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A Comprehensive 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

The Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing (POPDHH) provides support to 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. In order to directly address the known challenges facing Deaf Education, the POPDHH has developed a comprehensive professional development program with various opportunities to foster collegiality, promote learning, build capacity and influence educational practices across the province.

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 (TDHs) 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 TDHs, 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.

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.

With the implementation of a Professional Development Program for TDHs, 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 TDHs) in the field of deaf education
- Provide opportunities for TDHs to be key stakeholders in shaping Deaf education in BC
- Provide access to professional development and a forum for teachers to connect with other colleagues through professional conversations and activities

This cohort's Professional Development Program will have two streams: Induction and Retention, and Professional Community. In addition, educators are welcome to opt-in to complementary programming offered online.



Mentorship

TDHH Professional Community

The members of this exclusive working group will be key stakeholders in identifying unique aspects of Deaf Ed in BC, and will work together with POPDHH and the Ministry of Ed to develop tools or resources that will support provincial initiatives. The group will connect online between in-person meetings to work toward the chosen goal or project. This is an opportunity to develop leadership skills, influence Deaf Ed at a provincial level, and make professional connections.

TDHH Induction & Retention

TDHH Stewards will be paired with participants to provide targeted professional development. Participants and Stewards will identify goals or topics that they would like to cover, and plan to schedule twice-monthly points of contact. There is a budget for travel (which is optional), and for materials, resources or training that are required to meet objectives that are identified.

Year 1

September



In-person meeting:
Develop group goals, timeline, roles and responsibilities.

Optional in-person meeting for stewards to review the guiding documents.



October - March



Regular online contact working towards goals defined by the group.

Partners meet virtually on an agreed upon schedule to develop goals and review resources.



April



In-person meeting:
Review goals and share progress.

Virtual meeting. Review goals, reflect and plan for year 2.



Year 2

September



In-person meeting.
Continue to work towards goals.

Visit steward or participant's district or meet virtually.



October - March



Regular online contact working towards goals defined by the group.

Virtual meeting and regular contact between partners.



April



In-person meeting.
Finalize project, review, reflect, and share out.

Optional in-person meeting for stewards to review, reflect and plan for future cohorts.



<h3>Lunch and Learn</h3> <p>Monthly Pro-D Workshops</p>	<p>Ongoing mentorship opportunities available for all TDHHs</p>	<h3>Journal Club</h3> <p>Critically appraise journal articles</p>
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Induction and Retention

The Induction and Retention group will consist of dyads of TDHHs consisting of a Steward and a Participant. Stewards will be chosen based on their past involvement in the program as POPDHH district partners. Stewards will be paired with Participants to provide targeted professional development. Participants and Stewards will identify goals or topics that they would like to cover, and plan to schedule twice-monthly points of contact (by email, phone or web-meeting). There is a budget for travel (which is optional), and for materials, resources or training that are required to meet objectives that are identified. Stewards have the option to meet in person at the beginning and end of the program to collaborate and plan for resources to share with Participants and join leadership development opportunities. The TDHH dyads will meet virtually and work through guiding planning documents and a provided TDHH toolkit. Participants will also have the opportunity for an optional visit to their Steward's district or vice-versa. The goal of these visits is to learn about another district, their partner's caseload management strategies, helpful resources, etc.

Professional Community

The members of this exclusive working group will be no more than 6 teachers who are key stakeholders in identifying unique aspects of Deaf Ed in BC. This group will work together with POPDHH and the Ministry of Ed to identify goals and develop tools or resources that will support provincial initiatives. The group will meet in-person in September and April of each year, and connect online between in-person meetings to work toward the chosen goal or project. This is an opportunity to develop leadership skills, influence Deaf Ed at a provincial level, and make professional connections. The group will work in collaboration with the POPDHH to share the culmination of their work in written and presented formats as appropriate.

Complementary Programming

In addition to targeted or intensive opportunities to participate in growing the field of Deaf Education in BC, POPDHH is offering the opportunity for educators and community service providers to opt-in to low/no barrier programming. This programming will be accessed on the basis of interest in individual topics, without travel or registration costs, and minimal time commitment.

Lunch and Learn Monthly webinars and interactive virtual workshops

Journal Club Critically appraising current research and discussing practical applications

Bursaries District partners may submit a request for a bursary to defray the cost of registration or travel for professional development. The proposal should include learning goals, amount being requested and a detailed plan for sharing the learning with POPDHHs network of professionals.

Participation in the Teacher Development Program may require 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.

Registration

If you are interested in participating in the Teacher Mentorship Program, please complete the application form on our website www.popdhh.ca/forms. Questions can be directed to office@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. POPDHH 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, airfare equivalent reimbursement may apply rather than mileage (the lesser of two costs will apply). *When two or more persons are traveling from the same region, it is expected that participants will respect the high costs of travel and car-pool whenever possible.
7. When planning air 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 traveling abroad and accommodations are required, POPDHH will arrange hotel bookings. Provincial government rates must be obtained where possible.
9. 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 per-diem amounts when meals are provided for them.