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Agenda Item 3.02 D.

**Commission on
Higher Education**

Dr. Conrad Festa
Executive Director

November 13, 2003

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Dalton B. Floyd, Jr., Chairman, and Members, Commission on
Higher Education

From: Dr. Vermelle Johnson, Chairman, and Members, Committee on
Academic Affairs and Licensing

VJ/gmv

**Consideration of Revision to Guidelines for the Education Lottery Teacher
Scholarship Grants Program, FY 2003-04**

Summary

The Commission has already approved *Guidelines* for the administration of a new scholarship program, the Teacher Scholarship Grants Program, established under the South Carolina Education Lottery. Allocated to this program for FY 2002-03 was \$2 million dollars.

Under the *Guidelines* approved by the Commission, staff worked with a vendor to develop an electronic application, selection process, and data base. Awards were made this summer retroactively to eligible applicants who had taken eligible courses or programs during Fall, Spring, or Summer, FY 2002-03. Because the electronic application process was not completed until late in Spring semester, 349 awards have been made to date. Unexpended funds carry forward into FY 2003-04.

For FY 2003-04, a similar \$2 million dollars in lottery funds have been allocated to this program. During late summer and early Fall 2003, staff has worked with the vendor to make improvements to the electronic application and electronic data collection process.

Staff has also revised the *Guidelines*. Revisions are marked on the attached document. No substantive changes have been made to the *Guidelines*; rather, the changes are made for purposes of clarification, particularly about eligibility and award processes.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve the revised *Guidelines* for implementation in FY 2003-04.

Guidelines

Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grants Program

I. Synopsis:

During the 2001 legislative session, the General Assembly approved the South Carolina Education Lottery Act. One provision of this act provides that teachers who hold a professional certificate and teach in the public schools of the State will be awarded grants not to exceed \$1000 per year to attend the State's public and independent colleges and universities for the purposes of upgrading existing core content area skills or obtaining a Master's Degree in the teacher's core content area (see definitions below). The act further stipulates that if there are insufficient funds in the Education Lottery Account to provide the grant to each eligible recipient for a particular year, priority must be given to those classroom teachers (i.e., not administrators, counselors, media specialists, or other support personnel) whose core content teaching areas are critical need subject areas as defined by the State Board of Education.

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II. Purpose: The purpose of the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grants Program is to support classroom teachers in their efforts to improve their content knowledge by completing coursework and degree programs.

III. Definitions

A. "Core content area" means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts¹, history, and geography [Title IX, Part A, Section 9101 (11)]. Also included are early childhood, elementary education, health education, middle level education, physical education, secondary education, and special education.

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B. "Fiscal year" is defined as the twelve-month period from July 1-June 30.

C. "Teacher" is a South Carolina teacher who is teaching in a P-12 classroom in a South Carolina public school and holds a "professional" (i.e., not initial, temporary, transitional, interim, graded, warrant, special subject or permit) teaching certificate as defined by the State Department of Education.(http://www.myschools.com/divisions/ga/regs/article_o3/53.doc)

¹ The arts include art, dance, music, advanced fine arts, and speech and drama.

- D. "Master's degree" is defined as any advanced-level program of study recognized by the Commission on Higher Education that extends and enhances a certified P-12 teacher's content and/or pedagogy in his/her content area. (i.e., core content area, early childhood, elementary education, middle level education, secondary education, special education, but not education administration, guidance counselor, media specialist or other support personnel). Generic master-level degree programs with no specific area focus are not eligible.
- E. "Add-on certification" is any sequence of courses that meets the requirements of the State Board of Education for an additional area of certification for a certified P-12 teacher.
(<http://www.scteachers.org/cert/addlcert.cfm>)
- F. "Critical needs" are teaching fields identified annually by the State Board of Education as having a critical shortage of certified teachers. The Teaching Scholarship Grants Program applies only to those teaching fields included in the core content areas.
- G. "NCATE" is the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the national accrediting entity for programs in teacher education. All public institutions are required by the Commission on Higher Education to be NCATE-accredited; independent institutions are required by the State Board of Education to meet the State's approval standards, which are modeled on NCATE accreditation standards.
- H. "Independent institutions" are those institutions eligible to participate in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program as defined in Chapter 113 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which defines an independent institution of higher learning as "an independent eleemosynary junior or senior college in South Carolina whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina and which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools." However, independent two-year institutions are not eligible for participation in this program.
- I. "South Carolina resident" is defined as an individual who satisfies the requirements of residency in accordance with the state of South Carolina Statute for Tuition and Fees, Statute 59-112-10, and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
(http://www.che400.state.sc.us/Finance/CHEMIS/Res_Class.htm)
- J. "Public schools" include "regular" as well as "charter," "alternative," "magnet," and "special" schools.

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K. "Professional" certificate is issued to candidates who hold an initial or critical needs teacher certificate, or who have met requirements under the interstate reciprocity agreement, upon their successful completion of:

- (i) at least two years of continuous, successful in-service teaching, including an induction year;
- (ii) the appropriate Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) examination; and
- (iii) the formal performance evaluation of professional teaching (ADEPT).

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(i) at least two years of continuous, successful in-service teaching,¶ including an induction year; ¶

(ii) the appropriate Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT)¶ examination

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IV. Teacher Eligibility: Initial Application

A. To be eligible for an Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant, the applicant must:

- (1) Be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident who meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statutes;
- (2) Be a South Carolina Resident as set forth by 59-112-10;
- (3) Hold a "professional" teaching certificate as defined and conferred by the State Department of Education; and
- (4) Be under contract as a teacher in a SC public school;

B. Eligible applicants must also meet one of the two following criteria regarding course of study:

- (1) Be accepted as a degree-seeking graduate student in the teaching field (core content area, early childhood, elementary education, health education, middle level education, physical education, secondary education, special education, but not education administration, guidance counselor, media specialist, or other support personnel) at the Master's level and be enrolled in good standing at an eligible institution, with appropriate documentation provided; or
- (2) Be enrolled for graduate or undergraduate courses in current teaching field or in teaching field in which add-on certification is being sought, with appropriate documentation provided.

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C. In addition to the above requirements, applicants must also:

- (1) For each \$1,000 scholarship received, sign a commitment to teach in South Carolina public schools for at least one year following completion of the scholarship grant year and to refund the scholarship amount if the one-year teaching commitment is not honored; and
- (2) Be able to demonstrate 0a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale.

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- D. The applicant must also certify that he/she has not defaulted and does not owe refunds on any Federal or State financial aid.
- E. The applicant must submit the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grants Program application by the stipulated deadline and comply with all the directions contained therein.

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V. Teacher Eligibility: Continuing Application

- A. In order to continue eligibility for additional Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship grant funds in subsequent years, the applicant must comply with the following provisions:

- (1) The applicant must have earned at least a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) for prior courses taken with grant funds; or
- (2) If the applicant is a continuing graduate student, he/she must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale.
- (3) The applicant must have complied with all rules and regulations associated with the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant program and met all initial eligibility requirements.
- (4) The applicant must sign a commitment to teach in South Carolina public schools for at least one year following completion of the scholarship grant year and agree to refund the scholarship amount if the one year teaching commitment is not honored.

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- B. The applicant must submit the application for another Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant by the stipulated deadline and comply with all the provisions contained therein.

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VI. Institutional/Course Eligibility

- A. Applicants may access a program/course at any public or independent not-for-profit four-year institution headquartered in South Carolina whose degree programs are approved by the Commission on Higher Education and/or by the State Board of Education.
- B. Selected course(s) may not be "contract" courses or those that carry the professional development course designator.
- C. Selected course(s) may be elected in any term, including summer, during the fiscal year which runs from July 1-June 30.

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- D. Courses selected must be from programs that are fully approved by NCATE, the Commission on Higher Education, and/or the State Board of Education, as appropriate, and may NOT be in provisional or probational status by any of the three approving bodies.

VII. Amount/Duration of Award

- A. Applicants may receive up to \$1000 per fiscal year which runs from July 1-June 30. Funds may be used for tuition, fees, books and other "cost of attendance" elements and will be paid directly to the applicant upon successful completion of course(s).
- B. Applicants may receive up to three grants within a five year period, assuming that demand exceeds availability of funds. If demand does not exceed availability of funds in any given year, this restriction will be waived.
- C. Applicants must re-apply annually and provide evidence of having met continued eligibility requirements.

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VIII. Priority

- A. In the event that funds are not sufficient to provide grants to each eligible applicant, recipients will be awarded funds based on the following priorities in order:
- (1) Teachers whose core content areas are designated as "critical need subject areas" as defined annually by the State Board of Education;
 - (2) Teachers who teach in schools that have Educational Accountability Act report card ratings of "below average" and "unsatisfactory";
 - (3) Teachers who are adding on certification in a core content within the critical need subject areas as defined by the State Board of Education;
 - (4) Teachers who are seeking their first master's degree in the core content area.

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IX. Scholarship Grant Disbursements

- A. Each grant recipient may receive scholarship grant funds not to exceed \$1000 per fiscal year, assuming availability of funds. Awards will be made by semester in accord with the funding priorities for the program established by the Commission.

(i) Summer II and Fall due by December 15

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(ii) Spring and Summer I due by June 15

B. Scholarships will be processed after the conclusion of each semester and after transcripts and signed W-9 forms have been received.

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C. Only one grant per applicant may be distributed each fiscal year. Duplicate applications will not be processed.

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X. Appeals Procedure

A. A denied applicant may appeal the decision by forwarding written documentation supporting the reason for the appeal to the Commission on Higher Education.

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B. A grant recipient who does not meet the continued eligibility criteria for renewal of the Education Lottery Teaching Scholarship Grant forfeits continued participation in the program and may request an appeal based on an extenuating circumstances.

C. A grant recipient wishing to appeal any non-renewal decision based on extenuating circumstances must submit the following source documents to the Commission on Higher Education by no later than the established appeals deadline (for Summer II and Fall., April 1; Spring and Summer I, November 1) for the academic year for which the scholarship is requested:

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- (1) A completed application for appeal
- (2) A letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstances
- (3) An official transcript(s)
- (4) A letter from the recipient's principal supporting the appeal
- (5) Other supporting documentation for the appeal

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