SASKATCHEWAN TEACHERS' FEDERATION

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH NETWORKS

June 2025

# Annual Report to the STF Executive

## Professional Growth Networks Advisory Committee 2024-25

## Overview of Professional Growth Networks

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 24 professional growth networks. The success of these networks is measured by teachers' 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 3,240 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 the 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

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, this annual report and highlights from the previous year.

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

- Association provinciale des enseignantes et enseignants des écoles fransaskoises (APEF)
- Literacy Educators and Resources Network (LEARN)
- Physical and Health Education Saskatchewan (PHES)
- 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 Early Childhood Education Council (SK ECEC)
- 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 (SK TEAL)
- Saskatchewan Teachers of Ukrainian (STU)
- Saskatchewan UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (SK UNESCO)
- Social Studies Saskatchewan (SSS)

## Operational Policies

The three professional growth network operational policies include:

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

The basic purpose of the advisory committee is to serve the interests of all networks. The committee met three times in 2024-25. The advisory committee reports to networks after each meeting. Members 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 for the STF Executive.

## Committee Members

| Teacher Members | Location | Network | Term |
|---|---|---|---|
| Laurie Colhoun (Chairperson) | Indian Head | Saskatchewan School Based Leaders | 2022-25 |
| Michael Graham | Weyburn | Saskatchewan Mathematics Teachers' Society | 2024-27 |
| Stefanie Sweeney | Regina | Literacy Educators and Resources Network | 2023-26 |
| Tracy Johnson | Saskatoon | Saskatchewan Music Educators Association | 2024-27 |
| Tricia McEwen | Prince Albert | Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language | 2022-25 |
| **Staff Members** | | | |
| Andrea Papouches | Administrative Assistant | | |
| Denise Heppner | Associate Director, STF Professional Learning | | |
| Derek Barss | Senior Administrative Staff | | |
| Grayson Beaudin | Manager, Member Experiences and Operations | | |
| Rod Drabble | Communications Officer | | |
| Scott Burant | Managing Director, Member Experiences and Operations | | |

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

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 continues to be realized.

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.

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

The advisory committee is currently reviewing the Saskatchewan Special Educators Network (SSEN) as there has been no functional board for a few years while it has significant membership. The goal is to contact those individuals who last served on the board to hold a membership meeting to either gain new board members or to dissolve.

New this year, our advisory committee teacher members are each assigned as liaisons to a group of networks. The purpose is to facilitate effective communication and collaboration between the advisory committee and professional growth networks. Objectives include:

- Intermediary Role: Bridge gap between advisory committee and networks. Ensure information, feedback and requests flow smoothly between these groups.
- Coordination: Help prevent misunderstanding, conflict or duplication of work. Ensure everyone is on the same page and working toward common goals.
- Relationship Building: Foster positive relationships, build trust and promote cooperation. Their role is crucial in maintaining strong connections between different stakeholders.
- Problem Solving: Support networks by directing them to possible solutions if challenges arise. Identify bottlenecks, address issues and share these with the full advisory committee.

| Committee Member | PGN |
|---|---|
| Laurie Colhoun | Physical and Health Education Saskatchewan (PHES) |
| | Saskatchewan Middle Years Association (SMYA) |
| | Saskatchewan School Based Leaders (SSBL) |
| | Saskatchewan Science Teachers Society (SSTS) |
| | |
| Michael Graham | Saskatchewan Business Teachers' Association (SBTA) |
| | Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers' Association (SHETA) |
| | Saskatchewan Mathematics Teachers' Society (SMTS) |
| | Social Studies Saskatchewan (SSS) |
| | Saskatchewan Teachers of Applied Technology (STAT) |
| | |
| Stefanie Sweeney | Association Professionnelle des Enseignants Fransaskois (APEF) |
| | Literacy Educators and Resources Network (LEARN) |
| | Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of French (SATF) |
| | Saskatchewan Association of Teachers of German (SATG) |
| | Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environmental Education Association (SaskOutdoors) |

| Committee Member | PGN |
|---|---|
| Tracy Johnson | Saskatchewan Art Education Association (SAEA) |
| | Saskatchewan Association of Student Council Advisors (SASCA) |
| | Saskatchewan Drama Association (SDA) |
| | Saskatchewan Music Educators Association (SMEA) |
| | Saskatchewan UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (SK UNESCO) |
| | |
| Tricia McEwen | Saskatchewan Career and Work Education Association (SCWEA) |
| | Saskatchewan Early Childhood Education Council (SK ECEC) |
| | Saskatchewan Special Educators Network (SSEN) |
| | Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language (SK TEAL) |
| | Saskatchewan Teachers of Ukrainian (STU) |

## Feedback from Networks

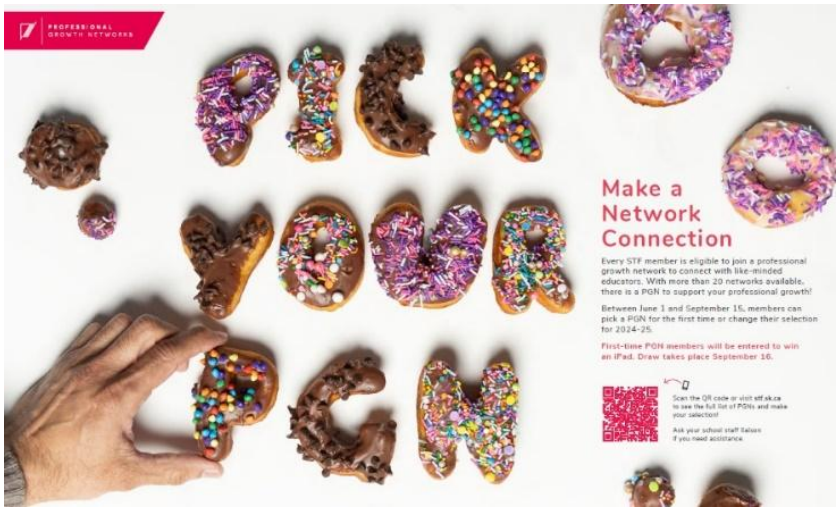
The advisory committee's main source of feedback is from Professional Growth Networks Day held each fall. On October 5, 2024, the committee met in person with networks.

Friday Night Networking/Social

On the Friday night before PGN Day, we hosted a networking/social event at the Delta Hotel Downtown where approximately 20 network members and Federation staff connected.

Professional Growth Networks Day

1. STF President, Samantha Becotte, provided greetings on behalf of the Federation.
2. Building Community – Mark Turner, Chief Executive Officer and Creative Producer for the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra provided an enjoyable and illuminating keynote on his building community development in the last few years. He spoke to the importance of self-reflection when looking to expand a community noting that change is often difficult and requires creative thinking, but that it will ultimately inspire bigger and more engaged communities. There is a growing need to invest in what members need for them to feel invested within the community.
3. PGN Online Toolkit – The online Toolkit is on the STF website and is updated with the resources required by networks.
4. Spring/Summer 2024 Pick Your PGN Campaign



- Membership to networks increased as follows:
  - 2,481 in April 2024 to
  - 3,109 on September 16, 2024 to
  - 3,244 in April 2025 for an increase of 763 members in 12 months!
- Our spring campaign certainly assisted with this increase in membership. We offered members a chance to win an iPad if they signed up for a network for the first time from June 1 to September 15, 2024. On September 16, we made the draw for the iPad. Congratulations to Jacqueline Ullyott from Social Studies Saskatchewan. Jacqueline received her iPad at the PGN Advisory Committee meeting on September 23, 2024, in Saskatoon.
- Collectively, we want to ensure the member experience in each PGN is valuable and positive to retain engaged members and attract additional members. Members can sign up on our website at https://www.stf.sk.ca/mystf/my-profile/manage-professional-growth-network/

5. Planning for Belonging and Engagement with Your Community
   - Denise Heppner from STF Professional Learning provided an interactive session for attendees. The session focused on building a sense of community and fostering engagement within professional growth networks. It emphasized the importance of nurturing connection and a sense of belonging. Strategies were provided to enhance member engagement, such as creating a "connection calendar," recognizing members through spotlights, collaboration and cross-promotional opportunities among networks, and leveraging artificial intelligence to streamline tasks like content creation and communication. Practical tools like automating social media updates, newsletters and emails were discussed with the goal being to address time constraints, ensuring sustained professional development and value for members.
   - Resources from the Emma Stewart Resources Centre were provided related to network areas of focus.

## Referral Program Launch – Summer 2025

As part of ongoing efforts to support the growth and sustainability of professional growth networks, a new referral initiative will be introduced as part of the Summer Sign-Up Campaign. This campaign will run from June 1 to September 15, 2025, and is designed to encourage increased membership and engagement across networks. Key details of the referral program include:

- **Goal** – Increase PGN membership by 500 during the prize window.
- **Eligibility** – Individuals who sign up for or transfer to a new PGN during the campaign period will be eligible to participate.
- **Referral Process** – New or transferring members will have the opportunity to identify a referring individual at the time of registration.
- **Incentives** – Two randomly selected referral pairs (the new member and their referrer) will each receive a $100 gift certificate of their choice from a list of Saskatchewan-based businesses.
- **Participation** – There is no cap on the number of referrals an individual can make.
- **Analysis** – Year-over-year enrolment data will be analysed to monitor the effectiveness of this initiative as a long-term incentive.

The referral program is intended to serve as a motivational tool for school staff liaisons and current network members to actively contribute to the expansion of PGNs. By leveraging peer networks and word-of-mouth promotion, the initiative aims to strengthen professional learning communities across the province.

Year-round online selection of a network is available on the Federation's website through the member MySTF Login. The network selected by a member carries forward every year unless they change their selection, retire, quit teaching, etc. From June 1 to September 15 members can make online changes to their current selection.

## Operational Goals

### Run Agenda Goals

Each year the advisory committee develops an action plan that identifies operational goals. The 2024-25 plan included:

| Goal | Timeline | Connection to Area of Focus |
|---|---|---|
| Provide Professional Growth Networks Day | Fall 2024 | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee<br>Leadership |
| Provide information to school staff liaisons to promote PGN memberships | All year | • Advocacy |
| Provide access to the STF Events Calendar for PGN events | All year | • Supports and Resources |
| Provide grants to the networks | All year | • Supports and Resources |
| Provide website services to the networks | All year | • Supports and Resources<br>• Advocacy |
| Provide promotional ad space within the STF Professional Growth Opportunities catalogue | Winter 2024 | • Supports and Resources<br>• Advocacy |
| Collect information via the STF member survey | Dependant on STF Research timeline | • Advocacy |
| Provide templates for administration | All year | • Innovation and Best Practices<br>• Supports and Resources |
| Provide operational support via STF staff | All year | • Leadership<br>• Innovation and Best Practices<br>• Supports and Resources |
| Provide networking opportunities for PGNs | At PGN Day 2024 | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee<br>• Innovation and Best Practices |
| Facilitate Ministry contracts | All year | • Advocacy<br>• Supports and Resources<br>• Innovation and Best Practices |
| Membership drive goal: 2,700<br>Achieved: 3,109<br>Current: 3,244 | June 30, 2025<br>Sept. 16, 2024<br>April 30, 2025 | • Advocacy |

## Change Agenda Goals

| Goal | Timeline | Connection to Area of Focus |
|---|---|---|
| Promotion of PGN events provincially<br>• Celebration stories from PGNs | Ongoing<br>January 2025 topic | • Supports and Resources<br>• Advocacy |
| Update/create graphic based on PGN renewal (figure 1) to represent responsibilities of the advisory committee and networks to define roles | January 2025 topic | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee |
| Special project grant promotion through sample stories, templates and reports<br>• Create a one-page summary. Use as a template for future reports. | May 2025 topic | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee<br>• Innovation and Best Practices<br>• Supports and Resources |
| Examine ways to encourage members to join a PGN | January 2025 topic | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee Leadership<br>• Advocacy |
| Support PGNs working together more collaboratively | October 2024 PGN Day | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee Leadership<br>• Innovation and Best Practices<br>• Supports and Resources |
| Ways to promote and enhance our online toolkit | PGN Day<br>January 2025 topic | • Innovation and Best Practices<br>• Supports and Resources |
| Assign advisory committee members as a liaison to specific PGNs | September 2024 | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee Leadership |
| Explore networking opportunities for PGNs beyond PGN day | January 2025 topic | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee Leadership |
| Explore the opportunity for a provincial conference in the summer for PGNs to support PGN leadership | January 2025 topic | • Connection and network between PGNs and PGNs and the advisory committee Leadership<br>• Innovation and Best Practices<br>• Supports and Resources<br>• Advocacy |
| Develop a promotion display that can be used at events where members could learn how to sign up online on our website<br>• Discuss website requirements for future<br>• Use QR code on a slide, table card, banner? | January 2025 topic | • Advocacy |

# Grants

## Basic Grants

Basic grant funds in the amount of $49,535 have been disbursed to 15 professional growth networks to date. This is 68 percent of the calculated grants as of April 30, 2025. The remaining networks have a deadline of June 30 to submit their documents or their funds will be forfeited for 2024-25.

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 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
   Support new and innovative professional growth opportunities for their membership.
2. Resource Development
   Assist a professional growth network in the development of resources.
3. Strategic Planning
   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. Criteria of special project grants include the following:

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 Professional Growth Network 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. Multiple applications by one PGN shall only be considered at the discretion of the Professional Growth Networks Advisory Committee. 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 all 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.

There are two application deadlines – December 31 and March 31.

The allotted budget for special project grants in 2024-25 was $9,000. This year there were five special project grant applications received from professional growth networks. The amount of grant funds awarded was $5,000. The amount paid to networks was $3,000 due to one network* having to cancel their event due to inclement weather, and another network** did not proceed with the previous year's project so the grant funds they received for that project were transferred to this year's special project.

## 2024-25 Special Project Grants Awarded

| Grant Year | PGN | Project Name | $ Requested | $ Awarded |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2025 | PHES | Health Educator Forum | $2,500 | $1,000 |
| 2025 | SAEA | Inspire and Share: A Provincial Art Educators' Resource Project | $1,000 | $1,000 |
| 2025 | SaskOutdoors** and SMTS | Math Outdoors | $1,000 | $1,000 |
| 2025 | SBTA* | Executive Committee Strategic Planning Retreat (this event was cancelled due to inclement weather) | $2,182.80 | $1,000 |
| 2025 | SHETA | Bridging the Gap: Updating and Developing SHETA Resources | $1,000 | $1,000 |

# Budget

Professional growth networks are funded in the General Fund. The advisory committee monitors network participation and growth to support the Federation's budget development process. The advisory committee also recognizes that future budget development will continue to balance actual and potential use. For the 2025-26 budget, we are targeting 500 additional members to select PGN memberships for an approximate total of 3,750.

The PGN Advisory Committee also anticipates a request for establishment for a new network to support substitute teachers in the 2025-26 year. This will impact the budget starting in 2026-27 in terms of a new basic grant as well as a membership grant.