Overview of Micro-Credentials

What is a micro-credential in Kettle Moraine?
A micro-credential is demonstrated, applied learning. It is
● aligned to the district’s vision, mission, and charge,
● personalized,
● specific to the educator’s context and applied within that context, and
● pre-approved and verified.
A micro-credential will impact an employee’s compensation if acceptance and submission process are successfully met.

Does all learning have to go through a micro-credential process?
● No, all learning does not have to be treated as a micro-credential. The district encourages ongoing learning at all levels of the organization. Learning may occur informally throughout one’s work, during inservice and through common planning times within the context of job responsibilities. Sometimes learning occurs through formal delivery methods such as university coursework and sometimes learning occurs through action research and collaboration.

Does everyone have to pursue micro-credentials to be held in good standing?
● No, micro-credentials are not a requirement. They provide an opportunity to recognize the continuous learning that is inherent in the education profession. They also provide a vehicle for demonstrating progress to PPG’s (a requirement for all teachers) and could be used in a teacher’s PDP for renewing a teaching license. Teacher learning and work can or support micro-credentials, PPGs and PDPs.

Will this process lead to a “competitive setting” in our district?
● Micro-credentials are designed to recognize, reward, and reinforce collaboration, to the best of our ability. We believe that collaborating on professional development will minimize competition and is a better direction than tying compensation to the Educator Effectiveness process, to student test scores or other academic measures.

Application Process

What is the process for earning a micro-credential?
A micro-credential must be
● pre-approved by the District committee,
• verified through submission of student and teacher artifacts, and
• awarded by the District committee once determined to be complete.

Once the micro-credential has been awarded, the amount of compensation tied to the micro-credential is added to the educator’s base salary. This increase remains in the base salary for an individual and compounds in subsequent years.

What are the different tiers of micro-credentials?

Tier 1: District pays none of the costs and learning occurs on non-contract time. This tier of micro-credential is driven by the individual educator and results in the highest level of compensation added to base salary.
  • Courses leading to a Master’s degree or PhD
  • Courses leading to a reading specialist license
  • Internships or externships
  • Learning groups that meet outside of the school day.

Tier 2: District pays for registration and learning occurs on non-contract time. This tier of micro-credential is encouraged by the district and the educator. It will receive less compensation than Tier 1 micro-credentials due to partial funding by the district.
  • PLTW or AP training (only if the training is not paid by the district)
  • Training that would lead to CAPP/PIE/WCTC Dual Certification
  • Conferences that occur over a weekend or in summer.

Tier 3: District pays for all and learning occurs during contract time. This tier of micro-credential does not result in additional compensation added to base, but the employee receives recognition for earning the micro-credential.
  • AP refresher training
  • Specialized reading intervention training (Orton Gillingham, Wilson, Read 180, Reading Recovery

How do I submit an application for a micro-credential?

• There are two distinct steps in the micro-credential process.
  ○ The first is the pre-approval application. Applicants will describe the intended learning, scope of learning, alignment to district vision and plan for applying learning. This application can be accessed on the intranet, [here](http://example.com). Notice that the dates the pre-approval window is open will be communicated to all staff and will include a link to the application.
  ○ The second step is submission application. Applicants will share artifacts and evidence of teacher learning and student impact. Reflection of teacher and students is a key component. This application can be accessed on the intranet, [here](http://example.com).

• Once the application window closes, a committee reviews all applications.
• You will receive notice of acceptance OR rationale explaining why your pre-approval submission was not accepted at this point in time.

December, 2015
• If resubmission is necessary before approval would be granted, areas needing additional detail or clarification will be identified.

Do you have examples of a micro-credential application?
• Examples of completed micro-credential applications are available on the intranet, here

Can I submit an action-research plan and apply for a micro-credential based on a course I've already taken?
• It is intended that micro-credentials recognize new learning. Because some teachers have continued to advance their credentials in the absence of a formal system of recognition, there will be a 2 year look-back window, beginning fall 2014 and sunsetting end of year 2016. During this window you can make an application for a micro-credential, based on prior learning. Application does not automatically lead to approval. The submission would be subject to the approval process described below. After May of 2016, only learning that was pre-approved using this micro-credential process will be eligible for submission. Learning that occurred prior to employment in KM, even if it falls in the window listed above, is not able to submitted for a micro-credential.

Are undergraduate classes looked at the same as graduate classes if teachers are in a program for a new license or are just enriching their educational experience?
• Undergraduate courses may be appropriate, just as graduate level courses may be inappropriate. If the coursework aligns in supporting the district’s mission, vision, and goals, undergraduate work would definitely be considered, especially if enriching the license of the teacher and his/her ability to meet the needs of the district. Each learning opportunity will be looked at independently with an emphasis on how the learning is applied to impact students.

Can a teacher teaching other teachers be considered a micro-credential?
• Yes, it is possible for a teacher to apply for a micro-credential for teaching other District employees. In this circumstance the “student impact” portion of the application will refer to the teachers who are the receivers of the applicant’s learning.

Can teachers submit an application as a group or team?
• Yes, teachers can submit applications as a group or team. Pre-approvals may be done as a group. Submissions must be done individually. Care must be taken to show that each teacher learned and is able to independently apply that learning with students.
• There will also be opportunities to take part in district-advertised, pre-approved micro-credentials. These will be communicated via email and will also be on our intranet.

When are applications due?
• Each fall the Teaching & Learning office will publish the windows for pre-approval and submission.

December, 2015
How many micro-credentials can I apply for during one submission cycle?
- Currently, there is not a limit stipulated. The number of submissions will be monitored and may be considered during the approval process.

Can teachers on the top of the pay scale apply for micro-credentials?
- Yes, all teachers are eligible to apply for micro-credentials.

What is the timeline to complete if my first submission isn’t successful?
- If feedback suggests major changes are required the committee will provide guidance.
- If feedback suggests minor changes are required, a one week deadline will be in place.

Do teachers need pre-approval before starting a Master’s program (separate from approval for a micro-credential for that work)?
- The District no longer requires pre-approval for a Master’s program. The District is not as interested in the degree as it is in the learning process and how that learning is applied in KM. However, teachers should feel free to discuss Master’s programs with the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning to see how specific programs align with the District’s vision, mission, and goals.

Approval Process

Who grants approval?
- Under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, a pool of committee members will be formed. The Assistant Superintendent T&L will train the committee on process and purpose. The committee will reflect educators across grade levels, content areas, demonstrating a mix of experience levels.

Why does the approval process require in-depth documentation? Does the District trust me that I have learned the micro-credential?
- Micro-credentials are an adult version of competency-based learning. The District does not prescribe the amount of time or the method of learning that is most effective for educators. Rather, based on demonstration of the competency, the micro-credential is awarded. Unlike University credits that are earned through demonstrated proficiency on quizzes, projects, papers, and final exams, the micro-credential allows the educator to specify how competency is demonstrated. The intention is to personalize learning for teachers just as teachers are expected to personalize learning for students.

What is the criteria that will be used if the district cannot financially afford all the micro-credential applications?
- Approval will not exceed budgetary capacity. If funds are encumbered through a prior approval cycle, a submission will be considered in the next round and considered as equal to all others in that round.

How will applications be prioritized in their approval ranking?

December, 2015
• Priority will be given to the quality of work as it relates to student impact, reflecting
district mission/vision/charge, district data, impact on students/staff.

If application approval is based on District/building goals, and those goals are focused
around academics, how will specialists such as therapists, phy ed, art, and music
teachers be recognized?
• All teachers have an impact on student achievement, regardless of content area.
Additionally, the District and buildings have goals around topics like personalized
learning and use of technology that apply to all content areas.

What happens in my submission is denied?
• If a submission is denied, it will be based on quality or the submission and formative
feedback will be shared. Re-submission will be welcome

Who verifies completion of a micro-credential?
• The micro-credential committee.

What is the timeline to complete a pre approved micro-credential?
• An intended due date will be part of the application and pre-approval process. The
typical due date is within one year of the date listed on the pre-approval letter.
Considerations will be made if a micro-credential cannot be completed in a year or there
are extenuating circumstances.

What happens if I don’t complete the micro-credential process?
• If an extension is required, the individual will need to submit a request for extension.
That request may or may not be granted, depending upon the circumstances.
• Those not completed within a year of pre-approval and where a teacher has not asked
for an extension will be considered void.

How many artifacts/what type of artifacts are acceptable?
• Determined by rubric/proposal (in approval process)
• District will provide examples of successful micro-credentials.

What are the committee’s “look-fors” in determining completion?
• The Pre-approval rubric is available.
• The Submission rubric is available.

**Compensation**

If the learning takes place during contracted time, a micro-credential may be awarded but
it will not result in additional compensation.
• When the learning that supports a micro-credential is earned outside of contracted time,
the micro-credential will add to the base salary for an individual. Some micro-credentials

December, 2015
may be for a limited time, especially those addressing areas of rapid change, such as technology tools. Unless specified in the approval process, the micro-credential will be sustained throughout the career of the employee. The approval of the micro-credential application will stipulate the value of the micro-credential and the term or sustainability of the micro-credential.

How are micro-credentials valued?
- A tier 1 micro-credential is valued at $200 and a tier 2 micro-credential is valued at $100. The number of micros considers the amount time needed for learning (aprx. 15 hours per micro) and the depth of the application. The awarded amount is added to an employee's base.

Why should I try for a micro-credential when it is only worth $200?
- Micro-credentials add to base salary so they increase a teacher’s compensation over their entire career. To determine the true value of the micro consider the following formula:

\[
\text{Awarded amount} \times \text{years intended to work} = \text{actual value of micro-credential}
\]

(example: $400 micro-credential \times 20 more years of working = $8000 micro-credential)
- Micro-credentials are paid out immediately upon demonstration of the learning. Unlike a traditional salary schedule, the compensation is added as it is earned rather than waiting until some arbitrary number of credits is earned.

Will there be consistency of payout for teachers doing the same type of work if one application states the value is one micro-credential and another application states it is worth two (or more)?
- The objective is to have comparability between the same micro-credential for different teachers. We will establish a repertoire of approved micro-credentials as well as a history of micro-credentials by employee to help ensure consistency. Historical data will inform current decisions. However, differences in payout may occur due to differences in the application of the learning.

How much money is available for micro-credentials?
- The budget for micro-credentials will be determined on an annual basis in collaboration with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning and Business Manager.

For what period of time do micro-credentials apply to compensation?
- Compensation will be added to base for lifetime of employment in KM, unless a specific time frame is stipulated in the acceptance of the application.

December, 2015
Even if an employee moves to another state, the micro-credential impact follows the teacher because it is added to the base compensation for that teacher. It is not like stipend compensation used by other districts where the pay is made one year but may not be made in a subsequent year.

**When is compensation applied?**
- The compensation will be added to base salary starting with the paycheck commencing after the micro-credential is awarded. When the micro-credential is earned during the school year, the base compensation for that year is recalculated for the entire school year. When the micro-credential is earned at the end of the school year, the compensation is reflected in the base for the next school year.

**Is micro-credentialing the only way to increase my compensation in KM?**
- No, micro-credentials are not the only way to increase compensation in KM.
- Currently staff can earn extra compensation by pursuing a leadership career pathway in KM. This may be done through a co-curricular contract for building or department-level leadership or through a role as a lead educator, Director of Learning, or other roles with additional days of work.
- Staff members also receive additional compensation as part of the annual wage adjustment process.

**Is National Board certification now a micro-credential?**
- For now, National Board certification will remain a separate stipend.

**How will we share or showcase successful micro-credentials?**
- This will be determined individually, based upon the outcome of the micro-credential. Potential opportunities include:
  - Digital portfolio (TBD)
  - Common planning time
  - August inservice days
  - Half days
  - Emails
  - Staff meetings
- The District will also share information with staff about the number of applications submitted each cycle and the number approved and denied.

**Where are we in defining the compensation bands that were shared with staff in Spring 2014?**
- Compensation bands continue to be developed but are not yet finalized. Additional information will continue to be gathered this year to inform that decision-making process.

**How does/should my micro-credential align to my PDP?**

December, 2015
- There is no requirement to align a micro-credential with a PDP. There is, however, the opportunity to do so, an educator could align their PDP goals with their Educator Effectiveness evaluation and submit a micro-credential for the learning that will support accomplishment of the goal. The three components (PDP, EE, and micro-credential) could be aligned to reinforce the learning expectations in all three areas.