

June 7, 2007

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Layton R. McCurdy, Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

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

Consideration of Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education)
Budget Allocations, FY 2007-08
Appropriations Request, FY 2008-09

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. In FY 2003-04, in an effort to engage higher education more collaboratively with the State’s efforts to improve underperforming schools, the Commission issued revised *Guidelines* that provided a different focus for the program.

The revised program focuses on teacher training specifically linked to the State’s low-performing schools and districts. The program’s revised goals are to improve teacher quality, raise student achievement, and increase the graduation rate in the target schools and districts. State funding is provided for up to five years with the goal of establishing statewide resource centers that will have a positive impact on the State’s neediest schools and children. There are currently eleven active Centers of Excellence. Six are receiving EIA funding through this program during the current fiscal year (FY 2007-08). The other five continue to offer programs of excellence for South Carolina’s teachers and students through other funding streams, now that their eligibility under this program has ended.

Program *Guidelines* stipulate that each Center must submit budgets for the first five years of funding. The maximum funding award is \$150,000 in year one. In year two,

funding is awarded at 90% of the original request, and further reduced to 75% of the original request in the 3rd – 5th years. In the event of budget shortfalls or mid-year reductions, funding awards are adjusted accordingly. In addition, reporting requirements in the Guidelines further stipulate that each year there is a formal request for funding.

Budget Allocations for FY 2007-08

For FY 2007-08, full funding for the six newest centers still entitled to five years of State funding (including administrative costs and a Centers of Excellence Symposium) requires an appropriation of \$721,101.00. The actual appropriation for FY 2007-08 is \$721,101.00. A new Center will not be funded for FY 2007-08 because of the lack of funding. Funding for the newest recommended Center at USC-Aiken will be postponed until FY 2008-09.

The table shown below displays the names of each existing center and institution and the amount of the FY 2007-08 award:

Table 1

Center/Institution	Projected Award FY 2007-08
Engineering & Computing Education, USC-Columbia (year 5 of 5)	\$112,500.00
Advancement of Rural, Under-performing Schools, USC-Aiken (year 5 of 5)	\$112,500.00
Preparing Teachers of Children of Poverty, Francis Marion (year 4 of 5)	\$112,500.00
Collaborative Learning, USC-Beaufort (year 4 of 5)	\$100,175.00
Adolescent Literacy and Learning, Clemson University (year 3 of 5)	\$112,500.00
Advancement of New Literacies in Middle Grades, College of Charleston (year 2 of 5)	\$135,000.00
CHE Administration	\$12,000.00
Centers of Excellence Symposium	\$23,926.00
Total	\$721,101.00

This information is presented to the Commission for information since it is relevant to the Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education) appropriations request for FY 2008-09, which requires Commission approval, and which is outlined below.

Appropriations Request, FY 2008-09

This report outlines the appropriations request for FY 2008-09 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 (EOC). In FY 2008-09, five Centers under the *Guidelines* will receive their second, third, fourth and fifth years of funding as shown in Table 1 below.

Noted in the table below is an itemized list of the Commission’s total appropriation request. We are seeking an increase in funding of \$28,574 for the program for FY 2008-09. This request for an appropriation increase is to allow the Commission to award one new Center that will focus on assisting the State’s low-performing schools. Two currently funded centers will rotate off the funding cycle in FY 2007-08. Five remaining centers will be eligible for funding in 2008-09. The priority areas for funding have been established by the EOC. The Centers of Excellence program will seek a new center that will meet the high priority areas.

Table 2

Center and Institution	Amount to be Requested in FY 2008-09
Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty (Francis Marion)	\$112,500 (fifth and last year of funding)
Center of Excellence for Collaborative Learning (USC-Beaufort)	\$100,175 (fifth and last year of funding)
Center of Excellence in Adolescent Literacy and Learning (Clemson)	\$112,500 (fourth year of funding)
Center of Excellence for the Advancement of New Literacies in Middle Grades (College of Charleston)	\$112,500 (third year of funding)
Center of Excellence in Middle-level Interdisciplinary Strategies for Teaching (USC-Aiken)	\$150,000 (first year of funding)
CHE Expenses (administration, brochures, review panel, meeting, symposium)	\$12,000
Subtotal	\$599,675
One New Center of Excellence to be funded in FY 2008-09	\$150,000
Total Appropriation Required	\$749,675
FY 2006-07 Funds Awarded	\$721,101
Probable Shortfall for FY 08-09 if level funding awarded	(\$28,574)

Recommendation

In order to permit the funding of a new Center of Excellence in Teacher Training at the full \$150,000 level during FY 08-09, the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission authorize the staff to seek an increase of \$28,574 or 3.9% from the Education Oversight Committee for this program.