

May 3, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> 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 seven newest centers still entitled to five years of State funding (including administrative costs) required an appropriation of \$820,614.00. The actual appropriation for FY 2007-08 is \$721,101.00 which results in a shortfall of \$87,513.00. If the request for an increase in funding for the Centers of Excellence program for 2007-08 is not approved, the 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 center and institution, the amount of the FY 2007-08 award, the percentage reduction of total funds of that award (2% across-the-board decrease), the dollar reduction to be made, and the revised award for FY 2007-08:

Table 1

<b>Center/Institution</b>	<b>Projected Award FY 2007-08</b>	<b>% of Total Funds</b>	<b>Reduction</b>	<b>Revised Award FY 2007-08</b>
Engineering & Computing Education, USC-Columbia (year 5 of 5)	\$110,333.00	15%	\$2,125.00	\$108,208.00
Advancement of Rural, Under-performing Schools, USC-Aiken (year 5 of 5)	\$110,696.00	15%	\$2,132.00	\$108,564.00
Preparing Teachers of Children of Poverty, Francis Marion (year 4 of 5)	\$110,333.00	15%	\$2,125.00	\$108,208.00
Collaborative Learning, USC-Beaufort (year 4 of 5)	\$98,246.00	14%	\$1892.00	\$ 96,354.00
Adolescent Literacy and Learning, Clemson University (year 3 of 5)	\$112,484.00	16%	\$2,166.00	\$110,318.00
Advancement of New Literacies in Middle Grades, College of Charleston (year 2 of 5)	\$132,400.00	18%	\$2550.00	\$129,850.00
Middle-level Interdisciplinary Strategies for Teaching, USC-Aiken (year 1 of funding)	\$150,000.00	21%	\$2889.00	147,111.00
CHE Administration	\$12,000.00			\$12,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$824,492.00</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$15,878.00</b>	<b>\$820,614.00</b>

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.

**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 \$16,112 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

<b>Center and Institution</b>	<b>Amount to be Requested in FY 2008-09</b>
Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty (Francis Marion)	\$108,208 (fifth and last year of funding)
Center of Excellence for Collaborative Learning (USC-Beaufort)	\$96,354 (fifth and last year of funding)
Center of Excellence in Adolescent Literacy and Learning (Clemson)	\$110,318 (fourth year of funding)
Center of Excellence for the Advancement of New Literacies in Middle Grades (College of Charleston)	\$110,333 (third year of funding)
Center of Excellence in Middle-level Interdisciplinary Strategies for Teaching (USC-Aiken)	\$132,400 (second year of funding)
CHE Expenses (brochures, review panel, meeting, symposium)	\$12,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$437,213.00</b>
Two New Centers of Excellence to be funded in FY 2008-09 (includes funding for USC-Aiken if not funded in 2007-08)	\$300,000
<b>Total Appropriation Required</b>	<b>\$737,213.00</b>
<b>FY 2006-07 Funds Awarded</b>	<b>\$721,101</b>
<b>Probable Shortfall for FY 08-09 if level funding awarded</b>	<b>(\$16,112)</b>

## **Recommendation**

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission authorize the staff to seek an increase of \$16,112 or 2.2% from the Education Oversight Committee to permit the funding of a new Center of Excellence in Teacher Training at the full \$150,000 level during FY 2008-09. In the event that the increase is not approved and assuming level funding, the new center will not be established.