Teacher Learning and Leadership Program
for Experienced Teachers
(TLLP)

2007-08
Program Guideline

Ontario
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Section A: Introduction

1. The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program
Ontario has many fine teachers whose choice of career is the classroom and who have expertise to offer to other teachers, boards and regions. These teachers are a valuable resource that must be encouraged, developed and utilized to enhance the educational experience of our students. A program was needed to create opportunities for these teachers to extend their learning and share their expertise for the broader benefit of Ontario's students. Therefore, following the approval of the recommendations of the Working Table on Teacher Development, the ministry consulted with teacher federations and experienced teachers to design the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) for experienced teachers.

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) is a project-based activity for selected experienced teachers whose choice of career is the classroom. Teachers can apply, as individuals or as a group, to undertake a project. The project has three components:
- Professional Learning;
- Leadership Development; and
- Knowledge Exchange.

Approximately 50 projects are expected to be approved by April 2008.

Professional Learning:
The program will foster teacher learning and facilitate knowledge production by funding proposals from teachers for innovative, self-chosen learning activities that teachers undertake individually or as part of a community of practice. The proposals will occur in the context of ministry/board/school goals to enhance student learning.

Leadership Development:
This program will foster teacher leadership by providing all participants in the program with a two-day Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training session in March 2008 that will help them develop the skills needed to effectively manage their learning project and share their learning with colleagues. The participants will then apply this leadership training through the knowledge exchange component.

Knowledge Exchange:
This program will facilitate knowledge exchange opportunities for experienced teachers that will provide benefits to Ontario students. Within the context of their project, participants will be required to share their learning and promising practices with others on an intra-board/inter-board and/or provincial basis.

A list of the participants, along with descriptions of their project and copies of the materials produced will be posted on the Ministry of Education's website.
Section B: General Guidelines

2. Who can apply for the TLLP?

✓ Experienced teachers from all district school boards, school authorities and provincial schools, who have chosen to remain in the classroom and want to deepen their learning in an area of their expertise

✓ Teachers who are beyond the induction career stage and whose primary assignment is teaching students (e.g., classroom teacher, teacher-librarian, guidance counsellor, co-op teacher, itinerant teacher)

✓ Individual teachers or groups of teachers may apply. Groups must be teacher-led but may include other educational workers, such as education assistants

Teachers working in system level or administrative positions (e.g., coordinators, consultants) are not eligible.

3. What types of projects may be funded?

Projects may involve a range of learning activities in the area of expertise of the experienced teacher/group of teachers. These include projects that support current research, as well as innovative approaches that challenge current thinking by presenting alternative methods that may be effective in improving student outcomes.

Examples of projects include:

✓ action research into innovative classroom strategies;
✓ sharing teaching expertise (e.g., math skills, improving boys’ literacy);
✓ opening the classroom to other teachers in their schools or other boards; and
✓ adapting new methodologies and/or technologies for students with special needs.

Other teachers, subject associations and local affiliates could be a rich source of ideas.

Approximately 50 projects are expected to be approved. Some sample project proposals are available at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/develop.html to guide applicants in developing proposals.

It is expected that the range of funding for each selected proposal will be approximately $1,000 for small-scale proposals, up to $10,000 for those involving teams of teachers.

4. What are the project selection criteria?

✓ The extent to which the topic would have an impact on student learning and development and reflect ministry/board/school goals

✓ The experience the teacher/group of teachers brings to the subject matter or the project

✓ The extent to which the proposal is guided by the following five characteristics of effective professional learning (see Appendix A):
  o Coherent
  o Attentive to Adult Learning Styles
  o Goal-oriented
  o Sustainable
  o Evidence-informed

✓ The innovative nature of the proposal

✓ The quality of the proposal (i.e., to what extent the proposal is well thought out and realistic)
The potential of the plan for sharing with others in the school, board, and/or other boards
The extent to which the learning and sharing outcomes could be measured
The potential effectiveness and efficiency of the project (due to the limited duration of the project, this does not imply EQAO data)

5. What are eligible and ineligible project costs?

Eligible costs:
✓ Resources specific to the project (e.g., books) - anticipated purchase of resources must be made clear in the application
✓ Release time (at the board’s per diem rate)
✓ Travelling costs (e.g., travel*, accommodation*, meals in accordance with the board’s reimbursement rate policies)
* Applicants must always use the most economical mode of travel and accommodation

Ineligible costs:
× Resources unrelated to the project
× Anything for which the Ministry of Education currently provides funding (e.g., student textbooks, salaries of existing teacher positions)
× Capital expenses (e.g., computer equipment)

Applicants are encouraged to consult with others when preparing their project budget. Principals and staff in the finance department of school boards can provide advice on items, such as release time. Other contacts, such as curriculum consultants or other teachers, may be able to help with determining the cost of resources in particular program areas.

6. How will the contract and transfer payments work?

Contract:
Boards will be responsible for supporting teachers in the TLLP activities and manage the budget allocated to the project. The Ministry of Education will provide a transfer payment contract to allocate the funding. The funding amount will be based on the project budget, plus an additional 10% to be used by the board to pay for the administration of the project funding. The remainder must be dedicated solely to the approved project as described in the proposal.

The teacher participants must comply with the board’s accounting practices and collaborate with board staff who are managing the budget.

The contract will also stipulate that the teacher participants complete the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form (located on the TLLP website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/develop.html ) and submit it to the board’s director of education/supervisory officer of school authority no later than June 30, 2009. The board’s senior business official will be required to complete the TLLP Board Final Report Form. The board will send the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form and the TLLP Board Final Report Form to the Ministry of Education no later than July 31, 2009.
Section C: Roles and Responsibilities

7. Teacher Applicant(s)/Participant(s)
- Completes the application form
- Prepares project budget, consulting with principal, school board staff or other staff as needed.
- Obtains the principal’s signature on the application form to acknowledge that s/he is aware of the application
- Submits the application form to the director of education in the board/supervisory officer of school authority. In the case of a group application, the application is sent to the director of education/supervisory officer of school authority of the group leader’s board.

The selected participants will be required to commit to the following expectations of the program:
- Attend the two-day *Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers* training session to strengthen facilitation skills and effective strategies in communicating with adults and budget management
- Carry out the activities as described in their proposal application
- Comply with the board’s accounting practices and collaborate with board staff who are managing the budget
- Agree to be contacted/surveyed, for evaluation purposes, by ministry representatives throughout the duration of the project
- Participate in building a community of practice and a province-wide TLLP teacher network
- Participate in knowledge exchange opportunities in order to share their learning and promising practices with colleagues and other education stakeholders
- Document and conduct an analysis of their project and their learning
- Complete the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form (located on the TLLP website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/develop.html) and submit to board’s director of education /supervisory officer of school authority.
- Present and share results of their learning within the context of a growing TLLP community of practice

8. School Principal
- Signs the teacher(s)’ application form to acknowledge that s/he is aware of the application
- Assists the teacher(s)’ with their growth goals, strategies and timelines for meeting them within the larger context of school and school board improvement planning
- Supports the teacher(s)’ project on an as-needed basis and facilitates opportunities for the teacher(s) to share their expertise with colleagues

9. Director of Education/Supervisory Officer of School Authority
- Ensures that all experienced teachers are aware of the TLLP opportunity
- Establishes a board level committee to review and prioritize the proposals, and to recommend two to be forwarded to the Ministry of Education
- Supports the selected teacher participant(s) in TLLP activities and manages the budget allocated to the project
- Has the senior business official complete the TLLP Board Final Report Form (located on the TLLP website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/develop.html)
Forwards the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form and the TLLP Board Report Final Form to the Ministry of Education

10. Board Level Review Committee
The director of education/supervisory officer of school authority may use an existing committee (e.g., NTIP Steering Committee) or set up a new committee. The committee must have board and affiliate representation. For example:

- Experienced classroom teacher(s) (primary assignment is teaching students in schools)
- Principal(s)
- Superintendent(s)
- Federation(s)
- Others that the board deems appropriate (e.g. consultants)

The Review Committee:
- Uses the selection criteria, described in item 4 of this guideline, to identify up to two priority projects
- Forwards an acknowledgement letter, signed by the board’s director of education/supervisory officer of school authority (sample provided by the ministry) to all teacher applicants to thank them for their proposal and to the two recommended applicants to confirm that their proposal will be sent to the Ministry of Education for consideration by the provincial Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee (TLLC)
- Forwards copies of Section 1 and 2 of each proposals and the two full application documents for the recommended applications to the Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee via the Teaching Policy and Standards Branch (TPASB) of the Ministry of Education
- Keeps the other applications on file for one year in case the TLLC asks to see them (note that even though the board is recommending up to two proposals, the TLLC may wish to consider the others)

11. Provincial Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee (TLLC)
The Ministry of Education will chair the Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee. This committee is comprised of:

- Ministry of Education staff
- Teacher federation representatives

The TLLC:
- Reviews the project applications recommended by the board level selection committee
- Reviews Sections 1 and 2 of the other applications sent by the board level review committee
- Contacts the board/school authority/provincial school if it wishes to see an application not recommended by the board level review committee
- Selects approximately 50 projects, based on the selection criteria described in item 4 of the 2007-08 TLLP Program Guideline, the funding available and equity of distribution
- Informs teachers of the selection decision in February, 2008
Section D: TLLP Timelines

October 15, 2007: Ministry of Education launches the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program

October – November 2007: Board and education partners promote the program to experienced teachers

November 2007: Director of education of the board/supervisory officer of the school authority establishes the review committee

November 30, 2007: Due date for eligible teachers to submit application to the director of education/supervisory officer of school authority
   Director of education/supervisory officer of school authority forwards applications to the board level review committee

December 21, 2007: Due date for board review committee to submit two recommended proposals and Sections 1 and 2 of the other applications to the Ministry of Education

December 2007 – January 2008: Board sends acknowledgement letter to teacher applicants

January 2008: Applications reviewed by the Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee

February 2008: Ministry of Education sends decision letters to selected applicants (copies to the boards)
   Transfer payment contracts sent to boards

March 3, 2008: Due date for submission of signed transfer payment contracts to the Ministry of Education

March 27-28, 2008: Ministry holds two-day Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training session for selected participants

April 1, 2008: Ministry sends project funding to appropriate boards

April 1, 2008 – May 31, 2009: Teachers implement project learning and sharing activities

June 30, 2009: Due date for teacher participants to submit the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form to the director of education/supervisory officer of school authority

July 31, 2009: Due date for director of education/supervisory officer of school authority to submit the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form and the TLLP Board Final Report Form to Ministry of Education
Section E: Questions?

Visit the TLLP website (www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/develop.html) for answers to frequently asked questions. The website also contains a number of sample applications to assist teachers who wish to develop a project proposal.

For further information and/or questions, e-mail the Ministry of Education at: ILDDPSB@ontario.ca
APPENDIX A

Characteristics of Effective Professional Learning

In May 2007, the Minister’s Education Partnership Table approved the Working Table on Teacher Development’s recommendation for the adoption of the following five characteristics that should be considered by anyone charged with, or seeking to provide professional learning experiences for Ontario’s teachers:

i) Coherent

Teacher professional learning is ultimately about best practices for student learning and development and occurs in the context of the ministry/board/school and parent/community/classroom continuum. Coherence is also built on the “three R’s”* of respect, responsibility and results, recognizing teacher professionalism and the complexity of teacher learning. Whether as part of required training, personal selection, or as the subject of an independent research initiative by an individual teacher or a professional learning community, and whether it is directly or indirectly job-embedded, the learning must have a positive impact on the students and school success.

*The “three R’s” were articulated in the discussion paper Ontario Education Excellence for All: Developing Partners in Education (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/nr/05.12/developing.pdf).

ii) Attentive to Adult Learning Styles

Teachers come to each professional learning experience with a wide variety of skills, knowledge, education, teaching, and training background. As a result, when planning professional learning, adult learning principles should be addressed by:

- Considering the role of choice. Research supports the importance of choice and self-direction in personalizing the learning.
- Providing programming that is viewed as meaningful, relevant and substantive.
- Providing differentiation in the content and delivery models.
- Considering “best fit” within a culture of collaborative learning. The “one size fits all” approach may prove problematic in many circumstances. Effective learning must recognize and include the participants’ understanding and perspective in order to bring about a culture of reflection and transformation.
- Providing appropriate recognition for the successful completion of professional learning.

iii) Goal-oriented

Professional learning is enhanced when it is goal oriented and is clearly:

- Connected to improved student learning and achievement.
- Connected to daily practice (job embedded), both directly and indirectly.
- Situated within and respectful of varied contexts (i.e. relevant to ministry, board, school/community, classroom).

iv) Sustainable

Professional learning that will have impact in the classroom must:

- Be planned and progress over time (i.e. it is a process).
- Be supported by appropriate resources focussed on its success.
- Involve the learners and allow time for practice (job embedded).
- Include time for self-assessment through reflection (construct/de-construct/re-construct thinking about practice) within its processes.
- Include, wherever possible, congruency in professional learning for other staff who support student learning (e.g. educational assistants, social workers, etc.).

v) Evidence-informed

Professional learning should consider and be built upon current research as well as both formal and informal data (e.g. quantitative, qualitative information). This approach would ensure up-to-date theories and practices are aligned with the needs of teachers and students. Evidence based professional learning activities also provide a baseline upon which outcomes can be measured.

The full report of the Working Table on Teacher Development is available on the ministry website at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/develop.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/develop.html).