

SEINE RIVER TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Professional Fund Guidelines (effective September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025)



Overview

- Commencing on the first day of each school year the Seine River School Division shall provide payment on an annual basis to the Seine River Teachers' Association to establish a Professional Development Fund for individual professional development for teachers of the division. The amount agreed to by the parties shall be \$100,000 in 2024/2025.
- The SRTA PD Development Fund is intended to stimulate individual and collaborative, personal professional growth, and provide financial assistance for as many association members as possible.
- Active SRTA members who are employed under a Teacher-General (permanent) contract have equal access to the funds.
- Active SRTA members who are employed under a Limited Term contract have access to funds in the following categories: In-area/Webinar and Group Projects/Other. Applications and attendance at the PD event need to occur while under the employment of the Division as per the contract.
- It is recognized that this development will be of the kind that is beneficial to the association member within the realm of public education.
- It is also recognized that Local members use the most economical means to spend Professional Development funds (e.g., attending an in-area conference, rather than the same one out-of-area).

Fund Distribution

Professional Development funds are divided into five categories. When applying, please note that the conclusion of the PD event indicates the applicable term. The PD Committee reserves the right to redistribute funds between categories after January 1, 2025, and to add surplus funds to categories at any time.

Category	Funds Available	Notes	School/ Workplace Limits*
In-Area/Webinars	\$50,000	Applications accepted beginning September 3, 2024	4 per school/workplace; 6 for schools > 300 students & Division Office
Out-of-Area			2 per school/workplace; 3 for schools > 300 students & Division Office
University Courses	\$20,000	Applications accepted beginning September 3, 2024	
Indigenous, Reconciliation and Treaty Education	\$5,000	Applications accepted beginning September 3, 2024	
Group Projects/ Other	\$5,000	Applications accepted beginning September 3, 2024, until February 28, 2025	2 per school/workplace; 3 for schools > 300 students
Substitute Costs	\$20,000	For in-area/webinar, out-of-area, group projects, and other PD opportunities	

* Per PD conference/event; Clinicians/consultants/directors are deemed to be a part of the Division Office workplace.

Summary of Categories

In-Area/Webinars: PD opportunities that occur within 100 km of the boundaries of the Seine River School Division. These are typically conferences taking place in Winnipeg.

- \$800 accessible per member, per school year
- Allowable expenses limited to registration costs
- Substitute costs covered for day(s) at event, if applicable
- Optional article for newsletter (maximum one page)
- Members cannot access Out-of-Area or University Coursework funding in same school year
- Webinars are professional learning opportunities similar to a workshop or conference that one might attend as In-Area. Online courses should be applied for as University Coursework.

Out-of-Area: PD opportunities that occur further away than 100 km from the SRSD boundaries. In general, these are PD opportunities that are unique in nature and are not something that can be found locally.

- \$2400 accessible per member, per two school years
- Allowable expenses limited to registration costs, travel costs (including kilometrage if applicable), accommodations on days of PD plus one day before OR after PD, and meals (\$95 per diem) on days of PD event
- Substitute costs covered for day(s) at event, plus one additional day before OR after PD, if applicable
- Requires article for newsletter (maximum one-page)
- Members cannot access In-Area or University Coursework funding in same and following school year

University Coursework: Courses being offered at local and international accredited programs. These can be attended in-person or through distance education programs.

- \$1000 accessible per member, per school year
- Allowable expenses limited to tuition costs only associated with completing coursework, as billed by the university; university extended health and/or dental plans, library and other fees are not covered; textbook and material costs not covered; costs related to defending a master's thesis not covered
- Substitute costs not covered
- Requires article for newsletter (maximum one-page)
- Members cannot access In-Area or Out-of-Area funding in same school year

Indigenous/Treaty/Reconciliation Education: PD opportunities that enhance a member's understanding of topics related to Indigenous education, treaty education, and/or reconciliation.

- \$200 accessible per member, per school year.
- Allowable expenses limited to professional materials, workshop/registration costs, kilometrage, substitute costs, and honorariums for Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers (\$200 per session). No costs related to purchase of materials for student use will be covered.
- If an elder or knowledge keeper is being brought in for a session, we encourage members to communicate with the SRSD Indigenous Education Consultant for guidelines related to meetings with elders or knowledge keepers.
- Members can access this category regardless of whether they have accessed other categories of funding.

Group Project: Collaborative PD opportunity that involves at least three SRTA members. Members can be at same school, or in different schools. These projects are generally on a theme that is common across grade levels or job assignment (i.e. resource teachers).

- \$500 accessible for each of two groups for schools under 300 students; \$500 accessible for each of three groups for schools with 300 students or more. (Committee discretion for multi-school groups)
- Allowable expenses limited to professional materials, workshop costs, speaker costs (except honorariums), registration costs, and meals (actual cost); no costs related to purchase of student materials will be covered
- Food costs are up to a maximum of \$31 per person per day, and a total maximum of \$186.
- Up to two days of substitute costs covered per participating member for meetings
- Up to one day of substitute costs per participating member for classroom visits pertaining to collaborative learning (co-teaching, observing, etc.)
- Requires article for newsletter (maximum one-page)
- Funds for Group Projects are guaranteed until March 1
- Part-time teachers should contact PD chair prior to taking part in activity

Other: A flexible category that allows members to present new ideas that do not fit into the above categories. The purpose is to allow for the PD Fund to grow and evolve in ways that accommodate and encourage professional collaboration and development. Formerly “Classroom Visits”, this category can include the opportunity to travel to another school to observe the teaching practices of a colleague, which would not need to be within SRSD.

- Members are encouraged to formulate a proposal which the PD Committee will evaluate. Sub costs may be considered as part of the funding dollar value permitted (unlike other categories), such as with classroom visits.
- Members should apply with more than the standard ten days’ notice prior to commencing the project, if possible, to allow the committee time to consider this new type of application.

Items Excluded from Funding

- S.A.G.E. events or S.A.G.E.- affiliated events and costs; (MTS PD Day, formerly known as SAG)
- Applications through a second party
- Payment for late fees
- Membership Fees
- Release time for supervisory duties
- Release time for presenting a workshop/session
- Course/workshop materials (exception for Group Projects only)
- Entertainment venues offered outside the scope of the conference
- Child/Dependent Care
- Administration-initiated professional development
- School-wide PD activities
- Mandatory PD
- Alcoholic beverages
- Meal and travel costs for In-Area PD events, University Coursework
- Cancellation costs (except for registration cancellation costs)
- Speaker honorariums (allowable in Indigenous/Reconciliation/Treaty Education category only)

Steps for Accessing SRTA PD Funding

1. Approach your principal well ahead of the professional development activity and ask that a substitute be made available, if applicable. Such release is subject to a substitute being available.
2. Visit the SRTA website at <https://www.srta.ca>.
3. Enter the **PD** section (<https://www.srta.ca/PD>).
4. Complete and submit the online form specific to your event on the website, at least ten school days prior to the event.
5. The PD committee reviews the applications and the PD Chair will contact you regarding the status of your application.
6. Attend your PD activity and maintain all original receipts necessary for reimbursement.
7. Within 30 days of the activity:
 - a. complete the Evaluation Form online;
 - b. write an article for the newsletter, if applicable, and attach it to Evaluation Form; and
 - c. scan all original receipts necessary for reimbursement and attach it to Evaluation Form.

Note: if file attachment does not work, please email receipts and article to pdchair@srta.ca.

Accessing Funds

A: Individual Applications

- Each member can access a maximum of **\$800.00** of PD funds per year for In-Area/Webinar PD, **OR \$1000.00** of funds for University Course PD, **OR \$2400.00** of PD funds per two years for Out-of-Area PD, based on the criteria outlined in the Summary of Categories. In addition to this, members can access the Indigenous/Reconciliation/Treaty Education and/or Other categories.
 - If a member accesses out-of-area PD funding, regardless of the total amount of the application, the member is prohibited from accessing any individual PD funds, with the exception of group project Indigenous/Reconciliation/Treaty Education and/or classroom visit funding, for the following school year.
 - Once an application for in-area or university course PD has been accepted and approved, out-of-area applications by the same association member will not be accepted until the following school year.

B: Group Project Applications

- Association members may apply for up to \$500 of Group Project funding based on the criteria outlined in the Summary of Categories.
- Group projects may encompass association members from one workplace or many workplaces. However, the workplace to which the applying member belongs will be the workplace at which the group project is based.

Application Process

- All applications will be considered in order of receipt, based on the timestamp of when the application is received via email.
- All member's funding is conditional to available funds. If surplus funds become available through the course of the school year, SRTA members will be notified via email to school representatives of the SRTA council.
- The PD application form be submitted a minimum of ten (10) teaching days prior to the PD activity.
- An exception to the ten-day rule will be made for the first two weeks of school.
- Applications will not be processed retroactively. Applications may be placed in a queue (based on order of receipt) for processing after submission dates have expired.
- Members are responsible for the payment of their own registration and to make their own travel arrangements. In cases where PD registration is being paid by the school, members need to notify the SRTA PD Chair of this arrangement so that reimbursement can be given to the correct source of funds.

Reimbursement of Expenses

- Evaluations must be completed for all claims prior to reimbursement.
- All categories, with the exception of In-Area/Webinar, require an article for the SRTA newsletter to be submitted with the evaluation prior to reimbursement.
- Failure to complete requirements for reimbursement will cause member to be ineligible for further funding.
- Scanned or physical original receipts are required for all claims.
- Members must submit claims no later than 30 days after the event has occurred; unclaimed funds will be returned to the PD fund after this date.
- Amounts reimbursed for tuition fees are not eligible for tuition rebates as per CRA guidelines.
- Reimbursements will be awarded in the form of a cheque that is delivered through the division courier.
- Reimbursements will be conducted in a timely manner. Due to the nature of the process, reimbursements typically take up to two-four weeks to be completed.

Article Guidelines

- Articles are required for reimbursement of Out-of-Area, Group Projects and University Coursework. They are optional for any other category of funding.
- Required articles must be sent in with the Funding Evaluation prior to receiving any reimbursement.
- Articles must include the title of the event, dates, names of any other participants (group), and facilitator of the event.
- Articles should be no less than 250 words long, and should provide:
 - a description of the event and topics covered
 - an application to your professional development
 - a critique of event for future reference
- Members are welcome to submit pictures with their articles.
- Articles require member's name on the document.
- Members need to be aware that the articles are included in the SRTA newsletter, which is publicly available on the SRTA website.

Cancellation of Event by Event Organizer

- Member is required to notify the PD Chair of the cancellation as soon as they know of the cancellation.
- If cancellation occurs more than one day in advance of the event, substitutes need to be contacted by the member and told that their services are not required. In cases such as these, members who do not cancel their substitute for the day will be billed for the costs of the substitute.
- If cancellation occurs on the day of the event, the PD Committee will review the details of the cancellation (as told to the PD Chair by the member) and inform the member, through the PD Chair, of their status after event cancellation.
- In the event of cancellation, the PD fund will not cover the costs of airplane travel. Members are encouraged to purchase flight cancellation insurance.
- If a refund for registration is issued by the event organizer, member is required to notify the PD Chair.

Failure to Attend Event by Applicant

- Members are expected to take all actions necessary to attend the PD events they are approved for.
- In the event of illness, family emergency or other situation which prevents member from attending the PD event, member must notify PD Chair within five (5) days of the PD session with details about the missed PD.
- The PD Committee will review the details of the failure to attend (as told to the PD Chair by the member) and inform the member, through the PD Chair, of their status after failure to attend the PD event.
- Should a member drop a University Course for which they had been previously approved, the member shall notify the PD Committee and shall consider their original application void. In such a case, a member would have to re-apply for a different University course occurring in the same or future term.

Implementation of the Fund

- The fund shall be administered by the association's professional development committee.
- At the end of each school year, the Association will present a detailed report to its members and the board on the use of the funds.
- The board will consider carry forward amounts upon the submission of a formal request by the Association, as per SRSD/SRTA Collective Agreement: 2018-2022.
- Before September 30, the association will make a formal request to the board to carry over any surplus funds in the PD account to the following year.

Appeals

- If any decision by the PD Committee is deemed unsatisfactory by the member upon which the decision has been made, the member has the right to appeal the decision back to the PD Committee for further review. An appeal should be accompanied with detailed reasons on why the member has deemed the decision unsatisfactory.
- The PD Committee will reconsider an application under appeal and issue a further decision, which will be communicated to the member via the PD Chair.
- If the member is still not satisfied after the committee decision after appeal, they can appeal to the SRTA President. The SRTA President will then review the original decision and the appeal and issue a decision, which will be deemed the final decision of the SRTA.

The SRTA PD Committee

It is the mandate of the SRTA PD Committee to allocate the SRTA PD funds. The committee to supervise the disbursements of this fund shall be no fewer than 5 members, and may be comprised of:

- high school principal/vice-principal
- high school classroom teacher
- elementary principal/vice-principal
- immersion teacher/principal
- clinician/consultant
- K-8 classroom teacher
- resource teacher/school counsellor
- SRTA PD Committee Chair*
- SRTA President*

In terms of the approval process, the SRTA PD Committee Chair and the SRTA President are non-voting members of this committee. Of the committee members eligible to vote, 50%+1 must cast identical votes for an application to be processed.

PD Chairperson

The duties of the Chair of the Professional Development Committee are outlined in Policy II, article 6.2, of the Local Bylaws and Policies. Additionally, the function of the PD Chairperson includes the following responsibilities:

- screen the applications for accuracy and forward them to committee members via email for voting
- maintain accurate records of all PD Fund transactions and provide written up-to-date reports to Executive and Council meetings
- share the PD fund applications records with the SRTA President and the SRTA Treasurer for purposes of accurate bookkeeping
- forward completed applications to the SRTA president for verification before forwarding to the treasurer for payment to the applicant
- convene 2-3 committee meetings throughout the year for the purposes of reviewing any changes and of educating committee members
- provide a written report for each of the council's newsletters
- prepare a comprehensive year-end report of the PD Fund's activities. This report shall be presented to the SRTA executive and council for approval prior to presentation to the SRSD's Board of Trustees
- submit a final electronic copy of the PD fund records to the SRTA president for archiving