

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy **NO.:** FAAP 09-08
COMMITTEE DATE: November 14, 2008
BOARD DATE: November 21, 2008

MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached amended Guidelines for the Mathematics and Science Teachers Scholarship pilot program.

Authority: MGL Chapter 15D Section 5 Clause (10)
 Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2005, Item 7070-0065
 Chapter 139 of the Acts of 2006, line item 7061-9804

Contact: Dr. Clantha McCurdy, Senior Deputy Commissioner, Access and 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 for coursework leading to the initial educator license for Massachusetts teachers who are currently employed in Massachusetts public schools and teaching Mathematics or Science courses under either a preliminary license, waiver, or are teaching outside their licensure area.

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 designed to help the Commonwealth address the current teacher shortage in Mathematics and Science related fields. The **Mathematics 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 Elementary and Secondary Education (formerly Department of Education) licensure requirements for teaching mathematics or science.

The existing guidelines and application materials were developed in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The amendment further clarifies the benefits for teachers who have received a preliminary license but are required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to complete additional coursework or degree programs to attain licensure status.

**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 an approved educator preparation program for an initial license in Mathematics or Science or a program of study or related coursework leading to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education licensure in Mathematics or Science.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT

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

- be employed, full or part time, as an educator in a Massachusetts public school or school that provides publicly-funded special education, and
- be currently teaching Mathematics or Science (including Technology or Engineering) under a preliminary license, waiver, or outside their licensed area; and meet the following criteria:
 - (a) be a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts
 - (b) be a United States citizen or eligible non-citizen
 - (c) be enrolled in up to three higher education courses per academic semester in fulfillment of degree or program requirements in a state-approved educator preparation program for the initial license in the Mathematics or Science field and level of interest.
 - (d) sign an agreement to continue teaching Mathematics or Science (including Technology/Engineering) 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
 - (e) be eligible under Title IV Regulations and not in default of a state or federal education loan or grant
 - (f) 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 percent 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 Elementary and Secondary 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 percent) of the cost of tuition, fees, and related expenses.

The Board of Higher Education, in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary 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 Mathematics 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 Elementary and Secondary Education.

INSTITUTIONAL DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS

Each participating institution must certify that the recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the Mathematics 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 Mathematics 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 Commissioner of Higher Education 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 Commissioner of Higher Education, 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.