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OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PAYROLL & BENEFITS



the right people

## SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PAYROLL & BENEFITS

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## THE ORGANIZATION

## SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Surrey School District (“Surrey SD”) is the largest school district in British Columbia, serving over 85,000 students across 105 elementary schools, 21 secondary schools, and five learning centres, and three adult education centres; Surrey SD is known for its commitment to innovation and personalized learning, offering a wide range of programs to support student success. This includes a focus on technology integration, experiential learning, and social and emotional learning. Surrey SD also places a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion, striving to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students and staff. Surrey SD is a dynamic and forward-thinking school district dedicated to providing high-quality education to all students.

In addition to its academic programs, Surrey SD also offers a variety of extracurricular activities and sports teams, providing students with opportunities to develop their interests and talents outside of the classroom. The District has received numerous awards and accolades for its innovative programs and commitment to student achievement, making it a respected leader in the education community.

To learn more, please visit Surrey School District’s [website](#).

## THE OPPORTUNITY

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PAYROLL & BENEFITS

Reporting to the Director of Finance, the Associate Director, Payroll & Benefits provides strategic leadership, vision, and guidance to the school district's Payroll and Benefits function servicing 13,000+ employees within a large, unionized environment. The Associate Director, Payroll & Benefits oversees the Manager, Payroll, as well as the Payroll and Benefits team responsible for administering payroll and benefits services for all District personnel with quality, accuracy, and timeliness while adhering to related legal, contractual, and policy compliance requirements.



This leader will monitor, train/educate, undertake payroll/benefits transformation projects, offer specialized knowledge regarding all regulatory and contractual requirements related to payroll/benefits, manage payroll risks, and adhere to statutory requirements. They will build and maintain productive relationships with all stakeholders, including Payroll and Benefits staff, Human Resources, and other internal and external customers. The position is also responsible for continuous improvement in processes, technology and seeks to ensure efficient structures are developed and implemented in a manner that allows for the efficient operations of the Payroll and Benefits department.

Through a lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion this position will champion a culture in which teamwork, collaboration, boldness, and innovation are expected. The Associate Director will lead by example with regard to effective communication with District colleagues to provide a high level of customer service, cross-organizational cooperation, and reliance on clear standards of professional and ethical conduct. The position also provides some accounting and systems support to the Finance and Budget departments.



## Responsibilities

- Lead the strategic review of the District's benefit plan, including benchmarking against external and peer organizations, identifying opportunities for improvement, and assessing plan design, utilization, and cost drivers. Evaluate the financial implications of proposed changes in collaboration with Finance and benefits consultants, and present clear, evidence-based recommendations to support informed decision-making;
- Lead the comprehensive administration of all employee benefits program. Develop and deliver employee communications and training materials to educate employees. Oversee the enrolment process and collaborate with the HR department to ensure efficient and effective administration across departments. Ensure compliance with benefit plan requirements, District policies, and government regulations. Collaborate with the Finance department to ensure accurate financial reporting and budgeting;
- Liaise with benefits consultants, audit benefit plan participation, costs, and invoices against payroll deductions and premiums to identify discrepancies and resolve issues promptly; evaluate current programs, monitor industry trends, identify, recommend, and implement benefit plan improvements;
- Lead the identification and implementation of continuous improvement initiatives related to process, structure, and technology to ensure efficient use of resources and reduce manual efforts to improve effectiveness of service delivery;
- Oversee the enrollment process, ensuring that it is efficient, accurate, and user-friendly for all employees.
- Regularly audit benefits plans participation, costs, and invoices against payroll deductions and premiums to identify discrepancies and resolve issues promptly;
- Collaborate with the finance department to ensure accurate financial reporting and budgeting for benefits expenses;
- Leads, trains, supports, hires, and develops staff to ensure that they are knowledgeable and competent; sets goals and priorities for the department; plans, directs, supervises, and assigns work amongst staff to ensure all deadlines are met; evaluates staff performance and provides performance feedback; directs and determines team structure and roles of members; fosters and develops synergy among the team to promote a healthy and productive work environment;
- Directs the accurate and timely completion of all payrolls, including the School Districts Pension Plan and related Retiree benefits processes, disbursements, payroll related remittances and other remuneration-related disbursements and withholdings; ensures the efficient operation of the payroll function;



- Manages relationships and employs judgment in liaising with internal staff and external stakeholders such as legal counsel, external auditors, WorkSafe, Ministry of Education officials, insurance adjusters and other external agencies; responds quickly and appropriately to escalated situations of a sensitive nature;
- Employs judgment in the interpretation of contract language, with the intent of maintaining uniformity and fairness across the District;
- Maintains a strong working knowledge of, and compliance with, all applicable, federal, provincial, and local wage laws and regulations;
- Oversees the implementation of systems to ensure protection of personal information as required by law under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and B.C. Privacy Law;
- Acts as liaison with external organizations, including STA, CUPE Local 728, Surrey Principals and Vice Principals Association to coordinate payroll functions and provide payroll information; works with peers in other organizations to jointly develop best practices for the K-12 sector;
- Builds effective cross-departmental working relationships and communication with customers and stakeholders, works closely with HR, Finance, & Budget department staff, and partners with other functional groups to continually streamline function and improve accuracy, customer service, and efficiency;
- Manages all employee compensation grids, extracts, and assesses payroll data; provides analytical reports and information; supports analysis of remuneration data to facilitate decision making; provides analysis and advises on the impacts on the organization of potential scenarios in bargaining;
- Responsible for managing payroll processes and technological change, while minimizing associated risk factors and addressing the evolving needs of the District;
- Oversees the testing and implementation of any software or hardware changes or upgrades; works closely and in a collaborative manner with others involved in the process, including Finance, Human Resources, bargaining units, and management;
- Establishes mechanisms to enhance and monitor customer service; oversees the research and responses to complex payroll and benefit related inquiries; resolves employee concerns regarding wage payments, taxation, benefits, or other deduction issues; continually seeks areas of improvement in existing processes to further enhance accuracy, customer service and efficiency; makes decisions that reflect best practices and are intended to support the District's long-term needs.

## THE PERSON

The Associate Director, Payroll & Benefits is an experienced leader with a strong understanding of complex payroll operations, benefits administration, and client-focused service delivery within a large, multifaceted organization. Comfortable navigating the intricacies of system implementation, process improvement, and regulatory requirements, they bring valuable experience in leading system enhancements and operational initiatives—ideally within a public-sector environment. With an inclusive and collaborative leadership style, the Associate Director fosters trust and engagement across the district by building cohesive, high-performing teams and leveraging the diverse expertise that exists throughout the organization. They are a decisive and strategic thinker, combining sound business acumen with political awareness and discretion. This enables them to effectively support the department in making complex decisions while guiding staff through evolving priorities and challenging initiatives with clarity and confidence.



### Education and Experience

- Undergraduate degree in business, accounting, or relevant discipline;
- Completion of the Canadian Payroll Leadership Professional (PLP) Certification (formerly known as Certified Payroll Manager (CPM)), as well as continued maintenance of this professional designation by meeting the annual Continuing Professional Education (CPE) requirements as set out by the Canadian Payroll Association;
- Minimum of 8 years' experience or the equivalent combination of education and experience of in-house payroll and benefits services;



- At least 7 to 10 years demonstrated supervisory experience (inclusive of mid to senior management level) and subject matter expert in payroll and benefits in a large, complex, unionized, high-volume; payroll, benefits, and pension environment;
- Comprehensive knowledge of accounting principles including internal control, as well as legislation, regulations, practices, and guidelines.

### Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Expert knowledge of privacy legislation and regulations related to payroll and benefits, contracts, and ability to maintain confidentiality on all discussions with staff on all matters related to the position;
- Excellent knowledge and experience in payroll and benefits practices and related business processes;
- Skilled at interpreting collective bargaining agreements; organizational policies and procedures; and applicable laws and regulations as they relate to managing payroll and benefits administration, and performing human relations functions;
- Ability to partner with key stakeholders on continuous improvement of information systems relevant to payroll;
- Sophisticated knowledge of information processing technology, software development and operations relevant to a large-scale complex payroll processing;
- Familiarity with purchased computerized integrated financial, payroll and HR information systems; proficient with Microsoft applications with adaptability to learn new applications. Intermediate knowledge of MS Excel is required;



- Excellent leadership, managerial, interpersonal, negotiating, dispute resolution and communication skills;
- Proven track record for taking initiative, leading projects, and implementing new procedures; a self-starter with strong planning, time management, and organization skills;
- Demonstrated experience engaging, leading, and working with teams and stakeholders with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion;
- Positive attitude and ability to work in a dynamic and complex environment while leading and developing staff; very strong commitment to team culture and leadership in ensuring customer service excellence;
- Experience training, directing, motivating, and evaluating the work of assigned staff; ability to schedule, organize and supervise work priorities and assignments to ensure timely and effective completion; capable of developing and maintaining accurate records of assigned activities and operations;
- Superior analytical and proven problem-solving skills, detail oriented and accurate in execution;
- Ability to work under pressure with changing priorities and to meet deadlines;
- Demonstrated willingness and ability to face sensitive employee relations situations and take the appropriate action, seeking the input of senior management as required.



## Competencies and Personal Characteristics

**Leadership** – Achieves desired organizational results by encouraging and supporting the contribution of others; a proactive and positive team player who acts with a sense of urgency and leads by example; sets and communicates clear goals.

**Accountable** – Holds self and others accountable for responsibilities; focuses on results and measuring attainment of outcomes in a business focus.

**Strategic** – Develops a plan in support of organizational strategic direction. Demonstrates an understanding of the link between one’s job responsibilities and overall organizational goals.

**Integrity and Honesty** – Demonstrates a resolute commitment to and respect for the spirit behind the rules and core values of the organization, setting an example of professionalism and ethical propriety.

**Influential and Collaborative** – Has an open and consistent approach to working with others and possesses strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to build relationships and develop/maintain partnerships, obtaining key partner agreement.

**Creativity and Innovation** – Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.

**Effective Working Relationships** – Treats colleagues, and key partners with respect; resolves conflicts in a timely manner, negotiates effectively, and provides effective feedback to colleagues/employees.

**Communication** – Clearly presents written and verbal information; writes with clarity and purpose; communicates effectively in both positive and negative circumstances; listens well.

**People Development** – Fosters learning and development of others through coaching, managing performance and mentoring; has a genuine desire to develop others and help them succeed; formally and informally recognizes deserving staff and colleagues.

**Partner Group / Student Focused** – Anticipates and attends to the needs of internal and external partners of the organization; keeps student and partner group interests in the forefront.



## COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package will be provided including an attractive base salary and excellent benefits. The salary range is \$115,240 - \$144,050. Further details will be discussed in a personal interview.

## FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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