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Agenda item 3.02.M

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 the Improving Teacher Quality
Higher Education Grants Program
(PL 107-110, Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act)
Project Year 2002-03**

Background

Since 1984, the Commission has been responsible for administering federal funds for a competitive grants program under Title II of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA). ESEA was re-authorized in FY 2001 under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Under this legislation, several programs were combined and others were greatly modified. The former *Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Program* was modified and renamed. While the program is still under Title II, this section of the law is now entitled *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants*. The purpose of the revised section Title II is to increase the academic achievement of all students by helping schools and school districts improve teachers and principal quality and ensure that all teachers are highly qualified.

The new higher education program to be implemented as a result of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation must remain a competitive grants program with a primary focus on professional development, but there are several significant changes to be made under the new legislation. Foremost is that the Commission will only award grants to eligible partnerships that must be comprised of, at a minimum: (1) a private or public institution of higher education and the division of the institution that prepares teachers and principals; (2) a school of arts and sciences at a higher education institution; and (3) a

high-need local education agency (i.e., K-12 school). Additional partners may also be included. Another significant change is that there is no longer a focus on science and mathematics; instead ten core academic areas (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography) can be addressed in proposals. Professional development is no longer just for in-service or pre-service teachers but now includes principals and paraprofessionals. Finally, pre-service educators are no longer included in the target population for services. The focus of the proposed projects must be on low-performing schools, and the Commission is charged with ensuring an equitable geographic distribution of grants.

The *Guidelines* have been modified to reflect the changes in new legislation summarized above and have been developed in collaboration with S.C. Department of Education. Federal regulations require that the Commission work in conjunction with the department in meeting statewide educational needs. Specifically, priority areas derive from the federal legislation as well as those developed in the State's Consolidated State Plan sent to the U.S. Department of Education.

The allocation of funds to the states is based on two methods. First, funds to the state are allocated based on the FY 2001 amount received under the former *Eisenhower Professional Development* and Class-Size Reduction programs. Second, any remaining funds from the federal appropriation are distributed through a formula based on the State's school-age population and percent of these children in families with incomes below the poverty level.

Under federal regulations, 2.5 percent of the *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants* funds for the state are allocated to the Commission to be used for the competitive grants program. The Commission will award approximately \$850,000. Proposed projects may request up to \$75,000 each. Average awards have ranged from \$40,000 to \$60,000 during past funding cycles. Multi-year projects are allowed. The number of grants awarded will be determined primarily by the quality of the proposals submitted and the size of the negotiated final budgets in comparison to the total funds available.

With these funds, the Commission issues a Request for Proposals for a competitive grants program. The attached *Guidelines* represent the Commission's proposed rules and regulations for the competitive grants program.

In summary, this grant competition represents a new and important vehicle for K-16 collaboration in service to the State's teachers and principals, especially those serving in or planning to serve in low-performing schools.

Recommendation

The staff suggests that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommend to the Commission approval of the attached *Guidelines* for the *Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grants Program* for FY 2002-03. The Committee will consider this item at its meeting on September 4 and will make its recommendation to the Commission on September 5.

Attachment: *Guidelines for the Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grants Program*