



SASKATCHEWAN
TEACHERS'
FEDERATION



PROFESSIONAL
GROWTH NETWORKS

June 2023

Annual Report to the STF Executive

Professional Growth Networks Advisory Committee
2022-23

Overview of Professional Growth Networks

Professional growth networks are intended to support professional growth and lifelong learning as a teacher through networking, communications and innovative opportunities. Networks provide the opportunity to connect with like-minded teachers across Saskatchewan and share promising practices and resources related to a specialized area of practice or interest in education. Networks have been established in a variety of subject fields, service areas and interdisciplinary groups.

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation currently supports 26 professional growth networks. The success of these networks is measured by teacher interest in becoming members and taking an active role in their work. Membership is not limited to teachers but includes any person with a professional interest in the activities of the networks. Currently, there are approximately 2,170 teachers who belong to the networks.

Professional growth networks are subject to all Federation policies as outlined in the *Governance Handbook*. The Federation does not exercise any control over network elections or how their basic grants are spent. Professional growth networks exist as separate entities subject to the conditions outlined in policy. Professional growth networks are advised to register as charitable organizations or to incorporate if significant funding is available through lottery or other government grants.

Professional growth networks have a long history of providing professional growth opportunities as well as collaborative structures for teachers throughout Saskatchewan to be engaged in a specific topic of interest. The need for professional growth opportunities has not diminished, however, the ability for teachers to access professional growth continues to be a topic of discussion. Money to support teachers to attend professional growth opportunities of choice has often been reallocated at the school division level to support a more directed approach within the school division. Teachers have also reported that if the funds are available, it is not enough to cover expenses, or they cannot get approval for release time at the school level.

Benefits of Joining a Professional Growth Network

Included on the Federation's website is a page dedicated to professional growth networks. This page is used to communicate with members and to host a number of documents such as the PGN Toolkit, this annual report and highlights from the previous year.

The benefits of joining a professional growth network:

- Network and learn from colleagues who share similar areas of interest.
- Attend conferences and workshops to gain insight and enhance skills.
- Stay on the leading edge in areas of interest through available publications, newsletters and journals.
- Celebrate accomplishments of students, teachers and schools.
- Engage in research that contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning.

Members play a leadership role in education in Saskatchewan by being involved with networks that:

- Address issues and challenges facing schools today.
- Raise awareness and encourage discussion through submission of resolutions to the Federation's Annual Meeting of Council.
- Help develop policy in areas such as evaluation.
- Help assess and shape implementation of renewed curriculum.
- Support and enable research and facilitate projects of benefit to students, teachers and the community.
- Recognize excellence through awards and other programs.

Current Professional Growth Networks

- Association provinciale des enseignantes et enseignants des écoles fransaskoises (APEF)
- Awâsis Aboriginal Inter-Agency Education Conference (AWÂSIS)
- Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC)
- Literacy Educators and Resources Network (LEARN)
- Physical and Health Education Saskatchewan (PHES)
- Saskatchewan Anti-Racism Forum on Education (SAFE)
- Saskatchewan Art Education Association (SAEA)
- Saskatchewan Association of Student Council Advisors (SASCA)
- Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of French (SATF)
- Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of German (SATG)
- Saskatchewan Business Teachers' Association (SBTA)
- Saskatchewan Career and Work Education Association (SCWEA)
- Saskatchewan Drama Association (SDA)
- Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers' Association (SHETA)
- Saskatchewan Mathematics Teachers' Society (SMTS)
- Saskatchewan Middle Years Association (SMYA)
- Saskatchewan Music Educators Association (SMEA)
- Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environmental Education Association (SaskOutdoors)
- Saskatchewan School Based Leaders (SSBL)
- Saskatchewan Science Teachers Society (SSTS)
- Saskatchewan Special Educators Network (SSEN)
- Saskatchewan Teachers of Applied Technology (STAT)
- Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language (SKTEAL)
- Saskatchewan Teachers of Ukrainian (STU)
- Saskatchewan UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (SK UNESCO)
- Social Studies Saskatchewan (SSS)

Operational Policies

The three professional growth network operational policies were updated in the spring of 2023:

1. Advisory Committee – Outlines the establishment and operation parameters for the advisory committee.
2. Establishment – Outlines the establishment and operation parameters for a network.
3. Grants – Provides networks with funding as per Federation policy.

Advisory Committee

The basic purpose of the advisory committee is to serve the interests of all networks. The committee met three times in 2022-23. The advisory committee reports to networks after each meeting. Members on this committee carry out a valuable leadership role for the networks and for the Federation as a whole. Functions of the committee include:

- Promote awareness and understanding of professional growth networks within the teaching profession.
- Support professional growth networks by providing information and responding to requests or questions about Federation policies, procedures and services affecting the networks.
- Address issues of common concern to professional growth networks.
- Take a lead role in planning programs or activities for professional growth network executives.
- Screen special project grant applications and recommend projects for approval by the STF Executive.
- Make recommendations to the STF Executive regarding the establishment or dissolution of professional growth networks.
- Make recommendations to the STF Executive regarding professional growth network bylaw and constitution amendments.
- Ensure professional growth networks meet their annual criteria for affiliation and grants.
- Review membership statistics.
- Develop recommendations on behalf of professional growth networks to the STF Executive.
- Provide an annual report to the STF Executive.

Committee Members

Teacher Members	Location	Network	Term
Carol Sarich	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan School Based Leaders	2020-23
Laurie Colhoun	Vibank	Social Studies Saskatchewan	2022-25
Leah Fornwald	Weyburn	Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of French	2020-23
Shawna Jurgens	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language	2021-24
Tricia McEwen	Prince Albert	Early Childhood Education Council	2022-25
Staff Members			
Colleen Paulhus	Administrative Assistant		
Denise Heppner	Associate Director, STF Professional Learning		
Derek Barss	Senior Administrative Staff		
Scott Burant	Managing Director, Member Services		

Thank you to all members of the committee for their time dedicated to supporting professional growth networks and to the school divisions for granting release time for teacher members to carry out their duties.

Work of the Advisory Committee

PGN Renewal

This year we continued our renewed approach in supporting the professional learning of Saskatchewan teachers and raising the status of our profession. The renewal plan included four categories:

1. Membership
2. Governance
3. Funding
4. Additional Federation Supports

The renewal plan responded to the new realities in the following ways:

- Ensure teachers can self-select networks providing access to professional growth opportunities of choice.
- Ensure teachers from across the province are connected to provincial networks and are exposed to promising practices beyond their own school division.
- Elevate the status of professional growth networks to demonstrate to the education sector and local associations the importance and usefulness of professional growth networks for the profession and for teaching and learning in education.
- Respond to any direction the SPTRB may establish regarding professional learning by building a strong and positive reputation within the sector.
- Engage and interact with a broader membership due to network membership now being a benefit of Federation membership. This may lead to increased contributions of members to the network itself.
- Establish standards of administration and assist volunteer executive members to focus efforts on supports for teachers with the change in governance structure.

With the approval of last year's budget, our vision for all Federation members to be a member of a professional growth network as part of the privileges of being a member of the Federation has begun to be realized.

This renewed model provides the infrastructure to encourage Federation members to be a member of a network as one of the privileges of their STF membership, and the responsibility is also shared with each network to provide quality service to retain members. This service needs to move beyond events and into the area of collegial supports.

Networks have been working on their new governance model moving from a constitution to a set of bylaws, similar to the format used by non-profit corporations in Saskatchewan. New bylaws for 19 of the networks have been finalized and approved by the STF Executive. Federation staff continue to work on the bylaws with the seven other networks.

Beginning July 1, 2022, our members were able to log in to MySTF to self-select their PGN membership online which carry over year-to-year unless they change their selection or they retire, quit teaching, etc. Membership lists and contact details are provided to networks monthly.

The recruitment of members by the Federation continued during the year with a variety of communications appearing in the *Bulletin*, *What's New*, poster, postcards, email, as well as our website.

Feedback from Networks

The advisory committee's main source of feedback is from Professional Growth Networks Day held each fall. On October 15, 2022, the committee met in person with networks. A summary of our session includes:

- Greetings and a Ministry update from Ian Krips, Associate Executive Director.
- Introduction of Networks and Share a Highlight
- Leadership Development Opportunity: "*Navigating the Innovation Eco-Cycle Towards Collective Impact*" presented by Alison Robertson, Systems Bright Consulting. A session to explore the theory and process of innovation within a complex social system. The 'infinity' eco-cycle structure will be used as a visual tool to help participants conceptualize change and better understand their own personal experiences as an innovator and change maker. Finally, they will learn how to put the theory into practice using the methodology of collective impact to collaborate across networks for a common goal.
- Carousel Discussions related to the following topics:
 - Membership Drives and Benefits
 - Collaborating with Other PGNs
 - Supports the PGN Advisory Committee Can Provide PGNs
 - Sharing Resources and Social Media Best Practices
 - Website Supports - How We Got Here
 - Managing Your Executive - Delegating Work

Operational Goals

Each year the advisory committee develops an action plan that identifies operational goals. The 2022-23 plan included:

Area of Focus	Goals	Timeline	Direction 2025
Renewal: Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with PGNs to renew their bylaws and replace current constitutions 	All year	Governance
Renewal: Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new templates and resources for online toolkit 	All year	Operations Teacher Success
Renewal: Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create sample reports and documents 	All year	Operations
Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send a report from the advisory committee to PGN presidents Identify common themes of interest to networks – areas of concern and support Enhance awareness of Federation supports to PGNs 	All year All year All year	Operations Teacher Success
Strengthening Relationships with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working with the Ministry Improve status with school divisions Promote PGNs to teachers Support collaboration between PGNs Share the work of PGNs with the Ministry 	All year	Public, Member and Stakeholder Relations Teacher Success Teaching and Learning
STF Members Value PGNs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase perception of professionalism Increase awareness of PGNs Increase PGN membership Highlight PGN projects through STF Communications (articles for the Bulletin, What's New, social media, etc.) 	All year	Teacher Success Operations
Contributions to Profession/ Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise status of profession 	All year	Teacher Success Public, Member and Stakeholder Relations

Curriculum Renewal

Arts Education

To support implementation of the renewed Dance 10, 20, 30 (2020); Drama 10, 20, 30 (2019); Music 10, 20, 30 (2020) and Visual Art 10, 20, 30 (2019) curricula, the Saskatchewan Art Educators Association and the Saskatchewan Music Educators Association submitted a collaborative project proposal to adapt with permission and/or create original online materials in English and/or French. The materials support outcomes and indicators relating to First Nations, Métis and Inuit content, perspectives and ways of knowing.

This project is funded by the Ministry of Education to a maximum of \$5,000 with the Federation providing support. The English version is complete and has been submitted to the Ministry. Half of the funds will be disbursed to the networks and upon receipt of the French translation, the remaining funds will be disbursed.

Grants

Basic Grants

Basic grant funds in the amount of \$43,423 have been disbursed to 16 professional growth networks to date. This is 64 percent of the calculated grants as of April 25, 2023. The remaining ten networks have until the end of June to submit their documents or their funds will be forfeited for 2022-23.

The purpose of a basic grant is to provide networks with funding. By meeting the criteria specified in Federation policies, each professional growth network receives an annual basic grant according to the renewed funding structure:

- An annual flat grant of \$2,000 shall be provided to each professional growth network.
- In addition to the flat grant, a membership grant of \$7.50 for each Federation member or fraction thereof shall be provided to each network.

Networks receive their calculated grant when they submit the required documents:

- President's Annual Report
- Audited Financial Statement or Review Engagement Report
- Proposed Budget
- Bylaw Amendments
- Annual General Meeting Minutes
- Current Membership List of Non-Federation Members
- Policies Approved by the Network

Special Project Grants

Special project grants are intended to support three types of activities:

1. Professional Growth
Support new and innovative professional growth opportunities for their membership.
2. Resource Development
Assist a professional growth network in the development of resources.
3. Strategic Planning
Assist a professional growth network in developing a strategic plan.

Special project grants are intended to benefit as many professional growth networks and Federation members as possible. By meeting the criteria and eligibility guidelines specified in Federation policies, professional growth networks receive a special project grant according to the renewed funding structure:

- There will be three grants of \$1,000 available for each purpose annually.
- The Professional Growth Advisory Committee may reallocate unused funds from one purpose to another.
- In instances where more than one professional growth network submits an application for the same project, a grant may be awarded to each network.
- Grants are recommended by the advisory committee to the STF Executive for final approval.

To ensure consistent decision making, the advisory committee applies the following criteria to assess the merits of each grant application and monitors the progress of each project.

1. Special project grants are only intended to support proposed initiatives. Applications shall not be accepted for projects that are either complete or, in the opinion of the advisory committee, substantially under way.
2. Applications must demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics:
 - Collaboration
 - Accountability
 - Identified benefits
 - Engagement with members, stakeholders and/or other partners

The following eligibility guidelines were updated in spring 2023 and are followed to ensure maximum benefit for all networks:

1. Multiple applications by one PGN shall only be considered at the discretion of the Professional Growth Networks Advisory Committee. Joint applications, or applications in which more than one network is directly involved, are treated as separate applications.
2. Projects must be consistent with Federation policy.
3. As a non-profit organization, the Federation does not approve applications where the goal is the development or distribution of commercial resources from which networks or individual members may benefit financially. As the sponsor, the Federation retains ownership for any resources or reports generated from specific projects.
4. Special project grants are not intended to replace or subsidize network membership fees. A network must be up-to-date in providing the required documentation for all grants in order to be approved for a special project grant.
5. Resources created with special project grants must be available to be shared with other networks upon request.

A notable change to application deadlines in the updated policy:

The deadline date for submission of applications has been changed from November 30 to December 31.

A secondary call for applications may be initiated with a deadline for applications of March 31.

The allotted budget for special project grants in 2022-23 was \$9,000. This year there were two special project grant applications received from professional growth networks. The amount of grant funds requested was \$2,500 and the amount awarded was \$2,500.

2020-23 Special Project Grants Awarded

Grant Year	PGN	Project Name	\$ Requested	\$ Awarded
2023	SaskOutdoors	Strategic Planning	\$1,500	\$1,500
2023	SaskOutdoors	Reconciliation Journey PD	\$1,000	\$1,000
2022	SCWEA	Virtual Career Teacher Compendium	\$9,200	\$4,400
2022	SDA	Strategic Plan Renewal	\$7,700	\$3,600
2022	SSS	Virtual and Pop-Up PD	\$1,000	\$1,000
2021	LENS/SSLA	Amalgamation	\$2,500	\$2,500
2021	SHEA/SPEA	Amalgamation	\$5,000	\$4,375
2021	SPEA/SHEA	Social Justice in Physical Education and Health	\$4,000	\$4,000
2020	SKTEAL/SSTS	Creating Meaningful Engagement with ELLs in a Middle Years Science Unit	\$4,898	\$4,898
2020	SMTS	Engaging Parents in Elementary Mathematics	\$3,750	\$3,750

National Conference Grant

The Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers' Association (SHETA) Board of Directors would like to thank the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation for their grant of \$2,000 to host the 17th Canadian Home Economics Symposium in Saskatoon on March 3-5, 2023. The event kicked off on Friday night with a presentation by Dr. Priscilla Settee, Acting Vice-Dean Indigenous from the University of Saskatchewan on Indigenous Food Sovereignty. Thanks to the grant from the STF, this portion of the conference was open to the public. We welcomed 40 attendees in person and 15 virtual attendees who heard about Indigenous knowledge systems and resistance to solving the development crises of capitalism.

For the symposium, we had 25 delegates from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan. Eleven of the 25 delegates were teachers from Saskatchewan and members of SHETA. We also had 15 delegates attend virtually, with one delegate joining us from as far away as South Africa! Throughout the weekend, we heard about the research being done in the subject area and conversed about teaching methodologies and how to best meet the needs of our students. This was also an opportunity to discuss the struggles educators around the world faced throughout the pandemic and how we were able to learn and grow from the experience.

When putting in the bid to host this national conference in Saskatoon, we anticipated registration numbers would be lower than what the larger centres around the country drew due to limited travel opportunities. However, we were happy with the registration numbers and offering the conference as a hybrid model allowed us to still network with those who could not join in person. The grant we received from the STF also ensured we could offer the conference at an affordable rate while not compromising on the calibre of the event.

Thus, the grant from the STF allowed us to offer an invaluable professional development opportunity where teachers and academics from across Canada were able to come together and network with others in the area. We are grateful for this opportunity as we look to continually grow our professional growth network and ensure we are meeting the needs of our members at all levels within the education system.

Regards,
Michelle Hardy, SHETA President

Budget

Professional growth networks are funded in the General Fund. The 2022-23 budget was underspent due to the lower than anticipated membership selection by members. In recent conversations of the PGN Advisory Committee, barriers to participation and membership selection have been identified as teacher fatigue, frustration with access to the MySTF login, and difficulty for existing networks to organize traditional member drives such as social gatherings and in-person conferences.

Members of the advisory committee acknowledge the updated funding model is well received by networks and is no longer a barrier.

The advisory committee will continue to monitor network participation and growth. The advisory committee also recognizes that future budget development will continue to balance actual and potential use. For the 2023-24 budget, we are targeting 2,770 members selecting PGN membership.