TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Agenda Item: II.C.

DATE: November 20, 2014

SUBJECT: 2015 Improving Teacher Quality Grant Awards

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Operating as Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program is a federally funded program which provides grants to public and private higher education institutions and non-profit organizations. Administered in Tennessee by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, these grants are designed to conduct professional development for in-service K-12 teachers.

In accordance with Section 2132 (a) of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission worked jointly with the Tennessee Department of Education to identify priorities that will have the greatest impact on Tennessee school districts and student achievement. As a result of this collaboration, elementary and middle school educators' mathematical content knowledge and pedagogical practices were identified as the areas of focus for 2015.

Institutions prepared proposals to demonstrate their ability to provide a summer workshop, along with sustained activities throughout the school year, to elementary and middle school teachers. Proposals were allowed a maximum funding level of $75,000. Projects will be funded for the period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.

An advisory committee consisting of both K-12 and higher education experts was constituted to review grant proposals and make funding recommendations to the Commission. This year's Advisory Committee is listed on Attachment A. Attachment B presents the projects recommended by the Advisory Committee and approved by the THEC Executive Director. A total of 22 proposals were submitted and 14 projects recommended for funding at $1,003,000.

The grant review process is described on Attachment C to this agenda item. All grant proposals are available for review at the Commission office.

Attachment A
2015 Improving Teacher Quality
Advisory Committee

Wendy Blackmore
Tennessee College Access

Kate Derrick
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Scott Eddins
Tennessee State Board of Education

Gloria Gammell
University of Tennessee

Victoria Harpool
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Karen Babbs Hollett
Tennessee Department of Education

Emily House
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Kenyatta Lovett
Tennessee Board of Regents

Patrick L. Meldrim
Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association

Deanna Morris-Stacey
Tennessee Board of Regents

Latonya Todd
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Patrice Watson
Tennessee Department of Education

Brad Windley
Citizen Representative

Attachment B
2015 Improving Teacher Quality
Recommended Projects

Austin Peay State University
"Improving Student Outcomes through Professional Development Using Rigorous Non-Routine Problems in the Domains of Algebra and Geometry and Measurement for Mathematics and Special Education Teachers for Grades 6-8
Dr. Gina Grogan

APSU will use ITQ funds to improve student outcomes in the Common Core domains of expressions and equations, ratios and proportional relationships, and functions by providing rigorous professional development to 65 middle school mathematics and special education teachers.

Belmont University
Cooking and Gardening: Strengthening Middle School Math Competencies Across the Disciplines
Dr. Lauren Lunsford

The themes of Gardening, Food, and Cooking will be used as the models to demonstrate how school gardens and food-related topics can enhance learning in both math and science courses. Belmont University will use ITQ funds to increase competencies of 30 middle school math teachers.

East Tennessee State University
Reaching for Excellence in Elementary School Mathematics
Dr. Chih-Che Tai

This project will increase student achievement and reduce the achievement gaps in elementary school mathematics by providing high quality professional development. The Reaching for Excellence in Elementary School Mathematics will provide 20 elementary math teachers' opportunities to learn standards based on math content and implement standards based on instructional strategies.

East Tennessee State University
Middle School Mathematics
Dr. Ryan Nivens

This project seeks to support 20 middle school teachers to reach for excellence in math through hands on, standards based, project based and technology based learning environments. The project will deliver high quality professional development to math teachers to increase their content knowledge in the Tennessee Mathematics Standards, acquire effective instruction to improve their students' academic performance and advance their pedagogical skills aligned with the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) model.

Lee University
Bringing Life to Mathematics (BLT Math): Teaching Middle School Content Knowledge through Real-World Problems
Dr. Caroline Maher Boulis

The goal of the BLT project is to help 25 teachers increase their understanding and instruction of the mathematical content in four domains: Ratios and Proportional Relationships, Expressions and Equations, Geometry, and Function, with focus on major work of grades 6-8. This will be done through creating real world problems that encapsulate the targeted mathematical content and the effective use of manipulatives and hands on scientific experiments.

Lee University
Elementary Mathematics and Science Connections – $E=MC^2$: Mathematical Modeling through Scientific Inquiry
Dr. Lori West

This project seeks to increase 25 teacher's knowledge and competency in the instruction of mathematics and science standards among 4^{th} and 5^{th} grade elementary mathematics and science teachers.

Lipscomb University
Geometry, Measurement, and Algebraic Thinking for Grades 5-8
Dr. Brandon Banes

This project will help 28 teacher participants develop their content knowledge while engaging in the Standards for Mathematical Practice through hands on activities, technology-aided explorations, number talks, problem solving tasks, and other problem based pedagogies.

Middle Tennessee State University
Understanding Progressions, Assessment and Content Knowledge in Mathematics (Project UnPACK)
Dr. Rongjin Huang

This project is designed to deepen 30 teachers understanding of both mathematics content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The Professional Development will emphasize learning progressions across grades and illuminate the connections between different categories of knowledge.

Milligan College
Putting the Pieces Together: Literacy, Modeling, and Problem Solving for Fraction Instruction (Grades 3-5)
Dr. Lyn Howell

Milligan College will use ITQ funds to engage 40 teachers in hands-on opportunities to practice and refine their teaching skills and develop effective methods for incorporating Literacy, Modeling, and Problem Solving strategies in their instruction.

Tennessee Technological University
Talking Sense: Math Talk and Number Sense in K-2
Dr. Jane Baker

The Talking Sense: Math Talk and Number Sense in K-2 project will engage 30 teachers in kindergarten through 2nd grades from predominately rural elementary schools. This project will build participating teachers' dispositions and capacities to evaluate and improve the quality of instructional materials for use in their classrooms.

Tennessee Technological University
Coding for the Core: Computer Programming & Common Core Middle Grades Mathematics
Dr. Leslie Suters

TTU will use ITQ funds to deliver explicit instruction to 30 teachers with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge Framework to engage participants intentionally in thinking about the intersection of content, pedagogy, and technology and how this can help them with TEAM evaluations.

University of Memphis
Exploring the "M" in STEM: Problem Solving Strategies and Reading/Writing Connections
Dr. DeAnna Owens

The University of Memphis will use ITQ funds to increase the content and pedagogical knowledge of 24 middle school math teachers. The proposed program aligns with the TEAM practices and addresses increasing teacher's mathematical content knowledge.

University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
Building the Staircase to Algebra through Grade 5 Mathematics
Dr. Deborah A. McAllister

This program will focus on improving mathematics content and pedagogy for 32 5th grade teachers, as they implement the Tennessee Mathematics Standards. Teachers will be able to understand the most critical areas of 5th grade mathematics, employ the targeted instructional practices of TEAM, and address student needs through the integration of mathematics and English language arts.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Mathematical Literacy for English Language Learners
Dr. Clara Lee Brown

The ITQ funds will be used at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville to help 20 secondary math teachers who teach English language learners, yet who lack pedagogical knowledge and skills in accommodating them to reach rigorous math standards. The professional development will focus on increasing the teacher's content knowledge and pedagogical practices.

Attachment C
2015 Improving Teacher Quality
Proposal Review Process

On July 21, 2014, a memo from Dr. Rhoda and the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Improving Teacher Quality Grants was distributed to college and university chancellors, presidents, deans, and faculty. A contact at each teacher preparation institution was sent the RFP.

The RFP included the background of ITQ grants, federal requirements, funding priorities as determined by THEC, a description of eligible partners (including a list of high-need school districts), competition guidelines, grant timeline, evaluation rubric, and all appropriate forms to be completed for proposals. A Notice of Intent to Submit was due via email by August 18, 2014 and completed grant proposals were due to THEC on September 15, 2014 by 4:30 p.m. CST.

THEC staff distributed the grant proposals to the Advisory Committee for review prior to the committee meeting on October 9, 2014. The committee was divided into teams to individually evaluate proposals. The teams met separately in small groups to discuss their assigned grants and score the grants according to the evaluation rubric.

Proposals with the top scores were compiled into a master list. The entire committee could pose questions about the grant proposal, make recommendations or amendments, and discuss the level of funding the proposal should receive. The committee then funded the proposals based on the scored average, with necessary geographical requirements taken into account.