

**TORONTO SECONDARY UNIT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday May 14, 2014
4:00 PM**

Ontario Federation of Labour

**15 Gervais Drive
8th Floor**

(Don Mills Rd. and Eglinton Ave. E.)

Bargaining Unit

**Joint Professional Development
Committee Report**

Committee Name: Joint Professional Development Committee

Prepared By: Teresa Placha, Chair, Madonna

TSU Committee Members: Dave Szollosy, Executive Liaison, TSU Office
Maureen Riffin, Loretto Abbey
Theresa Oakley, Msgr. Fraser
Cathy Sears, Msgr. Fraser

Terms of Reference:

From the Collective Agreement:

19.01 (a) The Parties agree:

(i) that Professional Development is job-embedded, informed by research, done in partnership with colleagues.

(ii) that Professional Development needs to be addressed at the system level through the establishment of a Joint Committee.

(iii) that professional activities for teachers during Professional Activity days shall be consistent with the learning goals identified in the Teachers' Annual Learning Plans.

(b) There shall be established a Joint Professional Development Committee composed of three (3) representatives of the Teachers appointed by the Unit Executive and three (3) representatives of the Board. The representatives of the Teachers and of the Board shall each nominate one of their number as a Co-Chairperson.

(c) The Committee shall meet at least four (4) times per year.

(d) The terms of reference for the Committee shall be:

(i) to oversee professional activities for teachers during Professional Activity days and at other times during the school year consistent with the learning goals identified in the Teachers' Annual Learning Plans;

(ii) to promote best practices and sustain successful Catholic Professional Learning Communities (CPLC) and monitor their implementation;

(iii) to promote a focus on learning, collegiality, respect for professionalism, a commitment to continuous learning, collective inquiry into best practice, innovation and experimentation to improve teaching and student learning;

(iv) to recommend on the allocation of funds available to teachers for convention and meeting expenses; and

(v) to recommend to the Board in a timely manner regarding the scheduling of appropriate professional activities for the subsequent school year.

19.02

(a) Teachers may apply to use funds for attendance at professional conferences, seminars and other professional activities within the Province. Funding may include all or part of the cost of registration fees, transportation costs, books and lodging. Teachers shall make

application for funding to their superintendent or designate who will forward such decision to the Joint Committee.

(b) Teachers shall submit to their superintendent or designate receipts attached to the appropriate form.

(c) Provision of occasional teachers to replace teachers attending approved professional activities, shall be at the discretion of the appropriate superintendent of education.

(d) The Board shall endeavour to provide an occasional teacher for any teacher who, under direction from the Board, is required to be absent from the school for one or more full school.

Activities:

The Joint Professional Development Committee assisted in the review of data, surveys, as well as Ministry and school board policies related to teacher learning and professional development. The committee also reviewed school board professional development/learning plans for teachers associated with Student Success, Safe Schools, Catholic Caring Communities, Pathway, Numeracy and Literacy, and provided recommendations in several key areas of teacher professional development and professional learning, including the following:

1. Annual Professional Development Day

As part of the 6 PD days the Ministry allocates to school boards for teacher professional development, TSU has advocated for over 4 years that one of these days be used for teachers to participate in professional learning opportunities of their choice. The board has agreed to implement this PD day for the 2014/15 school year. Plans are currently in development with TSU and the board, through the Joint PD Committee, to provide a plan for how this day will be structured, to investigate the variety of workshops and alternative professional learning opportunities that will be offered, and to secure the various venues that these workshops will be held at on this day.

2. Locally Developed PD Day

As part of the 6 PD days the Ministry allocates to school boards for teacher professional development, TSU has advocated that teachers in local school communities be provided with the opportunity to develop a PD day based on the needs of teachers and specific to each school. The board has agreed to implement this day in our secondary schools and LSSACs are being asked to schedule a local PD day by the end of June for the 2014/15 school year.

Plans are in development with the board to provide a resource guide for schools in the fall of 2014 that will outline the process by which local school communities may survey their staff and develop a PD day based on a consultative process.

3. Annual Learning Plans: An on-going project developed on facilitating the completion of ALPs and making aggregate data available to the Joint PD committee in order to inform the PD program of the Board on an annual basis. In the third year of its development, TSU hopes that your professional development and professional

learning will be reflected in several PD forums provided by the board, including symposiums and workshops provided through PAL.

An ALP sub-committee was formed this spring with a mandate to revise the ALP and annual professional learning reflective process. The goals include an effort to make the process of completing the ALP more user-friendly from a technological perspective, underscore its importance to all teachers as a tool for reflecting teacher voice and analyzing teacher interest in professional learning topics, retrieve aggregate data that will enable the Joint PD Committee to readily make timely recommendations and further develop professional learning opportunities for teachers in our board.

4. **Self Directed Professional Learning (SDPL):** In its inaugural launch two years ago, these PD funds were used to provide occasional teacher coverage for TSU members released 1 -2 school days for their own professional learning. This was an extremely well received success story. TSU expects that these funds will continue to be provided for our teachers through Ministry monies after 2014. We continue to advocate that the Board should provide money for Code 93 Days.
5. **School Effectiveness Framework (SEF):** In its fourth year of implementation, the SEF is a Ministry mandated directive that asks schools to engage in a dialogue every five years that may help them understand the future goals they wish to collectively work towards. TSU has continued to work with the board in creating a 4 step process for school effectiveness reviews to be conducted in as meaningful, engaging and affirming way as possible for the teacher and their communities. The SEF process is not meant to be evaluatory nor should it be in any way linked to a teacher's Performance Appraisal. For more information, please see the SEF Fact Sheet available on the TSU website.
6. **School and Board Learning Improvement Plans (SLIP/BLIP):** TSU continues to advocate for a grass roots based paradigm that would have board learning improvement plans be based on input from school communities. In turn, teacher voices are to be directly reflected in the school learning improvement plan. The SEF Steering Committee accepted this paradigm and is continuing to work on implementing a model whereby school learning improvement plans are "living documents", a reflection of an engaged and dynamic approach to school planning that is informed in real time by teacher voices, through job-embedded time whereby professional learning communities meet on a regular basis. Plans that teachers can identify themselves in.

TSU is meeting with the board in May to make recommendations for the consultative process by which local school communities would be developing and implementing school learning improvement plans for 2014 that are reflective of local school needs. It is TSU's belief that a board learning improvement plan be reflective of, and responsive to, the needs all of its school communities.

7. **Joint PD In-Service:** On-going PD training in proposed by TSU to address common challenges in the workplace that may create or encourage conflicts with

administrators, colleagues and parents. As part of this mandate, the board and TSU collaborated on the second annual *Pastoral Care* workshop that was offered to both administrators and teachers in every secondary school. This year's workshop focused on relationship building from a spiritual perspective. TSU and the board are working on plans to continue this training and develop a follow up workshop next year.

8. **Disclosure on Budget/Consultation on Teacher PD Funding:** TSU continues to work towards enabling the board to provide full and timely disclosure on all Ministry monies related to teacher professional development and learning and provide input on how these funds would best serve our teachers' PD needs.

This year TSU met for the first time with employees of the TCDSB Finance Department to review all sources of Ministry of Education funding that could be used to fund teacher professional learning, including GSN Funds and other special grants that are provided annually by the Ministry. TSU expects to meet with the Finance Department on at least a semi-annual basis: in the spring to review projected funds for the next school year, and in the early fall to review actual expenditures.

It is the goal of TSU to jointly develop a Joint PD Calendar that would reflect the board's annual submission dates and timelines, as defined by the Ministry, for proposed teacher professional development and professional learning program planning each year. TSU endeavors to help the board to provide meaningful consultation and timely recommendations that will ultimately reflect teachers' professional voices on every possible aspect of professional development, including ministry/ board/school community learning goals, as well as individual teacher professional learning goals and needs.

9. **Consultation and Review of Code Days/Usage:** TSU continues to work towards ensuring that code days provided for PD related training and programming are allocated on a fair and equitable way to teachers from all schools, departments and grade levels, that they do not incur a substantial increase in teacher work load, and that they are pre-planned in consultation with TSU.
10. **Growing Success:** TSU has made several recommendations and requests to the board regarding several challenges in the implementation of this Ministry policy.

TSU has advocated for the need for consistency from school to school on the reporting of student marks, as well as the development of a homework policy and a plagiarism policy. There are still inconsistencies happening from school to school, and furthermore, with departments within schools. TSU continues to advocate for a standardized reporting protocol and homework / plagiarism policy.

Another of the key principles of this document reinforces that a teacher's professional judgment is to be respected both, in the assignment of student marks and, in the chosen method of communication to parents.

In addition to this, initiatives such as SSI or other Student Success based projects in schools whose aim is to enable students to succeed to a higher academic level, should be presented to teachers as voluntary, not place an extra workload on teachers, nor should the process create an evaluatory tone amongst colleagues in their departments / professional learning communities.

11. **Summer Writing Projects:** Teachers are encouraged to review the Director's Bulletins in June for any upcoming opportunities to participate in future summer Writing Projects.
12. **LGBTQ PD Proposal:** The Joint PD Committee reviewed a proposal on providing professional development for teachers in our board based on student-based LGBTQ concerns and challenges, and includes anti-bullying awareness and training. This anti-bullying initiative is part of the *Accepting Schools Act* and in the *Respecting Differences* document which came from OCSTA (Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association). The proposal is currently under review by the school board and the committee awaits the board's reply.
13. **Elearning Initiatives & 21st C Learning:** The board has made it part of their mandate and multi-year plan to familiarize more teachers with technology. The goal is to allow access for students to access blended elearning classes, and have 50% of all students in Grades 7 - 12 earn at least one of their credits through this medium. TSU has reminded the board that not every school and student has access to technology which brings up challenges related to equity for our students, financial resources and limited technological capacities in some of our schools. Further to this, TSU has reminded the board that on-going PD training considered essential to delivering day school credits should be "job-embedded" and taking place during the school day. Finally teacher engagement in technology should naturally lead to a teacher computer budget line which the Board has never had.

The committee would like to remind members that there are many ways to access PD beyond formal PD Days in the schools. These include summer institutes by the TCDSB, workshops (PAL system); OECTA and OTF courses and workshops, subject associations and other organizations. The TSU website has useful information and links.

Recommendations: The committee welcomes suggestions and information, which would benefit our members as well as providing feedback on the various PD the board provides.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Placha, Chair