

Meriwether Lewis Parent Teacher Organization Professional Development Fund

Description

The *Meriwether Lewis Parent Teacher Organization (MLS PTO) Professional Development Fund* is a fund sustained by the generosity of the Meriwether Lewis PTO as an investment in the growth and development of teaching excellence. The purpose of the *Meriwether Lewis PTO PD Fund* is to provide every Meriwether Lewis Elementary School teacher with professional development opportunities and expanded access to the highest level of professional development.

Purpose

In 2014, Meriwether Lewis Elementary School embraced the theme of “Explore. Play. Learn.” At the core of the theme was a desire to provide all students the opportunities to explore their passions, play in both structured and unstructured environments, and learn at the highest levels. In order to achieve this, it is vital to provide teachers the same opportunities to explore, play, and learn. By establishing the *MLS PTO Professional Development Fund*, the Meriwether Lewis administration and PTO are making a commitment to the development, recruitment, and retention of the finest teachers possible.

Eligibility and Approval Process

- Only employees classified as “teachers” and “administrators” of Meriwether Lewis Elementary School are eligible to apply for funding.
- Teachers will be divided into 3 groups according to their last name:
 - Group 1 – A-G
 - Group 2 – H-O
 - Group 3 – P-Z
- Every three years, every teacher in a given group will have access to up to \$1,200 worth of funds to be spent directly on attending and/or presenting at local or national conferences. Any increase in funding must be approved by the MLS PTO Board.
- Access to funds would begin with Group 1 on July 1, 2015, Group 2 on July 1, 2016, and Group 3 on July 1, 2017. This rotation complements the evaluation cycle established by the Albemarle County Public School.
- Access to funds begins on July 1 of the given year and is available for use for three years. (For example, if teachers in Group 1 gain access to the funds on July 1, 2015, each teacher has until June 30, 2018 to use all of his/her funds.)
- A part-time teacher may access the amount of money commensurate with his/her part-time status. For example, a .5 teacher may access up to \$600.

- If a teacher's employment status changes year to year, so will the amount made available. For example, if a teacher was full-time in the first year of eligibility, and then became .5 the next year, \$600 would be available during the second year, unless it had already been spent during the first year when \$1,200 was available. Likewise, if a teacher was .5 and had \$600 available during the first year of eligibility, but became .75 the next year, a total of \$900 would be available. If the teacher spent all \$600 during the first year, only \$300 would be available the next.
- Any unused funds after each three-year cycle will remain in the PTO Professional Development Fund but may be returned to the PTO General Fund by vote of the PTO Board.
- In order to access the funds, teachers must complete a MLS PTO Professional Development Fund Application form and have it approved by the principal prior to attendance.

Expense Reimbursement Procedure

- Funds are to be used only for expenses related to travel, food, lodging, and fees for an approved conference. Food related expenses should not exceed \$40 per day and may not include alcoholic beverages.
- After approval, and as expenses are incurred, teachers should complete an MLS PTO Professional Development Fund Expense Reimbursement Form so as to document expenses and be reimbursed for them on a timely basis.
- Forms should be submitted to the MLS PTO Treasurer. More than one form may be submitted for a single conference, should an attendee wish to be reimbursed for pre-trip expenses (such as airfare and registration fees) before traveling and other expenses (such as hotel, meals, and parking) upon return.
- The MLS PTO Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer will be responsible for managing the MLS PTO Professional Development Fund. Every attempt will be made to issue reimbursements within seven (7) days of receipt of the form and receipts.
- Teachers are requested to submit a brief write-up/summary of the conference after attendance. The summary could include benefits of the conference, key learning points, and/or new tools and strategies to be implemented.
- PTO Communications will maintain a webpage that will highlight the conferences funded by the MLS PTO Professional Development Fund. Teachers' summaries of conferences will be included here and will be helpful in promoting the Professional Development Fund among the parent community year after year.