

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

## Introduction:

The Professional Development Fund is a product of the Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiated between the Board of Education and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers. A committee of teachers and administrators capturing the intent and spirit of the cooperative process began developing the guidelines for this fund in September 1988. The committee recognized the value of professional growth, not only for the individual teacher participating in a self-development program but also for the entire school district. The committee agreed that maintaining a high quality professional growth program sharpens skills of teachers, introduces new and creative ideas, serves a catalyst to productivity and increases the spirit of collegiality among professional educators at all levels. The committee assumed that a fund of this nature would generate a large number of requests. It spent a great deal of time deliberating as to how this fund could serve the needs of a varied and complex work force. The committee never lost sight of the fact that providing resources for teachers to improve their skills would ultimately improve the quality of education that students receive.

## Guidelines:

The committee believes that all of those eligible for the fund covered under the collective Bargaining Agreement (referred to in this document as “Teachers”) should have access to the professional development fund and that the fund should be administered in a fair and judicious manner. To ensure this, the following guidelines were developed:

## Budget

1. Per the CBA, the PDF has a budget of \$175, 000 per year (Aug 15-Aug 14).
2. The fund will be budgeted into five portions corresponding with the school calendar for first, second, third and fourth quarters, and summer recess.

## Allocation

3. Money will be allocated on a reimbursement basis to teachers who request attendance at a recognized conference or convention that **directly relates** to their area of teaching responsibility.
4. Consideration will be given first to full time employees. Considerations will then be given to part time employees in descending order of percentage of time employed by the district.
5. The fund will be accessible to a teacher once per year (Aug 15- Aug 14). Priority is given to certificated personnel under contract.
6. In order not to deplete a given staff at one time, a maximum of five percent (5%) from any one staff is eligible to receive the fund at the same time, even though the requests may be for different conventions or conferences.
7. A request to attend a professional conference/convention may be denied if the Committee administering the fund believes that the absence of each teacher

conflicts with a critical event of the district and would have an adverse impact on the education of children (for example, a teacher responsible for administering any CPS mandated test). Prior to making a judgment of this nature, the committee administering the fund shall review the matter thoroughly. The teacher who had been denied a request will be informed of the reason for the denial.

The following things are “blackout” periods for the PDF allocation:

- a. K-8 teachers: Spring administrator of OAT & two weeks prior
- b. 9-12 teachers: Spring administrator of OAT & two weeks prior
- c. District-wide Professional Development Days
- d. First and last week of school

## **Reimbursement**

8. The fund will reimburse teachers for expenses as follows:
  - a. \$1500 for –
    - conference registration
    - transportation – plane ticket, transportation to/from airport, transportation to/from hotel, taxis
    - lodging – provided conference is at least 50 miles from Cincinnati (3 days max)
    - food – based upon federal per diem guidelines (3 days max)
    - parking
  - b. Substitute coverage for up to three days
9. The appropriate Cincinnati Public Schools reimbursement document, “Claim for Travel Expense and/or Consultant’s Compensation”, will be paid according to IRS guidelines as stated on the back of the reimbursement form.
10. Parking – When teachers travel together, only the person driving the car can submit for reimbursement for parking. The entire amount should be submitted by the driver of the car.
11. Hotel costs may be shared.
12. Food receipts must be itemized. Each person must have his or her own food receipt, regardless of how many people travel or dine together. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.
13. Reimbursements for food purchased prior to the first flight from any of the following cities: Cincinnati, Dayton, Lexington, Indianapolis, Louisville and Columbus will not be reimbursed.
14. Upon returning from the PD/conference, the teacher must submit his/her Professional Development Fund request form & travel reimbursement expense form, within 30 days.

## **Application Process:**

15. A standardized application form will be available from school offices, building representatives as well as on the PDF StaffNet website. The application must be completed in its entirety. Disqualification of an application may occur if information is incomplete.

Submit to HR:

- PDF request form
- Explanation of how the conference directly relates to assigned teaching responsibilities
- A brochure, registration and/or announcement regarding the conference

16. The committee recognizes the importance of making the appropriate arrangements for taking professional leave, especially in providing for the continuation of a strong instructional program in the absence of the teacher. In order to provide adequate time for both principals and teachers the following timelines have been established:

- All applications must be received 30 days before the conference occurs and no earlier than 120 days prior to the conference date
- For example, if a conference is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup>, the application must be received by December 17<sup>th</sup> and no earlier than September 21<sup>st</sup>

17. Decisions regarding approval or denial of a request will be made no later than ten days after the monthly meeting. Both the teachers and the principal will be informed when approval is granted in order to begin discussing arrangements that need to be made during the absence of the teacher. The committee administering the fund will also notify those not receiving approval.