

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 Centers of Excellence Appropriations Request
FY 2003-04**

Background

The Educational Improvement Act of 1984 provided for the establishment of a contract program with public or private colleges in South Carolina to foster the development of "Centers of Excellence" in particular areas of need related to teacher training. This year the Commission is issuing revised *Guidelines* that will have a different focus for the program. The revised program will focus on teacher training linked to the State's low-performing schools and districts. The program's goals will be to improve teacher quality and raise student achievement at the target schools and districts. State funding will now be provided for up to five years with the goal of establishing statewide resource centers that will have a positive impact on the State's most needy schools and children. There are currently fifteen Centers of Excellence, although only four are receiving funding during the current fiscal year (FY 2002-03).

Program *Guidelines* stipulate that each Center submit budgets for the first five years of funding. Reporting requirements in the *Guidelines* further stipulate that each year there is a formal request for funding.

Budget Summary for Funding Request for FY 2003-04

This report outlines the appropriation request for FY 2003-04 that will be made to the General Assembly through the Commission's annual report to the Education Improvement Act Subcommittee of the Education Oversight Committee.

In FY 2001-02, the Commission did not conduct a Centers of Excellence grant competition because the General Assembly did not fund the appropriation increase requested by the Commission and without an increase we were unable to have a competition. As a result, during FY 2002-03 the program will have two centers in the fourth and final year of state funding, one center in the third year of state funding, and one center in its first year of funding.

Noted in the table below is an itemized list of the Commission's total appropriation request. We are seeking a \$150,000 increase in funding for the program for FY 2003-04. This request for an appropriation increase is to allow the Commission to award three new Centers that will focus on assisting the State's low-performing schools and districts.

Center and Institution	Amount to be Requested in FY 2003-04
Center of Excellence in Early Childhood Professional Development Winthrop University	\$67,225 (fourth year of funding)
Center of Excellence for the Education and Equity of African-American Students	\$114,963 (second year of funding)
New Centers (three) to be awarded in FY 2003-04	\$456,038
CHE Expenses (brochures, review panel, meetings)	\$12,000
Total Request	\$650,226

Recommendation

The staff suggests that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission an appropriation's request of \$650,226 for FY 2003-04 to fund the Centers of Excellence Program. The Committee will consider this item at its meeting on September 4 and will make its recommendation to the Commission on September 5.

cc: S.C. Centers of Excellence Brochure (not included in electronic mail-out)