

DATE: November 27, 2018

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Funds for 2019-2020 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program

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

RESOURCE

STAFF: Trish Kolotyluk, Renée Thomson

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

ISSUE

An allocation of funds from the 2019-2020 operating budget is requested to support the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program, 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.

In keeping with the District's commitment to exempt staff, an application process was drafted with input from the Exempt Liaison Committee and the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program was implemented in December 2015 as a pilot.

In March 2016, the Board approved an allocation of \$150,000 from the Central surplus to provide exempt staff members with tuition and professional leave support for coursework undertaken in 2016-2017. Allocations of \$150,000 from the subsequent year's budget were approved for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years (Attachment I). In November 2017, the Board approved the continuation of the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program as an ongoing District program. A comparison of successful applicants by year is included in this report (Attachment II).

RELATED FACTS

- The implementation of the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program is aligned with the District's Cornerstone Values and supports Priority 2, Goal Three which is to enhance the professional capacity of District staff.
- The Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program ensures that exempt staff members across the District have access to opportunities that would serve to enhance their professional capacity and remain current with industry standards and trends.
- It is anticipated that support for professional development will assist in the attraction of exempt staff to the District and in the retention of those employees.

- Exempt staff have the opportunity to submit an application for support in January for courses that take place between July 1, 2019, and August 31, 2020, or in September for courses that take place between December 1, 2020, and August 31, 2020, (Attachment III).
- An allocation of \$150,000 would allow for a three 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 program participants on leave with an allowance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That an allocation of \$150,000 from the 2019-2020 operating budget be approved for the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program for the purpose of granting exempt staff professional improvement leaves and/or tuition support for the 2019-2020 school year.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

Providing a dedicated program to support professional development for exempt staff honours commitments the District has made in response to Exempt Liaison Committee budget presentations to the Board of Trustees and ensures that related processes are transparent.

A selection of statements from staff 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.

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.

NEXT STEPS

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

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT I	Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program History
ATTACHMENT II	Professional Improvement Program – Successful Exempt Applicants by Year
ATTACHMENT III	2019-2020 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program Timelines
ATTACHMENT IV	Selection of Reflective Statements: Benefits of Program Participation

RT:jw

EXEMPT STAFF PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HISTORY

YEAR	APPROVED ALLOCATION	APPROVED TOTAL LEAVE FTE	ACTUAL GRANTED FOR LEAVES	ACTUAL GRANTED FOR TUITION	TOTAL ACTUAL GRANTED FOR LEAVES & TUITION
2016-2017 ¹	\$150,000	1.467	\$106,861	\$35,585	\$142,446
2017-2018 ¹	\$150,000	0.644	\$47,129	\$39,304	\$86,433
2018-2019 ²	\$150,000	0.600	\$47,147	\$52,902	\$100,049

¹ The Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program was piloted in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018.

² The program was approved as an ongoing District program beginning in the 2018-2019.

EXEMPT STAFF PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS BY YEAR		
YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER SUCCESSFUL
2013-2014 ¹	5	3
2014-2015 ¹	5	5
2015-2016 ¹	6	6
2016-2017	5	5
2017-2018	6	6
2018-2019	15	10

¹ Applications from exempt staff were assessed using Clause 23 Professional Improvement Program application processes.

2019-2020 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

JANUARY 2019 APPLICATION INTAKE

(for courses that take place between July 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020)

Activity	Date
Exempt Professional Improvement Program information and application package are communicated to District exempt staff and made available online	October 26
Information meeting for interested staff (4:15 - 6:00 p.m. Conference Centre, Centre for Education)	December 4
Due date for applications	January 11
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 14 – February 1
Review of applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application packages prepared for committee review • Committee workshop conducted • Review of applications completed 	January 14 – February 1 February 7 February 14
Compile background information with input from assessors	February 14 – 20
Recommendation to the Superintendent	February 22
Approval of leaves and tuition support by the Superintendent	March 1
Communication of support granted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters and agreements sent to successful applicants • TM to Board • District News announcement 	March 4 – 8 March 13 March 15

2019-2020 PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TIMELINE

SEPTEMBER 2019 APPLICATION INTAKE

(for courses that take place between December 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020)

Activity	Date
Due date for applications	September 20
Processing of applications	September 23 – 27
<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	
Review of applications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application packages prepared for committee review• Review of applications completed	September 23 – 27 September 30 – October 4
Compile background information with input from assessors	September 30 – October 4
Recommendation to the Superintendent	October 12
Approval of leaves and tuition support by the Superintendent	October 19
Communication of support granted	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letters and agreements sent to successful applicants• TM to Board• District News announcement	October 22 - 26 October 31 November 2

**Selection of Reflective Statements: Benefits of Program Participation
2017-2018 Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program**

Andrea Colling

University of Alberta – Advanced Certificate in Leadership through the Faculty of Extension

“...I have strengthened my ability to communicate with clarity, build cohesive teams and support a growing team of diverse staff whom I supervise. I have gained confidence in my coaching skills and developed strategies for complex conversations and leading change.”

Julia Dalman

University of Alberta – Master of Education in Education Policy Studies with a specialization in Theoretical, Cultural and International Studies in Education

“It is rare to have the opportunity to combine learning and practice and innovative research with classroom connections district wide. It has vastly improved my own practice and has allowed me to further community connections with higher education.”

Lindsay Marshall

University of Alberta – Master of Business Administration through the Alberta School of Business

“What I have learned will enhance planning and execution of new initiatives, improve teamwork, and encourage goal-oriented activities that tie into the strategic plan for Metro and the District.

Linda McFalls

University of Alberta – Doctor of Philosophy in Secondary Education

“...These courses contributed to knowledge regarding educational policy, practice and potential areas of weaving clinical social work practice theory/knowledge with educational policy, practice, and programming to support student academic and social/emotional well-being.

Julia Roy

University of Alberta – Master of Science in Family Ecology and Practice

“By valuing the importance of a child’s family as their first teacher, we can promote school readiness, which includes social-emotional aspects, to achieve long-term educational success, benefiting the district and its students in the long-term. When all pre-kindergarten school-family liaisons have the knowledge, understanding, skills, and support needed to better support families of pre-kindergarten children, we can be confident that these families are embarking on their educational path with their children with their best foot forward.”