

September 5, 2002

MEMORANDUM

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

From: Ms. Dianne Chinnes, Chairman, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

**Consideration of Guidelines for Teaching Scholarship Grants Program
FY 2002-03**

Background

The Commission's Task Force on Graduate Teacher Education met during 2001 to develop *Guidelines* for the proposed Teaching Scholarship Grants Program to be funded by the S.C. Lottery. Staff have taken the work of the Task Force and developed the proposed *Guidelines*. Representatives of the S.C. Teacher Recruitment Center, the Division of Teacher Quality of the State Department of Education, and the Commission's Division of Student Affairs also participated in the Task Force's discussion of the proposed *Guidelines*.

Staff have interpreted the legislative language as literally as possible and have also drawn heavily on the other scholarship programs that are administered by the Commission for appropriate language and procedures since these have successfully progressed through the promulgation of regulations under the Administrative Procedures Act.

In "non-recurring" lottery funds, \$2 million has been allocated to the program. At award levels of \$1,000, the program will reach 2000 teachers. We would expect "demand" to exceed "supply" of grant funds, so the *Guidelines* build in some prioritizing in terms of recipient eligibility.

The legislation establishing the scholarship program reads as follows:

Section 59-150-380. The Commission on Higher Education, in consultation with the State Department of Education, must develop an Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grants Program to provide certified teachers in the public schools of this State grants not to exceed one thousand dollars per year to attend public or private colleges and universities for the purposes of upgrading existing content area skills or obtaining a Master's Degree in the teacher's content area. If there are insufficient funds in the Education Lottery Account to provide the grant to each eligible recipient for a particular year, priority must be given to those teachers whose subject areas are critical subject needs as determined by the State Department of Education.

An earlier version of these *Guidelines* was distributed to the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs in April as well as to Task Force members and other interested constituents. The *Guidelines* have been revised slightly in response to feedback received from that distribution, which also included a review by several staff members of the State Department of Education's Office of Teacher Quality.

Because the funds are "non-recurring," and there is no legislative stipulation that regulations be developed, we expect to operate the program under the proposed *Guidelines*.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that the Commission approve the proposed *Guidelines*.

Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grants Program

Synopsis:

During the 2001 legislative session, the General Assembly approved the South Carolina Education Lottery Act. One provision of this act provides that certified teachers in the public schools of the State will be awarded grants not to exceed \$1000 per year to attend the State's public and independent colleges and universities for the purposes of upgrading existing content area skills or obtaining a Master's Degree in the teacher's content area. The act further stipulates that if there are insufficient funds in the Education Lottery Account to provide the grant to each eligible recipient for a particular year, priority must be given to those teachers whose subject areas are critical subject needs as defined by the State Board of Education.

Purpose: The purpose of the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grants Program is to support teachers in their efforts to improve their content knowledge by completing coursework and degree programs.

Definitions

- A. "Fiscal year" is defined as the twelve-month period from July 1-June 30.
- B. "Teacher" is a South Carolina teacher who is teaching in a P-12 classroom in a South Carolina public school and holds a "professional" (i.e., not initial, temporary, transitional, interim, graded, warrant or permit) teaching certificate as defined by the State Department of Education.
- C. "Master's degree" is defined as any advanced-level program of study recognized by the Commission on Higher Education that extends and enhances a certified P-12 teacher's content and/or pedagogy in his/her content area.
- D. "Add-on certification" is any program approved by the State Board of Education that leads to an additional area of certification for a certified P-12 teacher.
- E. "Critical needs" are teaching fields identified annually by the State Board of Education as having a critical shortage of certified teachers.
- F. "NCATE" is the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the national accrediting entity for programs in teacher education. All public institutions are required by the Commission on Higher Education to be NCATE-accredited; independent institutions are required by the State Board of Education to meet the State's approval standards, which are modeled on NCATE accreditation standards.

- G. “Independent institutions” are those institutions eligible to participate in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program as defined in Chapter 113 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which defines an independent institution of higher learning as “an independent eleemosynary junior or senior college in South Carolina whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina and which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.” However, independent two-year institutions are not eligible for participation in this program.
- H. “South Carolina resident” is defined as an individual who satisfies the requirements of residency in accordance with the state of South Carolina Statute for Tuition and Fees, Statute 59-112-10, and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
- I. “Public schools” include “regular” as well as “charter,” “alternative,” “magnet,” and “special” schools.

I. Teacher Eligibility: Initial

- A. To be eligible for an Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant, the applicant must:
 - (1) Be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident who meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes;
 - (2) Be a South Carolina Resident as set forth by 59-112-10;
 - (3) Hold a “professional” teaching certificate as defined and conferred by the State Department of Education; and
 - (4) Be under contract as a teacher in a SC public school;
- B. Eligible applicants must also meet one of the two following criteria regarding course of study:
 - (1) Be accepted as a degree-seeking graduate student in the teaching field at the Master’s level and be enrolled in good standing at an eligible institution, with appropriate documentation provided; or
 - (2) Be enrolled for graduate or undergraduate courses in current teaching field or in teaching field in which add-on certification is being sought, with appropriate documentation provided.
- C. In addition to the above requirements, applicants must also:
 - (1) For each \$1,000 scholarship received, sign a commitment to teach in South Carolina public schools for at least one year following completion of the scholarship grant year and to refund the scholarship amount if the one-year teaching commitment is not honored; and
 - (2) Be able to demonstrate, if a continuing graduate student, a 3.5 cumulative grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale.

- D. The applicant must also certify that he/she has not defaulted and does not owe refunds on any Federal or State financial aid.
- E. The applicant must submit the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grants Program initial application by the stipulated deadline and comply with all the directions contained therein, including a statement tying use of the scholarship to the applicant's Goals Based Evaluation (ADEPT process) and endorsement by the school principal.

II. Teacher Eligibility: Continuing

- A. In order to continue eligibility for additional Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship grant funds in subsequent years, the applicant must comply with the following provisions:
 - (1) The student must have earned at least a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) for prior courses taken with grant funds; or
 - (2) If the student is a continuing graduate student, he/she must maintain at least a 3.5 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale.
 - (3) The student must have complied with all rules and regulations associated with the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant program and met all initial eligibility requirements.
 - (4) The student must sign a commitment to teach in South Carolina public schools for at least one year following completion of the scholarship grant year and agree to refund the scholarship amount if the one year teaching commitment is not honored.
- B. The applicant must submit the renewal application for another Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant by the stipulated deadline and comply with all the provisions contained therein.

III. Institutional/Course Eligibility

- A. Students may access a program/course at any public or independent four-year institution whose selected program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education and by the State Board of Education.
- B. Selected course(s) may not be "contract" courses or those that carry the professional development course designator.
- C. Selected course(s) may be elected in any term, including summer, during the fiscal year which runs from July 1-June 30.
- D. Courses selected must be from programs that are fully approved by NCATE, the Commission on Higher Education, and/or the State Board of Education, as

appropriate, and may NOT be in provisional or probational status by any of the three approving bodies.

IV. Amount/Duration of Award

- A. Applicants may receive up to \$1000 per fiscal year which runs from July 1-June 30. All funds must be expended within the fiscal year with no carryover allowed. Funds may be used for tuition and fees.
- B. Applicants may receive up to three grants within a five year period, assuming that demand exceeds availability of funds. If demand does not exceed availability of funds in any given year, this restriction will be waived. [Note: Funding has been approved for one year only.]
- C. Applicants must re-apply annually and provide evidence of having met continued eligibility requirements.

V. Priority

- A. Because funds are not expected to be sufficient to provide grants to each eligible applicant, recipients will be awarded funds based on the following priorities in order:
 - (1) Teachers whose subject areas are designated as “critical subject needs” as defined annually by the State Board of Education;
 - (2) Teachers who teach in schools that have Educational Accountability Act report card ratings of “below average” and “unsatisfactory”;
 - (3) Teachers who are adding on certification in a critical subject needs area as defined by the State Board of Education;
 - (4) Teachers who are seeking their first master’s degree.

VI. Scholarship Grant Disbursements

- A. Each grant recipient may receive scholarship grant funds not to exceed \$1000 per fiscal year, assuming availability of funds. Funds will be disbursed directly to the institution through an invoicing mechanism for reimbursement to the grant recipient’s account following verification by CHE that all eligibility criteria have been met.
- B. Disbursements to institutions will occur at the beginning of Summer II; Fall; Spring; and Summer I terms.

VII. Appeals Procedure

- A. The Commission on Higher Education shall define the procedures for scholarship appeals.
- B. A grant recipient who does not meet the continued eligibility criteria for renewal of the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant forfeits continued participation in the program and may request an appeal based on extenuating circumstances.
- C. A grant recipient wishing to appeal any non-renewal decision based on extenuating circumstances must submit the following source documents to the Commission on Higher Education by no later than the established appeals deadline for the academic year for which the scholarship is requested:
 - (1) A completed application for appeal
 - (2) A letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstances
 - (3) An official transcript(s)
 - (3) A letter from the recipient's principal supporting the appeal
 - (4) Other supporting documentation for the appeal