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Singapore American School Professional Learning Guidelines

Definition of “Professional Learning”

The term “professional learning” means a comprehensive, differentiated, and sustained approach to improving teachers’ and administrators’ effectiveness in optimizing student learning and achievement. Areas of focus for new and consolidated professional learning among adults include:

1. **Student Learning Strategic Plan** – areas of new learning within the Strategic Plan for Student Learning
2. **Student Learning Targets and Results based on School Curriculum** – improving student learning
3. **Division and/or Department Goals** – areas of new learning aligned to the Student Learning Strategic Plan, but unique to the division and/or department
4. **Individual Goals** – aligned to one or more of the three areas above

Adapted from *Learning Forward, formerly National Staff Development Council (2009); Becoming a Learning School. Joellen Killion and Patricia Roy. (2009).*

Professional Learning Principles

The Professional Learning Principles articulate research-based best practices regarding approaches to professional learning. The intent of the Principles is to guide expectations and design around quality approaches to professional learning.

1. Professional learning should clarify the ‘negotiable’ and ‘non-negotiable’ areas for learning and performance.
2. Professional learning should involve faculty and administrators in identifying and planning their own areas of learning based on student learning targets and results, the Student Learning Strategic Plan, curriculum implementation, division/department goals, and/or PLC goals.
3. Professional learning for ‘non-negotiable’ areas should provide differentiated opportunities for learning, practice, implementation, feedback, and reflection.
4. Professional learning should focus on analyses of the differences between actual student performance and the standards for student learning, as well as collaborative conversations about addressing the gaps.
5. Professional learning should provide opportunities to engage in review of current best practices in comparison with the practices currently utilized with the team or department.
6. Professional learning should be organized around collaborative problem-solving and considered a part of the regular work of teaching.
7. Professional learning should be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning and implementation of learning.
8. Professional learning opportunities should be assessed on the (a) ability to build new knowledge and skills for faculty and administrators, (b) impact on student learning and (c) impact on enhanced professional practice.


Conditions that Support Professional Learning

Professional learning fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and must be comprised of professional learning that:

1. Is aligned with rigorous subject area standards, as well as the Student Learning Strategic Plan;
2. Is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by well-prepared administrators, school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers, or other teacher leaders;
3. Considers context, process, and content for learning;
4. Is supported by designated, adequate, and planned use of time;
5. Primarily occurs through Professional Learning Communities among established teams of teachers, administrators, and other instructional staff members where the teams of educators meet frequently and engage in a continuous cycle of improvement.

To support and enhance the work of Professional Learning Communities, other Professional Learning opportunities are beneficial. These include:

- Coaches and Mentors
- Courses, workshops, institutes, conferences (offered by both internal and external experts)
- Self-Directed Learning (e.g., distance learning, class observation/site visit, participation in professional associations, writing for publication, reflective practices)
- Teacher Performance Review (TPR) and Administrator Performance Review processes

**APPROACHES TO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

I. **Professional Learning Communities**

**OVERVIEW**

A Professional Learning Community is a collaborative team that is guided by three questions focused on improved student learning:

1. What do we expect our students to learn?
2. How do we know they are learning it?
3. How will we optimize learning for each student?

To optimize adult learning as well as student learning, PLCs also need to ask themselves the following four questions about the learning that is taking place among its members:

1. What are the teacher learning goals within our PLC?
2. What is the evidence that our PLC is achieving its learning goals?
3. How will we support teachers who are struggling?
4. How will we recognize/utilize those teachers who are demonstrating mastery?

**EXPECTATIONS**

Professional Learning Communities establish explicit and prioritized expectations and outcomes for how collaborative time is to be used. Specific use of time includes:

- unit review and refinement – establish agreement on learning targets and common assessments; establish agreement on vertical alignment of curriculum and scope and sequence
- look at student work
- analyze data to improve student learning
- develop interventions for students who are struggling
- develop extensions for students who excel
- evaluate the quality of assessment tasks
- review and/or use of new resources (e.g., texts, technology, media)
- develop strategies to support new or on-going school programs (e.g., readers’ workshop)
- engage in professional development as directed by PLC goals (e.g., introduction of new ideas, processes, strategies, and challenge to existing dispositions)

*Adapted from American School of Doha*
II. Coaches and Mentors

OVERVIEW

One of the most powerful sources for professional learning is job-embedded, ‘just-in-time’ support by expert coaches and mentors. SAS currently has full-time coaches in the areas of educational technology, elementary literacy, and elementary science. SAS contracts coaches for elementary mathematics and middle school literacy.

Mentors are experienced master teachers who are assigned to support teachers new to SAS, so as to familiarize them with the school’s educational practices.

EXPECTATIONS

For areas of new learning, coaches and mentors may introduce, model, or collaborate on approaches in the classroom with the teacher. For reinforcement of learning and practice, coaches and mentors may interact with the teacher regularly until the knowledge or skill has been attained. Coaching may be requested by teachers and administrators, or suggested by the coaches. This structure is currently available in the areas of Literacy (PS-IS), Science (PS-IS), Math (external coach PS-IS), and Technology (IT coordinators in PS-HS, technology integration coaches in MS-HS). At SAS, mentoring support for new teachers ranges from informal to formal processes according to division.

III. Conferences, Workshops, Institutes, Courses

OVERVIEW

The intent of conferences, workshops, institutes, and courses is to generate increasing levels of understanding on a variety of educational topics related to the Student Learning Strategic Plan, with potential for depth within programs that are offered over an extended amount of time. Conferences focus on networking and building awareness on a topic or variety of topics. Workshops and institutes focus on building levels of knowledge and skill related to a topic. In addition to building knowledge and skills related to a topic, courses typically require opportunities for application, sharing and feedback.

EXPECTATIONS

SAS has an expectation that participation in a conference, workshop, institute and/or course will align to one or more of the following:

- Student Learning Strategic Plan
- Student Learning Targets and Results based on School Curriculum
- Division and/or Department Goals
- Individual Goals

Conference Participation Associated with the Subject Area Renewal Cycle: Rationale

The Office of Learning supports participation of subject area representatives in the relevant National Conferences of the U.S. Professional Associations one time during the Research and Recommendation Phase of the Subject Area Renewal Cycle as one of several channels for gathering information on latest developments in curriculum, assessment, instruction and resources within an American education. The information below outlines the details regarding procedures, expectations and funding for subject area national conference participants.

Conference Participation Associated with the Subject Area Renewal Cycle: Participants

For English, Math, Science and Social Studies, the Office of Learning typically supports two participants per division. For other subject areas, numbers are determined on a subject by subject basis. Prior to subjects entering the Research and Recommendations Phase, the Director of Curriculum will inform Principals how many conference participants the Office of Learning is able to support. Division Principals have the final say on whether this number is viable based on such considerations as adequate class coverage. If any division believes there is good reason to increase the number of participants beyond the designated number being sponsored by the Office of Learning, they should consult with the Assistant Superintendent for Learning.
Conference Participation Associated with the Subject Area Renewal Cycle: Process

Faculty members interested in participating in the conference should:
• Notify the Director of Curriculum
• Process a PD pre-approval form through their Division Principals

Conference Participation Associated with the Subject Area Renewal Cycle: Expectations

It is expected that by attending the national conference, conference participants will actively contribute to the Research and Recommendation Phase of the Subject Area Renewal Cycle in ways outlined below.

Prior to the Conference
• Check in with colleagues within their divisions about any interests or needs to investigate at the conference, including resources.
• Meet with the Office of Learning to discuss strategies and specific areas of focus relating to the subject that have emerged as divisional/schoolwide interests.
• Arrange and prepare for a substitute teacher through their division.

During the Conference
In support of identified areas of interest, while at the conference participants should:
• Identify exemplary curriculum by schools or the professional associations that may contribute to further development/refinement of SAS curriculum.
• Participate in conference workshops and keynotes to understand current trends and recommended practices, as well as programs and courses that might be worthy of consideration and record these to share.
• Review the vast number of classroom resources that are typically available on the vendor floor, identifying and, where possible, collecting samples of those that align to our school’s curriculum and have potential value as adopted purchases for SAS.
• Obtain contact information of any exemplary presenters or schools that may be helpful for SAS to network.

After the Conference
• Share curriculum models, current trends, school contacts and potential resources with the Director of Curriculum.
• Present relevant information to the subject area committee involved in Subject Area Renewal Cycle.
• Share ideas learned with divisional colleagues, including potential resources for adoption.
• Provide information on exemplary presenters to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning.

Conference Participation Associated with the Subject Area Renewal Cycle: Additional Notes
• Free samples of textbooks and other resources are typically available at these conferences. Vendors will frequently ship sample textbooks to SAS. Cost for this should be covered by the vendor. Where this is not possible, conference participants are encouraged to carry samples in their baggage. As a last resort, samples may be sent via Fed Ex, UPS or DHL. Alternatively, participants may give textbook information to the Director Curriculum for acquiring as part of the textbook adoption review.
• Additionally, the Office of Learning will provide reimbursement of up to U.S. $250 per division for any “teacher books” identified and purchased at the conference that participants think would be helpful for themselves and other teachers.

Conference Participation Associated with the Subject Area Renewal Cycle: Funding
The Office of Learning will provide full PD coverage for the subject area participants to attend the National Conferences of the U.S. Professional Associations. Full PD coverage includes:
• Payment for conference registration
• Round-trip economy flight
• Regular room in hotel
• Round-trip taxi for hotel-airport in the conference city
Additional Notes:

- The Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning will book round-trip economy flights for all participants. Individuals wishing to make alternative flight arrangements may do so and seek reimbursement, but will need to bear any expense in excess of the fare secured by the Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning.
- Participants will need to pay the conference hotel bill with credit card and then seek reimbursement.
- Meals and other incidental such as phone bills are not reimbursable.
- Some national conferences are held in the fall and some occur all the way into late spring. It is recommended that teachers process all of their registrations and arrangements in the fall, and then use their receipts upon return for reimbursement.
- In the case of national conferences that occur during the summer, the Office of Learning will fund domestic flights within the U.S.

**EARCOS Teachers’ Conference (ETC)**

EARCOS (East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools) is our regional educators’ organization made up of over 40 schools throughout this area. Annually, EARCOS facilitates a regional conference that is attended by teachers, counselors, library media specialists, etc. This conference is held at various locations throughout the region. The ETC is an opportunity to hear some of the foremost educators in the world, participate in workshops and network with colleagues in the region.

Faculty members are encouraged to present workshops. Workshop presenters are given additional funding for the ETC. Faculty interested in presenting a workshop should contact the SAS ETC teacher representative for the guidelines. Teachers wishing to present at the ETC will be paid a stipend when presenting their workshop at SAS prior to the conference.

SAS supports ETC attendance with funding in addition to the individual’s professional development fund. ETC registration is paid from SAS funds, as well as part or all of the airfare (depending upon the number of participants and the cost for airfare).

Personal professional development funds may be used for hotel accommodation (standard conference rate) at the ETC conference when it is held outside of Singapore. Receipts for taxi service (airport to hotel and hotel to airport) are also reimbursable. Food, drinks, and miscellaneous expenses are the responsibility of individual participants.

*Visit the EARCOS homepage for information about the ETC and upcoming EARCOS-sponsored workshops and conferences* <http://www.earcos.org>

**EARCOS Weekend Workshops and Conferences**

The East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools (EARCOS) sponsors a large number of weekend workshops and conferences each year, hosted by schools throughout the region. Suggested topics for these institutes are solicited from EARCOS schools each semester by the EARCOS executive director, who then arranges institute presenters and sites. Institute announcements are shared with the SAS faculty as soon as they are received from EARCOS and/or the hosting school. The number of teachers from each school permitted to attend any EARCOS Institute is dependent upon the number of participants permitted by the presenter and the demand. The general guideline is no more than four from a single school, but this has been increased in various circumstances.

SAS often acts as the host school for these workshops. Announcements are made to our entire faculty as soon as information is available, and attendance is on a first-come basis. When SAS hosts, we are permitted at least ten participants. Often more than that are able to attend, depending on the number of participants permitted by the presenter and the demand from other schools.

Teachers wishing to attend out-of-Singapore workshops should fill out the *Individual Professional Development Pre-Approval Form* (available from the Office of Learning or division secretaries) and submit it to the division principal for approval. If the principal approves, s/he will pass the form to the Office of Learning.
Occasionally, one of these workshops will require time away from the classroom. If this is the case and the principal approves, the teacher should apply for Professional Leave via the e-leave website http://eleave1.sas.edu.sg/eSolution/Login.aspx

Cost for EARCOS workshops and conferences out of Singapore include airfare, housing, and a registration fee. The cost for workshops hosted at SAS includes lunches and snacks. The registration fee is waived for SAS teachers when we host.

Professional development funds can be used to attend out-of-Singapore EARCOS workshops and conferences. Teachers attending out-of-Singapore EARCOS Institutes are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. Travel, accommodations and expenses will be reimbursed when receipts and proof of completion are presented.

**Singapore American School Workshops**

Singapore American School recognizes that there is much to be gained by tapping into the expertise of our teachers and administrators. Workshops presented by SAS teachers to SAS teachers are encouraged.

1. Course proposals for after-school workshops should be submitted to the division principal (if a divisional focus) or the Assistant Superintendent for Learning (if a schoolwide focus). Proposals should include:
   a. workshop title;
   b. name of presenter;
   c. dates of workshop;
   d. length/times of workshop;
   e. description of the workshop, including course objectives and expected learner outcomes;
   f. description of relevance to classroom instruction;
   g. minimum and maximum number of participants;
   h. target audience;
   i. additional information the instructor feels is important.

2. Following approval of the proposal, the division principal or Assistant Superintendent for Learning calendars the course, distributes relevant information to the professional staff, arranges use of facilities, and finalizes enrollment.

3. Upon completion of the course, the instructor certifies that each participant has attended all sessions, met the course objectives, completed the course assignments, and submitted a course evaluation.

4. A stipend for approved after-school workshops may be provided to instructors.

**On-Site Graduate Courses**

When possible, SAS hosts on-site graduate courses in education. SAS faculty or external consultants may teach these courses. Information regarding these courses is publicized at SAS and, in some cases, other international schools in Singapore. Costs for these courses depend on the fees of the university offering the courses.

**Consultants**

SAS hosts external consultants at various times throughout the school year. Usually they are part of our school's effort to support the Student Learning Strategic Plan or Division Goals. Consultants may work in classrooms, meet with teachers during planning times, and offer sessions after school for teachers interested in pursuing a topic. Publishing companies may send consultants in connection with book adoptions. These consultants may also work in the classroom as well as during planning times and after school.
IV. Self-Directed Learning (e.g., distance learning, class observation/site visit, participation in professional associations, writing for publication, reflective practices)

OVERVIEW

Self-directed learning provides opportunity for a staff member to design and implement his or her own learning plan. If there is a cost associated with the self-directed learning plan, individuals may be approved to use funds from their professional learning account for plans that are aligned with one of the following:

- Student Learning Strategic Plan
- Student Learning Targets and Results based on School Curriculum
- Division and/or Department Goals
- Individual Goals

EXPECTATIONS

SAS will provide support for self-directed learning plans related to individual professional goals as long there is continued focus on the Student Learning Strategic Plan, SAS Curriculum, and Division or Department Goals and those goals that are aligned with the goals of the PLC. Self-directed learning may be teacher initiated or may be based on dialogue and discussion with colleagues, administrators, and coaches.

V. Teacher Performance Review (TPR) and Administrator Performance Review Processes

OVERVIEW

Research shows that professional practice improves through reflection and interactive feedback. The SAS Teacher Performance Review (TPR) emphasizes both of these professional approaches. The TPR asks teachers to reflect on five main areas of practice: Focus on Learning; Instructional Practices; Collaborative Work; Professional Communication and Interaction; and Contribution to School Culture.

EXPECTATIONS

- In writing reflections, faculty is encouraged to reference the “Quality Characteristics” for describing strengths and areas for growth within written prompts.
- In addition to the interactive response between faculty and Supervising Administrators regarding this reflection process, Supervising Administrators will provide feedback with teachers about classroom observations and engage in various faculty conversations.
- Faculty will formally be involved in the TPR process every three years, unless on an improvement plan.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

I. Available Funds

The intent of the professional development fund is to help finance the cost of activities that have direct, tangible input on the specific duties of teachers.

1. Each teacher is eligible for S$850 to use for staff development each year. Part-time teachers or teachers hired for permanent employment after the start of the school year, will receive a prorated amount according to the actual time they are employed during the school year. Professional development funds are not available for employees who are on probation or temporarily employed and who may not be completing the school year. Professional development funds are not interchangeable with spouse or other SAS employees.

2. This money may be accumulated for four years to a maximum of S$3,400. The maximum amount a teacher can be reimbursed at any time for any activity or activities is S$3,400.
3. Professional development money may be spent for:
   a. EARCOS-sponsored workshops and conferences;
   b. subject area conferences;
   c. university course work;
   d. distance learning course work;
   e. summer workshops and seminars;
   f. professional association membership;
   g. professional memberships and journals;
   h. professional development materials (e.g., books, video and audiotapes on teaching methodology and strategies). Reimbursement from professional development funds cannot be made for the purchase of software programs, textbooks or materials for classroom (student) use;
   i. tuition, course materials, and lodging (standard hotel rates). Funds may be used for travel to regional workshops, intercontinental travel (see Item #4 below), or for domestic travel within the United States, as well as round-trip taxi service airport to hotel.
   j. other professional development activities approved by the Division Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Learning, and the Superintendent.

Note:
1) In order to be approved, professional development activities or purchases must be relevant to the faculty member’s current or future role at SAS;
2) Costs for travel in Singapore (e.g., gas, taxi, MRT) are not reimbursable.

4. The use of professional development funding for intercontinental travel shall not be authorized during summer holidays for overseas hire staff. However, the cost of actual regional or domestic airfare during the summer break is reimbursable.

5. The Office of Learning maintains records on the amount of money in each teacher's account. If you need information regarding your account, please call Ext. 6305.

6. Professional development funds are not available for faculty members who are on unpaid leave of absence from school. Reimbursement for approved activities will be made upon the faculty member’s return to work at SAS.

7. The unused professional development funds of a person leaving Singapore American School will revert back into the professional development budget. Unused funds cannot be added to the professional development balance of other faculty members.

8. Faculty not returning to SAS may apply for reimbursement (submit proof of completion and receipts) for work completed in the first semester from their professional development funds up until thirty days before their last day of employment at SAS. Application for use of professional development funds during an employee’s last semester of employment shall generally be limited to participation in the spring EARCOS Teacher Conference, in which case an individual may access their professional development fund (not to exceed S$850) for reimbursement of expenses that are not already covered by the school as it relates to economy flight and/or hotel.

II. Additional PD Funding Requests

1. During the budget process, a request for additional professional development funding support may be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning.
2. Requests for additional PD funding should be linked to a plan that has been requested and/or approved by administration, and that has clearly identified expectations for results.
3. During the budget review process, any requests for additional PD funding will require Assistant Superintendent for Learning support that the proposed request is of prioritized importance to the division and/or school.
4. Priority will be given to inviting consultants to present at SAS (if possible) wherever a number of faculty may be involved, rather than supporting travel outside the school.
5. If approved, additional PD funding will only be supported for the budgeted year. If there is a need for funding beyond a year, a new request will need to be submitted for the next budget year.
6. Individual PD accounts may be considered as contributing funds to requests for additional support.
III. Applying to Use Your Professional Development Fund

Applications for funding approval for professional development activities should be submitted at least one month before the schedule activity (May 15 for summer activities) when possible.

A. Workshops, Courses, Seminars and Conferences

To apply to use professional development funds for workshops, courses, seminars and conferences:

1. Complete the Individual Professional Development Pre-Approval Form from the Office of Learning or from the principals' secretaries at any of the school divisions.

2. Give the form to your division principal for his/her approval before the scheduled activity.

3. If the principal gives approval, s/he will pass the form to the Office of Learning. If the principal does not feel the program is appropriate, s/he will meet with the faculty member to discuss the proposal. The Superintendent will grant final approval.

4. Arrangements such as registration, transportation and hotels are the responsibility of the participant.

B. Professional Memberships, Subscriptions and Materials

Note: While there is no application deadline for funding approval requests for professional memberships, subscriptions and materials, please ensure that approval is obtained prior to making your purchases.

To apply to use professional development funds for professional memberships and professional development materials (for teaching methodology/strategies to include books, videotapes, audiotapes, etc.):

1. Complete the Individual Professional Development Pre-Approval Form from Office of Learning or from the principals' secretaries at any of the school divisions.

2. Give the form to your division principal for his/her approval.

3. If the principal gives approval, s/he will forward the form to the Office of Learning. If the principal does not feel the application is appropriate, s/he will meet with the faculty member to discuss the request. The superintendent will grant final approval.

4. Once the Office of Learning receives the form with all appropriate signatures, we will forward your professional membership and/or subscription application form to the organization with the check attached and deducts the fee from your professional development fund.

5. If you choose, you may pay for the membership or subscription yourself (after approval) and then be reimbursed from your professional development fund.

6. Sometimes a department may wish to order a professional membership as a group. The department chair/subject area head should fill out the form, with the membership in his/her name and submit it to the principal for approval. Once approved, the application should be submitted to the Office of Learning. The cost may be shared by those department members wishing to do so, and will be deducted from professional development funds as requested by the chair. This request should be sent to the Office of Learning in writing.

7. To apply for reimbursement for professional reference materials (books, videos and audiotapes), please attach a copy of the title(s) you wish to purchase to the Individual Professional Development Pre-Approval Form and submit to your division principal. Note: Approval for requests made for reimbursement after purchases have been made is at the discretion of the building Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Learning, and the Superintendent.
C. Reimbursement Guidelines

To receive professional development funds, the following information should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning within one month after the activity (September 30 for summer activities) when possible.

1. Evidence of your payment for the activity. Please provide official receipts. Provide a written itemization of submitted expenses; and

2. Evidence of your participation in the activity through one of the following: a certificate of participation, a university course grade report or transcript.

3. Funding is on a reimbursement basis. Costs will be reimbursed to the teacher when evidence of participation and receipts are presented to the Office of Learning. Reimbursement from professional development funds will not be made unless the teacher completes the entire workshop, course, etc., and provides proof of completion (e.g., a certificate of participation, a university transcript or course grade report). The teacher is responsible for documenting all costs through official receipts.

4. In order to be reimbursed, the Individual Professional Development Pre-Approval Form must be approved.

5. I.A.#3 on page 2 of the PD Handbook identifies the areas authorized for individual professional development funds to be used. Other than reimbursement for receipt of round-trip taxi service airport to hotel for out of Singapore trips, no other taxis or ground transportation receipts are reimbursable. Also food, beverages and personal expenses are not reimbursable. Finally, individual pd funds cannot be used for technology purchases or for purchase of classroom resources used by students – these are funded through budget reviews and adoptions by divisions and the school.

6. Reimbursement will be made at the currency exchange rate provided by the Business Office.

UNIT WRITING PROCEDURES

Process for requesting support for unit writing:

1. Unit writing is following the subject area renewal cycle, and is expected to begin in the development phase and continue through implementation. Quality units aligned to school curriculum is an expectation of good professional practice.

2. Once units are established in all subject areas, grade levels and courses, there is an expectation that these will continue to be upgraded on an annual basis by teachers and teams as part of their regular PLC work in improving student learning. Within these areas of revision and refinement, leave or stipends are not expected.

3. The Director of Curriculum, in consultation with the division administrators and teacher leaders, will establish where full development or substantial overhaul of units is needed.

4. Once substantial need for development of units has been verified by the Director of Curriculum, the division Principal and the Director of Curriculum will mutually determine skilled unit writers to complete the work within designated specifications and timelines. Unit writers will have participated in UbD training or demonstrated proficiency in an Understanding by Design unit writing model.

5. A designated Division Administrator and the Director of Curriculum or Director of Assessment will collaboratively review and validate the completed work.

Expectations for unit writers:

1. Unit writers will attend a 2 hour workshop prior to embarking on unit writing to ensure understanding of the process and expectations at SAS (inclusive of how to enter in Atlas as an option).

2. Unit writers will be knowledgeable about the UbD Guidelines, and will have expertise in the execution of these guidelines into units that enhance the learning within their subject areas.
3. Unit writers will collaborate with the Director of Curriculum or Director of Assessment at different points of development of units. For units developed during the summer, the Director of Curriculum or Director of Assessment will review the drafts at the beginning of the next school year for possible revisions.

4. Unit writers will collaborate with their teams at different points of development to ensure that the units are supported and workable.
   a. Prior to unit drafting, writers would work with team to identify map of units (including big concepts in each unit to be written).
   b. Post unit drafting, writers would share drafts to solicit feedback and then make any necessary revisions. For units developed during the summer, this would occur during the following school year.

5. Unit writers will use the UbD criteria for assessing the quality of their units and will also pursue peer assessment using the criteria.

6. Unit writers will provide their completed units to a designated Division Administrator and the Director of Curriculum or Director of Assessment for final review and validation.

7. Unit writers will transfer validated units into Atlas, and will continue making refinements as needed.

Subject areas exempt from unit writing:
1. K-5 Everyday Math
2. K-5 Foss in Science

**PROFESSIONAL LEAVE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

**Criteria for Participating in Professional Development During Student Contact Time:**

We are seeking to strike a balance that honors our commitment to maximizing the learning of our students with a commitment to support the professional learning of our staff. The Administrative Leadership Team has developed the following criteria as the basis for evaluating staff requests for involvement in professional development experiences that occur during student contact time.

1. The professional development experience must represent the opportunity for a staff member to acquire important knowledge and/or skills that are aligned with either a professional development goal or with a divisional or school priority.

2. The professional development experience is determined to add a level of value that “outweighs” the absence of the teacher from the classroom for the required period of time.

We will continue to support certain scenarios for professional development that may occur during student time. Some examples would be the following:

1. School or Division priority in which all faculty or a group of faculty are working to establish a consistent set of performance skills through a workshop/program offered at SAS as determined by the Division Principal and Assistant Superintendent for Learning.

2. Professional Learning Community practices that enhance performance skills within a School or Division priority area and may only be practical during the school day (e.g., Peer Observation) as determined by the Division Principal.
3. Faculty who are involved in the process of subject area renewal development with the Office of Learning.

4. Participation in an outside workshop, conference or other professional development experience where the program is not offered at SAS and where enhanced professional skills are aligned to one’s professional assignment, professional goals, and needs of the division as determined by the Principal, and approved by the Assistant Superintendent for Learning and the Superintendent.

**Requested Leave for Conferences:**

1. The school will pay, at its discretion, the salary and substitute pay for selected teachers requested and/or supported by administration to attend relevant, specified conferences.

2. Upon approval by administration, teachers may attend conferences as non-paid leave in addition to the use of their personal days when they reach maximum limits within the categories of leave, with the approval of the division principal and subject to the availability of substitute teachers.

3. If there are too many requests for a particular workshop, the principal will make the final decision regarding attendance.

4. Absences from school will be at the principal's discretion, depending upon substitute availability and overall impact on the normal instructional program. If the absence is approved, the school will pay substitute costs. It is the responsibility of the teacher to apply for Professional Leave via the e-leave website [http://eleave1.sas.edu.sg/eSolution/Login.aspx](http://eleave1.sas.edu.sg/eSolution/Login.aspx). They are also encouraged to report their planned absence to the Division Secretary to assure a substitute.

**Expectations for Teachers Receiving Paid Leave:**

Teachers attending conferences, courses or workshops and seminars who receive paid administrative leave shall be required to share materials and information with faculty as deemed appropriate by the Division Principal or Office of Learning. The general nature of this in-servicing obligation will be determined prior to the approval of the application.
TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LEAVE TO BE IDENTIFIED ON E-LEAVE REQUESTS

Professional Leave – Schoolwide Adoption Cycle (MAXIMUM 5 DAYS)
This category of Professional leave has been created to provide for release time in relation to school-wide curriculum writing/articulation, national conferences for subject area reps involved in Curriculum Adoption Cycle and has a required field to note what school-wide initiative this time is for (e.g., curriculum writing, national conference).

Professional Leave – Schoolwide Strategic Plan (MAXIMUM 5 DAYS)
This category of Professional leave has been created to provide for release time in relation to school wide work on Mission/Vision, Student Learning, Finance, Development/Advancement, Communications, Alumni Relations, Human Resources, Technology and has a required field to note what Strategic Plan objective this time is for (e.g., Technology).

Professional Leave - Division directed (MAXIMUM 5 DAYS)
This category of Professional Leave has been created to provide for release time in relation to division initiatives as it relates to division workshops, peer observations, or any other training/learning model that may be used by the division in relation to division areas of focus and has a required field to note what division initiative this time is for (e.g., literacy, math, science, technology). All division-directed PD requests that require out-of-class time need to be submitted on a PD Pre-Approval Form and approved by the division Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Learning, and the Superintendent. Upon approval, e-leave may be submitted by the teacher.

Professional Leave - Individual-Directed (MAXIMUM 3 DAYS)
This category of Professional Leave has been created to provide for release time in relation to personal professional goals and has a required field to note what professional goal this leave is for. All individual-directed PD requests that require out-of-class time need to be submitted on a PD Pre-Approval Form and approved by the division Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Learning, and the Superintendent. Upon approval, e-leave may be submitted by the teacher.

Professional Leave – Division Academic Prep (MAXIMUM 5 DAYS)
This category of Professional Leave has been created to provide for release time in support of academic programs and has a required field to note what division academic program this time is for, i.e., DRA scoring, grade level/subject unit writing (off curriculum cycle), Six Trait Writing prompts, team lesson study and review of student work.

Professional Leave – Extracurricular (MAXIMUM 10 DAYS)
This category of Professional Leave has been created to provide for release time in support of extracurricular program and has a required field to note what this time is for, i.e., exchange, IASAS, community service, Cultural Convention.

Professional Leave – School wide IT (MAXIMUM 5 DAYS)
This category of Professional Leave has been created to provide for release time in relation to IT initiatives that are schoolwide and has a required field to note what school-wide initiative this time is for (e.g., Google, IT conferences/workshops).

Appendix: Professional Learning Rubrics

The Professional Learning Rubrics are intended to guide the design, delivery, and evaluation of learning by designated professional learning facilitators.

The following rubrics provide guidance as to the level of quality in four outcomes of professional learning:

• Outcome 1: comprehensive, sustained, intensive professional learning
• Outcome 2: continuous cycle of improvement
• Outcome 3: evaluation of collaborative professional learning
• Outcome 4: school support for classroom implementation
Outcome 1: In a learning-focused school, the school leadership team, teacher leaders and coaches, teams of teachers, and individual teachers engage in effective professional learning.

**EFFECTIVENESS**
1.1 The school leadership team, teacher leaders and coaches, teams of teachers, and individual teachers engage in comprehensive and sustained professional learning to improve teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in improving student learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excelling</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in sustained, intentional, and comprehensive professional learning focused on improving student learning and teaching quality.</td>
<td>Engage in sustained, intentional, and comprehensive professional learning focused on improving student learning.</td>
<td>Engage in short-term, intentional, professional learning that results in increasing level of improved student learning.</td>
<td>Engage in scattered professional learning that results in some level of improved student learning.</td>
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</table>

**COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY**
1.2 The school leadership team, teacher leaders and coaches, teams of teachers, and individual teachers share collective responsibility for student learning.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work and learn together sharing collective responsibility so that each team contributes to the success of its students.</td>
<td>Work and learn together so that each individual team member can improve the success of his or her students.</td>
<td>Each teacher works independently to improve the success of his or her students.</td>
<td>Hold nonschool factors responsible for student performance.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TEAM CONFIGURATION**
1.3 The school leadership team, teacher leaders and coaches, teams of teachers and individual teachers meet in a variety of team configurations over time addressing specific goals for teacher and student learning.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet in a variety of team configurations over time, addressing specific goals for teacher and student learning, including grade-level, department, or course teams with members who share common curriculum or students, or project teams for school improvement.</td>
<td>Meet in a variety of team configurations over time, addressing specific goals for teacher and student learning, including grade-level, department, or course teams.</td>
<td>Work independently addressing specific goals for teacher and student learning.</td>
<td>Work independently without focus on specific goals for teacher and student learning.</td>
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</table>

**FREQUENCY**
1.4 The school leadership team, teacher leaders and coaches, teams of teachers, and individual teachers make time for professional learning several times per week.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet several times each week within the school day for teacher collaborative team meetings and periodic whole-school collaboration.</td>
<td>Meet weekly within the school day for teacher collaborative team meetings and periodic whole-school collaboration.</td>
<td>Meet several days per school year within the school day for teacher collaborative team meetings and whole-school collaboration.</td>
<td>Meet outside the school day for teacher collaborative meetings and whole-school collaboration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome 2: Learning teams use a cycle of continuous improvements to refine teaching quality and improve student learning.

DATA ANALYSIS
2.1 Learning teams engage in ongoing data analysis of teacher action and student performance to determine school, educator, and student learning goals.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Analyze student achievement and demographic data at the school, team, and classroom levels to identify student strengths and weaknesses to set annual goals for student growth and teacher learning;</td>
<td>• Analyze student achievement data at the school, team, and classroom levels to identify student strengths and weaknesses to set annual goals for student growth and teacher learning;</td>
<td>• Analyze student achievement data at the school level to identify student strengths and weaknesses to set annual goals for student growth and teacher learning;</td>
<td>• Analyze student achievement data at the school level to identify student strengths and weaknesses to set annual goals for student growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analyze student achievement and demographic data at the school, team, and classroom levels several times throughout the school year to measure progress toward annual goals for student and teacher learning, to set benchmark goals for teacher and student learning, and to make ongoing adjustments in both goals and strategies for attaining the goals.</td>
<td>• Analyze student achievement data at the school, team, and classroom levels several times throughout the school year to measure progress toward annual goals for student and teacher learning, to set benchmark goals for teacher and student learning and to make ongoing adjustments in both goals and strategies for attaining the goals.</td>
<td></td>
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STUDENT LEARNING GOALS
2.2 Learning teams set SMART goals (i.e., specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, time-bound) for student learning:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write annual and benchmark SMART goals for student achievement based on school, team, and classroom data to guide their planning and improvement efforts and revise those goals throughout the school year.</td>
<td>Write annual SMART goals for student achievement based on school, team, and classroom data to guide their planning and improvement efforts.</td>
<td>Receive annual SMART goals for student achievement to guide their planning and improvement efforts.</td>
<td>Receive annual goals for student achievement to guide their planning and improvement efforts.</td>
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</table>

EDUCATIONAL LEARNING GOALS
2.3 Teams write goals for educator learning aligned with student learning goals.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write annual professional learning goals for the school and teams aligned</td>
<td>Write annual professional learning goals for the school aligned with</td>
<td>Use district professional learning goals to guide adult learning within the</td>
<td>Use topics rather than goals to guide professional learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
with student learning goals and revised mid-year needed.

DIVERSE INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

2.4 Learning teams select or develop research-based, coherent, classroom-centered differentiated instruction and interventions for student learning.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and/or develop research-based, coherent, classroom-centered differentiated instruction and interventions for student learning that align with team and student learning goals and focus on the school’s instructional framework for teaching quality.</td>
<td>Identify and/or develop research-based, coherent, classroom-centered differentiated instruction and interventions for student learning that align with team and student learning goals.</td>
<td>Identify and/or develop research-based, coherent, classroom-centered differentiated instruction and interventions for student learning that align with team and student learning goals.</td>
<td>Identify and/or develop non classroom- and non school-centered differentiated instruction and interventions for student learning.</td>
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</table>

JOB-EMBEDDED SUPPORT

2.5 The school leadership team, teacher leaders and coaches, and team members provide ongoing support at the classroom level to implement educator learning to increase student achievement.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently engage in focused review of external sources and more formal professional development opportunities to develop theoretical understanding for implementation of improved practices.</td>
<td>Regularly engage in focused review of external sources and more formal professional development opportunities to develop theoretical understanding for implementation of improved practices.</td>
<td>Occasionally engage in a scattered approach in the review of external sources and more formal professional development opportunities to develop theoretical understanding for implementation of improved practices.</td>
<td>Seldom engage in review of external sources and more formal professional development opportunities to develop theoretical understanding for implementation of improved practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

2.6 The school leadership team, teacher leaders and coaches, and team members engage in review of external sources (e.g., professional associations, external experts, networks) and engage in more formal professional development opportunities (e.g., workshops, institutes, conferences, courses) as needed to develop theoretical understanding for implementation of improved practices.

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<td>Occasionally engage in a scattered approach in the review of external sources and more formal professional development opportunities to develop theoretical understanding for implementation of improved practices.</td>
<td>Seldom engage in review of external sources and more formal professional development opportunities to develop theoretical understanding for implementation of improved practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome 3: In learning-focused schools, the school leadership team, teacher leaders, coaches, and teacher teams evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning to seek improvements.

ONGOING EVALUATION
The school leadership team, teacher leaders, coaches, teams of teachers, and individual teachers evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning on an ongoing basis.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in ongoing evaluation using multiple sources of data (e.g., disaggregated student learning, program, and perception data) to reflect, assess, and respond to: • professional learning; • student learning; • group effectiveness; and • individual members’ contribution to teams.</td>
<td>Engage in regular evaluation using multiple sources of data (e.g., disaggregated student learning, program, and perception data) to reflect, assess, and respond to: • student learning; • group effectiveness; and • individual members’ contribution to teams.</td>
<td>Engage in intermittent evaluation using multiple sources of data (e.g., disaggregated student learning, program, and perception data) to reflect, assess, and respond to: • student learning; • group effectiveness.</td>
<td>Engage in intermittent evaluation to reflect, assess, and respond to student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcome 4: In learning-focused schools, principals, teacher leaders, coaches, and teacher teams support the transfer of learning from professional learning communities to the classroom.

CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION
In learning-focused schools, teachers transfer their learning from professional learning communities to their classroom and reflect on the effectiveness.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning • Adapt instruction to align with student learning needs and goals; • Reflect on individual student progress toward learning goals.</td>
<td>Student Learning • Adapt instruction to align with student learning needs and goals; • Reflect on individual student progress toward learning goals.</td>
<td>Student Learning • Reflect on individual student progress toward learning goals.</td>
<td>Student Learning • Reflect on individual student progress toward learning goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning • Reflect on progress toward professional learning goals • Gather data from the classroom to share with the team to assess effectiveness of the application of new learning</td>
<td>Professional Learning • Reflect on progress toward professional learning goals</td>
<td>Professional Learning • Reflect on progress toward professional learning goals</td>
<td>Professional Learning • Reflect on progress toward professional learning goals</td>
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</table>

Adapted from Becoming a Learning School by Joellen Killion and Patricia Roy (2009).
INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRE-APPROVAL FORM

To apply for use of individual professional development funds, this pre-approval form should be submitted to your Principal at least one month before the scheduled activity (May 15 for summer workshops). Complete approval is determined by the Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Superintendent. One copy of this form will be returned to the faculty applicant after administrator review.

Individual PD money may be used for payment on Courses, Degree or Certification Programs, Workshops, Conferences, Professional Resources and Professional Association Membership. PD outside of Singapore may include reimbursement of receipts for registration, economy flight, and standard hotel rate, taxi service from airport to hotel and hotel to airport (not food/beverage, taxis, or personal expenses). Individual PD funds cannot be used for technology purchases or for purchase of classroom resources used by students – these are funded through budget reviews by divisions and the school. See the SAS Professional Development Handbook in the SAS Shared Folder for details on pd opportunities and use of pd funds. Faculty may call the Office of Learning at 6305 for an update on individual pd funds available.

1. PD Information
   Name: __________________________ Grade/Subject: __________________________
   Application Date: ________________ Title of Activity: __________________________ Dates Out of School Incl. Travel: ________________
   Type of Leave (# of days): school goals ______ division goals ______ individual goals ______ personal days ______
   Location: ______________________ Sponsor: __________________________ Estimated Total Cost: __________________________
   Substitute Teacher Required?: ______ (if a Substitute Teacher is required, arrangements to be made through division office)

2. Identify Goal Area Supported by this PD Request (check or describe)
   A Goal Area may be a School Goal, Division Goal or Individual Professional Goal (only one area need be identified).

   School Goals (5-year Strategic Plan)
   ≈ Curriculum Cycle/Classroom Units
   ≈ Assessment/Use of Data
   ≈ Differentiated Instruction
   ≈ Technology Integration
   ≈ Integrated Learning (e.g., SAS Focus on Learning, Service Learning, Global Issues)

   Division Goals
   Identify Goal Area (if different from School Goal Area):

   Individual Professional Goals
   Identify Goal Area (if different from School or Division Goal Area):

3. Professional Learning Community: How will you share your learning from this Professional Growth experience with your colleagues?

4. Administrator Review of PD Request (for completion by administrators only)

   Professional Growth Support
   Principal Signature/Date
   Asst. Supt. of Learning Signature/Date
   Superintendent Signature/Date
   Approved
   Not Approved
   Notes:

Reimbursement of Professional Development Funds

1. The Office of Learning must receive evidence of payment for approved pd activities (within one month after the activity – August 31 for summer activities) through receipts, canceled checks or credit card statement. Provide a written itemization of submitted expenses.

2. By policy, SAS does not provide access to pd funds for non-returning staff members in the semester prior to their departure, except for access to the EARCOS Teacher Conference or through approval by the Superintendent.