



SASKATCHEWAN  
TEACHERS'  
FEDERATION



PROFESSIONAL  
GROWTH NETWORKS

June 2022

# Annual Report to the STF Executive

Professional Growth Networks Advisory Committee  
2021-22

## Overview of Professional Growth Networks

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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 1,800 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

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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 and this annual report. New this year is a collection of highlights and testimonials from our networks, *Hear How Professional Growth Networks Support Their Members!*

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

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- 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

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The three professional growth network operational policies were updated and signed by the Executive Director in July 2021:

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

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The basic purpose of the advisory committee is to serve the interests of all networks. The committee met five times in 2021-22 including two extra meetings due to the renewal project. 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 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
Celine Smith Olivares	Spiritwood	Literacy Educators and Resources Network	2019-22
Crystal Schindel	Punnichy	Social Studies Saskatchewan	2020-23
Leah Fornwald	Weyburn	Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of French	2020-23
Shawna Jurgens	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language	2021-24
Staff Members			
Colleen Paulhus	Administrative Assistant		
Derek Barss	Senior Administrative Staff		
Michelle Naidu	Associate Director, Professional Learning		
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 implemented 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 the 2021-22 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. Effective July 1, 2021, the STF Executive supported the renewal of professional growth networks to implement the following new practices:

- Online membership identification process to provide network membership as a privilege of being a member of the Federation.
- Grant structure for basic and special project grants.
- Governance structure.

This 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.

The following networks amalgamated:

- Literacy Educators' Network of Saskatchewan (LENS) and Saskatchewan School Library Association (SSLA) became the Literacy Educators and Resources Network (LEARN).

- Saskatchewan Health Educators Association (SHEA) and Saskatchewan Physical Education Association (SPEA) became Physical and Health Education Saskatchewan (PHES).

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 17 of the networks have been finalized and approved by the STF Executive. Federation staff continue to work on the bylaws with the nine other networks.

Beginning August 16, 2021, our members were able to log in to MySTF to self-select their PGN membership online. 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*, school mailing, email, as well as our website and social media using Facebook and Twitter.

## Feedback from Networks

This year we held a meeting with network presidents in September to provide a renewal plan update which included a Q & A session.

The advisory committee's main source of feedback is from Professional Growth Networks Day held each fall. On October 16, 2021, the committee met online with networks to discuss the recently implemented renewal plan. Attendees joined small-group breakout sessions to discuss the renewal and:

- Barriers they experienced and solutions created.
- Ways in which their network was prepared to provide quality support to members.
- New initiatives their networks were undertaking.
- Highlights and celebrations.
- Worries, if any.

Networks suggested they would appreciate more communication from the advisory committee; therefore, the advisory committee now reports to networks after each meeting. An overview of the PGN renewal was provided to networks in December 2021 to:

- Summarize the renewal timeline and communication efforts.
- Answer questions from PGN Day in October.
- Provide discussion and feedback from previous meetings.

Networks also asked that they receive grant funds for the online sign-ups received after September 30. The advisory committee endorsed this suggestion; therefore, networks will receive grants funds for all the online sign-ups during the year, not just those received by September 30.

## Operational Goals

The advisory committee recommends the following priorities:

Area of Focus	Goal	Short-term	Long-term	Ongoing
Advisory Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build relationships via communication with members and non-members.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ask what they need/want.                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify common themes of interest to PGNs, i.e., areas of concern and support.</li> <li>• Focus on sharing materials and what works with networks and their members.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Engage with networks.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Renewal plan work continues.</li> <li>3. Enhance awareness of Federation supports to networks.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Practical ideas/tips.</li> <li>b) Ways to access support.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Promote recognition and awareness of networks.</li> </ol>	✓		✓
Strengthen Relationships in Education Sector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue working with the Ministry.</li> <li>2. Improve status with school divisions.</li> <li>3. Promote networks to teachers.</li> <li>4. Support collaboration between networks.</li> </ol>	✓	✓	✓
Provide Support to PGNs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide enhanced resources to networks.</li> <li>2. Enhance communication with members.</li> <li>3. Increase use of Federation communication tools, i.e., the <i>Bulletin</i>.</li> </ol>		✓ ✓ ✓	
STF Members Value PGNs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase perception of professionalism.</li> <li>2. Increase awareness of networks.</li> <li>3. Increase network memberships.</li> </ol>		✓ ✓ ✓	
Contributions to Profession/Federation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise status of the profession.</li> </ol>		✓	

## 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. Funds will be provided upon completion of the project. The proposal submitted 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 networks beginning their collaboration shortly thereafter.

An extension request was granted until March 31, 2022 for the networks to complete their work. They continue to work on the translations and required references before a final document is submitted. When the resource is finalized, it will be made available to Saskatchewan educators, school divisions and First Nations schools. 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

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### Basic Grants

Basic grant funds in the amount of \$48,380 have been disbursed to 19 professional growth networks to date. This is 74 percent of the calculated grants as of April 1, 2022. The remaining seven networks have until the end of June to submit their documents or their funds will be forfeited for 2021-22.

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  
To support new and innovative professional growth opportunities for their membership.
2. Resource Development  
To assist a professional growth network in the development of resources.
3. Strategic Planning  
To 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 are followed to ensure maximum benefit for all networks:

1. No network shall receive more than one special project grant during the fiscal year. 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 basic 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.

The allotted budget for special project grants in 2021-22 was \$9,000. This year there were three special project grant applications received from professional growth networks. The amount of grant funds requested was \$17,900 and the amount awarded was \$9,000, the entire allotted budget amount.

## 2019-22 Special Project Grants Awarded

Grant Year	PGN	Project Name	\$ Requested	\$ Awarded
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
2019	SaskOutdoors	50 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations	\$1,800	\$1,800
2019	SSLA	TRC Calls to Action – Grades 7-12 Resources Project	\$4,000	\$4,000

## Budget

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Professional growth networks are funded in the General Fund. The 2021-22 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. A highlight was the ability to provide all the funding allocated to special project grants.

The advisory committee recommends we continue the current funding model for two additional years, in hopes the barriers noted above may subside and teachers feel more willing and able to participate in these valuable networks. The advisory committee will continue to monitor network participation and growth. The advisory committee also recognizes that future budget development will balance actual and potential use.