

Palliser Professional Development Fund Committee

Terms of Reference - Updated January 2024

Background

As per the [2018-2020 Collective Agreement](#), the Palliser Professional Development Fund Committee (herein referred to as the Fund Committee) is a joint party of three teachers appointed by the Local and three members appointed by the Board that will be responsible for overseeing and managing the Collective Agreement Professional Development Fund (P.D. Fund). Effective September 30, 2020, the school division contribution to the P.D. Fund for each full-time equivalent teacher is \$425 per year, as indicated in the current Collective Agreement.

The parties agree that ongoing professional development (P.D.) and collaboration for teachers is critical to achieving the vision of district priorities and plans, school improvement plans and a teacher's individual professional growth plan. Prior to any use of the P.D. Fund by a Palliser teacher, the expenditure must be approved through a process defined through the Palliser Professional Development Reference Guide and Terms of Reference.

The Palliser Professional Development Fund Committee will meet in October and April to review and update the Terms of Reference and fiscal responsibility.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the P.D. Fund Committee are to:

1. Ensure effective P.D. is available for teachers so they can expand their professional efficacy to ensure all students have access to an exceptional education.
2. Support teachers as career long learners, who engage in ongoing P.D..
3. Provide universal access by maximizing awareness and reducing barriers to funding for P.D
4. Recognize that costs associated with P.D. activities are an important consideration.
5. Give priority to P.D. opportunities that are available locally.
6. Approve the use of P.D. funds collaboratively through the P.D. Application Committee
7. Recognize the need for fiscal responsibility.

Palliser P.D. Application Committee

The P.D. Fund Committee has designated a central Palliser P.D. Application Committee (herein referred to as the Application Committee) to facilitate access to P.D. Funds for ongoing P.D., as outlined in the Palliser P.D. Reference Guide. The Application Committee shall consist of 4 members, 3 teachers appointed by the Local and 1 member appointed by the Superintendent. The Application Committee will track professional development expenditures and report to the Local Council and the Professional Development Fund Committee twice a year, in October and April.

As teachers make an application for individual professional development funds, the Application Committee acts as the governing body to approve or not approve applications using the criteria in

the Terms of Reference. Applications for professional development are approved by consensus of the Application Committee members with approval required from each participating body.

1. Responsibility for Development and Review of Guidelines

The Fund Committee will establish the guidelines for the administration of the P.D. Fund as per the Collective Agreement.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Individual Teachers

2.1.1 Any teacher under the Collective Agreement in effect between Palliser School Division and Alberta Teachers' Association Local No. 19, that meets the criteria below, is eligible for assistance under this fund.

- Teachers, under a term contract for a minimum of (5) five consecutive months may access a prorated amount of up to \$800 and one sub day from the P.D. Fund, during the term of their contract. The P.D. activity must occur while the teacher is under term contract. Teachers may not access the P.D. Fund when employed on a day to day basis.
- Prior to a teacher accessing any funds from the Professional Development Fund, they must first access any money remaining in their individual teacher Professional Development accounts, accumulated prior to September 1st, 2019.
- A teacher is not eligible for support from the P.D. fund while on leave.

2.2 Collaborative Groups of Teachers

2.2.1 Groups of teachers may apply for funds to cover the costs of bringing in a speaker or presenter that will be available to all teachers on Division Wide Collaborative Days or on site P.D. days. Applications to access funds for this purpose must be submitted directly to the Application Committee, 6 - 8 weeks in advance to provide time for approval and planning of the event. Group applications will be reviewed by the P.D. Application Committee within two weeks of receipt. The **total** amount allocated for these purposes will be \$60,000 annually, to be reviewed by the P.D. Fund Committee annually.

2.2.2 Teachers who wish to attend collaborative events that are held on site based P.D. days at other schools, may make an application to the Application Committee to cover substitute costs, out of your personal allocation, if needed.

3. Purposes of the funds provided to teachers are to help cover the costs related to P.D. that must provide instructional strategies to the teacher within their instructional area, including:

- ❖ registration for seminars, workshops, conferences and non-credit courses including online non-credit courses, workshops, videos and webinars;
- ❖ travel expenses related to P.D.;
- ❖ accommodations;
- ❖ meals (*current per diem rate*);
- ❖ specialist council memberships;
- ❖ substitute costs, either to attend a P.D. activity, to participate in collaboration, focused on professional practice, with colleagues or specialists, or to visit/observe other teachers' classrooms within Palliser; (substitute costs shall be paid at the rate currently in effect according to the Collective Agreement. The maximum amount for substitute teacher costs during any three year allocation shall be 5 days);
- ❖ professional resources or educational literature that is directly related to the teacher's assignment or the teacher's professional growth plan to a maximum of \$500 (20%) in the three year cycle;
- ❖ engaging the services of a speaker or instructor who would offer P.D. to a group of teachers if it would be less expensive to bring the speaker to Lethbridge/Calgary than to send our teachers to a similar activity.

- 3.1 P.D. Funds would not typically be used to pay the costs of membership in any organization, except ATA Specialist Councils. The only exception to this would be when membership is required to reduce the cost of conference attendance.
- 3.2 Collective agreement funds may not be used to cover costs incurred for any mandated conventions that teachers are required and obligated to attend, including but not limited to SWATCA, PDTCA, ACSI, and PCCE.
- 3.3 P.D. Funds may be combined with other funds such as grants.

4. Applications and Approvals

- 4.1 Individuals wishing to participate in a P.D. activity will need to complete and submit an application form to the Application Committee a minimum of (ten) 10 business days prior to the activity for approval. The Application Committee will respond within (ten) 10 business days. During non-operational days, applications need to be submitted a minimum of (15) days prior to the activity, and the Application Committee will respond within (fifteen) 15 business days. The Site P.D. Committee will be informed of the application. If the Application Committee needs clarification, they will contact the member directly for information.

- 4.2 Members who want to attend a P.D. activity are encouraged to apply for the event early enough to take advantage of an early registration rate if one is offered.
- 4.3 If the same conference is being offered in two venues, an application should be made for the least costly venue whenever possible.
- 4.4 If registration is paid for at least three months in advance of the P.D. event, teachers can make two submissions for reimbursement, the first only for registration and airfare (if required) and the second for all other expenses.
- 4.5 The Expense portion of the Application Form must be filled out within 30 days after attending a P.D. activity. It will then be submitted with scanned copies of original receipts to the Application Committee. Receipts must be in Canadian funds or, if amounts are in foreign currency, must be accompanied by a credit card statement that includes the Canadian exchange rate and amount. Receipts and scanned copies of original receipts shall be submitted to the Application Committee.
- 4.6 Itemized receipts are required and must be submitted separately for each individual requesting reimbursement. For example, if two people share a hotel room, each must submit a separate receipt for their portion of the expense. Applicant's name MUST be on all receipts for hotels, flights and registration.
- 4.7 In the event that a teacher is unable to attend an event they have already received funds for, the teacher will be responsible for reimbursing any funds that have been advanced to them. This requirement may be waived by the Application Committee in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.8 Following a P.D activity, the teacher is required to fill out a reimbursement form and an activity summary and submit it to the Application Committee within 30 days for timely reimbursement.
- 4.9 The Site P.D. Committee is informed of the application but approval lies only with the Palliser Application Committee.
- 4.10 These funds are for teacher use only for self-directed P.D related to a teacher's teaching assignment. The professional learning opportunity must provide instructional strategies to the teacher within their instructional area. Contextual considerations are made specific to a teacher's assignment. For example, CTS and P.E. teachers may apply for first aid certification that will qualify them to teach the content to students as a course requirement.

5. Processing by Palliser Application Committee

- 5.1 The application will be checked to ensure that all requested expenses are appropriate to the guidelines.
- 5.2 When all of the above conditions are met, the teacher will be notified and an expense claim form will be sent to the teacher. If the application is denied, the teacher will be informed of the reason in writing prior to the event.

- 5.3 If a conference is cancelled, the funding is automatically cancelled and no reimbursement will be issued. Teachers are encouraged to ensure their costs are refundable.

6. Expenses and Administration

- 6.1 The maximum amount available to any teacher from the P.D. Fund during a three year cycle shall be \$2,500.00. The three year cycle will begin in September 2019 and run from 2019-2022, 2022-2025, 2025-2028, etc.
- 6.2 If the overall fund balance ever drops below 35% of the annual allocation, a lottery may be considered for all approved applications. Teachers who are on continuous contracts and those who have not yet used funds will have priority over those who have already accessed funds or are on short term contracts.
- 6.3 Information shall be maintained for each eligible teacher. The information shall include a record of expenses paid for out of the Application Committee Fund.
- 6.4 Teachers who retain funds accumulated over prior years will be required to use these funds before accessing additional P.D. Funds.
- 6.5 Travel costs will be reimbursed as per AP 508 on Travel Reimbursement. Members are expected to take advantage of early booking rates for any airfare where possible.
- 6.6 Accommodations
- 6.6.1 Reimbursement for accommodations shall be at the maximum of \$250.00 (CDN) per night, excluding applicable taxes. Exceptions may be considered for venue hotels.
- 6.6.2 The maximum number of days of accommodation for which a teacher may receive reimbursement during any school year is five (5). The number of nights for which accommodation shall be reimbursed shall be equal to the number of days of the activity.
- 6.7 Subsistence Reimbursement
- 6.7.1 Reimbursement for meals shall be at the current per diem rate. If meals are included in the event, no reimbursement is allowable.
- 6.7.2 Maximum number of days for which reimbursement for subsistence may be received during any school year is five (5).
- 6.8 Substitute Costs
- 6.8.1 Costs of substitute teachers are not charged to individual teachers. The costs of substitute teachers will be taken from the Application Committee Fund and will not be considered part of the three year allocation.
- 6.8.2 These costs shall be paid on behalf of the teacher at the rate currently in effect according to the collective agreement.

- 6.8.3 The maximum amount which may be reimbursed for substitute teacher cost for P.D during any three year allocation shall be five days (5) at the substitute teacher rate.
- 6.8.4 The Application Committee Fund may be used to support individuals to be absent from their duties for P.D activities for a maximum of five (5) days in any three year cycle.

7. General Guidelines

- 7.1 If a teacher believes that any guideline has been applied inappropriately, the teacher may request a reconsideration to the Application Committee whose decision shall be final.

8. Transferability of P.D. funds

- 8.1 Should a member retire or leave the division, any unused funds will be transferred into the P.D. Fund.
- 8.2 To promote the use of P.D. Funds, a teacher may transfer individually available funds accumulated over prior years to the P.D. Fund by filling out a [Transfer of Funds form](#).