

March 3, 2005

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Dalton B. Floyd, Jr., Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

From: Dr. Vermelle J. Johnson, Chairman, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Change to Teacher Scholarship Grant Program

Background

In 2000, the State Department of Education adopted a two-tiered system of teacher certification (licensure). Teacher candidates are first awarded an “initial” certificate. Once the teacher passes the formal performance evaluation of professional teaching (ADEPT), passes the “Principles of Learning and Teaching” standardized exam, and completes at least two years of continuous, successful in-service teaching, including an induction year, a “professional” certificate is awarded.

The current *Guidelines* for the Teaching Scholarship Grants Program restrict participation in the program to applicants holding a “professional” certificate. With the concurrence of the State Department of Education staff, we would like to change the *Guidelines* so that they mirror the current certification system by including, rather than excluding, teachers who hold “initial” certificates.

Funds are more than adequate to cover this change, since awards to date for the first three years of the program have expended less than half of the annual \$2 million appropriation for each of those first three years.

The proposed two changes to the *Guidelines* necessary to allow for the inclusion of teachers holding an “initial” certificate involves the following:

1. Add to the **Definitions** section the underscored words and delete the lined through:

C. “Teacher” is a South Carolina teacher who is teaching in a P-12 classroom in a South Carolina public school and holds either an “initial” or a “professional” (i.e., not ~~initial~~, temporary, transitional, interim, graded, warrant, special subject or permit) teaching certificate as defined by the State Department of Education.

2. Add to the **Definitions** section as Item L, the following:

An “initial” certificate is issued to applicants who have a.) earned a bachelor’s or master’s degree either from an institution that has a state-approved teacher education program and is accredited for general collegiate purposes by a regional accreditation association, or from a S.C. institution that has programs approved for teacher education by the State Board of Education, or from an institution that has programs approved for teacher education by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Professional education credit must be earned through an institution that has a teacher education program approved for initial certification; b) submitted the required teaching area examination scores(s) as adopted by the State Board of Education for purposes of certification; and c) undergone a criminal records check by the S.C. Law Enforcement Division and a national criminal records check supported by fingerprints conducted by the FBI.

Recommendation:

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve these changes to the *Guidelines* for the Teacher Scholarship Grant program for immediate implementation.