

*Teacher Learning and Leadership Program for*  
**EXPERIENCED TEACHERS**

**Program Guideline**



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## Section A: Introduction

### 1. The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) is a project-based activity for selected experienced teachers whose choice of career is the classroom. It is intended to create opportunities for experienced teachers to enhance their professionalism and skills, extend their learning and share their expertise with others for the broader benefit of Ontario's students. Teachers can apply, as individuals or as a group, to undertake a project. The project has three goals:

- Support Teacher Professional Learning;
- Foster Teacher Leadership; and
- Facilitate the Sharing of Exemplary Practice.

#### Teacher Professional Learning:

This component of the TLLP will foster teacher learning and facilitate knowledge production by funding proposals from teachers for innovative, self-chosen learning activities that they 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.

#### Teacher Leadership:

This component of the TLLP will foster teacher leadership by providing all participants in the program with a *Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers* professional development session 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 as they share their expertise of exemplary practices with colleagues.

#### Sharing of Exemplary Practices:

This component of the TLLP will facilitate sharing 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.

Information about completed projects will be posted in a public online archive on the Ministry website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html>. For each completed project, there will be "at-a-glance" information that includes a description of the project, a summary of what was learned and contact information for the project leader. This archive is intended to serve as a resource for school boards, principals and teachers to support future professional learning initiatives.

## Section B: General Guidelines

### 2. Who can apply for the TLLP?

- ✓ Experienced teachers from all publicly funded 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
- ✓ Previous recipients of TLLP funding may submit a project proposal, however it must be noted that the TLLP is not intended to fund ongoing programs. To be eligible for consideration, proposals from previous program participants must be significantly different in topic and/or scope from the previously funded project.

Teachers working in system level or administrative positions (e.g., principals, coordinators, consultants) are not eligible to lead a TLLP project; however, these educators can provide extremely valuable input as team members. The focus of the program is on experienced teachers who have chosen not to pursue system level or administrative roles and therefore do not have the opportunities to share their knowledge and experience as do, for example, consultants.

The TLLP is meant to deepen professional learning for teachers or teacher-led groups that bring relevant background or experience to the topic. The TLLP also fosters the sharing of the teacher's or teacher-led group's learning with colleagues. In this context, applicants will need to indicate what background and experience they bring to the project:

- to demonstrate what their learning goals are
- to state how they will achieve those goals
- to explain how they will share their learning with others.

### 3. What types of projects may be funded?

Professional learning projects may involve a range of activities in the area of expertise of the experienced teacher/group of teachers. These include learning 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 are:

lesson study and creation of an electronic resource that can be shared province wide

- action research into innovative classroom strategies and publication of the outcomes in a professional magazine
- deepening and sharing teaching expertise (e.g. math skills, improving boys' literacy)

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- learning about adapting new methodologies / technologies for students with special needs and opening the classroom to other teachers in your school or board

Professional learning topics of interest could include, but would not be limited to:

- equity of outcome (e.g. innovative strategies to address the needs of a targeted student population)
- teaching and learning strategies in and across content areas (e.g. innovative strategies to support student achievement in literacy and numeracy)
- competencies and strategies for teaching in a minority context (e.g. innovative strategies to help foster increased capacity to work in a minority setting to support the academic learning and identity building of every student)
- integrated curriculum (e.g. innovative approaches to the use of interdisciplinary studies or integration of subjects)
- community partnerships (e.g. innovative strategies to help develop school-community projects that serve as practical applications of students' learning, develop their sense of belonging to a community, and provide them with opportunities for self-affirmation outside of school)
- integrating technology to enhance curriculum delivery and pedagogy in order to address a specific learning need (e.g. innovative approaches to the use of communications technology)
- impact of professional learning communities/networks (e.g. school/board teams – including staff in educational support roles – share skills/knowledge on any of the above topics)

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

Some sample project proposals are available at

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html> to guide applicants in developing proposals.

Funding is dependent on the scale of learning and sharing activities of the project. It is expected that the range of funding for each selected proposal will be approximately \$5,000 for small-scale proposals, up to \$12,000 for those involving teams or possibly more depending on the scope of the project.

#### **4. What are the project selection criteria?**

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

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- ✓ The quality of the proposal (i.e., to what extent the proposal is well thought out and realistic)
- ✓ The background and experience the teacher/group of teachers brings to the subject matter or the project
- ✓ The potential impact for the learning of participating teachers
- ✓ The extent to which the topic would have an impact on student learning and development and reflect ministry/board/school goals
- ✓ The potential of the plan for sharing with others in the school, board, and/or other boards (i.e. the potential for replication and interest on a larger scale)
- ✓ The potential impact for the learning of other teachers
- ✓ The extent to which the learning and sharing outcomes can be measured

### **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)

#### **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)
- ✗ Additional qualification courses or academic credit courses

\* Applicants must always use the most economical mode of travel and accommodation

Note that technological equipment could be included in a budget on condition that it is not already available at the school or through the board or already funded by the ministry, that it is a necessary resource for the project's learning activity and that it will benefit the learning of other teachers or other educational workers. Applications requesting the purchase of technology must clearly show that the learning needs are determining the specific technology requested rather than the technology leading the learning.

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 and board purchasing procedures. Other contacts, such as curriculum consultants or other teachers, may be able to help with determining the cost of resources in particular program areas and for planning sharing activities.

## 6. How will the contract and transfer payments work?

### Contract:

Boards will be responsible for supporting teachers in the TLLP activities and managing 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 and procurement 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 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html>) and submit it to the board's director of education/supervisory officer of school authority. 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. Specific timelines for submitting all reports are outlined in TLLP Timelines posted on the Ministry website (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html>).

## 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 or the supervisory officer of the school authority. In the case of a group application, the application is sent to the director of education/supervisory officer of the group leader's board.

The selected participants will be required to commit to the following expectations of the program:

- ✓ Attend the *Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers* training session to strengthen facilitation skills and effective strategies in communicating with adult learners and budget management
- ✓ Carry out the activities as described in their proposal application
- ✓ Comply with the board's accounting and procurement practices and collaborate with board staff who are managing the budget

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- ✓ Agree to be contacted/surveyed, for evaluation purposes, by ministry representatives throughout the duration of the project
- ✓ Participate in building a community of practice through a province-wide TLLP teacher networking site
- ✓ Post at least two artefacts on the TLLP networking site
- ✓ 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 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html>) and submit it, along with any additional project artefacts, to board's director of education /supervisory officer of school authority.
- ✓ Present and share results of their learning at the *TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit* and within the context of a growing TLLP community of practice

### **8. School Principal**

- ✓ Ensures that all experienced teachers in their school are aware of the TLLP opportunity
- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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 in their board are aware of the TLLP opportunity
- ✓ Establishes a board level committee comprised of board staff and representatives from the teacher federations 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 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html>)
- ✓ Forwards the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form, along with any additional project artefacts, 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 proposal it has received and the two full application documents for the recommended applications to the Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee via the Teaching Policy and Standards Branch (TPSB) 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 also consider the others)

### **11. Provincial Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee (TLLC)**

The Ministry of Education chairs 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
- ✓ Contacts the board/school authority/provincial school if it wishes to see an application not recommended by the board level review committee
- ✓ Selects projects, based on the selection criteria described in item 4 of this guideline, the funding available and equity of distribution
- ✓ Informs teachers of the selection decision in February. Specific timelines are outlined in TLLP Timelines posted on the Ministry website - <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html>.

## **Section D: Questions?**

Visit the TLLP website (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.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:

[tllp-palpe@ontario.ca](mailto:tllp-palpe@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).

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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/enq/teacher/develop.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/enq/teacher/develop.html).**