

## **Purpose/Background**

Professional learning is a shared responsibility of the Division and staff and supports both in-service training and professional learning activities. The Board will contribute funds toward professional development as agreed to in the Collective Agreement between the Board of Trustees of Rocky View Schools and the Alberta Teachers' Association, Local #35.

The Board may support, in whole or in part, professional learning such as:

- In-Service Activities
- Job-related Training
- Staff Development Activities
- Professional Learning Activities
- Inter-Visitations
- Exchange
- Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave
- Secondments

## **Procedures**

### **1. Guiding Principles**

- 1.1 The school is the primary unit of change and, therefore, in relationship to the Division's four-year education plan, determines and articulates a direction and focus.
- 1.2 The leadership of the Principal is key in initiating and sustaining data-informed and research-based educational improvement.
- 1.3 Professional learning competencies as represented in teachers' professional growth plans (TPGPs) and support staff professional learning plans shall consider the Division's four-year education plans.
- 1.4 For certificated staff, TPGPs shall reflect the Alberta Education, Teaching Quality Standard and/or Leadership Quality Standards.
- 1.5 Division employees' professional learning shall reflect the standards and principles of the Professional Learning Model.
- 1.6 Procedures for accessing Professional Learning funds and possible initiatives shall be reviewed and communicated annually.
- 1.7 An evaluation of the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of the Division Professional Learning Model shall be conducted periodically by the Superintendent to ensure accountability and improvement opportunities.

### **2. In-Service, Staff Development and Professional Learning Activities**

All professional learning is to be based on provincial, Division or school/teacher identified goals, priorities, assessed needs or objectives.

### 3. Inter-Visitation of Teachers

Classroom inter-visitiation, as an in-service technique, may be arranged with approval of the Superintendent and/or the Principals concerned.

### 4. Exchanges

#### 4.1. Exchanges Within the Division

4.1.1. Teachers shall make applications, accompanied by a recommendation from their Principal, by March 15.

4.1.2. Exchanges may be arranged if two teachers in different schools can be paired with one another for a one-year period.

4.1.3. At the conclusion of the one-year exchange period, the teachers involved will return to their previous schools unless transfers are requested and approved.

#### 4.2. Exchanges with Teachers in other Countries

4.2.1. Professional staff foreign exchanges must be arranged through a recognized teacher exchange program.

4.2.2. Foreign exchanges must have the support of the Superintendent and the Principal. The following criteria will be considered:

4.2.2.1. The effect the exchange may have on the students and school concerned;

4.2.2.2. The length of service of the staff member concerned;

4.2.2.3. The quality of service of the staff member concerned;

4.2.2.4. The involvement in related professional activities of the staff member concerned.

4.2.3. Foreign exchanges must be applied for by November 1 of the year before the exchange.

4.2.4. Professional staff on foreign exchange retain their full salary and benefits (excluding administrative and extra allowances) and are eligible for their current or equivalent positions on return.

### 5. Professional Development Leave Committee (P.D.L.C.)

5.1. The P.D.L.C. will establish and set the Operating Procedures attached to this procedure.

### 6. Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave – see Appendix A – P.D.L.C. Operating Procedures.

6.1. The amount payable during the period of leave will be 20% of the Employee's current salary, including any administrative allowances, and in addition the Board will pay the Board's contributions to benefits described in the Collective Agreement on the same basis in effect prior to the Minimum Support Sabbatical leave.

## 7. Secondments

- 7.1. A teacher who wishes to apply for secondment positions at universities, such as the University Associate positions for student teachers, must apply through the process established by the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, who will establish a list of potential candidates who will be approved for secondment should they be selected by the university. It is expected that upon their return to the Division they could offer some benefit gained from their experience with that position.
- 7.2. Teachers who wish to apply for secondment positions at Alberta Education shall apply through the process established by the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, who will establish a list of potential candidates who will be approved for secondment should they be selected by Alberta Education. It is expected that upon their return to the Division they could offer some benefit gained from their experience with that position.
- 7.3. Teachers who wish to apply for secondment positions with other organizations, as identified by the Superintendent from time to time, shall apply through the process established by the Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, who will establish a list of potential candidates who will be approved for secondment should they be selected by the sponsoring organization. It is expected that upon their return to the Division they could offer some benefit gained from their experience with that position.
- 7.4. Principals and Assistant Principals assigned to the same school will not be granted a secondment in the same year.

### Reference:

- RVS AF424-A1 P.D.L.C. Teacher Annual Conference and/or Professional Activity
- RVS AF424-A2 P.D.L.C. Substitute Teacher Annual Conference and/or Professional Activity
- RVS AF424-B Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave Application
- RVS AF424-D PL Out of Jurisdiction Activity for Principals
- RVS AF424-E PL Out of Jurisdiction Activity for Associates, Directors and Supervisors
- RVS AF424-F School Based P.D.L.C. Funding
- RVS AF424-G Learning Commons Professional Development Funding
- RVS AF424-H Annual Professional Learning Plan Support Staff
- Section 18, 33, 52, 53, 68, 196, 197, 204, 222 Education Act
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Personal Information Protection Act
- Teaching Profession Act
- Certification of Teachers Regulation 3/99 (Amended A.R. 206/2001)
- Practice Review of Teachers Regulation 11/2010
- Ministerial Order 001/2013 – Student Learning
- Ministerial Order 016/97 – Teaching Quality Standard
- Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
- Practice Review Bylaws

## **APPENDIX A – Professional Development Leave Committee Operating Procedures**

### **1. Membership of the Professional Development Leave Committee (P.D.L.C.)**

- 1.1 Membership shall be subject to the current Collective Agreement.
- 1.2 The Board may have three (3) voting representatives, one being the Secretary of the P.D.L.C. Currently, the Secretary role is fulfilled by the Director of Instructional Leadership or designate.
- 1.3 The local A.T.A. may have three (3) voting representatives, one being the A.T.A. P.D.L.C. Processor (the Processor). The Processor shall be appointed annually by the A.T.A.
- 1.4 A chairperson shall be appointed at the first meeting of each new school year. This role is fulfilled by an A.T.A. representative one year, then a Board representative the next year, and continues to alternate each subsequent year.
- 1.5 All members shall have equal voting rights.
- 1.6 A minimum of four (4) members must be in favor for a motion to pass.

### **2. Powers of the P.D.L.C.**

- 2.1 The P.D.L.C. shall have full jurisdiction to oversee, set criteria, administer and process the Professional Development Leave Fund subject only to the current Collective Agreement.
- 2.2 The P.D.L.C. shall set criteria, determine the process of selection and allocate Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave, Conferences, and for Professional Learning (PL) Activities.
  - 2.2.1 P.D.L.C. annual pre-approval shall be required for Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave and for all P.D.L.C. funding.
- 2.3 The P.D.L.C. may allocate various responsibilities to other groups or individuals subject to the current Collective Agreement and Section 1 of this document.
  - 2.3.1 The P.D.L.C. shall assign administration and approval of funding, subject to P.D.L.C. criteria and guidelines, of PL Activities to the Processor. The Processor shall be a member of the P.D.L.C. and a representative of the A.T.A.
    - 2.3.1.1 The Processor's primary PL fund allocation for processing teachers' PL funding will be reviewed annually and agreed upon by the P.D.L.C.
  - 2.3.2 The P.D.L.C. shall assign the approval of school-based Professional Development Activities, subject to P.D.L.C. criteria and guidelines, to the Processor.
  - 2.3.3 The P.D.L.C. shall assign the approval of substitute teacher professional learning activities to the Processor.
    - 2.3.3.1 The Processor's secondary PL fund allocation for further processing substitute teachers' PL fund will be reviewed annually and agreed upon by the P.D.L.C.
  - 2.3.4 The P.D.L.C. shall assign the January communication of the sabbatical criteria and deadlines to the Processor and Secretary.

- 2.4 The P.D.L.C. shall review and approve all funding criteria and guidelines prior to June 30 for the following school year.
- 2.5 This document will be reviewed on an annual basis or as needed by members of the P.D.L.C. Any recommended changes to these Operating Procedures must be approved annually by the Board of Trustees and the Local 35 A.T.A. Executive.

### 3. Professional Learning Activities

#### 3.1 Professional Learning Spending Account

- 3.1.1 Financial assistance may be accessed for (up to) two funding events per year, up to a maximum of \$1000 for any eligible PL activity. Eligible activities may include (but are not exclusive to):
  - Conferences
  - Workshops
  - Course Tuition (online or face to face)
  - School Visits
  - Professional Resources
  - Subsistence (mileage, hotel, flights, and meals related to required travel - excluding Teachers' Convention)
    - Meal allowance claims may not exceed published CRA per diem rates - \$23 per meal (including taxes & gratuities).
  - Purchase of Substitute Release Time
  - Memberships/Fees for relevant Associations
- 3.1.2 Professional resources may be purchased up to a maximum of \$250.
- 3.1.3 Digital devices/Student Resources/Manipulatives/Materials are not eligible for PDLC funding.
- 3.1.4 RVS Purchasing Cards may not be used for meals, in accordance with [AP5224](#).
- 3.1.5 Staff must follow the current Alberta Health regulations and travel to conferences requiring a period of quarantine upon return would not be approved unless/until the period of quarantine is lifted.

#### 3.2 Funding Parameters and Approval

- 3.2.1. Eligible teachers' application for funding are subject to the pre-approval of the Processor then their supervisor.
- 3.2.2. Funding is for the fiscal year September 1 to August 31.

#### 3.3 Submission of Applications and Claims

- 3.3.1 As articulated in the current Collective Agreement, teachers on contract by September 30 of a school year and whose contracts continue until the last day of that school year, are eligible for P.D.L.C. funds.
- 3.3.2 Completed applications on the appropriate form, including the signature of the immediate supervisor, should be submitted by the advertised deadlines or as indicated on the form.

- 3.3.3 Pre-approvals by the Processor must be granted prior to the attendance of the event, or prior to the purchase of professional resources, as part of the application process. Approvals for P.D.L.C. funding will stop if P.D.L.C. funds have been depleted for the year.
- 3.3.4 The time limit for submitting claims, including receipts, for approved funding is sixty (60) days from the date of the conclusion of the activity or resource purchase.
- 3.3.5 Claims for Professional Learning Activities under 3.1 are to be submitted to the Processor.
- 3.3.6 Appeals for Special Cases covered in Section 3 are to be submitted to the Secretary of P.D.L.C. to be presented to the Committee.
- 3.3.6.1 Any appeal must include from the appellant:
- A copy of the original application or request
  - A rationale for the appeal
- 3.3.6.2 The Secretary will gather rationale for the denial of the request from the party who denied it i.e. Principal or processor.
- 3.3.6.3 The appeal information will be reviewed, discussed and voted on by the P.D.L.C. at its subsequent meeting or via email if it is time sensitive.
- 3.3.6.4 The Secretary will notify the appellant and administrator (if applicable) of the decision
- 3.3.7 One teacher's funding cannot be used for another teacher.

#### 3.4 Special Cases

If an individual receives preapproval for the use of P.D.L.C. funds but is denied reimbursement of expenses due to submission of the claim after the 60-day deadline, they may appeal to the P.D.L.C. to be reimbursed should any funds from the current fiscal year remain as of August 15. The remaining funds would be distributed equally among those filing an appeal.

#### 4. Minimum Support Sabbatical

In order to be considered for a Minimum Support Sabbatical, an applicant must have ten (10) or more years of service, the last five (5) years of service with Rocky View Schools. Ten (10) or more years of experience shall be defined as ten (10) or more years of service according to a teacher's grid placement.

- 4.1 Upon application from eligible teachers to P.D.L.C., the Board may grant Minimum Support Sabbatical leave(s) as outlined in Administrative Procedure AP424-Professional Learning as follows:
- 4.1.1 A leave for the entire school year.
- 4.1.2 A leave for one (1) semester within a school year.

- 4.1.3 Up to ten (10) minimum support sabbatical leaves will be granted. This number will be reviewed annually.
- 4.2 Criteria for judging applications for Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave shall be:
  - 4.2.1 Benefit of leave to the individual and to the Division.
  - 4.2.2 Effect of leave on instructional program or the Division.
  - 4.2.3 Length of service with the Division.
  - 4.2.4 Whether or not there have been previous leaves.
- 4.3 Deadline for receipt of applications for Minimum Support Sabbatical leave(s) shall be February 28 for the following school year. Should the maximum number of leaves not be awarded, subsequent leave requests will be considered.
- 4.4 There must be a period of at least three (3) years between the taking of a Minimum Support Sabbatical and applying for another Minimum Support Sabbatical.
- 4.5 A teacher who has been granted a Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave and the Superintendent of Schools will enter into a written agreement acceptable to both parties concerning the conditions for the Minimum Support Sabbatical Leave.

## **5. School-Based Professional Learning Activities**

- 5.1 A \$5000 fund is available to schools to apply for school-based professional learning activities allocated at a maximum of \$500 per school.
  - 5.1.1 Funds available in each annual budget will be distributed on a first-come basis to schools applying.
  - 5.1.2 Applications for funding are to be submitted to the Processor a minimum of fifteen (15) school days prior to the activity.
- 5.2 Criteria for approval of funding shall be as follows:
  - 5.2.1 Activities will contribute directly to the improvement of the educational experience for the students of the school through professional learning activities for all teachers on the school staff.
  - 5.2.2 Activities do not duplicate work already being done in other Divisional in-service and professional learning projects.
  - 5.2.3 Exclusive of Rocky View employees, costs to cover speaker/facilitator expenses and the rental of the meetings rooms will be reimbursed with the inclusion of original receipts. This funding is not intended to pay for personal expenses.
- 5.3 Levels of Funding
  - 5.3.1 Activities involving more than one school may have the maximum funding (\$500 per school) multiplied by the number of schools directly involved.

## **6. Substitute Teachers' Professional Learning Spending Account**

- 6.1 As articulated in the Collective Agreement, a substitute teacher who works more than

twenty (20) days prior to December 31 will be eligible and may make application to the Processor for a designated portion of the P.D.L.C. fund.

- 6.2 Financial assistance may be accessed for (up to) two funding events per year, up to a maximum of \$250 for any eligible PL activity. Eligible activities may include (but are not exclusive to):
- Conferences
  - Workshops
  - Course Tuition (online or face to face)
  - Professional Resources
  - Subsistence (mileage, hotel, flights, and meals related to required travel)
    - Meal allowance claims may not exceed published CRA per diem rates - \$23 per meal (including taxes & gratuities).
- Memberships/Fees for relevant Associations
- 6.2.1 Professional resources may be purchased up to a maximum of \$250.
  - 6.2.2 Digital devices/Student Resources/Manipulatives/Materials are not eligible for P.D.L.C. funding.
- 6.3 Funding Parameters and Approval
- 6.3.1 Eligible substitute teacher applications for funding are subject to the pre-approval of the Processor.
  - 6.3.2 Funding is for the fiscal year September 1 to August 31.
  - 6.3.3 Staff must follow the current Alberta Health regulations and travel to conferences requiring a period of quarantine upon return would not be approved unless/until the period of quarantine is lifted.
- 6.4 The annual substitute budget of \$2000 will be allocated to the Substitute Teachers' Committee to support up to two self-organized Professional Learning days.
- 6.4.1 Applications for this funding are to be made by the Substitute Committee Chair to the Processor.
- 6.5 All monies in this P.D.L.C. budget line not allocated in the current budget shall be carried over to the next budget year. An interest payment of five percent (5%) shall be paid annually on the surplus recorded as of August 31 of each year.

## **7. Professional Development Leave Fund**

- 7.1 The Professional Development Leave Fund shall be subject to the current Collective Agreement.
- 7.2 The Professional Development Leave Fund shall be administered by the Director of Finance of Rocky View Schools and the Chairperson of the P.D.L.C.
- 7.3 The Professional Development Leave Fund budget year shall be September 1 - August 31.
- 7.4 All monies not allocated in the current budget shall be carried over to the next budget year. An interest payment of five percent (5%) shall be paid annually on the surplus recorded as of August 31 of each year.





- 7.5 All Professional Development Leave Fund budget allocations shall be subject to an annual review.
- 7.6 The Professional Development Leave Fund shall provide an approved financial statement to the Treasurer of A.T.A. Local 35, on / before September 1 of each year. The approval for this financial statement shall be completed by the Director, or Manager of Finance and the Treasurer of A.T.A. Local 35.