

Fort McMurray Catholic Schools

Operating Policies and Procedures

OP 443 - Certificated Staff Professional Learning

Policy

1. The Catholic Board of Education recognize the importance of providing professional learning opportunities to its teachers to maintain high quality educational programs and support continuous improvement of teaching practices.
2. Faith development is an essential component of the Catholic Schools identity and will be included as an objective in the District and School Education Plans. Therefore, it is expected that teachers engage in faith development activities and that such activities be included District and School professional learning plan.
3. Teachers also have a professional responsibility to keep abreast of new developments in education and to continue to develop their professional practice. In Alberta, every teacher employed by a school system must develop and implement an annual plan for professional growth that outlines the professional development activities the teacher intends to undertake in that year. The requirements for an annual teacher professional growth plan (TPGP) are outlined in the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy of Alberta Education.

Professional learning

4. Funding for professional learning and development activities will be identified and prioritized as part of the annual budget process. The budget will support the following activities:
 - a. District Wide professional development and training days;
 - b. School based professional development sessions;
 - c. Scheduled Professional Learning days (PLF);
 - d. Fort McMurray ATA Institute day;
 - e. Attendance of teachers to ATA Convention as per collective agreement; and
 - f. Specialized training directly supporting a District or School initiative when such training is deemed essential to the success of the initiative.

5. Professional learning and development activities will:
 - a. Align with and support the priorities set in the District and School Education Plans;
 - b. Provide measurable and immediate impact in improving student learning;
 - c. Be delivered in the most efficient and cost effective manner, taking advantage of partnerships and collaboration with other local school districts, colleges or agencies and programs offered by the learning consortia;
 - d. Where possible, be delivered locally to allow maximum participation by teachers to broaden the impact across all schools.

Professional Development fund

6. The Superintendent of Schools will establish and administer a professional development fund. The amount allocated to the fund will be determined through the annual budget process based on the priorities identified in the District Education Plan and Provincial funding.
7. The objective of the fund is to supplement the approved and funded district professional learning activities and provide financial assistance to teachers seeking additional professional development and learning from their annual growth plan.
8. The fund may be used to support activities such as:
 - a. Credit courses provided by post-secondary institutions;
 - b. Attendance at summer institutes and seminars;
 - c. Other individual professional learning activities.
9. The fund may not be used for:
 - a. Courses or activities whose primary focus is for personal development;
 - b. Exchanges with other school jurisdictions;
 - c. Extra-curricular activities;
 - d. Extra fees such as application processing, student union, transit, supplies and material or books;
 - e. Membership in Specialist Councils or other professional organizations

10. The professional development fund will be administered at the district level. Instructional staff wishing to access the professional development fund shall apply in writing to the Director of Human Resources at least 60 days in advance of the program start.
11. The Superintendent or his designate may approve a professional learning grant from the fund for attendance at seminars, training or other professional learning activities to support the cost of:
 - a. Registration or tuition fees, exclusive of incidentals, meals or other administrative fees;
 - b. For attendance at seminars or trainings, transportation and per diem rates as per OP 516;
 - c. Cost of substitute teacher when required;
 - d. The maximum amount of the grant is limited as per paragraph 13 below.
12. The professional learning fund may also be used to assist teacher complete credit courses from a recognized degree granting post secondary institution subject to the following conditions:
 - a. The teacher has made application to the Director of Human Resources and received approval prior to course commencement and has signed an agreement identifying conditions of support;
 - b. The teacher is employed by the District on a continuing contract of employment and shall remain so for three (3) school years following the successful completion of the course or courses. Should the staff member leave the employment of the District prior to the completion of three years, repayment of the amounts given for tuition reimbursement shall be reimbursed pro-rated to the number of years of service completed following the completion of the course;
 - c. The PD grant will only be made once the course is completed successfully as evidenced by a statement of grades as supplied by the institution;
 - d. Reimbursement is limited to the tuition cost exclusive of incidental/ administrative fees, learning material, travel, accommodation and subsistence;
13. The maximum professional learning grant allowed per individual teacher in a school year is set at \$500.00;
14. Instructional staff on sabbatical leave or leaves of absence are not eligible to receive funds for professional development.

<p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta School Act, RSA 2000, Chapter S3 Articles 92 & 94 • Teaching Quality Standard (Ministerial Order 016/97) • Certification of Teachers Regulation • Practice Review of Teachers Regulation • Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy, Alberta Education • Board Governance Policy EL # 3 & 5 	<p>Approved:</p>
<p>Cross References: OP 516</p>	<p>Date Approved: August 31, 2007</p> <p>Date Revised: June 24, 2013</p>