialization in Curriculum Studies and a focus on financial literacy education

“I have found so much value in the implementation of curriculum theory in my teaching practice, which I believe has made me a better teacher in the service of my students, and a more effective subject matter resource to my school and division colleagues.”