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Professional Development Program
for
Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Background

It is the role of the Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing (POPDHH) to support school districts and educational teams in meeting the unique academic, cognitive, linguistic and social-emotional needs of the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) demographic province-wide.

The POPDHH recognizes that the 1,300+ students identified as DHH in BC schools have diverse and unique learning and social needs. It is also important to note that 50% of Itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (TDHH) work in isolation. Teachers working in isolation do not have the same amount of exposure to ongoing professional development opportunities and daily/weekly support when compared with teachers working in large inner-city schools with access to resource teams, district support and access to other peers in their field.

For decades, the education system in Canada has experienced a shortage of qualified TDHHS, visual language interpreters, and qualified education assistants with skills in sign language and knowledge of the unique needs and learning challenges of students who are DHH. BC has felt similar constraints and the effects are seen in the educational programming practices for children who are DHH throughout the province.

Program Outline

With the implementation of a Professional Development Program for TDHHS, the POPDHH and school districts will work collaboratively to address the following needs and concerns:

- Decrease teacher isolation by encouraging and supporting collaboration
- Provide opportunities for teacher leadership within the province
- Retain more teachers (or TDHHS) in the field of deaf education
- Provide access to professional development and a forum for teachers to connect with other colleagues through professional conversations and activities

TDHHS report a need for continued and increased professional support in relation to:

- Assessment
- Development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Programming development for students based on their IEPs
- Social-emotional programming for youth who are DHH
- Use of assistive communication devices and augmentative communication programs for students with communication challenges due to physical or cognitive impediments (hardware & software technologies)
- Meeting the unique needs of multiply challenged children who are DHH

- Meeting the needs of students with cochlear implants and their changing needs at different stages of academic, socio-emotional, cognitive and linguistic development
- Access to resources and opportunities for collaboration
- Strategies for communicating with educational teams and parents
- Exploring instructional strategies for 1-1 student support
- Access to ongoing professional development through workshops and conferences related to the field
- Current research developments and instructional practices in the education of students who are DHH

Teachers involved in the development program should possess the following skills and attributes:

- Interest and willingness to continue professional development
- Background and experience in using or desire to learn varied communication modes including oral, signed, augmentative communication systems
- Interest and willingness to give personal and professional time to this project
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Interest and willingness to share and develop leadership skills
- Assume leadership role as a TDHH within their districts and in the province

Framework for the Teacher Development Program

The Ministry of Education supports the implementation of a professional development program for TDHs. The POPDHH will be responsible for the implementation and delivery of the program. Teachers choosing to be involved in the program will be expected to have the support of their district administrator.

This cohort's Professional Development Program will consist of 10 - 14 teachers including at least 5 TDHs with less than 5 years experience and 5 TDHs with at least 8 years of experience in the field of deaf education. Working groups will be comprised of both new and experienced teachers. Teachers will have the opportunity for professional development and collaboration in a variety of ways including:

- Whole group professional development two or three times per year, over three-day periods
- On years with only two large group, in-person meetings, the teachers will be assigned to dyads. Each partner will visit their colleague to learn about another district, their partner's caseload management strategies, helpful resources, etc.
- Attendance at professional conferences locally and abroad on a per request basis
- Working groups involved in particular action plans are expected to meet on an ongoing basis through the year via email, telephone, internet, or in-person
- Attendance at webinars

- Working groups or individual members of groups be available to support and work with other teachers around the province in the form of collaborative efforts or provision of in-service and/or mentorship

Participation in the Teacher Development Program requires travel around the province. Districts will be expected to support this travel. To this end, we request that districts make some contribution to the travel costs required for this participation. The extent of this contribution is left respectfully to the individual district administration. At a minimum, the districts will be requested to cover local mileage (for distances less than 100km), local parking and baggage fees.

Please direct any questions you may have regarding this program to Terry Maloney, Vice Principal, POPDHH by emailing Terry@popdhh.ca.

Guidelines for Expenditures

The following guidelines are offered in considering participation in the program:

1. Teachers involved are expected to have full district support for release time to participate in workshops, webinars, action groups and conferences (as outlined above).
2. Teachers are expected to commit to the group and prioritize these meetings in their schedule (even above caseload or local district staff commitments). The objective of this group is to share resources and develop skills so teachers can be as efficient as possible.
3. TOC costs will not be provided.
4. Teachers involved should be willing to contribute their own personal time in addition to paid time in their respective districts. This may be in the form of travel time, collaborative time to any of the above program events, or attending conferences abroad at their request. Teachers will also be expected to take a leadership role, sharing resources and delivering training to colleagues in their home districts.
5. Provincial Outreach Program will cover most costs associated with participation. District contribution to travel costs, over and above local mileage and parking, is appreciated.
6. Mileage may be paid at the current Burnaby District rate, (for distances longer than 100 km; shorter distances will be reimbursed through local district). If driving alone, air equivalent reimbursement may apply rather than mileage (the lesser of two costs will apply). *When two or more persons are travelling from the same region, it is expected that participants will respect the high costs of travel and car-pool whenever possible.

7. When planning flight travel, participants will make every attempt to book flights in a timely manner. Provincial Outreach will not cover extraordinary flight costs due to late bookings without prior consent from the POPDHH Vice Principal.
8. When travelling abroad and accommodations are required, POPDHH will arrange hotel bookings. Provincial government rates must be obtained where possible.
9. Parking will be reimbursed at the long-term parking lot rate. Parking at airports will be covered by local districts.
10. Original receipts must be provided for all claims for reimbursement, along with a POPDHH expense form. Contact us at office@popdhh.ca for expense and EFT forms, and assistance with submitting.
11. When meals are not provided at an event, meal reimbursement will be provided as follows:
 - Breakfast \$10
 - Lunch \$15
 - Dinner \$25

In this case, the meal receipts are not required.
Participants cannot claim meals provided for them.

If you are interested in participating in the Teacher Mentorship Program, please complete the application form on our website www.popdhh.ca/forms.

Sincerely,

Terry Maloney
Vice Principal
Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing