

January 13, 2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Office of the Governor of South Carolina  
1205 Pendleton St.  
Columbia, SC 29201

The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.  
Office of the President pro Tempore of the SC Senate  
111 Gressette Bldg.  
Columbia, SC 29201

The Honorable James H. Lucas  
Office of the Speaker of the SC House of Representatives  
506 Blatt Bldg.  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: FY16 Proviso 1A.73

Dear Madam and Sirs:

Pursuant to FY16 Proviso 1A.73, enclosed please find a Report outlining the recommended incentives developed to recruit and retain teachers in rural districts experiencing excessive turnover of classroom teachers as defined in the Proviso. A list of the identified districts is provided as an attachment to the Report.

These recommendations are for Year One implementation and are based on the 1.5 million dollars allocated for FY 2016. The recommendations are to be presented to the identified districts as available options, and funds will be dispersed to the districts upon the written request of the district superintendent. Written requests must specify the incentive(s) the funds are to be utilized for, the amount of funds requested, and the manner in which the request amount was calculated or determined.

Should funding be continued and possibly expanded in future years, it is anticipated that the recommended incentives can be broadened in size, as well as scope, to include further student loan forgiveness programs and the development of non-traditional student programs through institutions of higher education.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the teacher recruitment and retention needs of the rural and underserved districts of South Carolina, and for your continued support of the programs and services provided by South Carolina's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement. Should you have any questions about the Report or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by telephone at 800-476-2387, extension 6411, or by email at [turnerj@cerra.org](mailto:turnerj@cerra.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jane Turner, Esq.  
Executive Director

Enclosure

C: Ms. Molly Spearman, State Superintendent of Education  
Ms. Melanie Barton, Executive Director, Education Oversight Committee

## **RURAL TEACHER RECRUITING INCENTIVES/FY16 PROVISIO 1A.73**

### **Year One Recommendations January 2016**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

##### **A. Background**

Under FY16 Proviso 1A.73 – Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive, the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA), in collaboration with the SC Department of Education (SCDE) and the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), is charged with the responsibility to develop a program to recruit and retain classroom teachers in rural and underserved districts that have experienced excessive turnover of teachers. Districts eligible to participate were defined as those experiencing greater than twelve percent average annual teacher turnover, as reported on the district's five most recent State Report Cards. A list of the eligible districts is attached as Appendix A.

##### **B. Collaboration and Input**

Prior to making recommendations for implementation of FY16 Proviso 1A.73, CERRA staff, primarily CERRA's Executive Director, Jane Turner, met with various staff from the EOC, the SCDE, the Governor's Office, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education Committee to review and discuss existing program data and effectiveness, as well as ideas, and strategies for rural recruitment and retention efforts. Turner also attended and addressed a number of meetings of House and Senate committees and sub-committees to gather further information about various ideas and strategies. Turner then met with the Superintendents and other officials from the districts identified under Proviso 1A.73. She shared a compilation of possible programs and strategies to pursue under the Proviso, and obtained input from the district officials about those and any other strategies or programs they wished to be considered. A summary of the discussion at the meeting was compiled and shared with the EOC, SCDE, and Governor's staff. Further data were collected about the rural districts from various sources and follow-up conferences were conducted with interested district officials. As a result of these steps, a list of recommended incentives was prepared, along with initial steps for implementation in Spring 2016 and subsequent steps to be taken for Fall 2016.

##### **C. Funding**

The legislature appropriated \$1,500,000 in the FY16 State budget for implementation of FY16 Proviso 1A.73. The funds were disbursed to the South Carolina Department of Education and subsequently released to CERRA on January 12, 2016. Proviso 1A.73 states

that appropriated funds “may be carried forward from prior fiscal years and used for the same purpose.”

## **II. INCENTIVES TO RECRUIT INTO THE PROFESSION**

### **A. Teacher Cadet**

The data are very strong that the Teacher Cadet (TC) program is successful at recruiting students into the teaching profession, and that many teachers return to their home districts to teach. For more information about Teacher Cadet, see the *2014-2015 CERRA Annual Report*, [www.cerra.org/about/news.aspx](http://www.cerra.org/about/news.aspx). Many of the high schools in the identified rural districts do not offer the TC class and those that do have very low enrollments. Rural school districts could be given financial assistance to enable them to offer a TC class in their high schools and support to both implement new classes and expand existing classes.

CERRA would assign an experienced Program Facilitator to spend half of his time working with newly appointed TC instructors and current TC instructors whose classes have low enrollments. CERRA also would provide rural districts who need to establish classes with a funding allotment to do so. This would include the amount necessary to free up a teacher class period for the TC class. CERRA provides the curriculum at no charge, as well as curriculum training, assistance with strategies to recruit students into the TC program, recruitment of a nearby institution of higher education (IHE) to provide assistance and resources to the TC class, and other general support for the TC instructors.

Fifteen high schools in the rural districts do not currently have a TC class; for each of these schools, CERRA would allocate approximately \$10,000 (1/5 of the state average teacher salary) per TC instructor to cover the cost of releasing the instructor to teach one TC class, for a total of \$150,000.

Expected Annual Allocation: \$150,000

### **B. Alternative Certification Programs**

School districts typically employ a number of teacher’s aides and other support personnel who have four-year, college degrees but who do not hold certification to teach in South Carolina. Many of these employees may be interested in becoming certified to teach, and may be eligible for one or more of the alternative certification programs in South Carolina. These include the SCDE’s Program for Alternative Certification (PACE), Teach for America (TFA) and American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE). Each of these programs charge certain fees for participation.

Rural districts could be encouraged to identify current, non-certified employees who have four-year, college degrees who may be interested in becoming teachers. In conjunction with the SCDE and CERRA, information sessions should be scheduled in the rural districts for the identified employees to learn about their options to seek certification through one of the alternative programs. Rural district employees who wish to pursue participation in the state-run PACE program, who are then admitted into the PACE program and rehired by their district in a teaching position, should have the PACE Training Program Fee paid directly from Proviso funds. The PACE Program also requires participants to complete three graduate courses.

The PACE Training Fee is \$250. The SC Teacher Loan Program, a forgivable loan program, is available to PACE participants and will cover up to \$750 per year toward the tuition associated with the required graduate courses. The cost of one graduate course can be estimated at about \$1,750. The remaining tuition costs, \$1,000 ( $\$1,750 - \$750$ ), should be covered by Proviso funds. Related expenses, such as books, fees and mileage, could reach up to \$500 and also should be covered by Proviso funds. If an average of one employee per rural district, for a total of twenty, were to participate in the PACE program, the amount allocated for the PACE Training Program fees would be \$5,000 ( $\$250 \times 20$ ) and the amount allocated for graduate coursework and expenses would be \$30,000 ( $(\$1,000 + \$500) \times 20$ ).

Expected annual allocation: \$35,000 ( $\$5,000 + \$30,000$ )

### **C. Master of Arts in Teaching Degree**

As noted above, school districts typically employ a number of teacher's aides and other support personnel who have four-year, college degrees but who do not hold certification to teach in South Carolina. Many of these employees may be interested in becoming certified to teach, but may not be eligible for the PACE program because their degree is not in a PACE subject area. However, they may be willing to pursue a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree, which is a graduate level teacher education program that typically requires approximately 15 courses. The SC Teacher Loan Program, a forgivable loan program, is available to students seeking an MAT degree and typically will cover most of the tuition associated with the degree program.

Rural districts could be encouraged to identify current, non-certified employees who have four-year, college degrees who are interested in pursuing MAT degrees. Districts also should be encouraged to offer these employees the assistance, support, and flexibility needed to complete the MAT program. These employees may need assistance with completion of MAT program applications and the SC Teacher Loan application. They also may need financial assistance to cover program admission testing fees, books/materials, other expenses and fees not covered by the SC Teacher Loan, travel costs for attending classes out of the district, and flexibility with work schedules so as to be able to attend classes (in person or online). Rural districts also should be encouraged

to coordinate with each other and with colleges/universities to offer classes on site (live or via closed broadcasting) where a collective of employees need to take a course or courses. Once rural districts identify current employees who wish to pursue the MAT and these employees have been admitted into the MAT program and have met eligibility requirements for the SC Teacher Loan, Proviso funds should be allocated to assist the employees with completion of the MAT program.

MAT students are eligible for up to \$5,000 per year in forgivable SC Teacher Loan funds, or a maximum amount of \$20,000. The SC Teacher Loan funds are then forgivable if the employee teaches in a designated school in the rural district where he or she was previously employed. Tuition costs per course can be estimated at about \$1,750. If three courses were completed during the first year, for a total of \$5,250 ( $\$1,750 \times 3$ ), this would leave a tuition balance of approximately \$250 ( $\$5,250 - \$5,000$ ) that could be transmitted to the IHE or the employee, whichever is deemed best. Additional costs, such as application fees, testing fees, books/materials, and mileage reimbursement, could reach up to \$1,000 per employee during the first year. If an average of two employees per rural district, for a total of forty, were to enroll in three MAT courses, the total amount allocated during the first year would need to be approximately \$50,000 ( $(\$250 + \$1,000) \times 2 \times 20$ ).

Expected annual allocation: \$50,000.

### **III. INCENTIVES TO RECRUIT INTO SOUTH CAROLINA VACANCIES**

#### **A. National Teacher Database**

National databases of teachers seeking positions generally allow for searches by subject area, by state where the applicant is willing to relocate, and other criteria. In the past, the SCDE funded a state-wide subscription to one such service, teachers-teachers.com. In recent years, CERRA and the SCDE subsidized the subscription fee to teachers-teachers.com for a limited number of districts on a first come basis. Rural school districts who used the service report being pleased with the service and the results they obtained. As of October 15, 2015, teachers-teachers.com reports that its database includes over 50,000 certified teachers who reside outside of South Carolina who are willing to relocate to South Carolina.

Rural districts should be provided with the opportunity to subscribe to one of the national databases of teachers who are searching for positions and are willing to relocate to South Carolina. CERRA has requested a discounted annual rate for the rural districts. The funds to cover the subscription cost should be paid out of Proviso 1A.73 funds. The cost to provide a teachers-teachers.com subscription for one year to the twenty identified rural districts is \$37,500.

Expected annual allocation: \$37,500

## **B. Critical Need Subject Salary Supplement**

Each year the South Carolina Board of Education approves a list of critical need subject areas for purposes of loan forgiveness eligibility under the SC Teacher Loan Program. The critical need subject areas are determined based on the results of the annual supply and demand study conducted each year by CERRA.

Rural districts should be allocated Proviso funds to recruit critical need subject teachers by paying them an annual salary supplement; it also is recommended that Proviso funds be allocated for rural districts to begin paying their current critical need subject teachers the same supplement. This would serve not only as a recruitment incentive for teachers to move into a rural district, but also as a retention tool for those teachers to then remain in the district long term, and for current critical need subject teachers to remain in the district as well. Otherwise, newly recruited teachers could leave once the supplement is no longer offered, and morale issues could arise among current teachers who object to the newly recruited teachers being paid more for the same job.

It is recommended that a reasonable salary supplement would be \$1,500. If each rural district employs an average of fifteen critical subject teachers, the amount allocated would need to be \$450,000 ( $\$1,500 \times 15 \times 20$ ).

Expected annual allocation: \$450,000

## **IV. RETENTION INCENTIVES**

### **A. Mentoring**

Beginning teachers need strong mentoring in their early years of teaching so that they will not leave after one, two, or even five years. Statewide, we are currently losing nearly 15% of teachers after their first year and almost 35% of teachers within the first five years. These statistics are even higher in rural districts where beginning teachers are new to the area and have little experience with children in poverty and rural settings in general. Thus, solid mentoring programs for beginning teachers in rural districts is critical. According to State Board of Education Induction and Mentoring Guidelines, beginning teachers must be assigned a mentor and the mentor must have been formally trained to serve as a mentor. CERRA and the SCDE have recently redeveloped and strengthened the mentor training program, but districts need incentives to encourage teachers to serve as mentors, and mentors need time to be able to serve effectively. Rural districts should be offered financial assistance to enable them to be able to offer a small stipend to mentors. Additionally, rural districts should be encouraged to continue

a mentor assignment for a beginning teacher's second year of teaching, when it is determined that this would be beneficial to the teacher. It is also recommended that districts provide an extra planning period to mentors of first year teachers so that they will have time to spend in their mentees' classrooms and then provide feedback to these early-year teachers. Additionally, districts should require school level administrators to complete the state mentor training program and to develop effective strategies for effectively inducting new teachers in their schools.

On average during the past three school years, the rural districts collectively have employed approximately 300 beginning teachers, resulting in the need for 300 trained mentors to serve those teachers each year. However, the number of available trained mentors must be greater than the number of beginning teachers because mentors must be matched to the beginning teacher as closely as possible in terms of location, subject or grade taught, etc. CERRA should provide a Proviso allotment to rural districts so as to allow them to employ retired teachers to serve as mentors, pay a stipend to current teachers who serve as mentors, and allocate an additional planning period to the mentor so that the mentor can spend adequate time working with the mentee.

For each of the approximately 300 mentors needed to serve the beginning teachers hired by the rural districts each year, allocate approximately \$1,500 per mentor, for a total of \$450,000 ( $300 \times \$1,500$ ), to enable districts to pay the mentor a stipend to work with the beginning teacher throughout the year. This would also serve to enable districts the option of hiring retired teachers to serve as mentors, to the extent allowed under the State Induction and Mentoring Guidelines. Also allocate funding to continue providing a mentor to certain second year, beginning teachers, and to pay these mentors a \$500 stipend. Assuming that 100 of the 300 new teachers need a mentor during their second year, an additional \$50,000 ( $100 \times \$500$ ) would be allocated.

Expected annual allocation: \$500,000 (\$450,000 + \$50,000)

## **B. Graduate Coursework**

Teachers increase their knowledge and understanding of their subject areas and their students' needs through graduate level coursework, potentially leading to an advanced degree such as the Master of Education (MEd). This targeted professional development also leads to increased efficacy and job satisfaction. Under the current teacher salary schedule, teachers also earn salary increases by earning advanced degrees and subsequent graduate coursework. Fully certified, continuing contract teachers in the rural districts should be encouraged to pursue graduate coursework, in exchange for tuition reimbursement, provided the teachers agree to remain in their current district for a specified number of years following receipt of the tuition reimbursement. Based on this tuition reimbursement and the increased job satisfaction, rural districts will be more likely to retain experienced teachers, even beyond the agreed upon service term.



Specifically, rural districts should identify and recruit fully certified, continuing contract teachers who are willing to take (and could reasonably benefit) from graduate coursework in poverty studies or coursework leading to additional areas of certification in critical need subjects. For example, an experienced teacher who is certified in Elementary Education may be willing to take the necessary coursework in order to become certified to teach Special Education, a critical need subject area, and receive the salary supplement paid to teachers in critical subject areas, as recommended above. Another example would be a teacher who takes classes in understanding children in poverty who learns tools and strategies to more effectively relate to and provide instruction to the students in their classes, leading to a greater degree of job satisfaction. In both situations, teachers are more likely to remain in their positions for a longer period of time.

Teachers who already hold a teaching certificate are not eligible for SC Teacher Loan funds to assist with tuition for general graduate coursework or courses taken to add on additional areas of certification. Thus, teachers identified by their districts to seek graduate coursework will need full tuition assistance, and perhaps other assistance as well, as described above for employees seeking MAT degrees. If two teachers from each of the twenty rural districts, for a total of forty, were recruited to take a graduate course in poverty studies each year, the tuition cost per teacher would be approximately \$1,750 per course, for a total of \$70,000 ( $\$1,750 \times 2 \times 20$ ) and the additional costs would be approximately \$500 per teacher, for a total of \$20,000 ( $\$500 \times 2 \times 20$ ). If one teacher from each of the twenty rural districts was recruited to take three courses per year leading to add-on certification in a critical need subject, the tuition cost would be approximately \$1,750 per course, for a total of \$105,000 ( $\$1,750 \times 3 \times 20$ ) and the additional costs would be approximately \$1,000 for the first year, for a total of \$20,000 ( $\$1,000 \times 20$ ).

Expected annual allocation: \$215,000 ( $\$70,000 + \$20,000 + \$105,000 + \$20,000$ )

## V. BUDGET

### A. Incentives

Teacher Cadet	\$ 150,000
Alternative Certification Programs	\$ 35,000
MAT Degree	\$ 50,000
National Teacher Database	\$ 37,500
Critical Need Subject Salary Supplement	\$ 450,000
Mentoring	\$ 500,000
Graduate Coursework	<u>\$ 215,000</u>
Subtotal	\$1,437,500

**B. Administrative Costs**

Executive Director (7.5% of salary/travel)	\$ 12,000
Research Coordinator (5% of salary)	\$ 4,500
Business Manager (5% of salary)	\$ 3,500
Program Facilitator (50% of salary/travel)	\$ 38,500
Miscellaneous Materials/Supplies	<u>\$ 4,000</u>

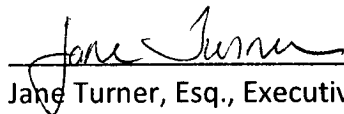
Subtotal \$ 62,500

**C. Total \$1,500,000**

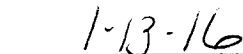
**VI. District Disbursements**

Eligible districts will be required to submit to CERRA a written request for disbursement of Proviso funds. The request must specify the particular incentive(s) for which the funds are to be utilized; the exact amount requested, per incentive; and the manner in which the requested sum was calculated and/or is to be expended. A request form will be provided to the rural districts for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted:



Jane Turner, Esq., Executive Director  
Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement



Date