1. **TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT: CLAUSE **9.4**

**NEW 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.**

1. **ADMINISTRATION:**
2. 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).
3. The PIFC shall consist of six members (3 representatives appointed by ATA Local 55 and 3 representatives appointed by the District).
4. The Committee shall meet at least two (2) times during the school year or as needed to review the applications from teachers requiring financial assistance and will in turn make recommendations to the Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) or designate.
5. 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 of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources).
6. The Committee will review annually **9.4.1 of** its operations and guidelines and make recommendations for any necessary changes.
7. “Established 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.
8. **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
1. **Disposition of funds**:
* **Grant Period 1**: **Closes second Friday in January: January 14, 2022**

Up to 50% of the PIF funds availableunder clause **9.4**.

* **Grant Period 2**: **Closes last Friday in April: April 29, 2022**

Up to 50% of the PIF funds availableunder clause **9.4.**

* Grants must be used during the **2022-2023** grant year.

***NB \* Not withstanding the percentage allotment in each grant period, any unused funds will automatically carry over into the next grant period.***

1. The PIF Committee may invite applications at any time during the year for activities in the current or subsequent year provided that funds are available.
2. **PIF GRANT APPLICATION GENERAL CRITERIA:**
3. Applications must be completed and signed only by teachers with continuing contracts who meet the following eligibility criteria:
	1. You must have completed three (3) years or more with the District
	2. If you have received a SABBATICAL in the past two (2) calendar years you are ineligible for PIF.
	3. PIF eligibility requires two (2) **regular school calendar** years between applications in which tuition or leave have been granted. If your application is approved, you will be ineligible for Sabbatical Leave or PIF for the next two (2) **regular school calendar** years.
	4. There will be a two (2) week review period granted following the PIF committee meetings to allow for clarification or changes.
	5. Applicants who rescind any portion of the grant or their entire grant may **not** reapply in the same fiscal year.
4. A PIF grant may be awarded to a teacher who meets the “Established 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
* which contribute to the professional growth of the teacher

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.

1. The Professional Improvement Fund Committee may recommend funding based on eligibility and merit until the available funds for the grant period have been exhausted.
2. The PIF is **not** meant to support attendance at conferences or workshops.
3. Applications received for **retroactive** reimbursement will **not** be considered.
4. Applications must be submitted to the PIFC Administrative Assistant **at Local 55** by the application deadline.
5. Applicants will receive written approval or refusal of their application with a rationale.
6. Should any application arise involving unusual or unique circumstances, the Committee reserves the right to make recommendations to the Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) for final approval.
7. Successful applicants shall not resign or retire for a period of one year from the date of PIF completion. Resigning prior to fulfilling this commitment could result in a request for repayment of the PIF funding in whole or in part.
8. An applicant who has been approved for a PIF grant or leave or both but is unable to complete the proposed activityor has a change in course designation or activity must inform the Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) in writing.

***N.B. Failure to inform the* Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) *could result in forfeiture of all funding eligibility for 2 years.***

1. **APPEALS:**
2. Any appeal concerning the decision of the PIF committee may only be submitted to the Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) using the appropriate appeal form within 15 days of providing notice. Failure to adhere to these Guidelines will result in an automatic denial of any appeals.
3. **PIF TUITION FEE GRANTS:**
4. 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 take place.
5. Eligible Individuals are entitled to make application to receive support for up to **$10,000.00** of tuition costs in that granting year **period**.
6. The PIF Application Form must be completed with all necessary enclosures and signatures.
7. Applications must be submitted to the PIFC Administrative Assistant by the end of business on the application deadline date. **Applications received on or after the course commencement date will not be considered.**
8. Applications for a specific course may be submitted to either PIF or PGS but not both within the **regular school calendar** year. Once your application is approved, you will be ineligible for PIF funding until the following **regular school calendar** year. Once you have been approved for PIF you will be ineligible to access any portion of PGS fund until the following **regular school calendar** year.
9. Applicants will receive written approval or refusal of their application with rationale.
10. Only accredited courses at recognized post-secondary or equivalent institutions will be considered.
11. Leave with pay may be requested to attend a course. Applicants must complete the “Leave” section of the Application form.
12. An applicant who has been approved for a course but is unable to attend must inform the Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) in writing one week after course commencement. Failure to inform the Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) could result in forfeiture of all funding eligibility for 2 years from the date of notification of forfeiture.
13. **PIF LEAVES:**

PIF Leaves from regular duties are with full pay and benefits**.**

1. PIF leaves may be:
	1. Short term: Equivalent to one day per course enrolled in. Longer leaves may be requested under exceptional circumstance for which a rational must be provided.
2. 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 approved mentorship activities such as Leave, Tuition or both up to a maximum of $10,000.00 or portion thereof in accordance with the approved proposal.
3. Given that PIF Leave days may require guest teachers for more than 2 consecutive days the PIF fund **will be costed at the average teacher grid rate per day of Leave**.
4. In the case of PIF Leave applications for activities other than university course attendance, applications must be accompanied by a copy of the activity overview including, a listing of the proposed activities, expected outcomes, value to the District, value to the individual, and proposed dates and topics***.***

A report of activities conducted will need to be provided upon completion of the paid leave.

**N.B. Failure to report appropriate activities consistent with the application could result in reimbursement being requested by the District.**

1. As a courtesy, each application requiring absence from regular assignment should be signed by the appropriate administrator to indicate her or his knowledge of the proposed absence for professional development reasons; however an administrator’s signature is not required on the application.
2. Absences planned during Teacher’s Convention require permission to be granted in writing from ATA Provincial at <https://ATA.smapply.ca> in order for the PIF Committee to approve the application. A copy of the approval is required by the PIFC administrative assistant before any reimbursements will be issued.
3. 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).
4. Any additional days required for reasons such as extended course time, airline delays or misfortune due to extenuating circumstance, cannot be covered by the PIF fund.

**N.B. 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.**

1. 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 of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources).
2. **CONDITIONS OF PIF:**
3. Following the PIF activity, applicants must submit the appropriate PIF **Fund Leave Report Form** within 30 days and PIF tuition and receipts within two (2) months of completing the activity. If Tuition receipts are not forthcoming, no funds will be allotted.
* Please note that processing time of reimbursement 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 reviewed and received.
1. 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**.
2. Upon return from a PIF, a teacher shall provide the Superintendent of Learning Services (Central Schools, Diverse Learning and Human Resources) or designate with a report of the activities or studies accomplished during the period of the PIF as evidence of compliance with the application under which the PIF was granted.
3. All terms of the current Collective Agreement and Staffing Guidelines will apply during the term of the PIF.

**Professional Improvement Fund**

**c/o PIF Administrative Assistant by:**

* Pony - ATA Local #55

Email - pif@ataloc55.ab.ca