



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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Ms. Julie J. Carullo
Acting Executive Director

May 3, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Ken Wingate, Chair, and Members, S.C. Commission on Higher Education

From: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chair, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Revised Guidelines for the Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grants Program (PL 107-110, Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act) Project Year 2013-14

Background

Since 1984, the Commission has been responsible for administering federal funds under the Title II program 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. While the program is still under Title II, this section of the law is now entitled *Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) State Grants*. The purpose of Title II is to increase the academic achievement of all students by helping schools and school districts improve teacher and principal quality and ensure that all teachers are highly qualified in the content areas they teach.

The higher education program is a competitive grants program with a primary focus on professional development. The current *Improving Teacher Quality Program* provides the Commission with the ability to offer grants to expand P-12 professional development offerings to include nine content areas and school personnel other than teachers and principals. The program seeks to bring together higher education faculty and P-12 school personnel to foster mutually beneficial partnerships based on sustained professional development. The ultimate goal of the partnership is improved student performance.

The federal regulations stipulate that the Commission will only award grants to eligible partnerships comprised of, at a minimum, (1) a private or public institution of higher education and the division of the institution that prepares teacher and principals; (2) a school of arts and sciences; and (3) a high-need local education agency. Additional partners may also be included. Regulations state that projects may focus on any of nine core academic areas (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography) but more specific areas of focus may be identified by needs the

state. CHE is focusing on projects that fully integrate the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the STEM disciplines (mathematics and science) for FY 2013-14 ITQ project proposals. Professional development activities may include teachers, principals, and/or paraprofessionals. 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* were modified for FY 2002-03 to reflect the new legislation and were developed in collaboration with the S.C. Department of Education. Federal regulations require that the Commission work in conjunction with the Department in meeting statewide educational needs. The 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 U.S. Department of Education issues two awards for the *Title II, Part A* State allocations, one to the State Education Agency (SEA) and one to the State Agency of Higher Education (SAHE). After one percent of the State's allocation is set aside for SEA and SAHE administration and planning, the SAHE receives an award for competitive grants that is 2.5 percent of the State's remaining allocation. .

Under federal regulations, 2.5 percent of the *Improving Teacher Quality State Grants* funds for the state are allocated to Commission to be used for the competitive grants program. In 2013-2014, the Commission may award up to \$950,000. Proposed projects may request up to \$90,000 in funds. Multi-year projects are allowed and encouraged for maximum impact. The number of grants awarded is primarily determined by the quality of the proposals submitted and the size of the negotiated final budgets in comparison to the total funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Education.

CHE issues *Guidelines for Proposals* for a competitive grants program. The attached *Guidelines* represent the Commission's proposed rules and regulations for the program. This competition represents an important vehicle for K-16 collaboration in service to the State's teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals.

Recommendation

The Committee commends favorably to the Commission approval of the attached *Guidelines for the Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grant Program* for FY 2013-14.

Attachment: *No Child Left Behind, Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grant Program, Guidelines for Proposals, FY 2013-14.*