

June 2021



Annual Report to the STF Executive

2020-21



Professional Growth Networks Advisory Committee

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Overview of Professional Growth Networks

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation currently supports 28 professional growth networks. These affiliates provide their members with publications, programs and other professional development opportunities.

The general purpose of professional growth networks is to provide opportunities for professional development of its members. Professional growth networks have been established in a variety of subject fields, service areas and interdisciplinary groups.

The success of the program is measured by teacher interest in becoming members and taking an active role in the work of the networks. Membership is not limited to teachers but includes any person with a professional interest in the activities of the networks. Currently, approximately 2,800 teachers 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 networks choose to spend their basic grants. 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 has become more complex. 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.

Professional Growth Networks Advisory Committee

The advisory committee's basic purpose is to serve the interests of all networks. The committee met for their regular meetings three times in 2020-21. Representatives 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 constitution amendments.
- Ensure professional growth networks meet their annual criteria for affiliation and grants.
- Review special project grants, constitutions and membership information.
- Develop recommendations on behalf of professional growth networks to the STF Executive.
- Provide an annual report to the STF Executive.

2020-21 Committee Members

Leah Fornwald (Weyburn) Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of French (2020-23)	Derek Barss Senior Administrative Staff
Shawna Jurgens (Saskatoon) Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language (January 2019 – December 2021)	Scott Burant Managing Director, Member Services
Carol Sarich (Saskatoon) Saskatchewan School Based Leaders (2020-23)	Rob Lehne Senior Administrative Staff
Crystal Schindel (Punnichy) Social Studies Saskatchewan 2020-23	Michelle Naidu Associate Director, Professional Learning
Celine Smith Olivares (Spiritwood) Literacy Educators' Network of Saskatchewan (2019-22)	

We would like to thank all members of the committee for their time dedicated to supporting professional growth networks and to the school divisions for granting release time for members to carry out their duties.

The Work of the Advisory Committee

PGN Renewal

We have been working towards our new approach in supporting the professional learning of Saskatchewan teachers and raising the status of our profession. The renewal plan includes four categories:

1. Membership
2. Governance

3. Funding
4. Additional Federation Supports

The plan responds to the new realities in the following ways:

- Ensures teachers are able to self-select networks providing access to professional growth opportunities of choice.
- Ensures teachers from across the province are connected to provincial networks and are exposed to promising practices beyond their own school division.
- By raising the status of professional growth networks, we hope 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.
- Building a strong and positive reputation within the sector, professional growth networks may have the opportunity to respond to any direction the SPTRB may establish in regard to professional learning.
- With membership in networks being a benefit of Federation membership, networks have the opportunity to engage and interact with a broader membership. This may lead to increased contributions of members to the network itself.
- The change in governance structure will help establish standards of administration and should assist volunteer executive members in focusing efforts on supports for teachers.

With the approval of the 2021-22 budget at April's Annual Meeting of Council, 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. Professional growth networks are seen as having a positive impact on teacher professionalism, contributing to the professional growth of teachers throughout Saskatchewan, working with other educational stakeholders in raising the status of the profession and contributing to student success in learning.

Our new vision not only ensures professional growth network sustainability, but also includes teachers having equitable access to the services and supports that may be available through a network as part of their Federation membership. The advisory committee believes the contribution of networks has a direct connection to the implementation of Federation policies around professionally led professional growth as well as its mandate of raising the status of the teaching profession.

The following option was supported by the STF Executive at their April 9, 2020 meeting for the renewal of professional growth networks:

Option A
Effective July 1, 2021: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Implement a new online membership identification process to provide network membership as a privilege of being a member of the Federation.2. Implement a new grant structure:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Membership Grant of \$7.50 per memberb. Basic Grant of \$2,000c. Special Project Grant (9 grants x \$1,000)Approximate cost: \$166,2503. Implement a new governance structure.

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

Network executives are currently considering the types of service they may offer through their PGN and examining their own sustainability. The following networks have decided to amalgamate:

- Literacy Educators' Network of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan School Library Association will become LEARN – Literacy Educators and Resources Network.
- Saskatchewan Health Educators Association and Saskatchewan Physical Education Association (keeping the SPEA name).

Networks have been working on their new governance model moving from a constitution to a set of bylaws. Federation staff have reviewed nine new bylaws documents to date.

The recruitment of members by the Federation began in April with a one-page layout in the *Bulletin* where four of the PGNs were highlighted and included testimonials from current members. Networks were given the opportunity to submit a write-up about their PGN for members to read, which will assist with their PGN membership selection. May and June editions of the *Bulletin* also highlighted additional PGNs.

In early May we began our communications plan to members in support of our objectives to reach our membership to promote PGNs. We are using multiple tactics and tools throughout the campaign including our website, social media on Facebook and Twitter, the *Bulletin*, What's New, email, etc.

The committee met a number of times with Federation staff who provided them with a progress report on the renewal plan.

An online resource toolkit will be available to our PGNs and will include fillable templates for their bylaws, financial documents, etc. This toolkit will replace the hard copy administration manual we have been using.

Beginning August 16 our members will be able to sign into MySTF to self-select their PGN membership online. In early October we will provide the networks with membership lists. Federation staff have been working hard with the website developers and database administrators to make this happen and are currently testing the system.

Constitution Reviews

The committee reviews constitutions submitted by professional growth networks to ensure the constitution meets the policy and requirements. Constitutions that do not meet these standards are returned to the network for attention. Constitutions that meet the standards are forwarded to the STF Executive for approval. Due to our governance renewal, there were no constitution amendments for the committee to approve this year because our networks are working on their new bylaws which will replace their current constitution.

Professional Development

Advisory committee members are provided with an opportunity to attend other professional growth network conferences to get a firsthand look at what other networks are doing and to gain a better understanding of their issues. Unfortunately, we were unable to send representatives from our committee to any conferences this year due to COVID-19.

Promotion

The *Professional Growth Opportunities* catalogue includes a section to promote professional growth networks. General membership information is included along with network advertisements for their professional development opportunities. Additional opportunities to promote networks included highlighting events through the Events Calendar on the STF website and utilizing our social media tools to promote networks.

Feedback from Networks

The committee's main source of feedback is from Professional Growth Networks Day held each fall. In October 2020, the committee met online with networks to discuss the upcoming renewal plan. The attendees went into small-group breakout sessions to discuss the proposed governance and funding models. Following the meeting, networks were provided with a checklist defining next steps. Networks are encouraged to contact the Federation if support is required.

Some networks were able to host online learning events this year to remain connected with their members. For some networks, the online events were successful due to no travel costs involved. School division level professional development continues to be a priority as teachers indicate their choice of opportunities is limited by the lack of permission or funds to attend network events.

Operational Goals

The PGN Advisory Committee examined the current context and has recommended the following priorities:

Area of Focus	Goals	Short-Term	Long-Term	Ongoing
PGN Advisory Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build relationships via communication with members and non-members. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask what others need/want. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify common themes of interest to PGNs – areas of concern and support. ii. Focus on sharing materials and what works (PGN – members). b. Engage with PGNs. 2. Renewal plan work continues. 3. Enhance awareness of Federation supports to PGNs. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Practical ideas/tips. b. Ways to access support. 4. Promote the recognition/awareness of PGNs. 	X		X
Strengthening Relationships with Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue working with the Ministry. 2. Improve status with school divisions. 3. Promote PGNs to teachers. 4. Support collaboration between PGNs. 	X	X	X
Support to PGNs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide enhanced resources to PGNs. 2. Enhance communication with members. 3. Increase use of Federation communication tools – the <i>Bulletin</i>. 		X X X	
STF Members Value PGNs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase perception of professionalism. 2. Increased awareness of PGNs. 3. Increase PGN membership. 		X X X	
Contributions to the Profession/ Federation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise status of profession 		X	

Curriculum Renewal

Physical Education

To support the implementation of the renewed Physical Education 20 and 30 curricula and the actualization of Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework, the Ministry of Education invited the Awâsis Aboriginal Inter-Agency Education Conference, Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environmental Education Association, and Saskatchewan Physical Education Association professional growth networks to submit a collaborative project proposal to develop materials in English or French to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit content, perspectives, and ways of knowing within the Physical Education 20 and 30 curricula.

This project was funded by the Ministry of Education for \$5,000, with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation providing support. The proposal submitted by two of the professional growth networks, SaskOutdoors and SPEA, was reviewed by the Ministry of Education and the Federation prior to being accepted. All intellectual property created in this project becomes property of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. An agreement was signed in February 2020 with the two professional growth networks, who began their collaboration shortly thereafter.

Key themes of the resource were to include:

- Physical literacy and physical activity ideas to help foster lifelong active learners.
- Actualizing applicable recommendations within the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation.
- Supporting First Nation and Métis ways of knowing through practical applications and activities within the curriculum.
- Outdoor education ideas and opportunities to support land-based learning.
- Enhancing outdoor/risky play opportunities for students.

The resource entitled *Physical Literacy: An Indigenous Journey for All, An Inclusionary Resource Supporting the Physical Education 20 and Physical Education 30 Curriculum in Saskatchewan*, was originally to be finalized by June 30, 2020, but due to COVID-19 was delayed and finalized in March 2021 when a final report was submitted to the Federation and the Ministry of Education. The resource will be formally made available to Saskatchewan educators, school divisions and First Nations schools by August 2021 just in time for the 2021-22 school year. An online support mechanism will also be created to compliment the physical resource created.

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 Teachers' Federation invited the Saskatchewan Art Educators Association, Saskatchewan Drama Association, Saskatchewan Music Educators Association and Awâsis Aboriginal Inter-Agency Education Conference professional growth networks to submit a collaborative project proposal to adapt with permission and/or create original online materials in English and/or French. The materials must 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 proposal submitted by two of the professional growth networks, Saskatchewan Art Educators Association and Saskatchewan Music Educators Association, was reviewed by the Federation prior to being accepted. All intellectual property created in this project will become property of

the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. An agreement was signed in January 2021 with the two professional growth networks, who began their collaboration shortly thereafter.

Key themes of the resource are to include:

- Actualizing applicable recommendations within the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation.
- Supporting First Nations and Métis ways of knowing through practical applications and activities within the curriculum.
- Enhancing culturally informed artistic and performance practices for students.
- Visual literacy to help educate students to become well-rounded observers aware of the impact art and design has on ourselves and our community.
- Musical literacy to help foster lifelong active learners and well-rounded audiences.
- Fostering an appreciation for the cultural arts of Canada's First Peoples.

The resource will be built before June 30, 2021, at which time an interim report will be provided to the Federation and the Ministry of Education. A draft of the resource kit will be vetted by a focus group of SMEA and SAEA members.

The resource is to be finalized by September 2021 when a report is to be submitted to the Federation and the Ministry of Education. The resource will be formally made available to Saskatchewan educators, school divisions and First Nations schools in Fall 2021. An online support mechanism will also be created to compliment the physical resource created. This content will be supported by the websites of SMEA, the Federation and the Ministry of Education. An annual review of the resource will be held at the Saskatchewan Music Conference in November.

Grants

National Conference Grant

The Federation assists professional growth networks with sponsorship of national conferences by providing grant and in-kind contributions. The guiding principles include:

- A national body shall exist and be a contributing partner of the conference.
- Advertising for the conference shall be conducted nationally.
- Attendees at the conference shall be from across Canada.
- The conference shall be held annually and in different locations across Canada.

Last year the Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers' Association was granted \$1,000 to assist them in hosting the Canadian Symposium on Home Economics Education in February 2021 in Saskatoon, but the symposium was cancelled due to COVID-19 and the funds were returned.

2020-21 Special Project Grants

Special project grants are intended to benefit as many professional growth networks and Federation members as possible. Should approved grant applications exceed the allotted funds, each grant shall be pro-rated at an equivalent percentage. The number of grants awarded may vary from year to year. The advisory committee determines the value of each grant within the limits of the overall budget by applying the grant criteria.

Grants Criteria¹ and Purpose

1. Special project grants are intended to support proposed initiatives.
2. Applications must demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics:
 - i. Innovation and/or promising practice
 - ii. Collaboration
 - iii. Accountability
 - iv. Identified benefits
 - i. Engagement with members, stakeholders and/or other partners
3. Grants are intended to support four main types of activities:
 - i. Joint Professional Growth
To assist two or more professional growth networks with the joint delivery of a conference or other eligible professional growth activity.
 - ii. Research Project
To assist professional growth networks with pursuing a research project. The funding may be used to support the process for an application for additional funding.
 - iii. New Initiative
To assist a professional growth network with developing a new initiative.
 - iv. Voluntary Amalgamation
To assist two or more professional growth networks with the transition costs that is associated with the amalgamation of networks.

Eligibility Guidelines

1. To ensure the maximum benefit for all networks, no network shall receive more than one special project grant during the fiscal year.
2. Networks may apply for a special project grant once every three years except in the instance where a grant is to be used for a joint professional growth activity assisting two or more networks with the transition costs associated with their voluntary amalgamation.
3. Projects must be consistent with Federation policy.
4. 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.
5. A specific project is not eligible for both a special project grant and a national conference grant.
6. Special project grants are not intended to replace or subsidize network membership fees or annual basic grants.
7. A network basic grant must be in good standing in order to be approved for a special project grant.

Applications

The allotted budget for special project grants in 2020-21 was \$17,500. This year there were three special project grant applications received from professional growth networks.

Funds Requested:	\$11,500
Funds Awarded:	\$10,875

¹ Page 25, *Professional Growth Networks Administration Manual 2020-21*

Summary of Special Project Grants Applications, 2019-21

Grant Year	Network	Project Name	\$ Requested	Approved/ Denied	\$ Awarded
2021	LENS/SSLA	Amalgamation	\$2,500	Approved	\$2,500
2021	SHEA/SPEA	Amalgamation	\$5,000	Approved	\$4,375
2021	SPEA/SHEA	Social Justice in Physical Education and Health	\$4,000	Approved	\$4,000
2020	SKTEAL/SSTS	Creating Meaningful Engagement with ELLs in a Middle Years Science Unit	\$4,898	Approved	\$4,898
2020	SMTS	Engaging Parents in Elementary Mathematics	\$3,750	Approved	\$3,750
2019	SaskOutdoors	50 th Birthday Celebrations	\$1,800	Approved	\$1,800
2019	SSLA	TRC Calls to Action – Grades 7-12 Resources Project	\$4,000	Approved	\$4,000