

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

**Informational Report on Awards for the
Improving Teacher Quality Competitive Grants Awards,
FY 2007-08
and
Funding Allocation to Continuing ITO Awards, FY 2007-08
New ITO Awards, FY 2007-08**

Background

Since 1984, the Commission on Higher Education has been responsible for administering federal funds under a Title II program of *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*. In 2001, the federal legislation was re-authorized under *The No Child Left Behind Act*. Title II Part entitled *A Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals*, authorizes the Commission to conduct a competitive awards program. The purpose of this part of the federal legislation is to provide support to:

increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools.

The Commission is authorized to provide a competitive grants program to partnerships comprised, at a minimum, of schools of education and arts and sciences from higher education institutions along with one or more high-need local education

agencies (LEA; defined as school districts). Additional partners may be included as defined by the legislation. Funds to the state are allocated based on the FY 2001 amount received under the former *Eisenhower Professional Development* and *Class-Size Reduction* programs. 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 Higher Education Grants* (ITQ) funds for the state are allocated to the Commission to be used for the competitive grants program. The Commission is expected to have \$960,000 with which to make awards with Federal FY 2007-08 awards. Proposed projects may request up to \$150,000 in funds per year. Average budget requests for both continuing and new projects range from \$125,000 to \$150,000. The Commission seeks proposals that will have maximum impact and encourages multi-year programs to assure positive results on the target audience. 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. Equitable geographic distribution (i.e., districts served) must be considered in making awards, assuming proposals are deemed to be of high quality. No proposal will be considered unless it meets the minimum federal definition of a partnership (as stated in the *ITQ Guidelines* and in the *Federal Title II Non-Regulatory Guidance*).

A total of 15 proposals were received by the Commission for consideration. In addition, there are 10 continuing projects for FY 2007-08 that are recommended for funding.

A review panel consisting of K-12 and higher education representatives met on January 11, 2007, to review and rate the proposals submitted for consideration.

The panel recommended funding one proposed project for 2007-08 and four proposed projects for 2008-09. Members of the review panel noted that even though funding was available for one new proposal for 2007-08, the top five proposals were excellent in nature and geographic representation and recommended that four additional proposals be recommended to begin at a later date when additional funding is available. The four additional proposals will be contingent upon availability of funds from the federal government and the submission of an updated proposal by December 1, 2007 to CHE staff for review.

Overview of Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grants Guidelines

The higher education program is a competitive grants program with the primary focus on professional development; however, there are several recent significant changes under the 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; and (3) a high-need local education agency (defined in the legislation as a school district based upon U.S. census data). Additional partners may also be included. A second change is that there is no longer a focus on science and mathematics. Instead, nine 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. A third change allows professional development to focus on in-service and pre-service teachers, as well as principals and paraprofessionals. Finally, the emphasis of the proposed projects must be on low-performing districts and schools, and the Commission is charged with ensuring an equitable geographic distribution of grants.

The priority areas that proposals must address are determined by the federal legislation identified in the State’s Consolidated State Plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

Review Panel Recommendations

Five fundable projects were identified by the review panel from the 15 eligible proposals submitted for review. As stated above, the panel recommended that one proposal be funded for FY 2007-08 because of the availability of funds and the additional four be recommended for funding for FY 2008-09. Members of the review panel noted the quality of the proposals received and made recommendations for programmatic and budgetary changes for each of the 15 projects, as a service to the proposers. The Review Panel made general comments regarding the quality of the proposals that the staff will use in future outreach activities with the institutions concerning the program. Some of the proposals received lower evaluations because of the level of quality of the proposed partnership, evaluation plan or meeting the needs of teachers and students, as required by the *Guidelines*. The federal legislation directly links teacher quality to student achievement, yet few of the proposals provided detailed evaluations of the projects’ activities in relation to student achievement.

University of South Carolina – Columbia	On-TRACK: Teaching Reading and Content Knowledge	Dr. David Virtue	\$147,231 2007-08
Clemson University	School University Collaboration: Creating Early Student Success (SUCCESS)	Dr. Janie Hodge	\$150,000 2008-09
Clemson University	Meeting the Need for Highly Qualified Mathematics Teachers	Dr. Elaine Wiegert	\$134,534 2008-09

University of South Carolina – Columbia	Creating an Early Childhood Nature-Based Inquiry Model	Dr. Mary Earick	\$143,314 2008-09
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The funding amount requested for the new award for FY 2007-08 is \$147,231. The total amount that will be requested for FY 2008-09 will be \$577,403, contingent upon availability of funds and the submission of an updated proposal submitted to CHE staff for review by December 1, 2007. The total amount requested for all proposals submitted is \$2,183,882. The second through fourth year of funding for awards made under the FY 2004-05 through 2006-07 grant competition total \$1,041,700.

In addition to the five new projects, ten previously funded Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education projects will continue to function during the coming year. Two other funded projects' operations have been concluded.

Clemson University	Building a Mathematical Learning Community	Dr. Donna Diaz	\$93,750
Clemson University	Digital Express	Dr. Chris Peters/Ms. Anna Baldwin	\$93,750
Columbia College	Making Math and Technology High-Quality	Dr. Lynn Noble/Ms. Kathy Coskrey	\$130,000
Converse College	Professional Development in Literacy	Dr. Nancy Breard	\$93,000
Francis Marion University	Middle School/Higher Education Partnership in Science Education	Dr. Derek Jokisch/Dr. Seth Smith	\$90,000
Francis Marion University	Improving Teaching Quality (ITQ)	Dr. Tammy Pawloski	\$93,700
University of South Carolina – Aiken	Developing High Quality Middle School Mathematics Teachers	Dr. Tom Reid	\$94,000
University of South Carolina – Columbia	Middle School/Higher Education Partnership in Science Education	Dr. Jon Singer	\$94,000

University of South Carolina Columbia	High School Teacher Inquiry and Technology Professional Development Program	Dr. Christine Lotter	\$112,500
Winthrop University	Leadership for a New Millennium: District Aspiring Leadership	Dr. Jonatha Vare	\$147,000

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing approved at its April 5, 2007, meeting, on behalf of the Commission, the review panel's funding recommendations as depicted. The Committee was given the authority to make the awards on behalf of the Commission several years ago. This authority was granted in order to streamline the grant award-making process. In keeping with the procedure from previous years, the staff is granted authority to negotiate the final program activities and budgets with the project directors (as per the recommendations of the review panel). Funding is contingent upon the project directors' revision of the proposed project to meet the review panel's recommended changes.

This report is being presented to the Commission for information only.