

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### REVIEW OF DIVISION EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

#### Background:

Professional development is an essential component of teacher learning to ensure that students are receiving top quality instruction that aligns with provincial guidelines. As curriculum, standards, and school mandates evolve teachers must be current on best practices in teaching and learning. They receive this ongoing training through professional development.

#### History:

In the past 15 years professional development has been handled by the division in a number of ways. For the most part a combination of full day and part day professional development has been made available through the development of a division wide calendar which identifies the days and times students are in classrooms for instruction. Professional development activities occur during times when students are not in class but teachers are expected to be at work. Three years ago a process of embedded Professional Development was developed by a division committee of stakeholders from the Board of Trustees, school administrators and teachers as well as parents. A three year pilot was launched where school dismissed each Monday for one half hour before regular dismissal time and teachers engaged in compulsory school planned professional development. This type of approach is called embedded professional development.

#### Results:

The results of the project which improved consistently over the three years were very positive. The educational research on teacher learning and effective schools overwhelmingly promotes the embedded professional development model as a superior model of teacher training. In our division considerable data was collected (and is available on request) which demonstrates the following positive outcomes:

- steady increase in student achievement over the past three years
- significant increases in the number of students achieving excellence levels of achievement in the K – 9 grades
- significant increases in the number of times teachers collaborate with peers who teach similar subjects and grades to discuss teacher planning, assessment and teaching strategies.
- significant increases in the focus in division schools on interventions for individual students who are under performing.

-Very high satisfaction levels expressed by teachers and administrators that the embedded professional development has resulted in teachers improving their professional practice in classrooms.

Where to go from here?

A committee of stakeholders from the school board, central administration, school principals, teachers, the Alberta Teacher Association and parents have met three times and reviewed data collected on the topic of teacher professional development. Many rich discussions, well supported by educational research, took place and the committee came up with two recommendations to continue embedded PD is a way in which teachers and students benefit and parents can support. At this stage of the process the committee is seeking feedback on two proposals and invited all stakeholders to respond to the proposals and identify challenges that either proposal presents. The committee is also looking for creative suggestions from stakeholders that may help address any challenges posed by the recommendations.

You are encouraged to give feedback to your school council chairperson or to your school principal to be forwarded to the parent representatives on the division committee.