

A. TERMS OF REFERENCE:

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT: CLAUSE 9.4

9.4 Professional Improvement Fund (PIF)

9.4.1 The Professional Improvement Fund Committee will review guidelines annually. Any changes shall be reported to the respective parties by April 30 each year.

9.4.2 The guidelines will allow for the disbursement of up to fifty percent (50%) of the current financial resources allocated to Sabbatical Leaves under clause 9.2 of the Collective Agreement.

B. ADMINISTRATION:

1. The Committee will henceforward be known as the “Professional Improvement Fund Committee” (PIFC) to make recommendations regarding the disbursement of the available funds under the title “Professional Improvement Fund” (PIF).
2. The PIFC shall consist of six members (3 representatives appointed by ATA Local 55 consisting of the President, TWC Chair and PD Chair and 3 representatives appointed by the District.)
3. The Committee shall meet at least three (3) times during the granting period or as needed to review the applications from teachers requiring financial assistance and will in turn make recommendations to the Superintendent or their designate.
4. The Committee must submit an Annual Report listing individual applications and detailing disbursements. The term of the report is to coincide with the Board’s fiscal year. Copies will be distributed to the Alberta Teachers’ Association Local #55 and the Superintendent or their designate.
5. The Committee will review annually 9.4.1 of its operations and guidelines and make recommendations for any necessary changes.
6. “General Criteria” are the general and specific areas of professional growth that the PIFC approves each year, publishes in the PIF information material, and are used to determine the merit of PIF applications.

7. Selection Procedure:

At the first meeting of each year the PIFC will:

- Establish criteria of a general nature to be used in the selection of PIF applicants
- Include the selection criteria in the application information

8. Disposition of funds:

- **Review Period 1: Closes last Friday in September:** **September 29, 2023**
Up to 50% of the PIF funds available under clause 9.4.
- **Review Period 2: Closes last Friday in January:** **January 26, 2024**
Up to 25% of the PIF funds available under clause 9.4.
- **Review Period 3: Closes last Friday in April:** **April 26, 2024**
Up to 25% of the PIF funds available under clause 9.4.

- Grants must be used during the 2023-2024 grant period ONLY (September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024).

NB * Notwithstanding the percentage allotment in each grant period, any unused funds will automatically carry over into the next grant period.

9. The PIF Committee may invite applications at any time during the year for activities in the current granting period provided that funds are available.

C. PIF GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION GENERAL CRITERIA:

1. Applications must be completed and signed only by teachers with continuing contracts who meet the following eligibility criteria:
 - 1.1 You must have completed three (3) years or more with the District.
 - 1.2 You may not apply for PIF Funding and PGS Tuition Funding for the same granting period.
 - 1.3 You may not apply for PIF Funding while on a Sabbatical Leave.
 - 1.4 There will be a two (2) week review period granted following the PIF committee meetings to allow for clarification or changes.
2. A PIF grant may be awarded to a teacher who meets the “General Criteria” and whose application is deemed by the Professional Improvement Fund Committee to be for:
 - activities which are responsive to the learning needs of students
 - activities which contribute to the professional growth of the teacher
 - activities which are considered accredited (and transferrable across post-secondary institutes) courses at recognized post-secondary or equivalent institutions

A Professional Improvement Fund application will be recommended only after full consideration has been given to the needs of the school District, and to the availability of teacher replacements.

3. The Professional Improvement Fund Committee may recommend funding based on eligibility and merit until the available funds for the grant period have been exhausted.
4. The PIF is not meant to support attendance at conferences or workshops.
5. Applications received for retroactive reimbursement, prior to the granting period, will not be considered.
6. All applicants will receive written approval or refusal of their application with a rationale.
7. Should any application arise involving unusual or unique circumstances, the Committee reserves the right to make recommendations to the Superintendent or their designate for final approval.
8. Successful applicants shall not resign or retire for a period of one year from the date of completion of the final course funded under the PIF application. Resigning prior to fulfilling this commitment could result in a request for repayment of the PIF funding in whole or in part.



PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT FUND GUIDELINES

GRANTING PERIOD FROM:

SEPTEMBER 1, 2023 to AUGUST 31, 2024 ONLY



9. An applicant who has been approved for a PIF grant and/or leave but is unable to attend or complete the proposed activity or has a change in course designation or activity must inform the Superintendent or their designate in writing.

N.B. Failure to inform the Superintendent or their designate could result in forfeiture of all funding eligibility for 2 years.

D. PIF TUITION FEE GRANTS AND LEAVES:

1. In the case of **Tuition Grants**
 - Applications must be accompanied by a copy of a course overview including a listing of the program of studies or degree sought, course descriptor(s), credit values, and dates.
 - A tuition receipt and copy of final grade(s) is required before any reimbursement will be made.
2. In the case of **PIF Leaves** (Applicants must complete the “Leave” section of the Application form).
 - Approved Leaves from regular duties are with full pay and benefits.
 - PIF Leaves are granted equivalent to **one day per approved course enrolled in** during school months. PIF Leaves may be granted to attend approved courses, complete course work, write dissertations, complete research projects, attend post-graduate practicum programs, or participate in other activities as approved by the Superintendent or their designate.
 - Longer leaves (in excess of one day per approved course enrolled in) may be requested under exceptional circumstance for which a rationale must be provided. Final approval rests with the PIFC Committee.
 - As a courtesy, each application requiring absence from regular assignment should be signed by the appropriate administrator to indicate their knowledge of the proposed absence for professional development reasons; however an administrator’s signature is not required on the application.
 - Applicants will make every effort to ensure program continuity in their teaching assignment during their absence by working closely with school administration and the guest teacher before their leave day(s).
 - Absences planned during Teacher’s Convention require permission to be granted in writing from ATA Provincial at <https://ATA.smapply.ca> , and must accompany the application form, in order for the PIFC to approve the funding application. A copy of the approval is required by the PIFC Administrative Assistant before any reimbursements will be issued.
3. Eligible individuals are entitled to make an application to receive funding, in any combination of tuition and leave costs, up to a maximum of **\$10,000.00 CAD** in the granting period.
4. The PIF Application Form must be completed with all necessary enclosures and signatures.
5. Applications must be submitted to the PIFC Administrative Assistant by the end of business on the application deadline date.



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6. Applications for an accredited course may be submitted for either PIF or PGS Tuition funding but not to both within the granting period. Once you have been approved for PIF you will be ineligible to access any portion of PGS Tuition funding until the following granting period.
7. Any additional days required (and not specifically approved under the PIF application) for reasons such as extended course time, airline delays or misfortune due to extenuating circumstance, cannot be covered by the PIF fund.

NB * Any additional leave must be requested and approved under the appropriate Collective Agreement process. Most leaves can be requested through “HR self – service” (eg Teacher Leave (Clause 12.1 of the Collective Agreement), Unspecified Leave (12.3), or Personal leave (12.2). Approval must be granted by the District before the leave is taken.

Should a teacher become ill, or require access to any other type of leave while on their PIF they will immediately report the illness and make a request for the appropriate type of Leave using HR Self-Service. The PIF Leave may continue after the new leave has been completed and after having informed the Superintendent or their designate.

E. CONDITIONS OF PIF:

1. Within sixty days (60) of the completion of each approved course, applicants must submit a PIF Fund Tuition Submission Report Form **AND** PIF Fund Leave Submission Report Form (if any leave days were accessed for the course).
2. No funds can be disbursed until receipts have been received, verified and processed.
 - Please note that processing time of reimbursements are relative to the quality of the reimbursement submission. Processing of check requisitions is between four (4) and six (6) weeks once the submission has been received and verified for completion.
3. The activity for which the Professional Improvement Fund Leave is paid shall be deemed to be an assignment. The period of time involved shall count toward the accumulation of teaching experience with the Board for the purpose of awarding increments pursuant to clause 3.3 in the Collective Agreement.
4. All terms of the current Collective Agreement and Staffing Guidelines will apply during the term of the PIF.

NB * An applicant who has been approved for a PIF Tuition Grant and/or PIF Leave but is unable to attend or complete the proposed approved activity, or has a change in course designation or activity **MUST** inform the Superintendent or their designate in writing. Failure to report changes from the original approved application could result in reimbursement being requested by the District.

F. APPEALS:

1. Any appeal concerning the decision of the PIF committee may only be submitted to the Superintendent or their designate in writing within 15 days of providing notice. Failure to adhere to these Guidelines may result in an automatic denial of any appeals.

All documents and forms can be sent to:

Professional Improvement Fund

pif@ataloc55.ab.ca