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Information/Action

Fiscal Policy and Planning Committee of the Whole

Proposal to Release a Competitive Grant Process for the Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

Executive Summary: The agenda item presents an overview of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) role in administering the California Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program (PTTP) grants that support local programs that assist paraprofessional pursuing a teaching credential. The item presents for consideration, a Competitive Grant Process that would enable the Commission to fund new PTTP programs for the FY 2005-06.

Recommended Action: Staff seeks the approval to release the FY 2005-06 CGP for the PTTP.

Presenter: Crista Hill, Division Director, Fiscal and Business Services Section

Strategic Plan Goal:

Continue effective and appropriate involvement of the Commission with policymaker's on key education issues.

- ◆ Respond to policymaker's information inquiries.
- ◆ Collaborate with and advise appropriate agencies.

Proposal to Release a Competitive Grant Process for the Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

Introduction

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) is responsible for administering the funding for the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program (PTTP) pursuant to Article 12 (commencing with Section 44390) of the Education Code. The complete text of the statute may be found in Appendix A. Currently, 36 local programs support 1,617 school paraprofessionals completing coursework to earn a teaching credential. This agenda item seeks direction from the Commission regarding the competitive grant process that will allow local education agencies that do not currently administer a local PTTP to participate in the program.

Purpose of the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

The primary purpose of the PTTP is to create local career ladders that enable school paraprofessionals – including teachers’ assistants, library-media aides, and instructional assistants – to become certificated classroom teachers in K-12 public schools. The Legislature also created this teacher development program to respond to teacher shortages in subject areas of need, improve instructional services provided by school paraprofessionals, and diversify the teaching profession.

The PTTP expands the existing pool of fully-certificated California teachers by recruiting individuals from paraprofessional classifications into the teaching profession. The program core consists of academic scholarships to defray tuition, books and fee costs for paraprofessionals who earn college degrees and teaching credentials. Paraprofessionals are expected to earn preliminary certification within the timelines established by their programs and approved by the Commission.

Background

The PTTP was initially established in 1990 by Senate Bill SB 1636 (Roberti, Chapter 144, Statutes of 1990) and modified in 1992 by follow-up legislation under SB 862 (Roberti, Chapter 1220, Statutes of 1991). In 1997, the program was re-authorized as the “California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program” under the Wildman-Keeley-Solis Exemplary Teacher Training Act of 1997 (Education Code Section 44390.)

The PTTP is the only teacher development program administered by the Commission that recruits from the classified personnel positions of school paraprofessionals and develops them into fully-certificated teachers. Initial legislation identified the program as a pilot program and required recruitment of a maximum of 600 paraprofessionals from among 12 school districts across the state. The program consisted of 13 program sites from

January, 1995 through June, 1999. At its peak in 1997, the pilot program served as many as 581 participants, in 13 programs, at a funding level of \$1.478 million. The original 13 programs included the participation from several California Community Colleges and campus of the California State University.

The range of prior academic experience of program participants has varied from completion of little or no postsecondary coursework (0-6 units) to completion of a bachelor's degree. Therefore, the typical certification path for most paraprofessionals is completion of baccalaureate degree requirements and the credential subject matter requirement, followed by entry into a district internship program pursuant to Education Code Sections 44325, 44326, 44327, 44328, 44830.3 or in a university internship program pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 44450) of Chapter 3. Local programs offer professional development, academic advice, test preparation workshops, tutorial support, and financial assistance to school paraprofessionals seeking a preliminary Multiple Subject, Single Subject or Level I Education Specialist credential through the program.

Expansion of the Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program

AB 352 and AB 353, Chapters 737 and 831, Statutes of 1997, re-authorized the program as the Wildman-Keeley-Solis Exemplary Teacher Training Act of 1997 (Education Code Sections 44390-44393). The Act mandated that as of January 1, 1998 the program must recruit a minimum of 600 candidates from among 24 or more school districts or county offices of education throughout California. Although the law required increased participant numbers, no funding was provided to expand the program.

1999-00 *Enhancing Professional Quality* Allocation

In January, 1999, Governor Gray Davis identified the Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program as an important element of his education initiative, *Enhancing Professional Quality*, and included a \$10 million dollar augmentation for program expansion in the 1999-00 California State Budget.

In August, 1999, the Commission issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) which invited all district and county superintendents to compete for participation in the newly expanded program. Districts and county offices of education could apply singularly or as consortia. Thirty-five proposals were received, and of these, 29 received full funding.

As a result of the increased funding allocation, the program has grown significantly since 1999, with the number of program participants increasing from 522 in 1999-00 to a high of 2,268 in 2000-01. Currently, the 36 local programs provide service and support to 1,617 participants. The PTTP includes the participation of several California Community Colleges, California State University campuses, campuses of the University of California and private/independent colleges and universities that offer teacher training programs.

Program Graduates

As of summer 2004, 475 of the original participants and 468 of the expansion participants of the 1999 cohort have completed the program and are fully credentialed. This means that the PTTP has produced a total of 943 fully-credentialed program graduates since its inception in 1995. Participant data is gathered through a Consent Form process which collects personal data about each participant as well as demographic information, including academic standing and employment information. Because PTTP Consent Forms gather data at the participant level we know that of the total number of program graduates, 893 continue to serve in California public schools. This means that 94 percent of PTTP graduates continue to remain in the education profession 10 years after program implementation.

In addition, to the program graduates, 177 participants served in classrooms as teachers of record: on university internship credentials (77), on district internship credentials (23), in individualized intern certificates (1), on pre-intern certificates (10), and, because the Commission's policies and laws do not prohibit emergency permits in this program, on emergency permits (66). This brings the total number of program graduates and participants who served as teachers of record in 2003-04 to 1,070. These teachers are currently providing certificated service in more than 90 California public school districts and county offices of education. Data for 2004-05 are currently being compiled and will be presented to the Commission during its August meeting.

Prior Action by the Commission

In October 2002, the *Report to the Legislature on the Progress of the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program* was presented to Commissioners for review and consideration. During the presentation staff explained that the original programs would cease to provide services to participants in 2003-04 resulting in decreased participant numbers. In addition to the RFP of the report to the Legislature a recommendation that Commissioners authorize staff to begin planning for the redirection of funds from the original programs for use by the expansion programs was made. That staff recommendation was accepted by Commissioners and staff began the planning process. This CGP will allow staff to enter into the competitive grant process so that the Commission can further expand PTTP participant numbers by allowing those local education agencies that can meet the requirements identified in law and addressed in the grant conditions to establish local programs.

Funding for the PTTP

The Commission has been administering incentive funding for PTTP since 1995. Funding allocated for the program ranged from \$1.478 million from 1995-99 to \$11.478 million in 2000. In July 2002, due to fiscal challenges experienced by the State of California, local assistance program funding for all state-funded programs was reduced. The PTTP funding allocation was reduced from \$11.478 million to \$6.583 million. Although program funding was decreased interest in the program has not decreased and

the program continues to serve 1,617 participants. Inquiries about participation in the program are received from hopeful participants weekly.

The 2005-06 Budget Act, appropriated \$6.583 million to the Commission for administration of the PTTP. Funding is available to school districts, county offices of education and consortia. Consortia are encouraged for small or geographically isolated districts that may not be able to develop programs based solely on their own human and fiscal resources. Table 1 below reflects the participant and funding history for the PTTP.

**Table 1:
PTTP Participation and Funding**

Program Year	Number of Programs	Participant Numbers	Budget Act Appropriation (millions)
1995-96	13	567	\$1.478
1996-97	13	580	\$1.478
1997-98	13	578	\$1.478
1998-99	13	573	\$1.478
1999-00	42	522	\$1.478
2000-01	42	2,268	\$11.478
2001-02	42	2,266	\$11.478
2002-03	42	2,059	\$6.792
2003-04	41	1,871	\$6.583
2004-05	36	1,617	\$6.583

The last statewide invitation to participate in the PTTP was issued by the Commission at the time of program expansion in the year 2000. As shown in Table 1, program participation has decreased over the years. Additionally, the remaining original programs will serve their last 19 participants during 2005-06. Although expansion programs replace program graduates with new participants who have approximately the same level of academic training as remaining participants, participant numbers will further decrease during 2005-06. Original programs are not authorized to replace participants because they have fulfilled their obligation as stated under the initial legislation. Therefore, if additional local education agencies are not allowed to participate in the program participant numbers will continue to decrease each subsequent year. In addition, the program could be subject to additional reductions in funding for not fully subscribing the program funds.

The Competitive Grant Process (CGP)

The purpose of the CGP is to allow new programs to compete for the funds administered by the Commission that are allocated through the annual Budget Act. Awards are granted annually at a rate of \$3,000 per participating paraprofessional. Although there is no matching funds requirement in law, those school districts, county offices of education and consortia that provide significant in-kind contributions in support of

paraprofessionals will be more competitive than those without. By authorizing staff to enter into the CGP and request Competitive Grant Proposals we will be able to allow local education agencies that do not currently administer a local PTTP to participate in the state-wide program and continue to train paraprofessionals through this important, effective teacher development program.

All responses to the CGP will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers knowledgeable about successful career ladder programs. Reviewers will include representatives of the California Community Colleges, the University of California, the California State University and private/independent institutions of higher education that offer accredited teacher training programs, and certificated and classified employee organizations. Reviewers will use the quality criteria and the point system included in the CGP. Additional follow-up will be conducted by reviewers via, e-mail, fax and telephone if questions or clarification is required. Those programs that meet the proposal requirements and respond to the inquiries of the panel are recommended to the Commission for funding. Successful grant programs must submit an annual re-application that describes program successes and challenges, anticipated program changes, and an annual budget for Commission approval prior to continued funding and participation in the program. In an effort to reduce printing costs, a copy of the CGP was not included in the agenda item, however is available upon request.

Considerations

It is anticipated that \$1.406 million will be available to support 577 new program participants in 2005-06. It is unknown how many proposals will be received in response to our request for proposals, but there should be no adverse impact to the Commission's budget. Costs for administering the PTTP are included in the Professional Services base budget. All funds received from the General Fund are passed directly on to the programs that successfully compete for participation in the PTTP. No General Fund dollars are used to cover state operation costs.

- If the Commission authorizes issuance of the CGP, staff will proceed to implement the steps in the CGP process.
- If the Commission chooses to delay action, this may delay the start of the potential new programs. If the delay is extensive, programs may not be able to begin their programs until summer or fall 2006.
- If no CGP is issued, the PTTP will serve 1,617 participants during 2005-06 with declining enrollment each subsequent year. All funds that would have been provided to new programs will be returned to the General Fund.

Staff is available to answer any questions Members of the Commission may have.

