

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy **NO.:** FAAP 07-21
COMMITTEE DATE: February 7, 2007
BOARD DATE: February 15, 2007

MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached Guidelines for the Pilot Scholarship Program for Mathematics and Science Teachers.

Authority: MGL Chapter 15D Section 5 Clause (10)
 C. 45 of the Acts of 2005, Item 7070-0065

Contact: Dr. Clantha McCurdy, Vice Chancellor for Student Financial Assistance

Background Information

The **Math and Science Teachers Scholarship Program** was established as a pilot initiative by the Legislature in Fiscal Year 2007. The purpose is to provide financial assistance to Massachusetts teachers who are currently employed in Massachusetts public schools but who have received waivers from certification regulations or are teaching outside their certificate area (“out of field teachers”).

This scholarship is designed to help reduce financial barriers that are often obstacles for educators to take higher education courses or pursue degrees. The program is also an attempt to help address the Commonwealth's current teacher shortage in mathematics and science.

The Board of Higher Education and the Board of Education are charged by the Massachusetts Legislature with developing guidelines and application criteria for the administration of the **Math and Science Teachers Scholarship Program**.

The **Math and Science Teachers Scholarship Program** provides funds to support the tuition, fees and related expenses for eligible educators who successfully complete higher education courses that lead to meeting the Department of Education licensure requirements for teaching mathematics or science.

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

DEFINITIONS

INSTITUTION

Any regionally accredited public or private college or university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that offers a mathematics or science program of study or program in a related field leading to the Department of Education licensure requirements in mathematics or science.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT

To be eligible for the Math and Science Teachers Scholarship Program, an applicant must:

- a) be a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts.
- b) be a United States citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- c) be employed, full or part-time, as an educator in a Massachusetts public school or schools that provide publicly-funded special education and currently teaching math and science under a waiver from certification regulations (educator licensure) or currently teaching outside their certification area (out-of-field teachers).
- d) enrolled in up to three higher education courses per academic semester in a degree granting program for math and science teachers, or
- e) pursuing a degree in order to satisfy requirements for teacher certification by the Massachusetts Department of Education for Mathematics or Science
- f) sign an agreement to continue teaching Mathematics or Science in a Massachusetts public school for a term of service after completion of courses or program (no longer teaching out-of-field) or repay funds as defined below
- g) be eligible under Title IV Regulations and not in default of a state or federal education loan or grant
- h) annually file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Priority consideration will be given to applicants meeting the above criteria who are teaching full or part-time in a high-need district. A high need district is a district that has been identified for corrective action in which there are one or more schools identified for corrective action or restructuring; or districts in which the percentage of low-income students is 40% or greater.

Preference will be given to applicants who are identified by superintendents or principals as highly talented educators who have demonstrated a commitment to education and to instructional excellence.

AWARD VALUE

The award for eligible applicants under this program shall include the cost of tuition, fees, and related expenses as determined by the Board of Higher Education and the Department of Education for up to three eligible courses per academic semester at an eligible institution of higher education in Massachusetts. Eligible applicants may receive a scholarship award for all academic semesters, including summer terms, based on availability.

Priority will be given to teachers employed in high-need districts. Teachers in high-need districts are eligible to receive full funding for tuition, fees, and related expenses. Teachers employed in non-high-need districts are eligible for partial funding (75%) of the cost of tuition, fees, and related expenses.

The Board of Higher Education, in consultation with the Department of Education, will annually review the tuition and fee charges at Massachusetts public and private colleges and universities and adjust the program award values, as it deems necessary.

TEACHING OBLIGATION

Recipients of the Math and Science Teachers Scholarship Program must sign a Terms and Conditions Statement acknowledging their obligation to provide service as a full-time teacher in a Massachusetts public school (K-12). The service commitment will range from a minimum of one and a maximum of four years of employment as a full-time teacher, depending on the number of courses taken with scholarship assistance, as follows:

1-2 courses	one year
3-4 courses	two years
5-7 courses	three years
8-10 or more	four years

Teachers in high-need districts are expected to fulfill their term of service in a high-need district. If a teacher in a high-need district fulfills the term of service in a non-high-need district, the teacher must repay the difference between the full scholarship rate and the partial scholarship rate.

A teacher who benefits from the scholarship and fails to provide the required service in a Massachusetts Public School will be responsible for repayment of the scholarship award received, prorated on the length of service provided, as defined in the Terms and Conditions Statement and as determined by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, in consultation with the Department of Education.

INSTITUTIONAL DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS

Each participating institution must certify that the recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the Math and Science Teachers Scholarship Program.

All funds appropriated for this program must be expended by June 30 of each fiscal year or as otherwise determined by the Legislature.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

Each institution participating in the Pilot Scholarship Program for Math and Science Teachers must file a State Financial Aid Program Participation Agreement to be maintained on file in the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each institution to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility.

- b) The Chancellor shall require each campus to furnish to the Board of Higher Education a report detailing specific information regarding recipients. The Office of Student Financial Assistance will coordinate specification and procedures for this report.
- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall at all times be open to inspection, review and audit by the Chancellor, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives, who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The institution shall retain such financial books, records and documents for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.

AUTHORITY

Chapter 139 of the Acts of 2006, line item 7061-9804.