

What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?



**Twenty-First Annual Reporting on
the South Carolina Education
Improvement Act of 1984**

**Two Descriptive Studies of
Programs to Improve
Teaching Practices**



South Carolina State Board of Education

December 2005

What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?

Two Descriptive Studies of Programs to Improve Teaching Practices

**Prepared by the
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General Introduction

The Education Improvement Act (EIA) requires that an annual assessment of EIA-funded education reform efforts be submitted to the legislature by December 1 of each year. This year's assessment report examines two programs that work to improve teaching practices by providing direct support to teachers.

The EIA Teacher Grant Program provides funds to teachers through competitive grants. The Critical Teaching Needs program provides funds for teacher training at the district level and for the summer workshops at the Roper Mountain Science Center in Greenville, South Carolina. Private researchers under contract to the State Department of Education (SDE) conducted these two studies. The costs of both studies were covered by EIA funds allocated for program evaluation.

Section 1 of this report contains the descriptive study of the EIA Teacher Grant Program. The descriptive study of the Critical Teaching Needs program is contained in section 2.

Overview of the Programs

EIA Teacher Grant Program

In studying the competitive EIA Teacher Grant Program, researchers found a viable and useful program, generally well run and considered by both teachers and administrators to be beneficial to teachers. Although hampered somewhat by the absence of a full-time program manager, the inability to provide more than minimal support and oversight to grant applicants and recipients, and the grant award's being in an amount set over twenty years ago, the program continues to flourish. In 2004–05 alone, almost 1,000 proposals were submitted for review. The EIA Teacher Grant Program is the only state-supported program that funds teacher-directed innovative, creative teaching practices or that allows teachers to plan, construct, and evaluate their own research projects. Teachers cite as other benefits of the program the ability to purchase needed materials for their classrooms and to pay for field trips.

The researchers studied the EIA grants awarded over the past five years and determined that these grants are disbursed equally among districts by size (as measured by student membership counts) and by locale. State-level program managers reported that districts with the highest success rates in receiving grants have school- and district-level administrators who encourage teachers to participate in the program.

Critical Teaching Needs Program

Another EIA-funded program benefiting teachers is the Critical Teaching Needs (CTN) Program. Funds allocated to this program pay for teacher training in targeted subject areas. Originally focused only on mathematics, science, reading, and computer education courses, funds now also pay for courses that support the education of students with special needs and courses that, in the words of Proviso 1A.15, “support instructional techniques and strategies in keeping with the professional development plans.”

Researchers did find that the name of the program confuses SDE, district, and school staff, however. The CTN program is often mistaken for the Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE), a program that provides training for individuals to become certified to teach in critical subject areas and critical geographic areas.

Beginning in 1992, 20 percent of the CTN program allocation—\$200,000 out of a total allocation of \$1 million at that time—was directed to the Roper Mountain Science Center to fund summer workshops for teachers. By the 1995–96 school year, the Center's \$200,000 allocation was taking 31 percent of the total CTN program allocation. Since 2002–03, the percentage of CTN program funds allocated to the Roper Mountain Science Center has remained at 41 percent (\$250,000 of \$602,011).

Some administrators in smaller school districts report that, with the funds currently allocated, they must partner with other districts or join a consortium to be able to offer needed courses. The allocation of funds sufficient to pay for needed staff development is the major issue facing the CTN program today.

Recommendations

EIA Teacher Grant Program

Based on interviews with past program managers and surveys of grant recipients, principals, and district-level program contacts, the actions recommended here should ensure the continued success and usefulness of the Teacher Grant Program.

- Take steps to ensure the continuity of the EIA Teacher Grant Program.

Teachers, principals, district contacts, and SDE grant program managers were uniform in praising the program. They are convinced of the important contribution it has made to the teaching profession in South Carolina and are confident of its promise for the future. The SDE should establish within the agency a permanent home for the EIA Teacher Grant Program that will ensure an adequate staff and adequate funding for its management.

- Form a panel to advise SDE program managers concerning the future of the EIA Teacher Grant Program.

Teachers who have had successful grants should be included in the discussion. School district contacts should be consulted about ways to make the application process easier and more accessible. School districts that have not participated in the past as well as districts that have had heavy participation should be invited to give input. Current and past program managers should be included in the discussion.

- Consider increasing the size of individual and unit grant awards.

This was a recurring suggestion from teachers, principals, and SDE grant program managers. The individual teacher grant has remained at \$2,000 since the program was created in 1984. Unit grants have not been increased in size since they were first funded in 1993. Increasing the size of individual and unit grant awards is something that can be accomplished without additional legislation. The SDE has the authority to manage the details of these grants. Increasing the grant award size, if there is no increase in appropriation, would have the effect of decreasing the total number of grants awarded each year, and such a decrease would not only make the program easier to manage but would also help to ensure that only the highest-quality proposals are being funded.

- Increase the SDE staff time devoted to the EIA Teacher Grant Program.

The 2004–05 grant program manager indicated that he was able to devote only about 5 percent of his time to the EIA grant program. For at least part of the year, a staff member should be available full-time to manage the program. There is also the need for staff time to be devoted to conducting workshop and dissemination activities and to working with districts that have not participated in the EIA Teacher Grants Program in the past.

- Study the feasibility of adjusting the grant program timeline to allow for earlier notification of grant award recipients.

Adjusting the timeline was mentioned in teacher final reports, in principal surveys, and in interviews with past grant program managers. The earlier the announcements are made, the more time teachers will have to prepare, to avoid loss of time at the beginning of school, and to realize success with their grants. A July 1 announcement date has been observed in the past. In addition, some grant readers have indicated to program managers that setting the review dates at the end of the school year would very likely disrupt their own classroom plans.

- Find a way to provide more public recognition for this program.

The EIA Teacher Grant Program is popular with teachers and principals in a way that few other programs are. In 2004–05, approximately 2,000 teachers, 5,000 community members, and 49,000 students participated in nearly 400 separate grant-funded programs. The EIA Teacher Grant Program provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the achievements of teachers and students.

- Make the dissemination of information about the best of the grants an important part of this program.

A requirement may need to be added to the grant process that teachers receiving grants share their grant experiences with other teachers. In the survey conducted for this study, almost all the 2004–05 grant recipients indicated that they had shared information about their grant with their school colleagues. But only half of the teachers shared information with district-level staff, and only 11 percent shared information with state-level professional groups. A requirement to share successful teaching methods and lesson plans with other teachers would expand the usefulness of the program. Small follow-up grants awarded after the completion of successful grants could be used to allow teachers to share their accomplishments at workshops and conferences outside of their districts. This kind of sharing would bring recognition to these teachers and would also increase other teachers' interest in writing grants. Other ways of advertising successful grants should be studied by the SDE.

- Examine the role of school district contacts in the success of the program.

School district contacts should be surveyed to determine the needs of the districts and to solicit the advice of these individuals regarding the ways the SDE can best assist their particular districts. School district contacts should be targeted for technical assistance. SDE staff resources will always be limited—a fact that makes ongoing training and support of school district contacts essential.

Critical Teaching Needs Program

The following are brief recommendations for improving all areas of the CTN program:

- Consider a name change for the CTN program to eliminate confusion about whether it is this program or PACE that is actually being referred to.
- Consider requesting the restoration of full funding for this program to pre-2001 levels, increasing funding, or consolidating the CTN program into other professional development initiatives.
- Review the application submission, approval, and evaluation processes in light of funding flexibility provisos and recent changes in funding disbursement procedures.
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation process that looks beyond the numbers of teachers served by the program to the impact of the program on student achievement.
- Develop guidelines for the expenditure of funds that are applicable both to school districts and to the Roper Mountain Science Center.
- Study the continued viability of the Roper Mountain Science Center's Science P.L.U.S. (Participatory Learning, Understanding, and Sharing) Institute as a state-funded statewide professional development activity.

The Science P.L.U.S. Institute does provide valuable professional development for science teachers. Instructors at the Institute model hands-on, inquiry-based teaching techniques, and participants are given materials and other supplies to take back to their classrooms. But the numbers of teachers who can be served over the summer represent only a small percentage of the teachers who could benefit from this particular training. An outreach program or regional workshops sponsored by the Institute and held throughout the year would reach more teachers.

SECTION 1

A Descriptive Study of the EIA Teacher Grant Program, 1984–2005

Introduction

Signed into law in 1984, the South Carolina Education Improvement Act was a major reform initiative whose goals were focused on improving student performance, enhancing the teaching profession, improving educational leadership, encouraging partnerships with the community, and enhancing the quality of schools. In order to fund this reform effort, the General Assembly increased the South Carolina sales tax by one cent. Two of the strategies implemented to reach the goals of the EIA were the Competitive Teacher Grant and Competitive School Grant programs, with the first grant monies being awarded in school year 1984–85. As a force that still serves the original EIA goals, teacher grants continue to benefit education in South Carolina today.

The EIA Teacher Grant Program, as it is now called, awards roughly 400 grants a year—for a total of over \$1.2 million—to encourage innovation and improved teaching practices in the state’s classrooms. This sum represents a significant increase since 1984, when the first 113 grants were funded with a total of \$200,000. Although it has emphasized different priorities over the years in response to the needs of South Carolina’s public schools, the program’s original purpose has remained unchanged.

Executive Summary

The EIA Teacher Grant Program has remained intact over the twenty-one years since it was created. Its management has been relocated numerous times within the State Department of Education (SDE) as offices have been realigned and as the missions of these offices have changed accordingly. Eight different SDE staff members have administered the program, all of them having additional responsibilities in greater or lesser degrees. Interviews were conducted with seven of the eight grant program managers, six of whom are still SDE employees. All seven of these individuals are overwhelmingly positive in their comments and opinions about the EIA Teacher Grant Program and its value to teachers in the state. They also offer a wide range of ideas to help improve the program.

In surveys conducted in 1990 and 2005, teachers and principals in large percentages indicated that the EIA Teacher Grant Program is having a positive impact on the curriculum, the teaching of content, teacher morale, basic skills instruction, student interest, and student achievement at their schools. When asked, the teacher grant recipients voiced few complaints about the operation of the program. They are, in fact, clearly enthusiastic in their support of the program and are eager to see it continued and, if possible, expanded. They also have a variety of proposals to make the program even better. Teachers and principals in 2005 were more positive in their remarks on the survey than their colleagues in 1990 had been about the benefits of the program.

Every region of the state is well represented in the allocation of the Teacher Grant Program funds, and any inequity that may exist in this regard is related not to geography but to the distribution of grants among the various school districts. The very successful grant-writing school districts are located across the state and include both large and small as well as rural and urban school districts.

There are only two districts in the state that have received no grant funds over the past five years and four that received grant funds in only one of the past five years. All of these six districts are rural and are small in size. It is understandable that small districts with fewer teachers would not receive large numbers of grants. Further investigation might reveal that these districts have fewer administrative resources to provide teachers with information about grants and give them assistance in grant writing. It is probable, however, that more technical assistance and support from the SDE would increase the participation of these and other underrepresented school districts in the Teacher Grant Program.

In their interviews, SDE grant managers observed that school district contacts or principals, who were aggressive in support of the program, were the major reasons for the success of their teachers' receiving grants. Responses from school district contacts to the survey in May and June 2005 were low—a situation that may have been the result of summer schedules or the fact that the survey was conducted online. At any rate, it is clear that school district contacts are an obvious target group for training and the dissemination of information by the SDE.

Management of the EIA Teacher Grant Program, as well as SDE support for participating teachers and schools, has been decreased to a minimal level. Concern was voiced by the grant managers, school district contacts, principals, and teachers about the fact that the dissemination

of information regarding the availability of grants, the application materials, and the end-of-year reporting are all handled entirely online now. To attempt to manage the grant program almost exclusively online is an understandable response to very limited staff time and resources, but this approach may not be sustainable over time. If the SDE has less staff time to devote to this program, then there is a greater need to train school district contacts and other local personnel to disseminate information and provide the support for teachers who want to participate in the program.

In addition, the fiscal management of the approximately 400 grants does not seem adequate. Once the grant awards are made, there is virtually no oversight of the implementation of these grants. Funds are disbursed to the school districts, and no reimbursement claims are required. This may be a common practice with other programs and seems practical for the number of grants involved. However, without some oversight beyond the annual local audit, there is no assurance that grant funds are spent in the ways that are described in the approved applications.

The following recommendations emerged as consistent themes during the course of this study. They are offered as a starting point for discussion about the future direction of the EIA Teacher Grant Program:

- Take steps to ensure the continuity of the EIA Teacher Grant Program.
- Form a panel to advise the SDE concerning the future of the EIA Teacher Grant Program.
- Consider increasing the size of individual and unit grant awards.
- Increase the SDE staff time devoted to the EIA Teacher Grant Program.
- Study the feasibility of adjusting the grant program timeline to allow for earlier notification of grant award recipients.
- Find a way to provide more public recognition of this program.
- Make dissemination of information about the best of the grants an important part of this program.
- Examine the role of school district contacts in the success of the program.

Methodology

A review of the available historical data was conducted for this report. With the assistance of the SDE staff in the Evaluation Section of the Office of Research, the statistical data in this report was compiled using agency records. The 1989 through 1997 editions of the annual EIA accountability report publication *What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?* were reviewed to determine the numbers of grants and total grant dollars for each year through 1996. SDE staff provided data for the remaining years from agency files.

For the purpose of appreciating the wide variety of EIA teacher grants that were funded and establishing an accurate picture of this diversity, all of the 2004–05 teacher grant applications as well as their final reports, were reviewed and summarized.

Interviews ranging from thirty minutes to an hour in length were conducted with seven of the eight SDE staff members who have managed the EIA Teacher Grant Program. Six of these grant managers are currently employed by the SDE; one of the former managers was unavailable for an interview. Each of the interviews was conducted by two persons, who asked the SDE grant manager a set of ten questions. (The interview questions are provided in appendix B, and the detailed responses are provided in appendix C.) Telephone interviews were conducted with a random selection of twenty teachers who received grants in 2004–05. (The teacher interview responses can also be found in appendix C.)

The December 1990 edition of *What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?* described the results of a survey of teacher grant recipients and their school principals. The questions from the 1990 survey were incorporated into the online 2004–05 EIA Teacher Grant final report form. (A copy of the 2004–05 teacher survey questions is provided in appendix A. Teacher responses to the open-ended questions appear in appendix D.) A survey form was also sent to all principals of schools that received grants and to all school district contact persons. The intention was to compare responses today with those from fifteen years ago. (The survey questions sent to principals and the school district contacts are listed in appendix B. The detailed responses are provided in appendix D.)

History of the EIA Teacher Grant Program

From 1984 to the Present

The South Carolina legislature, through the EIA, created the Competitive Teacher Grant (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-67) and the Competitive School Grant Programs (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-10). The Competitive Teacher Grant Program was designed to allow teachers to receive grants for the purpose of improving teaching practices and procedures and implementing new and innovative programs. Teacher grants were funded at a maximum of \$2,000 each. The Competitive School Grant Program was created to assist schools in the implementation of exemplary and innovative programs designed to improve instruction. School grants were funded at a maximum of \$5,000 each.

The two programs were originally housed in the SDE's Office of Federal Programs because the staff had experience managing and evaluating competitive federal grant programs. According to a former grant program manager, one EIA-funded staff position was provided, but there were no funds appropriated to operate the programs. State funds from other sources were used for basic administrative services and the costs of the peer review process.

As the first manager of these two original programs explained the situation, the need to make the most effective use of available resources led to the National Diffusion Network (NDN) program's being moved during the first year into the Office of Federal Programs to share the one EIA-funded staff position with the Competitive Teacher Grant and Competitive School Grant programs. A secretary was hired to support the three programs.

The NDN was a federally funded support and dissemination system for innovative programs. To become part of the NDN, programs were required to undergo a multiyear evaluation and then a rigorous review process conducted by the Joint Dissemination and Review Panel at the United States Department of Education. Programs that were proven to be effective when they were implemented in the way that they had been designed, and at the grade levels for which they were designed, were accepted into the NDN. The Competitive School Grant Program required that applicants draw from this network of programs or select some other proven-successful program for their grant implementation model.

Many of the early Competitive Teacher Grants also used NDN programs in their proposals. NDN funds were used to provide materials and travel expenses for schools that did not receive grants but wanted to implement one of the programs. When a Competitive School Grant or Competitive Teacher Grant recipient held a teacher-training workshop, teachers from other schools were allowed to attend. The teachers and other professional educators who conducted the NDN program trainings were required to be certified as trainers—a stipulation designed to ensure that the highest-quality professional development was available and that follow-up assistance could be provided.

Combining the federal dissemination funds and the Competitive School Grant funds resulted in the introduction of many innovative programs into South Carolina schools. Some of these

successful models, such as Reading Recovery and New Model Me, are still in use. As one former SDE grant manager said, “Thousands of South Carolina teachers have been exposed to new and promising practices and have been provided materials and assistance to implement these practices in their schools, as a direct result of the teacher and school grant programs.” The last year that the Competitive School Grant Program awarded grants was school year 1992–93. As the 1993 edition of the annual publication *What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?* reported, during the nine years that the program existed, the Competitive School Grant Program awarded 914 grants totaling \$4,320,000 to schools for the training of teachers and the implementation of innovative programs.

With the end of the Competitive School Grants, the EIA teacher grants were divided into the two categories of individual and unit grants that exist today. At the same time, the EIA Teacher Grant Program was redirected to give priority to grants addressing the state curriculum standards. In the early years of the Competitive Teacher Grant Program, a similar priority had been given to proposals dealing with mathematics, and a portion of the available funds was set aside for math grants. Beginning in 2003–04, the application was redesigned to ensure that every grant directly addressed one or more identified curriculum standards.

Funding for the EIA Teacher Grant Program has remained remarkably stable over time. After a steady climb in appropriations over the first eight years, from \$200,000 in 1984–85 to \$1,220,000 in 1991–92, the appropriations remained almost level for the next fourteen years. Since 1984, a total of \$22,520,000 has been appropriated for the EIA Teacher Grant Program. The funding levels for each year of the EIA Teacher Grant Program are in figure 1.

Figure 1
Annual Allocations for EIA Teacher Grants

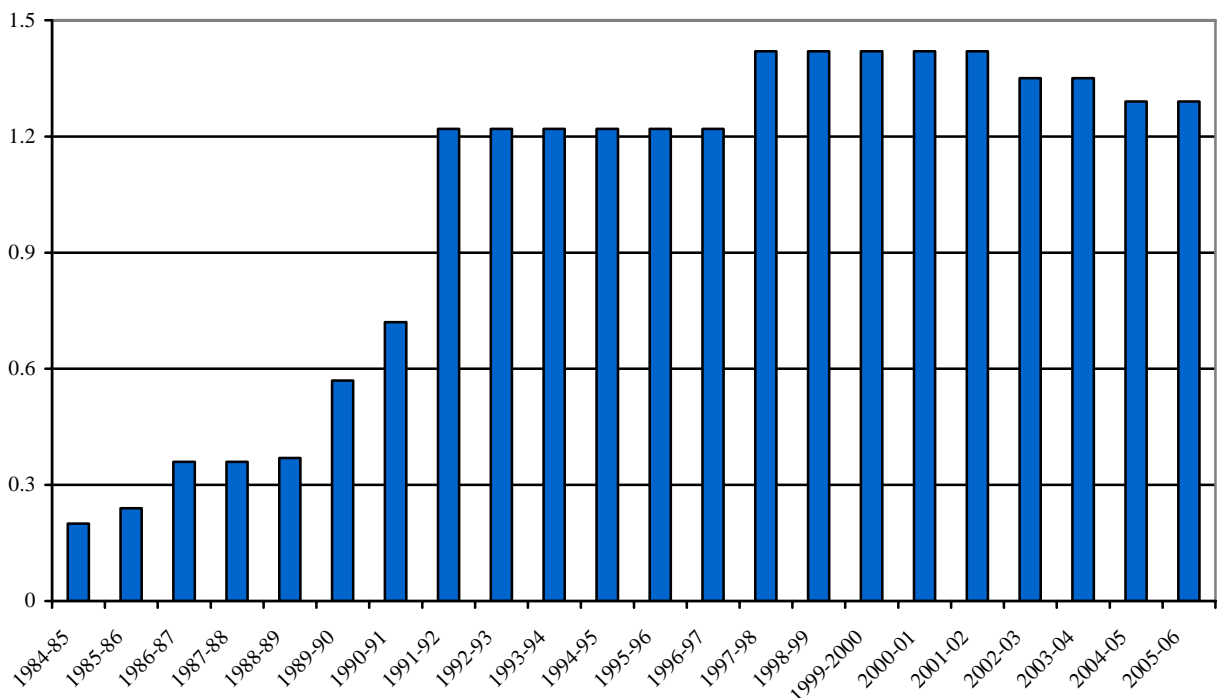


Figure 1 (continued)
Annual Allocations for EIA Teacher Grants

School Year	Annual Allocation		School Year	Annual Allocation
1984–85	\$200,000		1995–96	\$1,220,000
1985–86	\$240,000		1996–97	\$1,220,000
1986–87	\$360,000		1997–98	\$1,420,000
1987–88	\$360,000		1998–99	\$1,420,000
1988–89	\$370,000		1999–00	\$1,420,000
1989–90	\$570,000		2000–01	\$1,420,000
1990–91	\$720,000		2001–02	\$1,420,000
1991–92	\$1,220,000		2002–03	\$1,350,000
1992–93	\$1,220,000		2003–04	\$1,350,000
1993–94	\$1,220,000		2004–05	\$1,290,000
1994–95	\$1,220,000		2005–06	\$1,290,000

The EIA Teacher Grant Program Today

For the past twelve years, EIA individual teacher grants have been available for up to \$2,000 and unit grants serving two teachers have been available up to a maximum of \$4,000. Proposals involving three or more teachers are now eligible for a unit grant of up to \$6,000. All South Carolina public school teachers are eligible to apply for these grants. The SDE’s EIA teacher grant guidelines define the term “teachers” as including teachers, guidance counselors, media specialists, and speech clinicians.

Teacher specialists and curriculum coaches may participate in a unit grant but are not eligible for individual grants. The individual grants are limited to one per teacher per year.

Both individual and unit grants are competitive, and a panel of teachers and other school professionals convenes each year to read the applications and rate them with specific criteria. Reviewer scores for each grant are summed, and the highest-scoring applications, whether for individual or unit grants, are funded.

If an individual grant recipient transfers to a different school in the same school district, the grant may follow the teacher with the consent of the principals at both schools. Unit grants are awarded to a specific school and may not be transferred. There are few restrictions on the use of the funds, but travel costs may not exceed 15 percent of the total grant.

In November 2002, the EIA Teacher Grant Program was moved to the Standards Design Unit in the SDE’s Office of Curriculum and Standards. A staff member was transferred from the Office of School Leadership to manage the program. This individual was assigned to full-time management of the program during the application, peer review, funding, and final reporting stages and had other duties when the program did not require a full-time manager. A staff support person was assigned part-time to assist. It was during this time period that the first steps were taken to move the management of the program online. The grant application was

simplified, and the peer review process was standardized with new rubrics for the readers to use when rating the grants.

By June 2004, the grant manager position was again vacant. In November 2004, after an interim period during which the program was managed by the supervisor of the Standards Design Unit, the next manager was assigned to this program. That individual was also the only social studies consultant at the SDE, which in itself was a full-time position. He stated that he was able to devote only about 5 percent of his time to the EIA Teacher Grant Program. During 2004–05 the application was further revised along with the peer review criteria, and the application process was placed completely online. The final evaluation reports for 2004–05 were distributed and collected online as well.

Currently the funds to manage this program are taken from the budget of the Office of Curriculum and Standards. For the past two years, the budget for managing the program has remained the same. The supervisor of the Standards Design Unit indicated that the only expenses charged to this budget have been those for the peer review process. In table 1 are the budgeted amounts and expenditures for July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005.

TABLE 1
EIA Teacher Grant Program Budget for 2004–05
State Department of Education

Budget Category	Budgeted	Spent
Contractual services	\$21,900	\$9,836
Supplies	\$2,600	\$1,991
Fixed charges	\$1,800	\$750
Travel	\$500	0
Total	\$26,800	\$12,577

The Grant Review Process

As with other aspects of the EIA Teacher Grant Program, the peer review process has undergone changes over time. In this report, the focus is the grant review of May 2005. The SDE maintains a list of experienced and new readers that is made up of classroom teachers from a variety of content areas as well as subject-area coordinators and district-level administrators. Readers met three days in May to review grants submitted from across the state.

The SDE manager for the EIA Teacher Grant Program guided the review process. The first day included reader training and a review of the grant application forms (unit and individual) as well as the reader scoring rubric. Although the scoring rubric has been modified, the possible point total for each reader has remained 100. Changes in the application forms and new guidelines were noted. The most prominent changes were the elimination of the timeline and the addition of the EIA project overview charts. Readers were asked to look at budget items and at the

relationship of these items to grant activities. They were instructed not to review grants from any district where they had connections or where they might have a conflict of interest.

On the scoring rubric, 40 points were allowed for “Goals, Objectives, Evaluation Measures, and Alignment to Curriculum Standards.” The “Strategy and Activities” were worth 40 points, and “Budget” was allotted 15 points. Readers were allowed to award 5 points for “Potential.” Each grant was read and scored by two different readers. If the two scores varied more than 20 points, a third reader reviewed the grant. Any grants needing a third review were given to the most experienced readers. A grant’s final score was obtained by adding the two readers’ scores. When a third reader was needed, the first two scores were discarded, and the third reader’s score was doubled.

At the conclusion of the review process, readers were asked for feedback. There was informal discussion about the process. A suggestion box was available for notes. Readers were also offered blank applications so that they could write suggestions within the spaces of the form. The grant program manager asked for suggestions about high-scoring grants for use as exemplars to be displayed on the SDE Web site.

Individual and unit grant proposals were ranked by total scores, with the highest-ranking proposals receiving funding. Grants were carefully reviewed by the SDE staff to ensure that award guidelines were followed. Only one unit grant per school was allowed. A unit grant winner could not receive an individual grant, and duplicate grants could not be awarded. Grant winners for the 2005–06 school year were notified July 29, 2005.

Fiscal Management

The school districts serve as the fiscal agents for these grants. From the beginning, the program has been conducted with individual grant awards and with budgets created for each grant. Amendments to the grants were required for any program changes and any budget changes that varied from the approved budget by more than 10 percent in any one budget category. A portion of the funds was advanced to the school district for each grant, and the remaining funds were paid out on a reimbursement basis as claims were submitted. For the first years of the program, school districts were required to submit documentation with the claims. As the program grew to many times its original size, with hundreds of grants each year, documentation was no longer required to be submitted with the reimbursement claims.

In 2003–04, the SDE began to manage the distribution of funds to districts with regular monthly payments after the grant award announcements. The accountant in the Office of Finance who was responsible for these payments explained that the reason for the change in payment method was the need to accommodate the flexibility provisions granted by the General Assembly beginning with school year 2002–03.

The current year is covered by Provisos 1.61 (SDE: School Districts and Special Schools Flexibility) and 1A.47 (SDE-EIA: School Districts and Special Schools Flexibility) of the General Appropriation Act. No school district has used the flexibility provisions to move EIA teacher grant funds to other uses—a situation that may be due to limitations in these two

provisos, both of which state the following: “Any grant or technical assistance funds allocated directly to an individual school may not be reduced or reallocated within the school district and must be expended by the receiving school only according to the guidelines governing the funds.” Since the provisos specify “directly to an individual school,” these limitations may not even apply to EIA teacher grants; nonetheless, no one has yet chosen to use the provisos to reallocate any of these grant funds.

These grants are audited locally as are all other programs and funds that are managed by the local school districts. The independent auditors ensure the integrity of individual grants following SDE guidelines.

Data Analyses

Interviews with SDE Teacher Grant Program Managers

Because the SDE staff members who served over the years as grant program managers not only acquired a specialized knowledge but also had varied experiences that afford them unique insight into the program, seven of these eight individuals were interviewed for this report. (One former grant manager was not available for these interviews.) After addressing questions regarding the management of the program during their own tenures as the grant managers, all of them were asked to reflect on issues for the future—matters such as whether the program should be continued, what changes they would recommend, and what ideas they would offer regarding the distribution of funds and possible ways to make the application process more efficient.

- | |
|--|
| 1. How did the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Were these methods effective? Why or why not? |
|--|

Five grant program managers indicated that during their time with the program, application materials and information were mailed to all superintendents, district contact persons, and principals. One manager said that during the time he was administering the grant program, some information was beginning to be put online. The 2004–05 grant manager said, “For the first time, this year we did not send out a mass mailing of information. Everything was done electronically. Information about the grants was sent out through curriculum contacts and *Ed Blast* [an online news feature of *myschools.com*]. More people actually got the information. When you send a mailing to principals, many times it gets discarded. E-mail hits more teachers, more people, and it is easier to forward.”

Six of the grant managers said they held workshops to promote the program and provide teachers with information about grant writing. Some managers were able to provide workshops at the request of districts and individual schools. Other managers concentrated on providing workshops through professional organizations for subject-area teachers at their statewide conferences; and some managers provided workshops to both of those groups. One manager also held meetings with district contacts to determine how better to serve them.

- | |
|--|
| 2. What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal? |
|--|

Generally, in response to this question, the grant program managers reiterated the dissemination methods they had recounted in their responses to the first question. They mentioned sending information to all principals and staff members and going out to conduct workshops in schools and at conferences. Two grant managers stressed conducting workshops in parts of the state where there were no schools participating in the grant program. One described conducting technical assistance workshops for teachers by saying, “We stressed that teachers were able to do this, that they didn’t need a professional grant writer to be successful. We were always available to answer questions.” She finished by saying, “We really never said no to a district when it asked for assistance.” Another said, “We totally revamped the grant process and made the application

much shorter. There was no long narrative for them to fill out, for example. A lot was done through charts. This shorter and easier process encourages teachers to submit a proposal.”

3. Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?

Two grant program managers mentioned the peer review process as a place to find “excesses” and make some decisions about the wisdom of the spending plans. Three of them said that SDE staff also reviewed the budgets. One said, “I read every grant to look for excesses. If I found something, we negotiated. Each district contact and each district superintendent had to sign the grant.” Grant managers from the early years of the program talked about the requirement for detailed budgets in the applications and for amendments to the grants before revisions in the budget were approved. Over time, the SDE policy regarding fiscal management of these programs was relaxed, and less oversight and reporting were required. The 2004–05 grant manager pointed to a problem: “We do not supervise the money details. There is not as much budget scrutiny now as there was in the past.”

4. What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?

Five grant program managers said that telephone calls were the main way that the SDE provided support to teachers. When the teachers had questions or needed help with budgets or amendments or help dealing with their district offices, they called the SDE. One grant manager started a newsletter to provide technical assistance and disseminate information on topics of interest as well as to send out reminders about spending the funds and dates when final reports were due. This newsletter is no longer being published.

5. Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?

Four grant program managers felt strongly that the grants should be competitive. Rather than using some form of equitable distribution, these managers thought the SDE should find ways to encourage more teachers to apply and should provide assistance to districts where there is little participation. One manager said, “The SDE should reach out to low-participating areas and ask why they are not taking advantage of the program.” Another manager said, “The best projects should be funded. There are needs in every school and in every district. The highest-quality grants should get funded.”

Two grant program managers felt that a competitive process was the best way to award grants but that perhaps a separate source of funds should be set aside for school districts where there is little participation. One manager thought that there should be equitable distribution of funds across the state and across disciplines as well. One suggestion was that minigrants be offered to provide assistance to teachers who need help to learn to write better grants. Another suggestion was that teacher specialists be assigned to help teachers with grant writing.

6. How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?

All of the grant program managers agreed that having some or all of the grant application process online was a good thing. Two were concerned that exclusive use of an online application process might not serve everyone well, however. Three mentioned the need for workshops to inform and train teachers and school-level administrators. One of the grant managers said, “There is still a role for teaching and training about the program and how to write a grant in districts and at meetings.” Another commented that the SDE needed to find a way to help teachers “get over the hump” of understanding the grant proposal process. “We need to train the EIA contacts in things like how to buy, what to buy, the timeline for implementing a grant, and let them train the teachers in their districts. Continuing the newsletter would also help.” Two felt that it was important to meet with a group of teachers and ask them what they needed from the SDE in order to be successful in the grant process.

7. How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?

Two of the grant program managers stressed the need to have classroom teachers well represented on the reader panel. They suggested having the peer review take place in late May or early June after most school districts are finished with their school year and teachers are available to read. Two managers said that if the proposals are oriented to the curriculum standards, there is a need for content specialists to read the applications. One grant manager cited the need to search out and use the best teachers, including National Board–certified teachers and previous grant recipients. One said that good scoring rubrics have made the process better. One felt there was a need for quality training of the readers.

8. What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?

All of the grant program managers voiced concerns that involved funding either for grants or for program management. Three of the managers wanted to see more money put into the program, and all three of them mentioned the need to raise the total grant size from the current maximum of \$2,000 for individual teacher grants. One noted that “grants have been \$2,000 since 1984, and \$2,000 doesn’t represent the same amount of purchasing power in 2005.” Another said, “Teachers can expend the same amount of effort to write a grant that awards more money. So we need to either get more money in the pot or fund fewer grants but in larger amounts.” Five of the grant program managers listed the dissemination of successful grants as important and suggested various ways to accomplish such a goal. One said, “More money for this program is desperately needed! The dissemination requirement should be stressed more, and the program needs to be showcased somehow.”

9. During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?

The first three grant program managers said that mathematics had been a priority and that part of the money was set aside for these grants. The next three program managers said the emphasis was on grants that supported the curriculum standards. The applications for grants for 2005–06 did not have a priority but were required to identify in the proposal the curriculum standards that the grant project would address.

10. Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?

There was unanimous agreement among the grant program managers that the program should be continued. One added that it should be continued “only if we are going to put enough resources into it to have an active program.” The grant managers were in agreement that the program could not be operated properly as anyone’s part-time job. “The Teacher Grant Program should have enough staff to promote the program and be actively involved in it, to be able to go out in the field and support teachers.” The 2004–05 grant manager noted, “Running this program cannot be just a small part of someone’s job responsibilities. It is just a logistical nightmare. I saw many things that needed to be done, but I just couldn’t get to them.”

In support of the contention that the Teacher Grant Program should be continued, one grant manager said, “It encourages teachers to be innovative. It offers teachers ownership and pride in what they do. It offers students opportunities they never would have otherwise.” Yet another pointed out that the program “offers many benefits to teachers, such as self-initiated professional development—teachers plan the development, evaluate it, meet district expectations, and get recognition.” One grant manager answered the interview question by saying “Yes, and there are no ‘why not’s.’ If it means so much to people in the field, you just have to believe that this program impacts student learning.”

Telephone Interviews with 2004–05 Teacher Grant Recipients

Twenty teachers were chosen at random from the group of teachers who had completed the online final report. Telephone interviews of approximately 20 minutes each were conducted with these teachers.

1. On a scale of 1–5, with “1” being the least and “5” being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.

Nineteen of the 20 teachers rated accessibility as a 5. The remaining teacher rated accessibility as a 3 and indicated she was not comfortable with online work. The teachers who explained the reason for their particular rating cited ease of access online, ease of the application and reporting process, principal and district support, and responsiveness from SDE staff.

2. What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?

Eight teachers said the program worked well and recommended no changes. Four teachers felt the grant amount should be increased. One teacher said, "I wrote a grant about ten years ago that was funded—\$2,000 doesn't buy as much now as it did then." Another said, "I would recommend more money than \$2,000. While this is appreciated, it doesn't go far." Two teachers requested an earlier application date to avoid end-of-year pressures, and one asked for an earlier notice date for grant awards. Two recommended more technical support such as SDE workshops on writing teacher grants.

3. What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?

All of the teachers responded that they were able to have things they otherwise would not have had. Classroom materials, field trips, guest speakers, and special equipment were listed as examples of things that other fund sources would not have provided.

4. Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?

The teachers were unanimous and emphatic in their positive response to the question of continuing the program. One teacher said, "It gives us a chance to do the things we dream about. I lie in bed at night and think of things I wish I could do. The grant money helps me do those things." Another said, "Without these funds, many programs would die." One teacher remarked, "Getting a grant makes you a stronger teacher. The effects last well beyond the grant period. It made me look at the big picture." Another said, "Word spreads up and down the hall, and ideas and materials are shared with other teachers." One teacher said with enthusiasm, "Yes, really, really, really! The program helps the teacher to be creative. It gets extra things beyond the curriculum." Yet another teacher said, "Absolutely! The program provides extra things. I've already got ideas for my next grant proposal."

Comparison of Survey Responses from 1990 and 2005

The December 1990 edition of *What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?* included the results of a survey of teachers who had received Teacher Grant Program grants and the principals of schools that had received these grants. Although there is no information available on the sample size or number of grant years that were covered, the survey questions addressed the issue of the impact that these grants had on instruction and student learning. For this report, the same survey items were added to the online final report for the 2004–05 grant recipients. Teachers were given four response choices: "significant improvement," "slight improvement," "no improvement," and "not applicable." Since no copy of the 1990 survey instrument is available, and only positive impact responses were reported, the 2005 survey combines the "slight improvement" and "significant improvement" responses to arrive at a total for the positive impact responses. A total of 351 final reports were returned before the deadline for this report, and of those, 332 completed the survey. Principals of all the schools that received grants in

2004–05, as well as all school district contacts, were also asked to complete the same survey online. Seventy-one of the 216 principals who were contacted (33 percent) responded to the survey. It is not known what percentage of the principals and teachers completed the 1990 survey. But even though the percentage of 2005 principal responses was low, they are included in this report for comparison purposes. The school district contacts were not surveyed in 1990, and only 17 of the 94 school district contacts (18 percent) responded to the 2005 survey. Because this response rate is so low, school district contacts are not included in this report. The 1990 and 2005 survey results are displayed in table 2.

In addition to the survey items, the principals and district contacts were given three open-ended questions: whether the EIA Teacher Grant Program should be continued, whether there are ways to make the program better, and whether there are ways to make it easier for teachers to participate in the program. Excerpts from the responses are included in appendix D.

TABLE 2
Comparison of Teacher and Principal Survey Results from 1990 and 2005

Area of Student Learning and/or Instruction That EIA Teacher Grants Have Improved	Teachers				Principals			
	1990		2005		1990		2005	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Development of new curricula, materials, and activities	NA	94	317	95	NA	72	70	98
Student interest in learning	NA	94	331	99	NA	66	70	98
Teaching of the content area specified by the grant	NA	91	327	98	NA	67	70	98
Use of hands-on activities	NA	84	307	92	NA	60	70	98
Morale of teachers	NA	82	283	85	NA	60	66	93
Academic achievement of students	NA	81	315	94	NA	57	67	94
Teaching of basic skills	NA	80	307	92	NA	56	65	91
Teaching of problem-solving skills	NA	67	270	81	NA	51	67	94
Classroom behavior problems	NA	47	244	73	NA	36	53	74

The nine items from the survey were ranked in order of positive impact in the 1990 report. In the 1990 survey, 94 percent of the teachers indicated that the grants had impacted the development of new curricula, materials, and activities and had increased students' interest in learning. Ninety-one percent of the teachers indicated the grant had made a difference in the teaching of the content areas addressed in the grants. The use of hands-on activities, teacher morale, academic achievement, and the teaching of basic skills all scored in the low 80s. Two areas that fewer teachers reported as having been positively impacted were the teaching of problem-solving skills and classroom behavior problems.

On all of the nine items, teachers in 2005 rated the positive impact higher than the 1990 teachers did. Scores were similar in the two surveys but higher in 2005 in the areas of curriculum

development, student interest, teaching in content areas, use of hands-on activities, and teacher morale. The teachers in 2005 were much more positive about academic achievement (94 percent as opposed to 81 percent), teaching basic skills (92 percent as opposed to 80 percent), and teaching of problem-solving skills (81 percent as opposed to 67 percent). The greatest difference in teacher ratings was in regard to the impact on classroom behavior problems. This item received the lowest rating by both groups of teachers, but in 1990 only 47 percent of the teachers thought the grants had a positive impact on student behavior. In 2005 this percentage rose to 73 percent.

In the 1990 survey, principals rated all items much lower than the teachers did, with the highest rating being 72 percent and the lowest 36 percent. However, the principals did rank the items basically in the same order of positive impact as the teachers did. In 2005, principals tended to rate items higher than their teachers did, but teachers and principals were overall in fairly close agreement with one another on all of the items except one: 94 percent of the principals felt the teaching of problem-solving skills was positively impacted by the teacher grants, but only 81 percent of the teachers agreed.

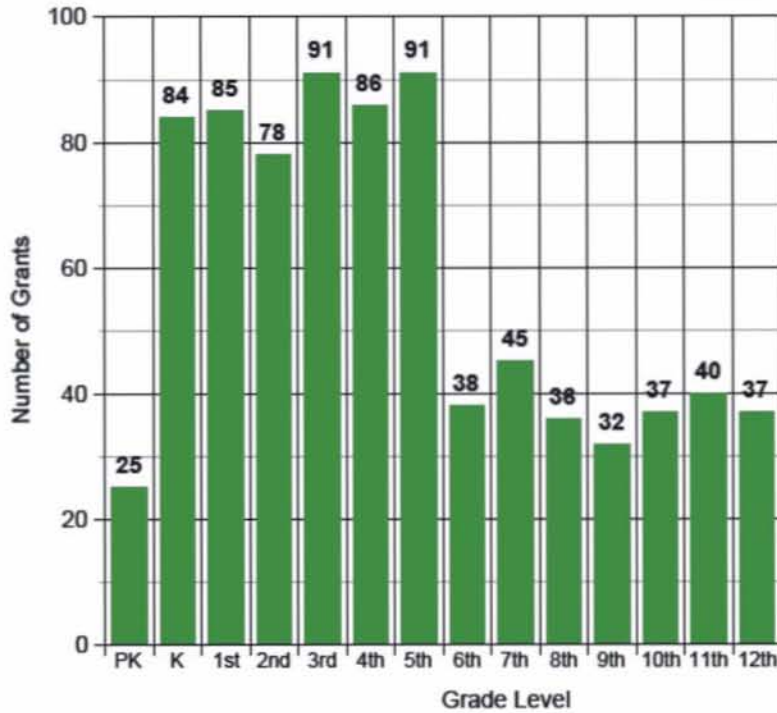
The greatest differences were in the responses of principals in 1990 and 2005. Of all survey groups, principals in 2005 gave the highest marks on all but one item, while the principals in 1990 gave the lowest scores by a wide margin for all nine items. In 2005 the percentage for principals did not drop below 91 on eight of the nine items. Teachers rated six of the nine items above 91 percent with the remaining three items ranging from 85 to 73 percent.

Review of 2004–05 EIA Teacher Grants and Final Reports

There were 723 applications for grants submitted in May 2004. After the grant review process was completed, 389 grants were awarded for school year 2004–05. A total of 351 grant recipients, representing 90 percent of the grants, submitted the required final report before the cutoff date for this review. The data from these grant applications and the final reports are summarized here.

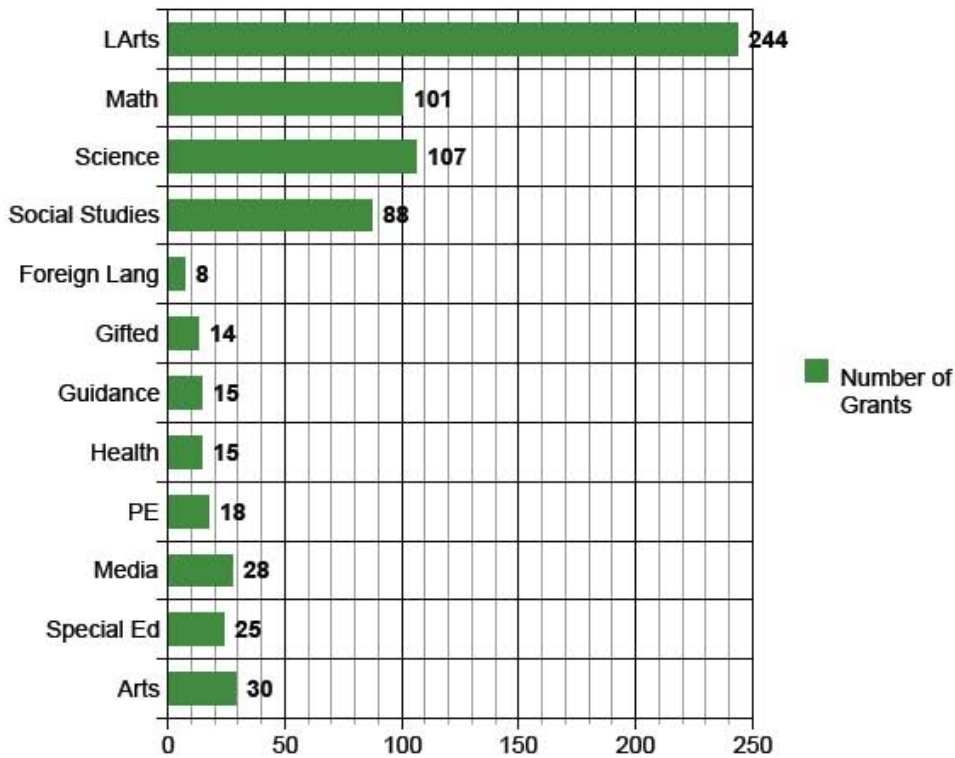
There were 157 grants that covered multiple grade levels and 212 grants that involved more than one subject area. There were 90 grants that involved more than one grade level and more than one subject area. Sixty-seven percent of the grants involved prekindergarten through grade five. Thirty-three percent of the grants included one or more of grades six through twelve. Figure 2 shows the distribution of grants across grade levels.

Figure 2
Distribution by Grade Level
Teacher Competitive Grants, 2004–05



Seventy-eight percent of the grant recipients identified their grant as covering one or more of four subject areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The largest group was in language arts, making up 35 percent of the grants. Mathematics, science, and social studies had nearly equal percentages of grants—15, 15, and 13 percent, respectively. The remaining 22 percent of the grants were spread over eight areas: foreign languages, gifted and talented, guidance, health, physical education, media, special education, and arts. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of grants by subject area. Because grants may cover more than one subject and grade level, the total number of grants reported by subject area is greater than the total number of grants awarded in 2004–05.

Figure 3
Distribution of Grants by Subject Area



On the final report form, teachers were given four open-ended questions, asking them to describe any difficulties they had encountered in implementing the grant and ways that the grant program could be improved. They were also asked how the project had affected their teaching and whether the grant had affected student learning. Selected teacher responses have been compiled and are included here in appendix D.

A summary of information taken from the 2004–05 grant applications and the final reports is given in tables 3 and 4 and in the bulleted list between the two tables.

TABLE 3
Information Related to Grants Awarded, 2004–05
(summarized from final reports)

Information Item	Number or Percentage
Unit grants awarded	122
Individual teacher grants awarded	267
School districts receiving grants	61
School districts that have received 5 or more grants over time	21
School districts that have received 10 or more grants over time	9
School districts that have received 20 or more grants over time	4
Students involved in grants	48,588
Community members involved in grants	4,777
School administrators involved in grants	441
Teachers participating in grants	1,914
Teachers receiving grants for the 1st time	178
Teachers who have received 5 or more grants over time	38
Teachers who have received 9 or more grants over time	7
Teachers who have received 12 or more grants over time	1
Teachers reporting that projects turned out as anticipated	91%
Teachers reporting that they developed strategies that will help them be more effective in the future	99%
Teachers reporting that they received help with their grant from their district office subject-area expert	5%
Teachers reporting that they received help in writing their grant from a district grant writer	24%
Teachers reporting that they received help with their grant from their principal	17%
Teachers reporting that they received help with their grant from another teacher	43%

- Anderson County School District One, a district of 8,100 students ranked 28th in size by student population, received 39 grants. This was the largest number awarded to one school district in 2004–05.
- There were twice as many elementary grants as middle or high school grants.
- Of the total number of objectives in all grants awarded, grant recipients reported that 90 percent of these grant objectives were met.

TABLE 4
Sharing and Dissemination of Information from Grants, 2004–05
(summarized from final reports)

Information Item	Percentage
Teachers who shared information about their grant with their school colleagues	99%
Teachers who shared information about their grant with their district-level colleagues	52%
Teachers who shared information about their grant with state-level groups	11%
Teachers who shared instructional materials from their grant	77%
Teachers who stated they would be willing to share their standards-based lessons/units with others	46%

Distribution of Grant Funds

In order to address the issue of equitable distribution of funds and determine if, in fact, an imbalance in distribution of grants exists, the writers of this report reviewed the distribution of grant funds throughout the state over the past five years. The school districts were ranked from the highest teacher grant award amounts received to the lowest, and the top ten school districts were identified for each of those five years. The number of school districts receiving no grant funds was also totaled for each year. The results are reported in table 5. A detailed listing of grant awards by district appears in appendix E.

TABLE 5
**Ranking of School Districts by Dollars in EIA Teacher Grants Received
and Number of Districts Receiving No Grants in Each Year**

Rank	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
1	Berkeley	Anderson 1	Anderson 1	Anderson 1	Anderson 1
2	Dorchester 2	Aiken	Berkeley	Dorchester 2	Anderson 5
3	Anderson 1	Berkeley	Aiken	Abbeville	Aiken
4	Aiken	Dorchester 2	Dorchester 2	Greenville	Charleston
5	Pickens	Pickens	Charleston	Berkeley	Spartanburg 6
6	Oconee	Kershaw	Greenville	Kershaw	Abbeville
7	Abbeville	Abbeville	Abbeville	Pickens	Kershaw
8	Jasper	Greenville	Anderson 5	Aiken	Pickens
9	Florence 3	Oconee	Colleton	Oconee	Dorchester 2
10	Anderson 5	Charleston	Kershaw	Richland 2	Berkeley
No grants	24 districts*	22 districts*	17 districts*	26 districts*	23 districts*

* Counts of districts include the school districts, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and special schools such as the School for the Deaf and the Blind, the John de la Howe School, and the Wil Lou Gray School.

For four of the last five years, Anderson School District One has been the top recipient of grant dollars and was ranked third in the remaining year. In the fall 2004 45-day average daily membership report produced by the SDE, Anderson District One had an enrollment of 8,100 students, making it 28th in rank among school districts in student population. Five school districts were in the top ten for each of the years reviewed. Only sixteen different school districts were among the top ten at least once during the last five years, and of these sixteen, five were in the top ten only once. In 2004–05, the grant awards to Anderson District One totaled \$105,447.

The number of school districts receiving no grants ranged from a high of 26 in 2003–04 to a low of 17 districts in 2002–03. In three of the last five years, two school districts, Barnwell 19 and Greenwood 51, did not submit any grant proposals. In the remaining two years, these districts submitted six proposals between them, which were not funded. Four other school districts received grants in only one of the past five years. The number of school districts receiving 10 or more grants has remained stable over the five-year period, ranging from 10 school districts in 2004–05 to 14 in 2001–02. A summary of the numbers of grants awarded to school districts each school year is given in table 6.

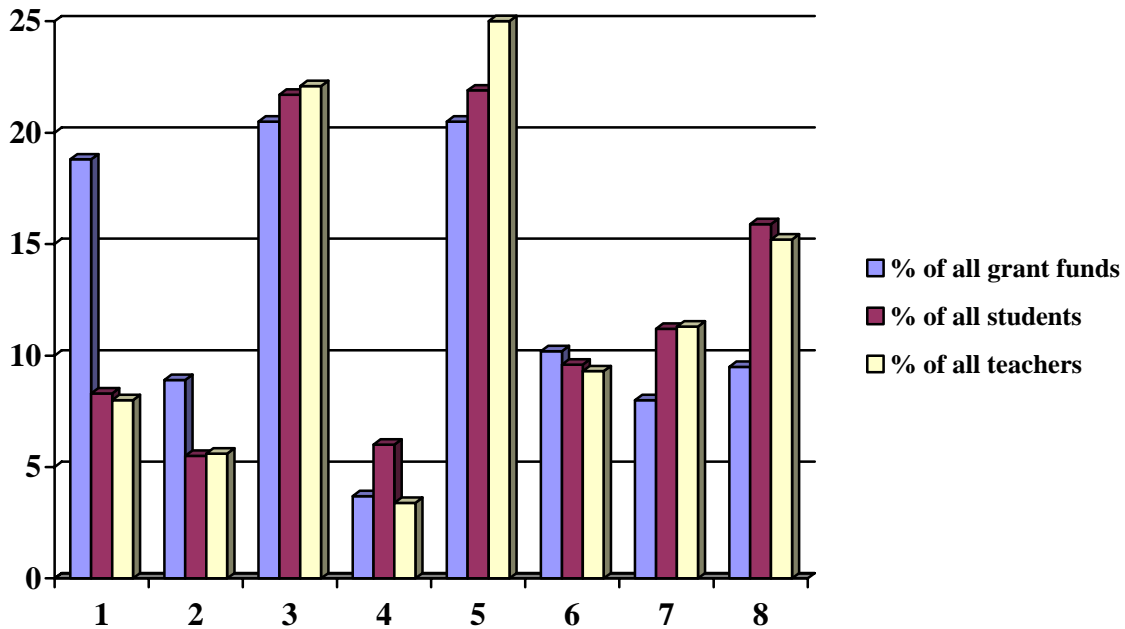
TABLE 6
The Numbers of EIA Teacher Grants
That Districts Have Received during the Past Five Years

School Year	Number of Districts* Receiving 0 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 1 Grant	Number of Districts* Receiving 2 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 3 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 4 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 5 Grants
2000–01	24	15	12	9	3	4
2001–02	22	21	12	6	4	5
2002–03	17	20	15	6	6	2
2003–04	26	16	12	4	4	2
2004–05	23	22	6	8	4	5
School Year	Number of Districts* Receiving 6 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 7 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 8 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 9 Grants	Number of Districts* Receiving 10+ Grants	
2000–01	5	3	0	1	12	
2001–02	1	0	2	1	14	
2002–03	2	2	5	2	12	
2003–04	1	2	3	4	11	
2004–05	1	2	0	1	10	

* Counts of districts include the school districts, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and special schools such as the School for the Deaf and the Blind, the John de la Howe School, and the Wil Lou Gray School.

In order to examine geographic distribution of funds, the writers of this report reviewed the data for grant awards in dollars by school district for school years 1999–2000 through 2004–05. Using the eight geographic regions that had been demarcated by the SDE’s gifted and talented program for professional development purposes, the report writers determined the total grant dollars by region. Since the regions are not equal in terms of student population or teachers employed, the percentage of the state’s total number of students and teachers for the 2004–05 school year was computed for each region. To make a comparison, the grant dollars were computed by region as a percentage of total EIA teacher grant funds for the past six years. The results of this comparison appear in figure 4 and table 7.

Figure 4
Distribution of EIA Teacher Grant Funds by Geographic Region Using Gifted and Talented Program Professional Development Regions for Geographic Divisions



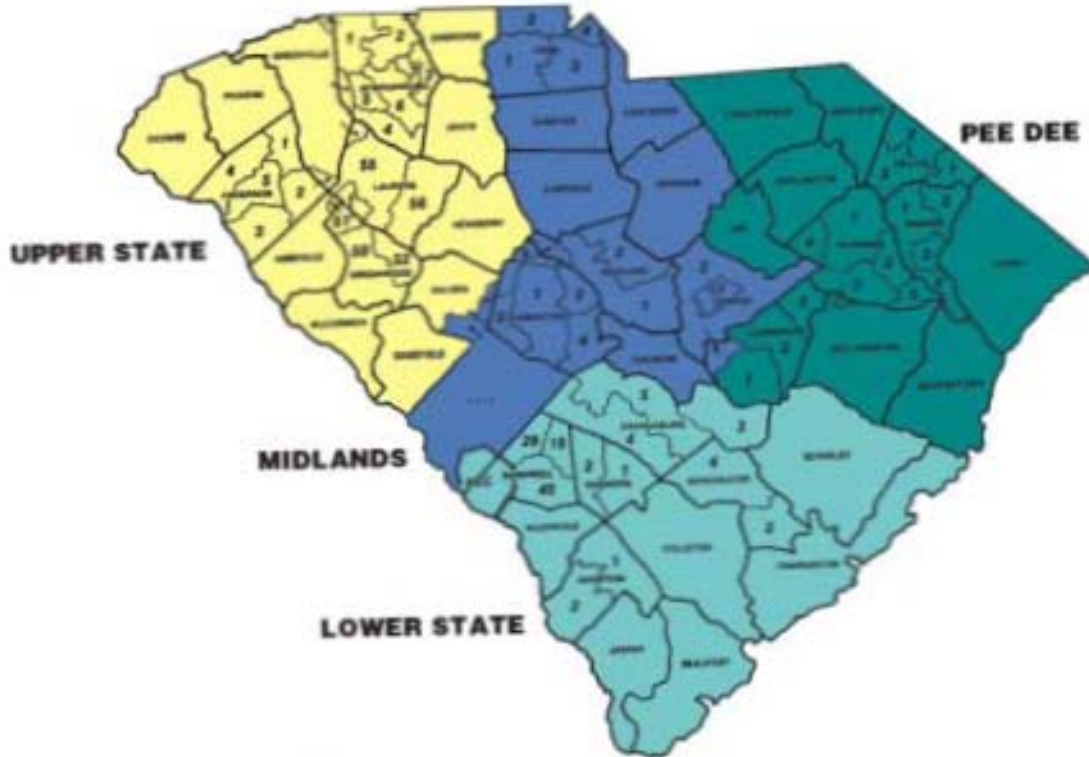
The greatest difference was in region 1, which has 8 percent of the state’s students and teachers and received almost 19 percent of the grant dollars. Region 2 had the next largest difference, with 5.5 percent of the students, 5.6 percent of the teachers, and almost 9 percent of the grant dollars. Region 8 had the largest negative difference, with almost 16 percent of the students and 15 percent of the teachers and receiving 9.5 percent of the grant funds. There were smaller differences in the other five regions. Five of the eight regions received less in funds than their percentage of the state’s student population. This same ratio holds true for four of the eight regions when the percentage of grant funds is compared to the percentage of teachers employed by region.

TABLE 7
Distribution of EIA Teacher Grant Funds by Geographic Region
Gifted and Talented Program Regional Groups

Region	School Districts in the Region	Total Grant Funds Received over Six Years	2004–05 Student Count	2004–05 Teacher Count
1	Anderson 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Oconee; Pickens	\$1,516,143	55,250	3,960
2	Abbeville; Edgefield; Greenwood 50, 51, 52; Laurens 55, 56; McCormick; Newberry; Saluda	\$721,136	37,068	2,784
3	Aiken; Kershaw; Lexington 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Richland 1, 2; Sumter 2, 17	\$1,659,138	145,103	10,899
4	Allendale; Bamberg 1, 2; Barnwell 19, 29, 45; Colleton; Hampton 1, 2; Jasper	\$295,491	39,825	1,693
5	Beaufort; Berkeley; Calhoun; Charleston; Dorchester 2, 4; Georgetown; Horry; Orangeburg 3, 4, 5	\$1,652,845	146,384	12,337
6	Clarendon 1, 2, 3; Darlington; Dillon 1, 2, 3; Florence 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Lee; Marion 1, 2, 7; Marlboro; Williamsburg	\$820,741	63,887	4,606
7	Cherokee; Chester; Chesterfield; Fairfield; Lancaster; Union; York 1, 2, 3, 4	\$643,437	74,602	5,563
8	Greenville; Spartanburg 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	\$765,783	105,961	7,503

In a further examination of the distribution of grant funds, an alternate geographical arrangement of school districts into regions was analyzed. The Office of Adult Education divides the state into four large geographic areas for services, and the EIA teacher grant funds were reorganized to fit this model. Figure 5 illustrates these four regions. As with the eight-region model described previously, the four adult education regions were not equal in terms of student population or in the number of teachers employed. The same procedure was used to determine the distribution of funds by region.

Figure 5
Adult Education Service Regions



This grouping of districts by region has the advantage of being easy to visualize, and it closely approximates the four physical regions of the state. As with the eight-region model, there is great variation in size and population of school districts within each of the four adult education service regions. This grouping produces a much more equal distribution of grant funds. The upper state region—which includes regions 1, 2, and 8 from the previous comparison—was awarded almost 40 percent of all the teacher grant funds over the past six years, while making up a little over 30 percent of the state’s teachers and students. The Pee Dee region—comprised of districts included in region 6 in the previous comparison as well as Georgetown and Horry—maintains the largest negative difference, with 12.4 percent of all EIA teacher grant funds in the past six years and around 17 percent of the students and teachers in the state. The results of the comparison of grant awards in these four regions are reported in figure 6 and table 8.

Figure 6
Distribution of EIA Teacher Grant Funds by Geographic Region Using
Adult Education Service Regions for Geographic Divisions

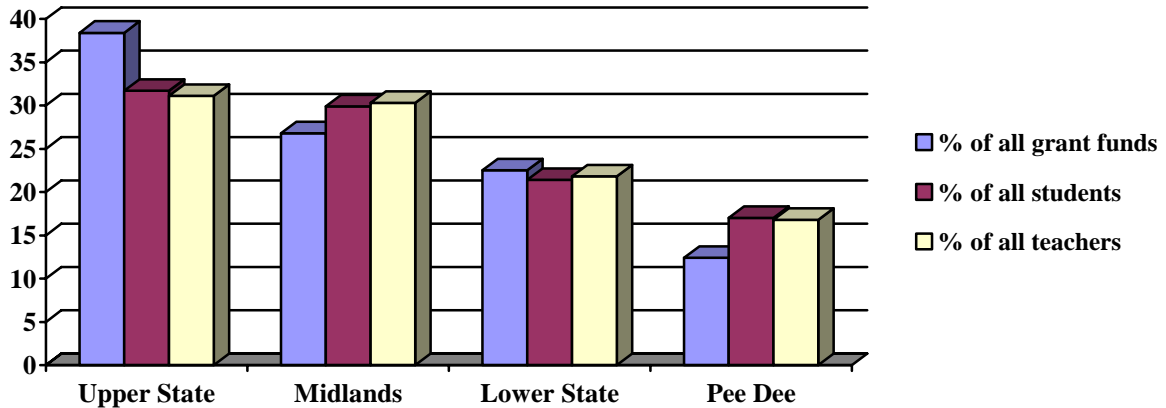


TABLE 8
Distribution of EIA Teacher Grant Funds by Geographic Region
Adult Education Service Regions

	Upper State	Midlands	Lower State	Pee Dee
Total grant funds received over six years	\$3,100,407	\$2,161,469	\$1,812,784	\$1,000,054
2004–05 student count	211,964	199,944	142,697	113,461
2004–05 teacher count	15,334	14,965	10,776	8,268

Usefulness of District-Level Grant Writers

With the information provided by SDE staff, a review was made of the districts that have employed a grant writer over the last two school years. No positive effect on numbers of EIA teacher grants received in school districts having grant writers could be shown. A study of the grant writers' duties and responsibilities was outside the scope of this work, and it is unknown if any of them performed any services for teachers in preparing and submitting grants. Eleven districts reported having grant writers on staff in 2003–04, and twelve districts reported so in 2004–05. Nine of these districts had grant writers in both years. Two districts that were in the top ten among those school districts receiving grant dollars in 2003–04 had employed grant writers. One of these districts was also in the top ten in 2004–05, and two additional districts with grant writers were also represented in this group.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have emerged from themes that consistently arose during the course of this study. They are offered here as a starting point for discussion about the future direction of the EIA Teacher Grant Program.

- Take steps to ensure the continuity of the EIA Teacher Grant Program.

Teachers, principals, district contacts, and SDE grant program managers were uniform in praising the program. They are convinced of the important contribution it has made to the teaching profession in South Carolina and are confident of its promise for the future. The SDE should establish within the agency a permanent home for the EIA Teacher Grant Program that will ensure an adequate staff and adequate funding for its management. As one grant manager described the current situation, “It is the ‘step-child’ that is passed around.”

- Form a panel to advise SDE program managers concerning the future of the EIA Teacher Grant Program.

Teachers who have had successful grants should be included in the discussion. School district contacts should be consulted about ways to make the application process easier and more accessible. School districts that have not participated in the past as well as districts that have had heavy participation should be invited to give input. Current and past program managers should be included in the discussion.

- Consider increasing the size of individual and unit grant awards.

Increasing the size of the grant awards was a recurring suggestion from teachers, principals, and SDE grant program managers. The individual teacher grant has remained at \$2,000 since the program was created in 1984. Unit grants have not been increased in size since they were first funded in 1993. Increasing the size of individual and unit grant awards is something that can be accomplished without additional legislation. The SDE has the authority to manage the details of these grants. Increasing the grant award size, if there is no increase in appropriation, would have the effect of decreasing the total number of grants awarded each year, and such a decrease would not only make the program easier to manage but would also help to ensure that only the highest-quality proposals are being funded.

- Increase the SDE staff time devoted to the EIA Teacher Grant Program.

The 2004–05 grant program manager indicated that he was able to devote only about 5 percent of his time to the EIA grant program. For at least part of the year, a staff member should be available full-time to manage the program. There is also the need for staff time to be devoted to conducting workshop and dissemination activities and to working with districts that have not participated in the EIA Teacher Grants Program in the past.

- Study the feasibility of adjusting the grant program timeline to allow for earlier notification of grant award recipients.

Adjusting the timeline was mentioned in teacher final reports, in principal surveys, and in interviews with past grant program managers. The earlier the announcements are made, the more time teachers will have to prepare, to avoid loss of time at the beginning of school, and to realize success with their grants. A July 1 announcement date has been observed in the past.

- Find a way to provide more public recognition for this program.

The EIA Teacher Grant Program is popular with teachers and principals in a way that few other programs are. In 2004–05, approximately 2,000 teachers, 5,000 community members, and 49,000 students participated in nearly 400 separate grant-funded programs. The SDE may be ignoring the potential of this program for good public relations with teachers, schools, and the community. The EIA Teacher Grant Program provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the achievements of teachers and students.

- Make the dissemination of information about the best of the grants an important part of this program.

Possibly offer small follow-up grants after the completion of successful grants to allow teachers to share their accomplishments at workshops and conferences outside of their districts. This kind of sharing would bring recognition to these teachers and would also increase other teachers' interest in writing grants. Other ways of advertising excellent grants should be developed by the SDE.

- Examine the role of school district contacts in the success of the program.

School district contacts should be surveyed to determine the needs of the districts and to solicit the advice of these individuals regarding the ways the SDE can best assist their particular districts. School district contacts should be targeted for technical assistance. SDE staff resources will always be limited—a fact that makes ongoing training and support of school district contacts essential.

APPENDIX A

Survey Items Included on EIA Teacher Grant Program Final Report Form, 2004–05

Instructions: Please respond to the following survey questions. Your responses will be used to report on the statewide impact of the Teacher Grant Program.

Number of teachers who participated in your project.

Number of students who participated in your project.

Number of administrators who participated in your project.

Number of community members who participated in your project.

List the grade(s) affected.

Approximately what percent of your budget did you spend?

Please check all the resources you purchased with project funds.

Books (Leave blank if not applicable.)

Class Sets

Research

Other

Materials and Supplies (Leave blank if not applicable.)

Display items

Media items

Activity items

Content-related items

Incentives

Other

Equipment (Leave blank if not applicable.)

Video camera

Digital camera

Computer

Recording Device

Publishing items

CD player

LCD projector

Other

Purchased Services (Leave blank if not applicable.)

Consultant or presenter

Student field trip

Conference attendance

Training

Other

How many objectives did your proposal have?

How many of those objectives did you achieve?

Did the project results turn out as you anticipated? Yes or No

As a result of this project, did you develop strategies that will help you be a more effective teacher in the future? Yes or No

With which group did you share information concerning your project?

(Check all that apply. Leave blank if not applicable.)

- School colleagues
- District level colleagues
- State level groups
- Local media

What type of products/materials did you share with other groups or individuals?

(Leave blank if not applicable.)

- General instructional materials
- Visuals/Video/CD/DVD
- Web site
- Other

Are you willing to share one of the standards-based lessons/units you developed/used this year? (If you answered yes, a template will be e-mailed to you.) Yes or No

In 1990 all teacher grant recipients and their principals were asked to complete a survey about the impact of the Teacher Grant Program on various aspects of teaching and learning. We would like to ask you the same set of questions about your Teacher/Unit Grant. Please rate how each of the following has had an impact on instruction and student learning: The rating scale is: Not applicable, No improvement, Slight improvement, Significant improvement

- Development of new curricula, materials, and activities
- Interest of students in learning
- Teaching of the content area specified by the grant
- Use of hands-on activities
- Morale of teachers
- Academic achievement of students
- Teaching of basic skills
- Teaching of problem-solving skills
- Classroom behavior problems

Instructions: Please provide the following feedback:

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Was the application process easy to understand? Yes or No

From whom did you receive help in writing your grant proposal?

(Leave blank if not applicable.)

SC Department of Education

District Grant Writer

District Office Subject Area Expert

Principal

Subject Area Chairperson

Teacher who received an award in the past

Other

Including this EIA teacher/unit grant award, how many EIA teacher/unit grants have you received?

CARRYING OUT THE PROPOSAL

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most satisfaction), how professionally satisfying was your experience?

Have you applied for a 2005–06 EIA teacher/unit grant? Yes or No

What area(s) did you have difficulty in while carrying out your proposal?

(300-character maximum)

What aspect(s) of the EIA teacher/unit grant program can be improved?

(300-character maximum)

PROJECT OUTCOMES

How has the project affected your teaching? (300-character maximum)

How has the project affected student learning? (300-character maximum)

APPENDIX B

Interview and Survey Questions for SDE Teacher Grant Program Managers, Teachers, and Principals

Interview Questions for SDE Grant Program Managers

1. How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?
2. What can the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?
3. Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money is used wisely? If so, what were these measures?
4. What did the SDE do to support teachers who receive grants?
5. Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?
6. How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?
7. How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?
8. What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?
9. During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?
10. Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?

Interview Questions for Teachers Awarded Grants in 2004–05

1. On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.
2. What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?
3. What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?
4. Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?

Survey for Principals and District Contacts

Please rate the following statements using the following scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), or No Opinion (NO).

The Teacher Grant Program promotes professional growth of teachers.

The Teacher Grant Program encourages instructional innovation.

The Teacher Grant Program improves instructional performance of teachers.

The Teacher Grant Program improves student learning.

The Teacher Grant Program enhances curriculum development.

The SDE encourages teachers to submit teacher grant proposals.

The SDE supports teachers who receive a grant.

The application process for the Teacher Grant Program is efficient and effective.

The teacher grant money is used wisely.

The Teacher Grant Program should be continued.

APPENDIX C

Excerpts from Interviews with SDE Teacher Grant Program Managers and Teachers Awarded Grants in 2004–05

SDE GRANT PROGRAM MANAGERS

Grant Manager 1

1. *How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?*

During my time as program director, we notified the district contacts, principals, and the superintendents about program opportunities. These people each got a packet of information at the beginning of the grant season. They could run copies for teachers and call the Department for additional information or if they had questions. There was no e-mail then. We had high participation in the program, but there were still “pockets” of participation in the state. So I guess this method was pretty effective.

2. *What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?*

Other than disseminating information packets, two or three staff members from my department did workshops for schools upon request during the fall. These were short, but they informed teachers about how to submit a grant. If we noticed that some parts of the state were not participating in the Teacher Grant Program, we would initiate contact and go to schools in these areas and present a program stressing how easy it was to submit a grant proposal. We also presented information at association meetings, like math and science. The State Department tried to make sure that every area of the state was covered.

There were two kinds of grants: teacher grants (from a single interested teacher) and school grants, where a grade or a whole school applied for a grant to adopt innovative programs that had never been used there before, like Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery was brought to South Carolina through the Teacher Grant Program. In the 1990s the kinds of grants were combined, and we did away with adopting innovative programs through school grants. We began to put emphasis on math. Historically, grant proposals have targeted various things.

3. *Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?*

Originally, these grants were more labor intensive, budgets were very detailed, and amendments were necessary if the budget changed. That controlled how money was spent, to a certain extent. Today the process is more streamlined. The subject-area staff also published the most promising practices book, and they looked at the grants for ideas for this publication. Each district received one of these books, and multiple sets were kept in the SDE A-V library. These were measures that helped account for wise spending of grant money.

4. *What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?*

Most of the SDE support consisted of our being available to answer teachers' questions. We had a fair number of calls, mostly from teachers who couldn't get answers from their district financial offices. There was always a staff member available, and we tried to get back to people in a timely manner.

5. *Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?*

The Teacher Grant Program is a competitive process in which effort and energy produce results. The state should be responsible for encouraging all teachers to participate. The SDE should reach out to low-participating areas and ask why they are not taking advantage of the program. The state should not assign a certain number of grants to the upstate, a certain number to the mid-state, and a certain number to the lower state, for example.

6. *How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?*

The application process needs to be accessible to all teachers. Maybe putting the application process online is the easiest way to accomplish this, but I have some questions. Is online too easy to ignore? If the only way to get an application is on the Internet, probably this is not sufficient. Something efficient may not be effective. We are not dealing with a factory making "widgets." We are dealing with people.

7. *How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?*

I like the system that has been used in the past. Up until last year, a panel of readers was used, and I think that is the best way to evaluate grants. I am concerned that in order to make it more convenient for the SDE to finish the review process by July 1, fewer classroom teachers are serving as readers. If it is a "peer review," the majority of the readers should be teachers. I think the grant review should be moved from May to the first week in June.

8. *What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?*

I would recommend moving the review process from May to June in order to have teachers as readers. I would also recommend putting more money into the program. The grants have been awarded in the amount of \$2,000 since 1985, and \$2,000 doesn't represent the same amount of spending in 2005.

9. *During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?*

Yes, when I managed the program, the area stressed was math. A certain amount of the grant money had to go math projects. The topics stressed have varied over the years.

10. Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?

Yes, I do think it should be continued, but *only* if we are going to put enough resources into it to have an active program. The Teacher Grant Program should have enough staff to promote and be actively involved in the program, to be able to go out in the field and support teachers.

Grant Manager 2

1. How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?

We sent out applications and information in batch mail to superintendents and principals and to each district EIA teacher grant coordinator. The application was put on the Web, but no information was taken online. We did workshops on request to inform teachers that this was a “doable” process. I suppose it was effective because, for example, the last year I was the administrator of the program, we received 2,200 grant proposals, and we could fund only 600.

2. What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?

As I said before, we conducted technical assistance workshops at the beginning of the school year as part of teacher staff development. We stressed that teachers were able to do this, that they didn’t need a professional grant writer to be successful. We were always available to answer questions. I went many times to small rural districts and did one-on-one appointments with teachers and let them run ideas by me. We really never said no to a district when they asked for assistance.

3. Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?

We reviewed the grant budgets to make sure that there were no excesses—like excessive requests for payment for substitute teachers. The teachers also had to send in amendments to their budget if they wanted to change how the money was to be spent. There were also audits by the districts to make sure the grant money was spent as proposed.

4. What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?

We provided a lot of assistance via the phone. We answered many questions when teachers were having problems.

5. Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?

No, because the *best* projects should be funded. There are needs in every school and in every district. The highest-quality grants should get funded.

6. *How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?*

I think the SDE should call in a group of teachers, both successful and unsuccessful grant writers, and ask them this question. We should do more with focus groups to find out the best way to do things.

7. *How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?*

The timing of the review process should encourage both principals and teachers to serve as readers of the grants. The SDE should continue to use experienced, well-qualified readers. We should use their training to provide continuity. At the same time, we should add new readers so that we can always have a well-qualified pool. We should call on high caliber teachers, like National Board–certified teachers and previous recipients of grants.

8. *What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?*

- Timing to allow principals and teachers to participate as readers.
- Using a peer review process.
- Disseminating more information about the things that happen through these grants.
- Sharing grants with other teachers in some way.
- Partnering with groups (e.g., math teachers, gifted teachers) and featuring grants at their conferences and meetings.

9. *During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?*

No. The process was wide open.

10. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, because it encourages teachers to be innovative. It offers teachers ownership and pride in what they do. It offers students opportunities they never would have otherwise.

One example of this was in a small rural county. This particular teacher's grant had a travel theme. The students studied about trains and then rode a train. They studied about airplanes and then went to an airport. The teacher could hardly get the students off the escalator at the airport because they had never seen an escalator. Other people got involved. And as it turned out, the teacher had money left over, and students who had parental permission got to ride in a private airplane. These students would never have gotten to do this otherwise. These grants go beyond textbooks and regular materials to fulfill individual needs and situations.

Grant Manager 3

1. *How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?*

We sent information in batch mail to districts and schools through superintendents and principals. Also, every identified district EIA teacher grant coordinator received information. I feel this was effective at that time.

2. *What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?*

We sent out the applications, and then we let teachers review grant proposals here in the Department. We even let them copy successful grants as examples. They got to see ideas from other teachers and districts. Nothing was done electronically.

3. *Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?*

We reviewed the grant budgets, and teachers had to make amendments if the money was to be spent in a different way. We called teachers if there were problems. I collected year-end reports, which made teachers more accountable.

4. *What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?*

We were always willing to answer questions and take phone calls from teachers. We would help teachers find ways to spend all the grant money and to make necessary changes.

5. *Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?*

The teachers who are willing to submit a grant proposal should get the funds. I have mixed feelings about this. We talked about giving the teacher grant coordinator in each district a certain amount of money and let them disburse funds in the district, but this was never done.

6. *How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?*

I think linking the application to achievement goals, like standards, makes sense if we are to have an effective process.

7. *How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?*

In my time as grant manager, there was a lot of "paper handling" at the SDE, lots of purchase orders to deal with. Reducing this paperwork is one goal to make things more efficient. The grant program is a competitive process. How else can we handle this but to bring in people to read the proposals? At one time, we talked about sending the grants out to readers to reduce the travel money and so forth.

8. *What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?*

Simplify the review process and do as much online as possible.

9. *During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?*

Yes, we gave extra points to the proposal if it was connected to achieving the standards.

10. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, because teachers got very excited about receiving this little pot money to do more for their students. Some teachers almost cried if their grant wasn't funded. This shows how much it meant to them.

Grant Manager 4

1. *How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?*

I worked with the district contacts for the program a lot. I met with groups of them and asked them why some districts weren't submitting proposals. I used mail, made phone calls, and offered to come do training in districts that weren't participating. I spoke at the state science teachers' conference. We worked on devising an electronic final report with a questionnaire. This information was something to give to district contacts to pass along to their delegation. Everyone who applied for a grant was sent an e-mail that said "We got your application. Contact us if you have questions." Batch mail was sent to every school and principal, superintendent, and district contact. During 2003–04, we had lots of conversation about electronic submission. We wondered how to achieve the benefits of this and balance it with the possibility of electronic problems.

The front page of the grant proposal involved lots of "keying" for the SDE secretaries, so we arranged to receive this electronically. We sent a letter to each school, with electronic copies to every district contact. The letter told them how to log in and fill out the front page electronically. That is when computers began to be used in the submission of teacher grants. We used the computer for the final report, and no hard copy was required. Districts could e-mail, fax, or mail the final report. It was their choice. This must have been more effective because we got lots of returns. We also let superintendents sign one "assurance" page to send in with multiple proposals instead of having to get a signature on each grant proposal.

2. *What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?*

We sought out districts that hadn't applied for grants and offered to come to the district and do in-service. We offered help. We also got the SDE content coordinators to help publicize the program, using all the Listservs that were available.

3. *Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?*

Well, 100 percent of the money was granted; we didn't hold anything back for amendments and such. We started putting questions in the final report such as "What percent of the money did you spend?" We never knew this information before. Dollars were disbursed to district accounting offices, teachers spent the money, and any unspent dollars had to be returned to the SDE at the end of the grant period. Measures were in place to ensure that the money was spent as approved. Teachers had to propose amendments to change the budget over 10 percent.

In 2003–04, I read every grant to look for excesses. If I found something, we negotiated. Each district EIA contact and each district superintendent had to sign the grant. This signature said that the grant met the district's goals. For example, a teacher wouldn't be allowed to purchase curricular materials that weren't deemed appropriate for the district as part of a grant.

The SDE reviewed the budgets to see if there were inappropriate expenditures. We also added an example of how to get a purchased services quote. We had had lots of problems with this, so we added a format for purchased services. We made a PowerPoint presentation available that showed participants what a budget looks like. Each item of purchase had to be budgeted.

4. *What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?*

We answered phone calls and questions about budgets and amendments. We started a newsletter for grant recipients that talked about topics of interest. We would remind them to spend their money and talk about the final report questions, for example.

5. *Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?*

I think awarding grants to teachers is one of the best professional development opportunities. The state should provide separate funds to enable a system to encourage teachers to write minigrants for the purpose of learning how to write a grant. The state needs to support more teachers in writing quality grants. A separate pot of funds should be used to target areas that are not applying for or receiving grants.

6. *How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?*

There was talk once of having the teacher grant application online—having the teachers work on it online, and then finally submitting it online. But this is great for the technologically inclined and not so great for others. Creating clear criteria for judging the grants has helped a lot. I think this minigrant idea would make the application process more efficient. For example, give a minigrant of \$500 to teachers who would learn to write two clear objectives, with strategies and good evaluative techniques. Then these teachers could use this as start for the larger grant process the next year.

The SDE needs to find a way to help teachers get over the hump and be clear about the grant proposal process. We need to train the EIA contacts in things like how to buy, what to buy, the timeline for implementing a grant—and let them train teachers in their districts. Continuing the newsletter would also help.

7. *How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?*

I think the development of the rubric made the process more efficient and effective. Giving applicants examples of good proposals makes the review process more effective also. Because education in South Carolina is very content-standard oriented, we need these proposals to be read by expert content-specific people. These proposals are all standards driven.

8. *What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?*

These are changes I would recommend:

- (A) Get more teachers involved.
- (B) Get information about the results of these grants back to the local level.
- (C) Since teachers can get certification renewal credits for writing grants, advertise this value to districts.
- (D) Post the grant recipients on the SDE Web site around the first of July.
- (E) The amount of each grant has not kept up with inflation, and \$2,000 doesn't go very far. Teachers can expend the same amount of effort to write a grant that awards more money. So we need to either get more money in the pot or fund fewer but larger amounts.
- (F) Look into a partnership with professional development.
- (G) Make more connections among teachers and require grant recipients to disseminate their ideas. Usually this dissemination process is minimal but requires them, for example, to submit one lesson plan from their grant on the Teaching and Learning Center Web site. This would be a way to share ideas between teachers. You might even offer an additional \$500 dissemination grant to anyone willing to share his or her grant and to mentor another teacher in the grant-writing process.

9. *During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?*

Yes, the program takes on the personality of whatever is “hot” in education at the time. Right now, that is standards.

10. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, because it offers many benefits to teachers such as self-initiated professional development—teachers plan the development, evaluate it, meet district expectations, and get recognition.

Grant Manager 5

1. *How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?*

We informed them through correspondence mostly. This was sent to principals, superintendents, and district contacts. We also conducted workshops through various organizations like the state science conference and the state council of the International Reading Association. We developed a booklet and a brochure, which we made available to all the state teachers' organizations. In the booklet called *Teaching Outside of the Box*, we showcased the EIA teacher grants from 1999–2000 that were outstanding. We encouraged teachers to share what they had done with others in their schools and in their districts. I think these methods were effective because we always got many more grants than we could fund.

2. *What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?*

Well, all the things I mentioned in the first question. Teachers seeking professional development would be at these conferences and meetings, and they would hear the information about the Teacher Grant Program.

3. *Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?*

Beyond the review of grant proposals, we brought consultants in to look at the grant budgets to be sure that the monies would be well spent. Sometimes somebody wanted to spend money on things that were not appropriate. For example, one time somebody wanted to pay students to do something. We had to make sure that the proposals were not against state policy. We looked for money earmarked for food. We were always OK with money spent for resources. If we found something that was questionable, we would have to get in touch with the grant writer and negotiate.

4. *What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?*

We asked the teachers whose grants were highly rated to come in to the Department and present information about their grants. Their presentations were rated, and if they were good enough, we paid these teachers to present their grants at conferences and organization meetings. This was an extra little dissemination type of grant.

5. *Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?*

There is an advantage to a competitive process because these people are acting on their own desire to do something. You get better ideas and better commitment. Yet some areas of the state are so bogged down with what they are trying to accomplish in their schools and classrooms that they don't have the time to write a grant. Maybe there is some way to do both—to have a competitive process and to reach those who are not submitting proposals. Good ideas and resources need to get to these places in the state.

6. *How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?*

The process in place at the time worked fine for me. I do think we should look at some combination of competition and equity for this program. This might be more effective. To be more efficient and effective, we need the staff necessary to implement the program.

7. *How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?*

At the time, I think the review process was the best we could do. I think we should get feedback from the readers and listen to those voices. When we went to the unit grant, it forced collaboration and learning communities in schools, which cut down on the number of individual grants. This made the process more manageable.

8. *What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?*

More money for this program is desperately needed! The dissemination requirement should be stressed more, and the program needs to be showcased somehow.

9. *During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?*

Yes, we mainly stressed the grant's connections to the accomplishment of the standards.

10. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, and there are no "why not's." I think it would be interesting to do a follow-up study to see what the impact of this program is on student learning. The program's impact is difficult to measure because you may not be able to see the results in one year. But if it means so much to people in the field, you just have to believe that this program impacts student learning. If the kids and the teachers are excited, that must have an effect on learning. You can determine if learning is occurring in a classroom. You can know if your instruction is producing learning. The Teacher Grant Program may be just one element in this atmosphere.

Grant Manager 6

1. *How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?*

We sent out information to principals, superintendents, and district contacts. We sponsored training with the science and math organizations, for example. The National Diffusion Network was trying to implement nationally validated programs in the state, so they helped get information out about the program. We also sought out districts that were not applying for grants and did training—mostly in rural districts. There was a strong local-control aspect. For example, if the district promoted the program, we got lots of proposals. Some districts used the program as a methodology for teachers to identify themselves as leaders.

Early on, there was a lot more support for this program. This worked effectively. In 1984, \$2,000 was a lot more money than it is today. This gave teachers an avenue to make change occur without district funds. If the chances of getting a grant funded were, say, 1 in 4, we got more applications. As the program grew, the funding grew. But if the chances of getting a grant funded were 1 in 10, the number of applications decreased.

When the first evaluation of the program came along, the politicians were trying to get rid of the United States Department of Education, and they targeted the National Diffusion Network as something to delete. So it was suggested that the school grants be done away with. At the zenith we got about 2,200 proposals for the program. Over time, this number was reduced. More emphasis was given to schools implementing innovative things than to individuals. The SDE “brain trust” reinvented the school grant as a unit grant. Money went to these, so the total number of grants was reduced because we were addressing systemic schoolwide change.

2. *What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?*

We worked with professional organizations and did in-service training for districts that requested it or in designated districts.

3. *Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?*

The end-of-the-year report required teachers to talk about what they did and included a budget report. They had to submit the names of products that they had examined in a search for excellence in such items. These names were printed and disseminated to promote the program. Beyond these motivational types of things, nothing else was done. Of course, the budgets were looked at in the review process, and the readers were trained in what a budget should look like.

4. *What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?*

Besides the dissemination process, there was technical assistance through phone calls. These calls were mostly about what to do concerning certain issues that had come up, not about issues regarding quality. We made grant files available to teachers to review. Some learned from this, and others copied—we had to be careful not to fund a grant that had been funded before.

5. *Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?*

This point has been debated. We were apprehensive about a few schools and districts getting so many grants. We decided you could have only one school grant. After the implementation of the unit grants, we came up with a formula for receiving grants. For example, a school of a certain size could receive so many grants. This was a workable process. If schools didn't spend their money or do some of the mechanics, they couldn't apply the next year.

For change to occur in individual teachers and situations, the competitive process seemed the best avenue. We worked with poor districts that had no grant-writing resources. We targeted

these districts and provided extra help to them. This kept competition alive but gave districts that weren't applying some extra help with the process. This program may not be effective in schools with lots of technical assistance: they have a lot of people telling them what they need to be doing, and \$2,000 may not be a big enough carrot for teachers in this situation.

6. *How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?*

The previous grant program administrator put the applications online. It had "bugs," but it was better. Our current way of dissemination via the Web is the best way. We need to continue to build on our technological ability. At the local and departmental levels, there needs to be a person to support the teachers and the program. There is still a role for teaching and training about the program and about how to write a grant in districts and at meetings. Being able to do a thorough needs assessment is critical to the grant-writing process. These kinds of skills need to be promoted. The process is subject to local pressures. For some situations, this program fosters great ideas and provides needed extra resources.

7. *How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?*

I think we came to a "Y" in the road here, and I don't know if we took the right direction. Early on, this was a competitive process. If you're really expecting curriculum standards-driven proposals, content specialists need to read the content-specific grants, even though this might be a rather cumbersome process. We need to recognize that the Department has failed this program during the transition to standards. Also, if this program is an add-on to someone's full-time job at the Department, it won't be effective. The administration of this program is a full-time job, not an addition to someone's professional role.

8. *What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?*

This should not be a program in isolation anymore. The fact that it has been around as long as it has shows that the consumers still have a demand for it. There are some very positive things about the Teacher Grant Program, but it is not functioning as well as it should. We have other programs now that encourage teachers to be innovative and creative, like the Teacher of the Year and National Board certification. There needs to be more coordination between all programs to make them function better and to optimize what could happen through them and to overcome the bureaucracy. This program does not involve a lot of money, so it doesn't swing a lot of weight. It has a lot of potential for change that doesn't come through coercion, however. How to make this program better is the question, to get more "bang from the buck." This is a self-initiated process, but it needs more coordination.

9. *During your years of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?*

Originally, math grants were targeted for funding because our students performed poorer in math. But regardless of whether the grant is funded or not, if a teacher goes through the grant-writing process, he or she will probably still try out the ideas if it's possible. The process promotes ideas.

10. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, but the program needs to be updated, and the updating should involve SDE staff and school staff. We need to bring in a committee composed of district and department staff and discuss how to coordinate many initiatives. Maybe more money is needed for the program. The people in the field should drive this program where it goes. The agency should support these efforts with whatever means necessary. National Board certification puts about \$7,000 in the pocket of a teacher. The Teacher Grant Program doesn't give any money personally to teachers. It's hard to compete with that. So we need to get ideas from the field about how to make this program work.

Once again, the administration of this program is not a part-time job if you want the best results and want to get the most from it. To turn this into a meaningful program that brings about change and affects student learning, it must be revamped. The entire dynamics of the process must be revisited. Right now, the program is just bumping along. We could get much more benefit. Teachers are not in the classroom with the door closed anymore. This is a perfect conduit for teacher exchange and sharing. People with curriculum expertise tried to build this program, but the agency didn't value what it could be. It is the "step-child" that is passed around. The Department doesn't understand its importance to teachers. We have lost sight of the individual and the impact of the program.

Grant Manager 7

1. *How does the SDE inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program opportunities? Are these methods effective? Why or why not?*

For the first time, this year we did not send out a mass mailing of information. Everything was done electronically. Information about the grants was sent out through curriculum contacts and *Ed Blast*. I think this was very effective. More people actually got the information. When you send a mailing to principals, many times it gets discarded. E-mail hits more teachers, more people, and it is easier to forward.

2. *What did the SDE do to encourage teachers to submit a proposal?*

We totally revamped the grant process and made the application much shorter. There was no long narrative for them to fill out, for example. A lot was done through charts. This shorter and easier process encourages teachers to submit a proposal. It must have been effective because last year we received about 750, I think, and I believe we got about 1,000 proposals this year.

3. *Did the SDE take measures to make sure that teacher grant money was used wisely? If so, what were these measures?*

There are guidelines that teachers and districts have to abide by, and teachers who receive grants must file a final report. We do not supervise the money details. There is not as much budget scrutiny as there has been in the past. No one at the department reviews the budgets to

see that things are in line. Teachers who do not send in a final report this year will not be eligible to receive a grant next year.

4. *What did the SDE do to support teachers who received grants?*

I have no idea. I didn't take over the program until October, so I haven't really been involved with this part of the process yet. I had very few questions about the grants after October 2004.

5. *Should the SDE promote equitable distribution of funds across the state? Why or why not?*

Yes, and across disciplines too. I think this because some districts apply for hundreds of grants and other districts that desperately need the money do not apply for any grants. Maybe there is no one at the district level to encourage or help them write a grant. I think, for example, that perhaps a part of the teacher specialist program should include helping teachers to write grants.

As far as disciplines go, over 600 applied for grants in language arts because this is the area in which the state has pushed. There should be a more equitable distribution of funds to other disciplines. We might have quotas or offer more help with districts that are not applying.

6. *How can the SDE make the application process for the program more efficient and effective?*

We made major strides this year. Of course, any time there is change, there is going to be some confusion. But that can be worked out. The instructions and forms are in the same document. We plan to listen to teachers about what gave them problems and try to solve these. The form is definitely easier and simpler for teachers to complete now.

7. *How can the SDE make the review process for the program more efficient and effective?*

I found out that there is a Department policy that an individual can read grants for only two years and is then required to take a one-year break. This had not been done, so I had to get a number of new readers. We brought in new science and social studies readers who had never read grants before. As a result, we had more third reads because of the new people. We instituted a new process for this too. We made our experienced, expert readers do the third reads, and we took that score and doubled it. This appears to be a fair process. I had to make lots of calls to clear up issues about the grants that we didn't understand. Hopefully, that won't happen again.

8. *What changes would you recommend for the Teacher Grant Program?*

Number one is that running this program cannot be just a small part of someone's job responsibilities. It is just a logistical nightmare. I saw many things that needed to be done, but I just couldn't get to them. You need more time to be able to do these things. We also need to hold teachers to the rules and regulations of the grant program. We don't need to waffle. We had to reread all the grants submitted by teacher specialists and curriculum coaches to see if there was a teacher we could name as the contact because teacher specialists

and these coaches were not supposed to submit proposals. We had to have another reading day because of this problem. We also need to encourage grants from all disciplines. Maybe we should divide the districts by reports card results, maybe into fourths—then we start with the lowest fourth and work our way up using a quota system for awarding grants.

- 9. *During your year of administering the Teacher Grant Program, was priority given to grants, which stressed certain things—such as technology or standards?***

No, not this year. We considered giving extra points to science and social studies grants because these content areas are coming on the report card soon, but we didn't.

- 10. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?***

Definitely. This is a unique program that is not done by anyone else. It just isn't available to teachers in other states. Perhaps the state should put some lottery money in this program so that teachers could benefit from it. The program needs more money.

TEACHERS

Teacher 1

- 1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.***

I would give it a 3. I am not as comfortable with the process being online. I want a hard copy. I worried about things being “lined up.”

- 2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?***

Teachers need to be able to fully explain what they want to do. I felt pressured to keep up with the timeline.

- 3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?***

I was able to get hands-on materials and additional curriculum materials.

- 4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?***

It provides funds that I otherwise wouldn't have. I have to cover so many skills, and my kids don't have the abilities of regular kids, so they need extra materials and extra help.

Teacher 2

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I give it a 5.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

Every year the program is a little different. This makes it more difficult to deal with.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I have a class within a class with the purpose of keeping seventh- and eighth-grade girls interested in science and math. I was able to get materials and speakers and take a field trip to a medical lab.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes. Without these grants, many programs would die. EIA is broader—it funds grants that many foundations won't fund because these grants are so specific.

Teacher 3

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

It was really easy to do everything online. If there were problems with e-mail, they were fixed immediately.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

Initially I was confused. It was OK the way it was; it just took a little time to look over the forms.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I was able to buy more hands-on materials and to take field trips to provide students with experiences outside the classroom.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, really, really, really! The program helps the teacher to be creative. It gets extra things beyond the curriculum.

Teacher 4

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I give it a 5. I e-mailed the program manager and got a prompt reply online. I had no problems with accessibility.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I like the program the way it is. I like to be able to make a needs statement.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I was able to get things to help students with comprehension, such as props for students to use in retelling stories. As a result, my students' reading comprehension scores went up, and we met the district goals.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

I most definitely think the program should be continued. It helps students and teachers make gains. This program is vital to be able to get materials to help kids be successful.

Teacher 5

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I rate it a 5. Everything was easy to access on the Internet.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

This is a very strong grant program. It is easy to implement—easier than some art grants.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

My school is a Title I school, but few funds are available for the art program. I was able to have sessions with artists in residence and provide other special experiences for my students.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Definitely. Getting a grant makes you a stronger teacher. The effects last well beyond the grants period. It helped me with the National Boards. It made me look at the “big picture.”

Teacher 6

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I would rate it a 5. The process was not hard at all.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I think the program is pretty workable as it is.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

This money provided students with field studies. It enabled me to have enough equipment for small-group instruction. Learning is taken out of books and put into student hands.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

I think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued. It fosters creativity and gives teachers money to be creative. It is a chance to go beyond the budget. You can purchase things that are durable and can be used year after year. For example, I purchased a wireless weather station that will last for years.

Teacher 7

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I think it deserves a 5. The application was easy to get to and easy to use.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I would recommend increasing the amount of each grant to \$3,000.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

There are so many different needs and skills to address in special education. This money helps to address all of the different needs of students.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Most definitely. This program encourages teachers to be creative.

Teacher 8

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I give it a 5. I was aware of the Teacher Grant Program through other teachers. I had easy access through the district Web site. Everybody was helpful. I contacted the SDE by phone and e-mail, and they were helpful. A fellow teacher was also very helpful.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

No room for improvement.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

Literature for students with multiple disabilities. I got augmentative communicative devices and assistive equipment. I was able to let families check out these things for use at home.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Definitely. Special materials are so expensive. This grant provided a way to let others know what goes on in a special classroom.

Teacher 9

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

It deserves a 5. It was an easy process online.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I would like a form that doesn't change from year to year. I think the SDE should sponsor workshops on how to fill out grants and on what subject are grants focusing on if there is a focus, for example.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

The program gave my students access to material that they wouldn't normally have had, different things beyond the text—for example, novels for literature groups that go along with periods in history.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes. The Teacher Grant Program gives teachers a chance to provide for the special needs of their student population and to address the standards.

Teacher 10

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I would rate it a 5.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I wish it were easier to get help from the SDE.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

It helped me get materials to meet the standards.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, because it gets materials for teachers and encourages teachers to implement ideas.

Teacher 11

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

It is a 5. Five. I e-mailed the program manager and he responded quickly.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

Grants should be worth more than \$2,000. I wrote a grant about ten years ago that was funded—\$2,000 doesn't buy as much now as it did then.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I was able to address different needs of kids. Left-handed students needed special pens, for example. I was able to get materials to do more research.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

I do! It is a way to get back money that has been taken away through decreases in school budgets.

Teacher 12

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I rate it a 5. Everything was easy to access.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I have no problems with the idea or the spending. These were easy grant procedures.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

This grant added something. I was able to certify a hundred students in ServSafe, the National Restaurant Association's food safety program. Twenty-five students told me that they got jobs and certificates because of my course.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Absolutely! The program provides extra things. I've already got ideas for my next grant proposal.

Teacher 13

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I rate it as a 5. My principal encourages us to write a grant and lets faculty know about the grant process.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

The amount of the grant should match the program—\$2,000 is not enough in many cases to really do what you want to do. Could the grant amount be increased?

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I was able to get classroom sets of the South Carolina Book Award winners for my students.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

I definitely think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued. Innovative ideas should be funded.

Teacher 14

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I give it a 5. We got flyers from the district. There was no problem getting the information online.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

The process was easy for me. I would recommend no changes from the 2004–05 format.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I was able to purchase more math manipulatives and to take field trips. I was able to provide extras that some other teachers have and my poorer students wouldn't get.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Absolutely, because it is specific to South Carolina. The grant pool is smaller. These grants are used to support the South Carolina standards, whereas national grants have a larger pool.

Teacher 15

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

It rates a 5.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

None.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

Materials that otherwise would not have been bought, such as book-making materials. This fostered more parental involvement through take-home books.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes. Schools don't have enough funding, so these grants provide a wealth of materials. This frees up the teacher's money. Word spreads up and down the hall, and ideas and materials are shared with other teachers.

Teacher 16

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I think it deserves a 5. I had no problems.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

Teachers would like to find out quicker if they got a grant or not. It is hard to initiate a grant and start school at the same time.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

The grant allowed a connection between school and home. It provided more books so that kids could take them home.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes, the program certainly should be continued. It gives us a chance to do the things we dream about. I lie in bed at night and think of things I wish I could do. The grant money helps me do those things.

Teacher 17

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I'd give it a 5.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I would like to see the application process not involve so much writing, but I know that is the nature of grants.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

Materials I wouldn't be able to get otherwise. Materials for speech therapy are very expensive.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Absolutely. This is an avenue to get materials that are specialized and expensive. It helps me to be focused to the needs of children.

Teacher 18

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

It rates a 5. I got lots of answers from Joel West. Everything was easy to access online.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

The EIA grant due date comes at a crunch time. High school AP courses made it impossible for me to turn one in this year.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I was able to get equipment, additional resources, and expert speakers.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Definitely. I couldn't have done this without the grant. Outside resources are critical. Trying new and different things becomes part of the curriculum through a grant, and you can't grow if you don't try new things.

Teacher 19

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I give it a 5. The application process was readable and easy to access.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

I would recommend more money than \$2,000. While this is appreciated, it doesn't go very far.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I used the grant money to teach geometry and measurement skills. I bought hands-on materials like rulers and protractors for the students to use.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

Yes! The money for these materials would not have been there otherwise. We really need the help to provide for students.

Teacher 20

1. *On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the most, how would you rate the accessibility of the Teacher Grant Program to classroom teachers? Tell me why you rated accessibility as you did.*

I would rate it a 5. The administration pushes grants at my school, so the information is provided. No problem getting things online.

2. *What changes would you recommend for the improvement of the Teacher Grant Program?*

You need to stop teachers from writing grants in other teachers' named and using the money themselves. Overall, though, it is an excellent program.

3. *What need(s) in your classroom(s) does the Teacher Grant Program address?*

I was able to get extra things that my school can't afford. I bought hands-on materials to keep things interesting for seventh graders.

4. *Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued? Why or why not?*

I think it should. It helped me get extra things, and many of those things can be used for years.

APPENDIX D

Excerpts from Written Comments by School and District Staff Involved with the EIA Teacher Grant Program, 2004–05

PRINCIPALS AND DISTRICT CONTACTS

What follows here are unedited responses to questions on the 2005 EIA Teacher Grant Program survey form.

1. Are there things that the SDE could do that would make the program better?

“I think the SDE should advertise the names and schools of grant recipients. This may encourage others to write grants.”

“The program needs more financial support.”

“The grants should be given in flexible amounts such as \$2,000–\$5,000. The \$2,000 limit is too low.”

“Throughout the year send emails to all teachers giving them very brief descriptions of successful grants and reminding them that they can apply.”

“It would be nice if more money were available so that more grants could be funded.”

“The SDE might hold grant writing tip sessions for teachers who wish to apply or have teachers who have received grants present to various schools to share their ideas.”

“Offer regional workshops on grant submission.”

“I believe it would be helpful to post the awarded grants for all to view. This will help others understand the process and see what is new and innovative that others are doing.”

“The program needs more money.”

“The SDE needs to come out to the schools or make a schedule to visit schools that are not participating in the program but need to.”

“Allow more unit grants to be accepted. Some great ideas were lost from my teachers.”

“I’d like to see a review of some of the more successful grants. Make a catalog of ideas that were approved in the past to foster new ideas.”

“The SDE needs better communication about what creative things teachers do throughout the state. Many teachers get an ‘aha’ moment when they read others’ ideas.”

“I would like to see the applications easier to access earlier, without having to register beforehand. This discouraged some of our potential applicants, who were wavering on submission but had some great ideas.”

“SDE needs to coordinate with professional organizations (SCCTM, SCIRA, etc.) for presentation of exemplary projects.”

2. Are there things that the SDE could do that would make it easier for schools and teachers to participate in the program?

“Send out reminders and encouragements during the spring—little email blips would be helpful.”

“I’m not sure some teachers are ready for the online application/approval process. That could discourage some applicants.”

“Continue to support teachers that are creative and are willing to go the extra step to use this program to give the students more opportunities to learn.”

“Provide a showcase of innovative practices that have resulted from the teacher grant program. Seeing the successful implementation may encourage others to apply in the future.”

“If the SDE provided sample awarded grants for all to view, it would provide a model for the teachers and perhaps a sense of ‘this isn’t a hard thing to do.’ A videotape of the necessary steps in writing a grant proposal would be helpful.”

“I don’t know what the answer is, but since it seems that fewer grants are awarded than in the past, and because it is very time-consuming to prepare a grant, many of my teachers are not motivated to participate.”

“I think giving examples of those applications funded and working successfully would help. If a program works with a student population like our school, we want to know about it and possibly look at implementing it.”

“The time for submitting a grant for the next school year is just before PACT testing. I would suggest announcing the grants in January with a deadline to submit them in March. It would be great if the winning teachers could be announced before the end of May/end of school each year.”

“Allow for different submission formats. Some teachers prefer hard copy.”

“Put out the RFP in August, so that districts can have staff development on submitting EIA grants throughout the year.”

3. Do you think the Teacher Grant Program should be continued?

“The Teacher Grant Program should be continued because this is one way teachers learn to collaborate. As the grants are developed, brainstorming among teachers increases and creativity in the classroom engenders greater student achievement.”

“Yes. So many of our funding sources are limited to reading and math. These grants enable us to focus on the whole child.”

“The Teacher Grant Program inspires teachers to try new and different approaches in their classrooms. These grants positively impact students and teachers.”

“Yes, indeed. Teachers should have access to funds to personalize the way they implement best practices. Grants give them this opportunity.”

“Yes, the Teacher Grant Program should be continued. This program is one of a few grant programs in which K–12 teachers across all programs of study may participate.”

TEACHERS

What follows here are unedited responses to the open-ended questions on the 2004–05 EIA teacher grant final report form.
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1. How has the project affected student learning?

“I think the hands-on work has helped them to take charge of their own learning.”

“Shy students became more involved, low motivated students got excited, and reluctant students jumped right in.”

“This project helped me to have all of my materials organized and to use hands-on activities on a daily basis.”

“The students were very excited to conduct research for their projects and several told me this was fun.”

“We noticed that their writing skills improved tremendously.”

“I think the project made all of my students more confident in their ability to contribute to the class as a whole.”

“Our first grade students dramatically increased reading and writing skills. First graders are naturally curious about nonfiction subjects and having leveled materials with beautiful pictures inspired them.”

“The children have become very excited about reading and were delighted with the power of making their own choices about their reading and writing.”

“I saw a huge difference in the way my students looked forward to Social Studies.”

“Students are reading much more at home, improving in fluency, and spending quality time sharing these books with family members.”

“We have seen greater Hispanic parent participation in school activities at all levels.”

“The students changed their attitudes toward reading as they experienced success as readers.”

“Students were really involved and seemed to enjoy it when they were researching a job they could see themselves doing one day. Some of them just couldn’t get enough information and wanted to know more and more and more.”

“Students were very excited about being able to use the greenhouse and complete class and school projects.”

“Many students have experienced growth as leaders.”

“Students were more involved in learning than ever before.”

“Students were excited about the activities related to this grant. They didn’t even realize we were meeting our goals and standards!”

“Interest in the states has skyrocketed in our classrooms. Also, the study of famous Americans spurred on a play about Martin Luther King, Jr., which was probably the highlight of our school year.”

“Our students were very excited about science this year. They would ask almost daily if we were going to ‘The Eagles’ N.E.S.T.’ lab. We saw a greater interest in our students checking out science books from the library and even in the students’ ability to work in groups.”

“Our students love doing research and producing more professional looking projects in the writing lab. The author was a great resource for generating interest in writing and science and even K–2nd graders attended one of his assemblies and have used his books to study habitats.”

“My students have shown an interest in reading nonfiction trade books. Their background knowledge for science is improving and they seem to enjoy the process of science more. They are also able to ask and answer more questions, and make more connections to the curriculum.”

“Students gained a wealth of knowledge through field trips. Many students never leave this rural county so this funding provided them with an opportunity they would not have received otherwise.”

“The experience at the State House made government more meaningful, and brought history to life in Charleston.”

“Our students were excited to finally be the expert in the classroom. They couldn’t wait to show us how to do things with the mouse, locate the websites, access the WebPages, etc. This project gave them a chance to be confident young men and women navigating research topics for peers.”

“My children didn’t realize they were learning science concepts; they thought they were just having fun on the computer.”

“My children learned letters, sounds, and high frequency words very quickly this year. This resulted in children who were reading much earlier and at much higher levels than in previous years! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”

“I really saw the light bulb come on when we were doing field work in the salt marsh and one of the boys said, ‘Hey, I could see myself doing this as a career!’”

“My students are no longer so afraid of trying to write! Therefore, they are writing more and writing better!”

“My students could not get enough of the ‘Caesar’s English.’ True to their nature, my gifted students were intrigued with the play of words and the new approach to vocabulary development and writing skills.”

2. How has the project affected your teaching?

“Thank you for funding this program. We would not have been able to do it without these funds.”

“This is my twenty-fourth year teaching in the South Carolina public school system. Each year that I receive an EIA grant is exciting. I am going to do something new, and I get to share this opportunity with so many of my students.”

“It made me more confident in involving students in outdoor activities.”

“This project has made me grow professionally because I had the honor of presenting at the South Carolina Middle School Conference.”

“The look of pure amazement in the eyes of the students made me realize that there are various ways to teach, not just sitting in a desk. I need to bring more life to the classroom.”

“I was able to add the ‘wow’ factor to my classes.”

“It allowed for the extras that teachers normally have to take out of their pockets.”

“I have had a blast teaching! It has been rewarding sharing students with disabilities with the community. Through community trips, we have shown that our students’ abilities outweigh their disabilities. I love ‘showing off’ our guys!”

“It has kept me motivated to teach by allowing me to ‘dream up’ and try new ways to teach. The creativity used in this project was very satisfying. The other thing that affected my teaching was the time management skills required to perform this grant.”

“I have learned not to set my objectives too high. If I had said 80 percent of my students would succeed on a reading comprehension test and that same percentage would score 90 percent or higher on a rubric-graded writing assignment, I would have met all three objectives.”

“I never actively used the computer prior to the inclusion of the SMART Board in my classroom. This year, I was able to collaborate with my two LA/SS team members to work on lesson plans and instructional activities. I have become more computer literate than ever before in my thirty years of teaching.”

“I am becoming a well-rounded teacher. I used to think that I only wanted to teach music standards. I am slowly finding out that I can teach any classroom standard using music.”

“I think the program has made me more aware of how children learn mathematics through a context that is reading. I saw students become more engaged in the math activities when they had literature to connect to.”

“I have not been in the classroom for quite some time. Therefore, I was in drastic need of professional development and materials in my content area. This grant provided me the opportunity to improve the quality of the instruction in my classroom and that improved the achievement of my students!”

“It has reminded me to focus on the large goals and to develop methods to bring about those goals.”

“The program was a success and gave me a burst of new excitement in my teaching! I recently presented the project to our school board. The principal has given approval for expansion of the project for next year that will include media arts.”

“This project helped me to reach those students who do not respond to traditional ways of teaching. It has made me more aware of how unique each student is.”

“My classroom now has instruments that will be used in my program for years to come. In addition, our media center has resources that support our state social studies standards.”

“When awarded the grant, I felt like my principal and other colleagues respected me even more.”

“I have become more reflective on my teaching of lessons. I try to evaluate the lesson by focusing on my students’ level of thinking and solving problems.”

“Thank you so much for giving me the chance of the grant.”

“I place more emphasis on reading and comprehending nonfiction literature.”

“It gave me the funds to do projects that I could not do without the funds—or at least without spending my own money.”

“This project has excited the students and teachers about the Solar System.”

“It has validated much of what I already believed. More importantly, it has changed the way many teachers now teach science.”

“I have spent more time working with other teachers to correlate standards for this unit. I also became a learner with my students as we made mistakes and learned better ways to carry out the breeding process.”

“We value writing even more than before.”

“I am much more confident in using inquiry to develop a concept. I have also figured out how to modify many of my lessons to include more inquiry.”

“Better communication between the math and science departments by making connections in the subjects.”

3. What area(s) did you have difficulty in while carrying out your proposal?

“There was a lack of cooperation with the school bus drivers in transporting the students at times.”

“The school secretary did not have time to process our orders in a timely fashion.”

“The most difficult thing was working with my county on purchase orders. It would have been so much easier had the money been given to my school. It would have been timelier.”

“There was not adequate space in some sections on the application to record all the information I felt was needed to give a complete explanation of what I want to accomplish with the materials.”

“The chart was very difficult to complete and include all needed materials. In fact, in trying to complete a grant for next year, I completed all but the chart and called it quits.”

4. What aspect(s) of the EIA Teacher/Grant Program can be improved?

“I think it is a wonderful resource. I can see no room for improvement.”

“The EIA Teacher Grant Program does not need improvement. I have written an EIA grant every year since 1989. It takes so little time on my part, yet has such a lasting impact on so many students.”

“The scoring sheet does not match the new items on the grant. It would have been helpful to have seen a sample grant to know exactly what information was being requested.”

“In order to plan for the year, it would be beneficial if the notification of grant approval were received earlier in the summer.”

“We felt that the new application process for 2005–06 did not allow us to be as specific and detailed about our project as we have been in the past.”

“Although \$2,000 has been a significant amount of money, in the future the amount might need to reflect the rise in costs by increasing appropriately each year.”

“The opportunities that the EIA unit grants provide teachers and students are incredible. Innovative practices are made possible through these grants.”

“The process for this year was not user friendly.”

“I am not as comfortable with the new chart version of EIA grants. However, I realize this is probably a much easier format for the grant readers.”

“Find an easier way to complete the chart.”

“The 2005–06 application was much more difficult due to the changes.”

“The program is wonderful, but I would like some alternate ways to submit grants.”

“More training in how to write a grant is needed. Many teachers are afraid of the process. I took a workshop offered by my district, which was a huge help.”

“I think the 2005–06 application table form clarifies the strategy, objective, activity, and sections into a more uniform format.”

“I was informed of my grant’s acceptance a little later than some other recipients. The only thing that might be improved is the time when a recipient is notified.”

“The program is a great incentive to try new methods. This was my first attempt and I could use more time to implement it.”

“The 2005–06 application process needs to be improved.”

“We need larger grant funding for BIG ideas.”

“I found writing the grant for the 2004–05 year to be easier than the one I completed for the 2005–06 year. Doing it online was not easier for me.”

“I would like to see smaller amounts offered and a simpler application process for teachers in their first five years of teaching to keep them from being discouraged.”

“I would like to have access to the grant application earlier in the school year. Springtime is so hectic for my school.”

“I would like to see a grant category for grants funded for more than one year.”

“It would be helpful to have a mid-year evaluation, where an EIA grant representative could assist the recipient in monitoring goals and making necessary adjustments.”

“More funds need to be made available.”

“I felt like I could give more information in the old grant format. I am not sure that I explained the project as well for the 2005–06 year.”

“We are very satisfied with the grant program because it was the ONLY way our at-risk students could have seen their work published and publicly acknowledged and valued at school and within our community.”

“I did notice this year (for 2005–06) as I was helping another teacher write a grant that the ‘chart’ form took out a great deal of the ‘personality’ of the grant.”

“The instructions for the 2005–06 grants were not as clearly defined as before.”

“If the districts could get the grant funds set up in the summer, we could order the materials then so that we could hit the ground running in August.”

“I was very pleased with my first experience with the EIA grant program. I do plan to apply again. It is an excellent resource and support group for implementing ideas and new curriculum strategies. At this time, I do not see how the grant program can be improved. I had a very positive experience.”

“Having the funding to do these activities made the biggest difference in the lives of the students in my classroom. I don’t know what to suggest to improve the grant program except to keep providing teachers with the money to make more projects like this possible.”

“I think the program is great.”

“The only aspect of the EIA grant program that I think could be improved is the new grant-writing format. When writing my grant for the 2005–06 school year, I felt like I did not have enough space to really go into detail about my idea.”

“I didn’t apply this year (2005–06) because of the new requirement of applying before writing the grant. I was out on medical leave during the nine weeks that the application had to be submitted. This prohibited me from applying for a grant this year.”

“If a proposal is successful, provide teacher funding to do the same program the next year to continue the success.”

“I would have like to have been notified earlier so that I could have ordered my materials earlier.”

“I think the whole idea of grant writing to enhance student learning is a wonderful tool.”

“The new form needs to be explained better.”

“Provide for more equitable distribution of funds among schools in a district. Some schools have many grants funded, while others that write grants that are just as worthy are not funded. Share the wealth!”

APPENDIX E

Grant Award Totals by School District for 1999–2000 through 2004–05

School District	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Abbeville	\$ 46,000.00	\$ 45,685.00	\$ 61,960.00	\$46,000.00	\$ 66,000.00	\$ 51,934.00
Aiken	94,392.00	77,993.00	111,510.00	61,854.44	50,086.37	67,195.43
Allendale	4,000.00	17,345.00	—	16,000.00	10,000.00	19,917.00
Anderson 1	64,094.00	79,710.00	120,745.00	79,805.41	120,792.30	105,447.00
Anderson 2	31,600.00	18,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	1,677.20	9,778.00
Anderson 3	2,000.00	—	—	—	—	6,000.00
Anderson 4	15,875.00	—	4,126.00	2,000.00	—	12,862.41
Anderson 5	21,985.00	39,601.00	23,802.00	41,927.00	38,606.00	96,765.00
Bamberg 1	2,000.00	—	4,468.00	4,000.00	—	—
Bamberg 2	6,000.00	4,000.00	8,000.00	—	8,500.00	—
Barnwell 19	2,000.00	—	—	—	—	—
Barnwell 29	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barnwell 45	—	—	—	—	—	2,000.00
Beaufort	11,917.00	11,966.00	—	4,000.00	5,994.00	6,000.00
Berkeley	140,051.00	135,716.00	94,592.00	67,664.22	55,387.98	43,569.95
Calhoun	4,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	2,000.00	—	—
Charleston	13,957.00	22,459.00	35,932.00	52,342.00	35,898.00	56,900.00
Cherokee	4,000.00	6,000.00	17,897.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	16,000.00
Chester	5,984.00	—	6,000.00	6,000.00	—	6,000.00
Chesterfield	31,921.00	21,940.00	8,000.00	1,900.00	—	2,000.00
Clarendon 1	—	1,945.00	13,600.00	4,000.00	8,000.00	4,000.00
Clarendon 2	16,000.00	4,000.00	6,000.00	2,000.00	—	6,000.00
Clarendon 3	—	2,000.00	2,000.00	—	—	—
Colleton	—	4,000.00	6,000.00	40,626.45	7,911.07	9,783.45
Darlington	60,195.00	34,094.00	23,954.00	23,956.00	19,835.20	19,698.00
Dillon 1	—	4,863.00	6,000.00	—	—	2,000.00
Dillon 2	6,000.00	—	—	—	1,998.00	3,600.00
Dillon 3	6,000.00	—	—	—	7,957.00	—
Dorchester 2	50,705.00	132,199.00	72,816.00	54,489.00	90,673.95	43,980.00
Dorchester 4	23,186.00	25,632.00	2,000.00	17,955.00	9,937.00	5,260.00
Edgefield	27,881.00	27,888.00	27,897.00	13,651.02	13,432.00	21,043.00
Fairfield	25,756.00	6,000.00	5,368.00	5,974.00	1,407.00	4,000.00
Florence 1	25,796.00	25,995.00	35,227.00	31,835.00	11,875.00	21,959.00
Florence 2	—	—	6,000.00	—	—	6,000.00
Florence 3	24,000.00	39,996.00	12,000.00	6,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00
Florence 4	8,000.00	12,290.00	—	—	14,000.00	2,000.00
Florence 5	—	—	—	6,000.00	2,000.00	4,000.00
Georgetown	—	—	11,000.00	19,400.00	7,264.00	2,000.00
Greenville	68,612.00	37,896.00	56,496.00	47,001.00	58,820.28	39,560.60
Greenwood 50	2,000.00	—	—	6,000.00	14,000.00	8,000.00
Greenwood 51	8,000.00	—	—	—	—	—
Greenwood 52	—	5,999.00	6,000.00	—	1,980.56	—
Hampton 1	25,232.00	14,000.00	—	6,000.00	—	3,967.00
Hampton 2	—	—	—	8,000.00	—	—
Horry	22,000.00	21,993.00	11,900.00	15,995.00	—	2,000.00
Jasper	12,000.00	43,741.33	—	—	—	6,000.00
Kershaw	53,711.00	35,073.00	67,949.00	40,000.00	51,982.00	49,993.00

Grant Award Totals by School District for 1999–2000 through 2004–05

School District	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Lancaster	\$ 24,655.00	\$ 21,980.00	\$ 26,551.00	\$ 33,905.00	\$ 25,928.00	\$ 22,000.00
Laurens 55	7,921.00	8,000.00	19,876.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	9,952.00
Laurens 56	10,525.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	7,869.00	12,000.00	6,000.00
Lee	8,000.00	2,000.00	6,000.00	14,000.00	—	—
Lexington 1	6,000.00	4,000.00	21,823.00	31,476.00	11,096.00	19,952.00
Lexington 2	7,997.00	2,000.00	4,000.00	3,462.00	9,973.00	11,063.65
Lexington 3	6,000.00	8,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	—	7,992.00
Lexington 4	6,000.00	14,000.00	1,852.00	12,000.00	23,979.00	6,000.00
Lexington 5	—	15,888.00	7,916.00	27,801.71	36,516.00	9,612.11
McCormick	8,000.00	—	5,667.00	8,000.00	16,000.00	6,000.00
Marion 1	4,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	2,000.00	4,000.00	—
Marion 2	6,000.00	—	6,000.00	7,680.00	5,797.00	—
Marion 3	—	11,972.00	9,930.00	merged	merged	merged
Marion 4	—	5,985.00	6,000.00	merged	merged	merged
Marion 7	N/A	N/A	N/A	8,000.00	—	—
Marlboro	—	—	8,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Newberry	4,000.00	6,000.00	—	13,975.00	12,000.00	12,000.00
Oconee	36,000.00	46,000.00	47,346.00	31,810.00	45,991.00	27,597.00
Orangeburg 3	19,935.00	15,745.00	13,850.00	13,938.00	13,980.00	6,000.00
Orangeburg 4	—	12,000.00	—	5,907.00	—	—
Orangeburg 5	5,760.00	6,000.00	5,370.00	20,000.00	37,866.00	17,763.00
Pickens	43,569.00	73,860.00	67,966.00	37,893.00	51,335.00	45,578.00
Richland 1	30,363.00	23,090.00	14,000.00	31,046.96	5,840.00	12,000.00
Richland 2	43,685.00	25,244.00	25,994.00	33,982.00	41,283.53	39,652.00
Saluda	—	—	—	12,000.00	—	6,000.00
Spartanburg 1	29,768.00	10,000.00	14,000.00	10,818.00	14,000.00	6,000.00
Spartanburg 2	1,985.00	6,000.00	—	5,997.00	6,000.00	—
Spartanburg 3	3,745.00	8,000.00	2,000.00	16,000.00	3,980.00	—
Spartanburg 4	—	2,000.00	—	6,000.00	6,000.00	20,000.00
Spartanburg 5	6,000.00	20,000.00	14,000.00	7,994.00	2,000.00	—
Spartanburg 6	2,000.00	15,919.00	29,700.00	24,000.00	29,825.00	55,854.26
Spartanburg 7	13,997.00	16,000.00	7,815.00	6,000.00	12,000.00	22,000.00
Sumter 2	22,000.00	23,908.00	35,715.00	36,000.00	34,000.00	30,780.00
Sumter 17	32,649.00	—	11,995.00	11,772.00	—	—
Sumter CC	—	3,550.00	—	—	—	—
Union	—	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	2,000.00	11,448.00
Williamsburg	6,863.00	12,000.00	8,000.00	9,845.60	2,000.00	—
York 1	13,787.00	8,000.00	6,000.00	3,988.00	—	7,765.00
York 2	5,900.00	—	—	4,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00
York 3	20,000.00	11,916.00	31,784.00	33,800.00	29,952.00	35,952.00
York 4	8,000.00	—	2,000.00	—	7,987.00	5,992.00
John de la Howe	—	—	6,000.00	—	2,000.00	—
Deaf and Blind	—	—	5,080.00	5,561.00	6,000.00	—
DJJ	—	5,881.50	12,000.00	12,000.00	1,000.00	8,000.00

SECTION 2

A Descriptive Study of the Critical Teaching Needs Program, 1987–2005

Introduction

In the early 1980s, the national education reform movement came to the forefront in South Carolina. The resulting school reform movement in the state provided the impetus for a critical examination of public education. Stakeholders—including parents, educators, business and industry, community leaders, and elected officials—came together to develop a strategic plan for improving the quality of South Carolina’s public schools. It was clear to all that if the state’s educators continued to do what they had always done, they would continue to get the same result: low student achievement. Planned, research-based, and results-oriented educational change became the path for the future of the state’s public school system.

The Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984, funded by an increase of one cent in the state sales tax, introduced programs to recognize and foster superior student performance, identify and improve poor school performance, and enhance student achievement. One component of the legislation addressed enhancing student achievement by improving teacher competencies through professional development.

The Critical Teaching Needs program is one reform initiative that has been receiving EIA funding since the 1987–88 school year. The program is managed by the State Department of Education (SDE), and its staff provide leadership and guidance to school districts and the Roper Mountain Science Center in the selection and administration of teacher training courses.

State laws, such as Target 2000—School Reform for the Next Decade Act of 1989 and the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993 along with federal legislation have reinforced the question “What is the penny buying for South Carolina?” School funding issues, parental concerns, school and district report cards, and the concept of “adequate yearly progress” all further intensify the burden on all entities to be accountable for every penny spent.

This study was designed to determine if the Critical Teaching Needs program has been effective in meeting the intent of that portion of the EIA that addresses the need to improve teacher competencies through professional development in order to bring about improved student achievement. This report primarily focuses on the five-year period 2000–01 through 2004–05 but, in an effort to include as much program history as possible, offers some information about the program prior to that time.

Executive Summary

The Critical Teaching Needs (CTN) program has been funded with EIA monies since the 1987–88 school year. Name changes, an expansion in designated critical teaching needs areas, the inclusion of the Roper Mountain Science Center as a recipient of funds, a reduction in funding, and funding flexibility provisos have significantly altered the program since its inception.

Information about the CTN program first appeared in the 1992 edition of the EIA accountability report, which is the State Board of Education (SBE) annual publication *What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?* In that report, the program was referred to as “Teacher Training: Selected Courses.” In the 1994 edition of the accountability report, the program was called “EIA—Critical Teaching Needs.” The name “Critical Teaching Needs” is what continues today as the formal program title used by the SDE.

It is, however, a name that causes confusion both at the SDE and within school districts because it seems to describe the Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE)—the program that addresses the need for qualified teachers in critical subject areas and critical geographic areas. In the PACE program, eligible candidates enroll in a series of training seminars and workshops as well as graduate courses that lead to their professional certification. Confusion between the PACE and the CTN programs was evidenced in survey responses and in program information provided to reviewers by the SDE staff.

From its initial funding in 1987–88 to 1995–96, the CTN program focused on courses in a narrow range of subject areas: mathematics, science, reading, and computer education. The subject areas were broadened by a 1995–96 budget proviso to include “courses which support the education of students with disabilities or special needs in the regular classroom.” In 2002–03, wording of the budget proviso was again revised to include “courses which support instructional techniques and strategies in keeping with the professional development plans.” The only course options remaining consistent are the science courses offered by the Roper Mountain Science Center.

The Roper Mountain Science Center was added as a recipient of CTN program funding in 1992–93. The legislation specified an allocation of \$200,000 for summer science courses for teachers. Funds allocated to the Science Center were increased in 1997–98 to \$250,000 and have remained at that level. This figure constitutes 41.4 percent of the current total state CTN program allocation. A review of state allocation data suggests that the allocation of CTN program funds to the Science Center significantly reduced the amount of money available to school districts from the 1992–93 school year forward. (Figure 1 in the main text, below, displays the funds allocated over time.)

When surveyed, CTN program coordinators in the school districts indicated their appreciation of CTN program funds, but they also indicated that funding is minimal. A review of district allocations shows that the smaller school districts do not receive sufficient funds to offer even one course without entering into a consortium arrangement of districts. The CTN program allocation for local districts and the Roper Mountain Science Center was reduced in 2001–02. However, the funding for the Science Center was restored the following year, while the school districts have received only a partial restoration of funds since that time. Survey responses also

revealed that the current level of funding is not keeping pace with the cost of offering college-credit courses.

The funding flexibility provisos put in place during the 2003–04 and 2004–05 school years—Proviso 1.61 (SDE: School Districts and Special Schools Flexibility) and Proviso 1A.47 (SDE-EIA: School Districts and Special Schools Flexibility)—have brought about more changes. School districts now have the flexibility of transferring funds between instructional programs, as long as the funds are utilized for direct classroom instruction. The districts have until May 1 of the fiscal year to decide if funds from certain approved EIA programs are to be transferred to another approved EIA program. Data in table 2 in the main text indicate a reduction in the number of courses offered and the number of teachers served with CTN program funds the first year the provisos were in place. SDE Office of Finance data also indicate a reduction in the number of districts using the EIA funds for CTN program courses during the first year of the funding flexibility provisos.

With these major changes over the twenty-year life span of the program, and specifically during the last five years, the intent of the legislation may need to be revisited and the direction for the future of the CTN program redefined.

Program History

The CTN program was funded by the legislature beginning in 1987–88. In April 1990, the State Board of Education enacted Regulation 43-500, titled “Operation and Funding of Teacher Training Courses in mathematics, science, reading and computer education.” (The entire text of the regulation is provided in appendix B.) The CTN program was established to encourage school districts to offer specially designed courses to improve the qualifications of teachers in specific subject areas identified by the state legislature. Courses could be provided throughout the state, on college campuses, or at school district facilities. The SDE was to provide the course syllabi or course descriptions to be used. The EIA funds were allocated to school districts on a formula basis to provide the training. The original funding formula—\$2,381 per district plus a proportional distribution of the remaining funds based on the number of full-time equivalent positions in excess of 88—continues into 2005–06.

Although the program had been funded in the annual state appropriations act since 1987–88, there is no mention of it in the publication *What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?*—which is the annual EIA accountability report—until 1992. In both the 1992 and 1993 editions of the EIA report, the program was referred to as “Teacher Training: Selected Courses” and was described in terms of these program guidelines: “EIA funds are allocated to districts on a formula basis to provide teacher training in the areas of reading, computer science, mathematics, and science.” The Roper Mountain Science Center was added to the list of funded entities in the 1992–93 appropriations act.

Beginning with the 1994 EIA accountability report, however, the program name changed to “EIA—Critical Teaching Needs.” Both the 1994 and 1995 editions of *What Is the Penny Buying for South Carolina?* state the following program guidelines for those years, as stipulated in the appropriations act: “funds . . . must be used for courses which support instructional techniques in keeping with the intent of the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act, Middle School Project, Preparation for the Technologies Program, Curriculum Frameworks, summer workshops for teachers through the Roper Mountain Science Center, and needs identified through school improvement plans.”

The guidelines were modified by the 1995–96 appropriations act to expand course offerings to include courses that support the education of students with disabilities or special needs in the regular classroom. A portion of the funds continued to be used to provide summer workshops for public school science teachers through the Roper Mountain Science Center.

Beginning in 1996–97, school districts were allowed to require and collect a deposit from teachers enrolling in CTN program courses. Upon the teacher’s completion of the course, the deposit was to be returned to him or her. Also beginning in 1996–97, the funds allocated to Roper Mountain Science Center could be carried forward to the next fiscal year. Proviso 1A.15 in the 1998–99 appropriations act changed the term “Curriculum Frameworks” to “grade-by-grade academic standards.”

In the 2002–03 the appropriations act, in Proviso 1A.17, the statement that EIA funds for the Critical Teaching Needs program must be used for courses that support instruction “in keeping with the intent of Act 135 of 1993, the Middle Schools Project, the Preparation for Technologies

Program, the grade by grade academic achievement standards, or need established in the school and district long range” plans is struck through. That text is replaced by the statement that the funds must be used to support instruction “in keeping with the *professional development plans*.” In the same proviso, the statement that “School districts may require and collect a deposit from teachers enrolling in critical teaching needs courses” is changed to the statement that “School districts may require and collect a deposit from teachers enrolling in *courses that support the areas identified above*.”

For 2003–04, 2004–05, and 2005–06, the general program guidelines remained the same. However, program funding significantly changed with the advent of the funding flexibility provisos, which gave school districts the option of transferring funds from one approved EIA program to another and of waiting until May 1 of the current fiscal year to choose to exercise this option. In 2003–04, for the first time, allocations were transferred to school districts in four payments beginning in September of the school year without the districts’ having an approved budget on file with the SDE.

Methodology

This report represents a detailed study of the CTN program for five years—the school years 2000–01 through 2004–05. From information available for review, it appears that this study is the first comprehensive evaluation of the program since its inception. A variety of sources such as legislative statutes and regulations, SDE program implementation documents, SDE CTN program annual reports, and annual EIA accountability reports were used to compile this report. The reviewers had difficulty gathering documentation related to program implementation prior to 1990–91.

The review team utilized the following primary sources to collect data and amass information:

- EIA program reports prepared annually by the SDE’s CTN program manager;
- survey forms distributed to all district-level CTN program coordinators and the Roper Mountain Science Center Science P.L.U.S. Institute coordinator;
- school district and Roper Mountain Science Center reports;
- SDE Office of Finance allocation data and funding manual information and guidelines;
- interviews with SDE CTN program coordinators, current and past; and
- CTN program grant application instructions and application forms, and end-of-year report forms.

Guiding Questions

The following questions were used as the foundation for the CTN program external review process:

1. What has been the funding level for the CTN program, and what impact has the funding had on teacher training?
2. How have the CTN program courses been provided?
3. Who administers the CTN program at the district level?
4. What are the job responsibilities of the district CTN program coordinators?
5. What is the procedure/process used to determine which courses or institutes to offer?
6. Has the program had a positive impact on local districts?
7. What were challenges faced by local districts and the Roper Mountain Science Center in implementing the CTN program?
8. Have school districts and the Roper Mountain Science Center expended funds in keeping with SDE guidelines?
9. Has implementation of the CTN program had a positive impact on the quality of instruction and student achievement?

Study Limitations

The external reviewers of the CTN program were contracted in May 2005, with their study to be completed by August 31, 2005. The time frame of this project spanned the end of the 2004–05 school year, the 2005 summer break, and the beginning of the 2005–06 school year. The following are the limitations of the study:

- The CTN program coordinator survey results are based on the responses of approximately 42 percent of the recipients of CTN funding during the 2004–05 academic year—that is, 36 of 86 possible respondents. The fact that the CTN program coordinator survey form was disseminated during the summer months may have contributed to the fact that the response rate was lower than desired.
- Review of documents was the primary method used to gather data.
- Program information prior to 1999 was limited, and prior to 1990, it was minimal at best.
- This report reflects the opinions and the data provided by the SDE and local district program administrators and not the opinions of individuals who had participated in the professional development activities.
- The timing and length of the review period did not make it possible for the reviewers to examine the integration of newly learned strategies into classroom instruction, the impact of the courses on teacher effectiveness and its relationship to student achievement, or the relationship between the courses and individual professional development plans. In addition, time constraints prevented the reviewers from fully studying and comparing the courses offered by individual districts, district consortia, or the Roper Mountain Science Center.

Findings

1. What has been the funding level for the CTN program, and what impact has the funding had on teacher training?

The General Assembly appropriates EIA funds for the CTN program on an annual basis. The program was first funded in 1987–88. Beginning in 1992–93, a portion of the appropriated funds was designated for the Roper Mountain Science Center to conduct summer workshops for science teachers. Figure 1 graphically displays the allocations over time. Table 1 provides the annual appropriation figures for the school districts and the Science Center.

Figure 1
Allocation of EIA Critical Teaching Needs Funds over Time

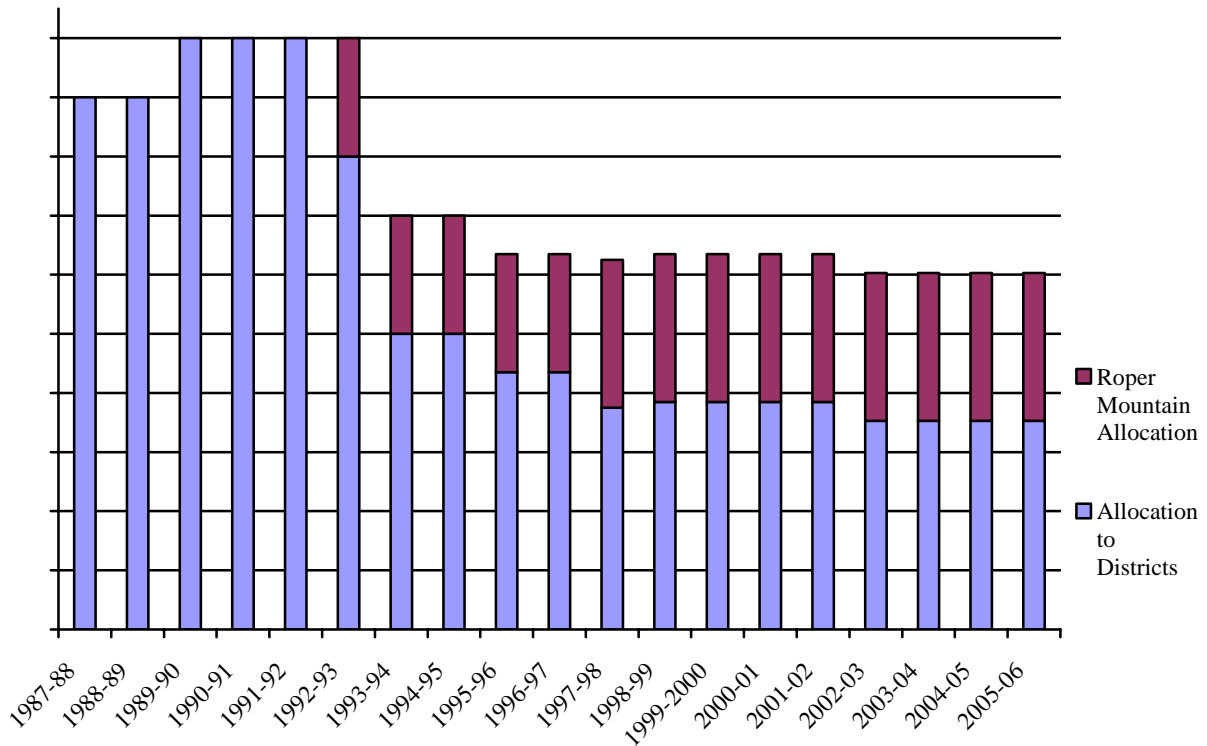


TABLE 1
EIA Critical Teaching Needs Funds Allocated for
School Districts and the Roper Mountain Science Center

School Year	Total State Appropriation	Funds Appropriated to Roper Mountain	School Year	Total State Appropriation	Funds Appropriated to Roper Mountain
1986–87	—	—	1996–97	\$635,000	\$200,000
1987–88	\$900,000	—	1997–98	\$635,000	\$250,000
1988–89	\$900,000	—	1998–99	\$635,000	\$250,000
1989–90	\$1,000,000	—	1999–2000	\$635,000	\$250,000
1990–91	\$1,000,000	—	2000–01	\$635,000	\$250,000
1991–92	\$1,000,000	—	2001–02	\$635,000*	\$250,000**
1992–93	\$1,000,000	\$200,000	2002–03	\$602,911	\$250,000
1993–94	\$700,000	\$200,000	2003–04	\$602,911	\$250,000
1994–95	\$700,000	\$200,000	2004–05	\$602,911	\$250,000
1995–96	\$635,000	\$200,000	2005–06	\$602,911	\$250,000

* Due to budget cuts, the total allocation was subsequently reduced to \$570,000.

** The Roper Mountain Science Center allocation was reduced to \$225,000.

From 1995–96 to 2001–02, program allocations remained constant (\$635,000). However, in 2001–02, midyear budget cuts reduced the program allocation by \$65,000. The General Assembly restored \$32,911 of the amount in 2002–03, bringing the total program funding level to \$602,911. The funding level continues to be \$32,089 less than that for the years 1995–96 through 2000–01.

Districts have utilized the funding in different ways—single district, consortium, and a combination of single district and consortium—to provide professional development in keeping with the state regulations for the CTN program. Table 2 illustrates the approximate per-teacher cost for the past five years. The average of these figures represents an approximate per participant cost of \$142 for this five-year period.

TABLE 2
District Allocations and Cost per Teacher Participant

School Year	Allocation for Districts	Number of District Courses Offered	Number of Teacher Participants	Cost per Teacher
1999–2000	\$385,000.00	133	2,972	\$129.54
2000–01	\$385,000.00	120	2,592	\$148.53
2001–02	\$345,000.00	185	3,510	\$98.29
2002–03	\$352,911.00	125	2,518	\$140.15
2003–04	\$352,911.00	111	1,821	\$193.80
2004–05	\$352,911.00	*	*	*

* End-of-year reports had not been submitted at the time of this review.

During the 2001–02 year, midyear budget cuts reduced funding to local districts by \$40,000. Some of the funding, \$7,911, was restored in 2002–03, but this sum was still \$32,089 below the original funding level of \$385,000. Funding to districts is now at its lowest level since the inception of the program.

By state proviso, Roper Mountain receives \$250,000 of the current \$602,911 program allocation, 41.5 percent of the total allocation. With these funds, the Roper Mountain Science Center conducts the summer Science P.L.U.S. Institute for public school science teachers in grades one through eight. Table 3 provides an analysis of the funding received and an approximate per-participant cost.

TABLE 3

Roper Mountain Science Center Allocation and Cost per Participant

School Year	Roper Mountain Allocation	Number of Courses Offered	Number of Teachers Participating	Cost per Teacher
1999–2000	\$250,000.00	NA	300	\$833.33
2000–01	\$250,000.00	17	255	\$980.39
2001–02	\$225,000.00	16	252	\$892.86
2002–03	\$250,000.00	11	196	\$1,275.51
2003–04	\$250,000.00	17	237	\$1,054.85
2004–05	\$250,000.00	*	*	*

* End-of-year reports had not been submitted at the time of this review.

As with the school districts, in 2001–02 the allocation to the Roper Mountain Science Center for its summer institutes was decreased by \$25,000. However, unlike the districts, the Science Center had its full funding restored the next year, and its allocation continues at that level. The approximate average cost per participant, based on data for the past five years, is \$1,007.

2. How have the CTN program courses been provided?

Districts provide courses as single districts, a combination of a single district and a consortium, and through a consortium. Some districts utilize the services provided by one of the three major state education consortia—Salkehatchie, Pee Dee Education Center, and Spartanburg County—to offer CTN program courses. Districts that participate in a consortium indicate that their primary reason for doing so is the fact that the single-district allocation is inadequate and will not pay the costs of providing courses as a stand-alone entity. The cost per course is approximately \$3,600.

The Roper Mountain Science Center, which is owned and operated by the School District of Greenville County, provides courses through the summer Science P.L.U.S. Institute. This institute brings together public school science teachers from across the state for intensive week-long courses on a particular subject for a specific grade level or range of grade levels. The

courses incorporate hands-on inquiry-based techniques, and participants are provided a significant quantity of materials to take back to their classrooms. The Science P.L.U.S. Institute pays the lodging costs for teachers who live more than an hour away from Greenville and are willing to share a room. Lunch for four days is also included. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the allocation funding range for single districts. The averages given in the table are based on the figures for public school enrollment published in the SDE's 2004 publication *Rankings of the Counties and School Districts of South Carolina 2002–03*.

TABLE 4
Allocation Funding Range for Single Districts, 2002–03

Funding Range	Number of Districts	Average Student Enrollment of Districts
\$2,000–\$3,999	56	3,301
\$4,000–\$5,999	18	10,509
\$6,000–\$7,999	7	19,954
\$8,000–\$9,999	2	28,398
\$10,000–\$11,999	0	NA
\$12,000–\$13,999	1	42,587
\$14,000–\$15,999	1	61,887

3. Who administers the CTN program at the district level?

Each school district has a person designated as the CTN program coordinator. The Roper Science Center has a person designated as the Science P.L.U.S. Institute coordinator. Persons who coordinate the program for local districts hold a variety of positions, with staff development and curriculum and instruction being their two major areas of responsibility. A majority of the CTN program coordinators were school- or district-level administrators in their district prior to working with the program. Most of the coordinators have served as CTN program coordinator for three or more years. Coordinators devote varying amounts of their time to administering the program, with a range from 1 percent to 100 percent of their time. Roper Mountain Science Center staff members (i.e., the Science P.L.U.S. Institute coordinator and assistant coordinator) spend 100 percent of their time with the CTN program. Their salaries are paid entirely from the \$250,000 appropriation the Center receives annually.

4. What are the job responsibilities of the district CTN program coordinators?

Coordinators perform a myriad of tasks related to administering the program. Those tasks identified most frequently are the following:

- administering the program according to CTN program guidelines;
- writing the CTN program application and monitoring the budget;
- disseminating information for the consortium regarding CTN program courses to be offered;

- developing and distributing the yearly needs assessment and coordinating courses to be offered with the SDE Division of Curriculum Services and Assessment;
- working with the consortia to provide professional development that addresses the South Carolina academic standards and the needs of classroom teachers;
- contracting courses, coordinating and organizing workshops and training, and monitoring activities; and
- completing all paperwork pertaining to the program, including the annual end-of-year report.

Coordinators engage in numerous activities related to collaboration with teachers, administrators, and consortium staff. They support the organization of the program and provide continuous leadership.

5. What is the procedure/process used to determine which courses or institutes to offer?
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The procedure/process for determining what courses to offer are summarized here on the basis of the survey results, SDE documents, and local district reports:

- Course offerings are based on needs expressed by administrators and teachers.
- School-level initiatives and school-level staff development requests form the basis for determining the courses that are offered.
- An assessment survey to identify areas of need is administered through the district's Office of Staff Development.
- Courses that support curriculum standards are selected.
- ADEPT evaluation and building-level evaluations are used to determine needs.
- Courses that support endorsement in gifted and talented and early childhood are offered.
- Courses requested by multiple districts are offered through the consortium.
- Courses are identified by assistant superintendents based on instructional needs.
- Course needs are determined by the district's strategic plan and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) assessment.
- Committee consisting of administration and education staff, Science P.L.U.S. Institute instructors, and the Institute coordinator determine what will be taught. Input from the county science coordinator, the Mathematics and Science Regional Center staff, and math and science specialists is sought.
- An annual survey is conducted at each school, and focus groups are held by the curriculum division to determine and prioritize professional development needs.

Funding guidelines specify what portion of the allocation goes to school districts and to the Roper Mountain Science Center summer institutes. The range of courses offered by the districts is much greater than those offered by the Science Center because of the legal stipulations for

each. A summary of the subject areas in which the school districts have provided courses since the 1999–2000 school year is provided in table 5:

TABLE 5
Subject Areas of CTN Program Courses Provided by School Districts
as a Percentage of Their Total Course Offerings

School Year	Science Courses	Reading Courses	Early Childhood Courses	Math Courses	Technology Courses	Special Needs Courses	“Others”	Total Courses Offered
1999–2000	18%	13%	4%	18%	38%	9%	0%	133
2000–01	9%	19%	5%	14%	32%	5%	17%	120
2001–02	3%	17%	0%	5%	35%	2%	38%	185
2002–03	3%	22%	0%	10%	17%	17%	31%	125
2003–04	19%	16%	0%	3%	20%	14%	28%	111
2004–05	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

* End-of-year reports had not been submitted at the time of this review

Note: Table 3 shows the data for the Roper Mountain Science Center’s summer Science P.L.U.S. Institute. Since all Institute courses are science courses, those data are not repeated here.

Technology was the subject of the greatest number of courses offered in 1999–2000, followed by science and mathematics. Again in 2000–01, technology ranked first in the number of courses offered, with reading and the category of “others” ranked second and third. The category “others” are approved courses aligned with the specific needs of districts. The “others” category, technology, and reading were ranked first, second, and third for the number of courses offered during the academic year 2001–02. In 2002–03 “others,” and reading were the course areas offered most often; technology and special needs tied as the third most popular subject areas. During the academic year 2003–04, the courses offered most often were “others,” technology, and science.

Overall, the three areas offered most frequently have been technology, “others,” and reading. Early childhood courses using CTN program funds were offered the least often. Science was not in the top three subject areas of the courses offered by school districts. This may be due to districts having participants in the Roper Mountain Science Center Science P.L.U.S. Institute, but a more extensive review of the program would be needed to verify which districts availed themselves of the Roper Mountain Science Center’s services.

The “other” courses were so classified by the SDE CTN program coordinator because they did not relate directly to the specific areas identified in the CTN program legislation. However, these courses were approved because they were a priority of the districts and were aligned with the districts’ strategic plans. The following are examples of courses that fell in this category:

- Best Practices for Teaching and Learning
- Human Growth and Development
- Cooperative Learning
- Discipline: A Total Approach
- Best Practices in Student Motivation and Classroom Management

- Differentiating Instruction in Middle/High School
- Multicultural Issues
- Differentiating Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms

The Roper Mountain Science Center provides a summer science institute for South Carolina public elementary and middle school teachers. The program began in 1993 as a two-week session. Since 1998, the each course has had a one-week, one-subject format. Teachers are grouped by grades: 1–2, 3–5, and 6–8. Course offerings differ from year to year, rotating through all the major science areas taught in elementary and middle schools.

The Center has in place a selection committee (Roper Mountain staff members appointed by the director) whose responsibility it is to select the teacher participants from the pool of applications. The committee chooses at least one participant from every school district that has applicants, regardless of the district’s size. The committee seeks to bring together a diverse group of teachers. According to correspondence (October 27, 2000) from the Roper Mountain Science Center Science P.L.U.S. Institute coordinator to the then-director of the Education Oversight Committee’s Curriculum and Program Review Committee, 20 percent of the Institute’s class slots are reserved for Greenville teachers. These reserved slots are offered in exchange for the support, identified mostly as in-kind, provided to the Institute by the Greenville School District.

6. Has the CTN program had a positive impact on local districts?
--

Districts are most appreciative of the funding, small as it may be for some of them. Funding is desperately needed for training that addresses professional development plans for teachers. In this way, the CTN program has had a positive impact on the school districts by making it possible for some teachers to take up-to-date courses that focus on the latest research and best practices.

Because funding to some districts has been small, those districts have been forced to “network” and to collaborate with other educators and educational agencies. The value of pooling resources has been a by-product of program implementation. District CTN program coordinators cite the following as additional benefits of the program.

- CTN program course offerings have helped participants become technology proficient. They have acquired skills and expertise that directly affect the success of their students.
- Districts have been able to offer courses for college credit that address the needs of teachers, especially PACE teachers.
- The program has enabled districts to offer courses locally for special education teachers.
- Courses can be offered for certificate renewal and graduate credit.
- Teachers are able to take courses online.
- Pooling resources with other districts has allowed more courses to be offered.
- The reports required for the program are not as overwhelming and full of “red tape” as some programs can be.

7. What were challenges faced by local districts and the Roper Mountain Science Center in implementing the CTN program?

Three challenges seem to emerge in all the data sources analyzed by the reviewers:

- The smaller school districts are limited in the number of courses they can offer due to the fact that allocations are based on the number of full-time teachers the district employs.
- The cost associated with offering a course has increased, but the funding level has remained the same.
- The location of the Roper Mountain Science Center may account for the low level of participation in the Center's activities by districts in the lower part of the state.

If the CTN program is to remain a viable source for professional development, policy makers and the SDE should explore solutions to these problems.

8. Have school districts and the Roper Mountain Science Center expended funds in keeping with SDE guidelines?

All funding and the auditing of funds for the CTN program are handled through the SDE's Office of Finance. In 2003–04, the CTN program fell under the guidelines of the funding flexibility provisos—a situation that resulted in the elimination of the budget section from the grant application. The provisos also gave the districts the option of waiting until May 1 of a current fiscal year to choose its option. For two years, funds have been transferred to districts with no SDE-approved budget summary or justification on file.

The SDE Office of Finance's funding manual for 2004–05 provides the guidelines for the expenditure of CTN program allocations. As the manual specifies, appropriate expenditures are the following:

- Improvement of Instruction, Inservice and Staff Training Salaries
- Improvement of Instruction, Inservice and Staff Training Employee Benefits
- Improvement of Instruction, Inservice and Staff Training Purchased Services
- Improvement of Instruction, Inservice and Staff Training Supplies and Materials

Maximum allowed expenditures are the following:

- Tuition/salaries plus fringe benefits cannot exceed \$3,600 per course.
- Books and materials cannot exceed \$150 per participant.

Disallowed expenditures are the following:

- Equipment purchases
- Supplanting district salaries

A review of records indicates that local school districts are in compliance with the guidelines. However, there do not appear to be funding guidelines that are applicable for the expenditures of funds for summer institutes sponsored by the Roper Mountain Science Center.

Questions raised regarding the expenditure of funds include the following:

- Why are districts restricted to \$150 per participant for supplies when the Roper Mountain Science Center is allowed to spend an average of \$527?
- Why are equipment purchases disallowed expenditures for districts but an allowable expense for the Science Center?
- With the Roper science institutes operating only during the summer months, is there a need for the program to pay two full-time staff persons (1.0 FTE each)?

9. Has implementation of the CTN program had a positive impact on the quality of instruction and student achievement?

A major goal of the EIA legislation was to improve student achievement by enhancing teachers' instructional skills and equipping them with strategies for providing appropriate and effective instruction based on best practices and research. These goals were to be accomplished with the CTN program funds, which would make needs-based, systematic professional development in specific identified areas available to teachers.

School districts receive funds from multiple sources to target specific areas for professional development. The target areas usually are the same as the ones listed in the CTN program legislation. Therefore, it may be difficult to isolate the impact of a single program or activity. Because of the emphasis on results-oriented professional development, districts need to have a plan to determine the impact that programs have on improving student achievement. Are EIA funds paying for results or for the status quo?

The following is a summary of activities and strategies that the district coordinators identified as methods they use in determining the impact of the CTN program on instruction and learning:

- District benchmark, PACT (Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests) and Measuring Academic Progress (MAP) on-line student formative assessment scores are analyzed each year in areas targeted for professional development.
- CTN program funds have been combined with other staff development funding to increase the number of certified teachers in critical areas.
- Some surveyed districts are in the process of defining a system to be used to determine the impact of professional development on student achievement.
- Comparisons of schools are made to determine the percentage of staff that have demonstrated proficiency on a district technology competency test.

- A review of data on student achievement by class and teacher is conducted. Comparisons of results for teachers who participate in CTN program courses with those who have not are made.
- Observations by administrators and curriculum facilitators have increased.

In question 1 of this section, tables 2 and 3 display the number of courses provided and number of participants for the past five years. Districts have provided 674 courses with 13,413 participants (a duplicated count because some participants have taken more than one course). Over 61 Science P.L.U.S. Institutes offered by the Roper Mountain Science Center have provided professional development in science for 1,240 teachers.

On the survey conducted for this study, CTN program coordinators were asked to identify the following: the percentage of teachers who participated in CTN program courses who are still in the district and the percentage of teachers who are still employed in assignments related to the training they received. The coordinators' responses seem to indicate that a significant number of teachers who completed CTN program courses are no longer in the districts where the professional development was provided and are not employed in areas related to the professional development completed. Thirteen of the 31 responding district program coordinators (42 percent) indicated that over 90 percent of their teachers who completed a CTN-funded course are currently still employed in the district. Sixty percent of the coordinators estimated that over 90 percent of their teachers receiving CTN courses training are currently employed teaching in the subject area in which they trained.

The responses from the district coordinators are summarized here in the tables 6 and 7:

TABLE 6
Percentage of Teachers Still in the District

Percentage Ranges on Questionnaire	Number of Responses
100–90%	13
89–70%	15
69–50%	3
Less than 50%	0

TABLE 7
Percentage of Teachers Still Employed in Areas Related to the Training/Courses Taken

Percentage Ranges on Questionnaire	Number of Responses
100–90%	18
89–70%	10
69–50%	2
Less than 50%	0

Did the CTN-funded professional development courses have an impact on student achievement? The reviewers feel that further study and more concrete data are needed before this determination can be made. Data about student achievement will need to be matched by subject area to each teacher receiving the training. An extensive database of information about teachers, subject areas taught, and student achievement by subject area would be required.

Implications and Conclusions

Changes in state legislation, regulations, and application procedures have brought the CTN program to a crossroads. If the program is to function effectively in the future, more funding for school districts and a higher level of district accountability for impacting student achievement need to be put in place. Additionally, the role of the Roper Mountain Science Center in relationship to the current CTN program intent and its impact on the professional development of teachers needs more thorough study. A more intensive evaluation and accountability system for measuring program effectiveness needs to be considered.

If the program has outlived its original intent, it may need to be revised to reflect current thought and research on effective professional development plans (i.e., ongoing programs that include coaching, feedback, and an expectation of implementation of program strategies into classroom instruction). While the Roper Mountain Science Center provides an exemplary facility that has the capacity to offer model science courses, its impact across the state needs to be studied.

These conclusions are ones that can be addressed only through a sustained, multiyear evaluation program that includes on-site training, classroom visits, and interviews with school administrators and teachers. Other than the “hard” data regarding the dollars spent, the courses offered, and the numbers of teachers served, the reviewers found little information that could be used as the basis for drawing specific conclusions about the impact of the CTN program funding. The continued use of “paper data” only, such as that utilized for this report, should be reviewed and analyzed. The ultimate question to be answered is “Is student learning increasing?”

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to provide state education decision makers input that will support their efforts to ensure a viable results-oriented program of professional development:

- Consider a name change for the CTN program to eliminate confusion about whether it is this program or PACE that is actually being referred to.
- Consider requesting the restoration of full funding for this program to pre-2001 levels, increasing the funding, or consolidating the CTN program into other professional development initiatives.
- Review the application submission, approval, and evaluation processes in light of funding flexibility provisos and recent changes in funding disbursement procedures.
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation process that looks beyond the numbers of teachers served by the program to the impact of the program on student achievement.
- Develop guidelines for the expenditure of funds that are applicable both to school districts and to the Roper Mountain Science Center.
- Study the continued viability of the Roper Mountain Science Center's Science P.L.U.S. Institute as a state-funded statewide professional development activity.

APPENDIX A

Survey Responses of CTN Program Coordinators

The survey questionnaire was disseminated online in the spring of 2005 to program coordinators in South Carolina education units that had received funding for professional development through the Critical Teaching Needs program.

Total number of completed surveys received: 36 (*Note: Not all respondents answered all questions; therefore, question totals may not equal the number of respondents.*)

▶ **How were the CTN courses provided?**

Method of Course Provision	Number of Responses
As a single district	20
Through a consortium	10
Combination of single district and consortium	2
Statewide	1

▶ **What staff members were employed to administer the CTN program?**

Position Titles Listed	Total Number Reported
Assistant superintendent/CTN coordinator	6
Director	1
Secretary	1
Director of professional development	1
Coordinator/director of elem. ed. programs	2
Chief academic officer	1
Bookkeeper	1
Associate superintendent	1
Administrative assistant	1
Staff development	5
Secondary education	1
Superintendent	1
Certified employee specialist	1
Lead instructional specialist	1
Coordinator	2
Personnel director	1
Executive director for curriculum and instruction	1
District staff/teachers	4
Language arts coordinator	1
Coordinator of instruction	1
Administrator	1
Instructional specialist	1
Science P.L.U.S. Institute coordinator	1
Assistant Science P.L.U.S. Institute coordinator	1

Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) of the Staff Employed to Administer CTN Program	Number of Staff Employed at This FTE
0.00	10
0.01	1
0.05	1
0.10	1
0.20	1
0.80	1
1.00	15

Percentage of Program Staff Salary Paid from CTN Funds	Number of Staff
0%	33
100%	*2

* Only Science P.L.U.S. Institute staff are paid from CTN funds.

► **How many years did you serve as CTN coordinator?**

Number of Years	Number of Responses
1	6
2	2
3	4
4	5
5	17

► **Before you became the CTN coordinator, what was your professional role?**

Former Professional Role	Number of Responses
Teacher in the district	2
School-level administrator in the district	8
District-level administrator in the district	19
Teacher in another district	0
School-level administrator in another district	1
District-level administrator in another district	3

► **As the CTN coordinator, what are your job responsibilities?**

The following are unedited written responses made by CTN program coordinators to the above question.

“To oversee personnel, staff development, teacher certification, and secondary instruction.”

“To complete the paperwork, secure signatures, do the Board Agenda, work with USC-Aiken to setup courses, do final report.”

“Oversee and plan expenditures for program. Complete reports.”

“Administer the program according to CTN guidelines; arrange for offering courses.”

“To complete grant application and administer the activities stated in the grant.”

“Complete CTN application and end of year report. Work with the Pee Dee Center staff to determine which courses need to be offered. Send course announcements and registration forms to teachers. We return the registrations forms to the Pee Dee Center. Work up a budget for bookkeeping.”

“Coordinate CTN activities.”

“Course work for teachers.”

“Communicate with the PACE teachers, alert them to the Pee Dee Education course offerings, assure documentation is provided for personnel file, sign off on reimbursement of course work and make recommendation for certification and re-hiring as appropriate.”

“Record keeping and arrangements for courses.”

“Staff development coordinator, fund custodian.”

“Complete paperwork, arrange for a course to be taught in our district and coordinate enrollment, etc.”

“Administer grant and manage CTN funds.”

“Annually, I write the CTN application and create and monitor the budget; I select appropriate course(s) to be funded by CTN; I obtain approval for course(s) selected through Coastal Carolina University; I obtain instructor(s) for CTN course(s); I pay for CTN course(s) and instructor(s) through CTN funding; and, I complete final Annual Evaluation Summary report(s) for the CTN Program.”

“Complete forms required for SDE for CTN funds; share information about course offerings with all certified staff; coordinate receiving of forms from teachers enrolling on courses with required info for Pee Dee Center; serve as liaison between teachers and Pee Dee Center.”

“To disseminate information from the Pee Dee Education Center about CTN courses, registration, etc.; to facilitate the registration process; to pay for course work for our district’s teachers.”

“As the authorized representative of this school district, I will be responsible for implementing the Critical Teaching Needs program as outlined by the Proviso 1A.16, South Carolina Code Ann. 59-5-60 (1990) and follow the statement of assurances.”

“To develop and distribute the yearly needs assessment, meet with the Division of Curriculum and outline the course needs.”

“Write this grant, choose courses that meet the qualifications, have the course approved through a university, do the paper work to offer the course in the district and enroll the participants, and then submit a final report.”

“Provide professional development for all CTN teachers. Meet with school teams to determine areas for professional development.”

“Work with the Spartanburg County Consortium and the Upstate Regional Center for Educational Support to provide professional development that addresses the South Carolina State Standards and needs of classroom teachers.”

“Establish what courses are offered; notify teachers of the availability of course; register teaches for courses; arrange for faculty/professor; oversee program.”

“Work with consortium to assess needs and plan courses.”

“Making decisions concerning course offerings and ensuring funding is used appropriately.”

“Conduct annual survey of professional development needs, contract courses, coordinate and organize workshops and training, and monitor activities, and distribute and tally evaluations.”

“Conducting needs assessments to determine what educators in the district desire in term of professional development which could be provided utilizing CTN funds.”

“Determine how funds will be used; complete grant application and end-of-year report; schedule courses; handle general administration of program.”

“Write the grant, assist with the implementation of courses, and complete the evaluation.”

“Disseminating information about available courses and processing teacher registrations.”

► **Since the inception of the CTN program, how many schools in your district have had teachers to participate?**

District coordinators reported a total of 67 schools that had teachers to participate. The Science P.L.U.S. Institute coordinator reported that teachers from 774 schools statewide participated in their summer institute.

► **How many teachers in your district have participated since the inception of the CTN program?**

Teachers Participating	Totals Reported by District Coordinators	Totals Reported by Science P.L.U.S. Institute Coordinator
elementary school teachers	1,703	1,953
middle school teachers	926	676
high school teachers	575	37
unknown	50	0

The following are unedited written responses made by CTN program coordinators to the above question.

“This is impossible to answer accurately. Do not have enough data to complete.”

“I am not sure of the exact numbers.”

“90% of the school participated each year since 1999.”

“It has varied depending on cost of courses.”

“This information is in storage and can’t be retrieved in time to include. We generally have 12-13 teachers participate in courses each year.”

- ▶ **What percentage of your district’s teachers who participated in the CTN program are still employed by the district?**

Percentage Ranges on Questionnaire	Number of Responses
100–90%	13
89–70%	15
69–50%	3
Less than 50%	0

The following is an unedited written response made by a CTN program coordinator to the above question.

“Cannot answer accurately. Not enough data available.”

- ▶ **What percentage of your district’s teachers who participated in the CTN program are still employed in assignments related to the CTN training they received?**

Percentage Ranges on Questionnaire	Number of Responses
100–90%	18
89–70%	10
69–50%	2
Less than 50%	0

The following is an unedited written response made by a CTN program coordinator to the above question.

“Cannot answer.”

► **Describe the process/procedure used in your district/agency to determine which courses to offer.**

The following are unedited written responses made by CTN program coordinators to the above request.

“Surveys regarding needs for course work are given to all educators each year. The teacher of the year committee reviews courses (evaluations and rates of participation) that have been offered for overall effectiveness and takes into consideration proposes course offerings. Along with district and school administrators, a draft of selected course offerings is sent to all educators for final recommendation to the committee. The assistant superintendent (as professional development and CTN coordinator) then schedules the appropriate course work for the next school year.”

“Course offerings are based on expressed need by administrators and teachers, and the results of teacher evaluation. At times, these courses are used to support PACE teachers in meeting their requirements.”

“Our district uses School Level Initiatives and School Level Staff Development requests as the basis for determining course offerings. These initiatives develop as a result of analysis of PACT achievement data and Benchmark test analysis.”

“A needs assessment survey was administered through the Office of Professional Development to identify areas of need.”

“We choose a course that supports new standards, curriculum, or observed need in one of the core areas.”

“We conduct an annual professional development needs assessment to determine which courses we need to offer.”

“Teachers complete a needs assessment survey.”

“We have the following needs: course requirements for PACT teachers, add ons for ESOL, Special education (MD, LD), middle level, gifted and talented, technology courses, behavior management. The Pee Dee Education Center surveys our needs annually. We give input to which courses need to be offered during the fall, spring, and summer sessions. We suggest them.”

“Teacher surveys, principal recommendation

“In collaboration with other members of the consortium. Recommendation from teachers and administrators.”

“Consortium survey from the district teacher interest.”

“ADEPT evaluation and information building-level evaluations are used to recommend what courses the district will reimburse through the Pee Dee Education Center. PACE teachers may choose to take other courses that will meet the CTN program requirements but the district will not use state funds to reimburse for these costs related to the course work.”

“Teacher survey/request.”

“Teacher requests and needs analysis/data review to determine areas where we need to work.”

“The district doesn’t even receive enough money to pay for one course; we have to supplement in order to have a course and what we supplement is about the same amount of money as is the allocation we get from the State Department. We offer a technology course because we feel like anyone could participate and not be restricted to certain subjects/content or instructional methodologies. Also, by teachers taking this course and passing it, they have demonstrated that they meet the technology competencies required by the Office of Technology at the State Department.”

“Technology courses directly related to technology competencies in our district.”

“I generally choose the Gifted and Talented endorsement courses to offer under CTN since we offer both courses each year and the courses meet the requirements of the CTN program.”

“The areas in which there are shortages of teachers certified drive the choices in many cases. Also, courses to add G/T endorsement have been offered to meet that need. We get input from teachers as to their needs.”

“The Executive Director at the Pee Dee Education Center asks for input from districts as to what courses are needed. These are basically what courses are needed. These are basically what are offered. The Pee Dee Consortium has provided a great service to its members by offering these courses (for graduate credit at Coastal Carolina).”

“This early childhood content course was one of two courses that teachers need to add-on early childhood certification to their elementary certification. SC certification levels are changing and this add-on will be possible until 2007. We had great difficulty in finding these courses within reasonable driving distance. This course was offered through distance education by the University of South Carolina.”

“Conducted a district ‘needs assessment’; reviewed needs as a result of PACT scores; met with Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment to outline courses; advertised course offerings via flyers, district web pages, and monthly principal’s meetings

“As a Curriculum Department we look at our District’s initiatives and the individual school needs for the coming school year. We also look at their professional development plans. Then we look at what our test scores show to be a need, then we look at what would give the best return on the money. We also look at what building administrators have said are needs based on classroom observations, etc. I spend time looking at what research says about the

initiative based on other districts with similar make-up. From this point we either choose a course we offered the previous year that meets our needs or we develop a new course based on our information.”

“School level evaluation teams observe and meet with teachers to determine all professional development courses that may be needed within the district. From these conversations, courses are developed, procured to meet the needs of the teachers.”

“As a consortium, we decide what courses to offer in conjunction with other Spartanburg County School Districts and The Upstate Regional Center for Educational Support based on needs of teachers obtained through needs assessment.”

“Curriculum and instructional needs of the district.”

“Administer professional development survey; collaborate with local consortium.”

“Assistant superintendents in our county meet to determine the need based on instructional needs.”

“An annual survey is conducted at each school level and focus groups are held by curriculum areas to determine and prioritize professional development needs of teachers.”

“After teachers expressed which courses or general category of courses in which they were interested, a list of possible courses was generated. From that list, consideration was given at the district to what course(s) had been offered in the district previously that school term. Following that, CTN funds were used to offer one graduate course to teachers in the school district.”

“Teachers and school administrators are surveyed to determine interest/needs. District Strategic and School Renewal Plans are reviewed as well as ADEPT evaluation results. Information is then shared with district-level administrators who determine which courses to offer.”

“The need for courses is determined by the district’s strategic plan.”

The district uses the needs assessment from SACS and the strategic planning process.”

“The Pee Dee Consortium surveys districts annually about their needs and offers those courses that are most requested.”

“This is accomplished through a committee of Roper Mountain Science Center administration and education staff, Institute instructors, and the Institute coordinator. We welcome input from the Greenville County Schools Science Coordinator and the Regional Math and Science Center math and science specialists, who are housed at Roper Mountain Science Center.”

► **What have been some of the most positive benefits of the CTN program in your district/agency?**

The following are unedited written responses made by CTN program coordinators to the above question.

“Most recently, CTN course offerings have helped our district’s educators become technology proficient, with skills and expertise that directly affect the success of students in the classroom.”

“We have been able to offer courses through USC-Aiken to address the needs of teachers, especially PACE teachers.”

“Course work addressed instructional needs.”

“Increased teacher technology proficiency.”

“We are able to offer a course free of charge to teachers.”

“Professional growth for teachers.”

“This program has allowed us the opportunity to bring courses to the district for our special education teachers, which enabled some of them to meet their permit requirements. Also, teachers working in the critical needs/PACE program benefited greatly from these classes, in that they were given techniques/strategies/information on working with the exceptional student. Teachers that have taken these courses have a better understanding of how to positively manage behavioral problems and are better equipped to provide quality education for all.”

“The Pee Dee Education Center consortium allows use to offer a variety of courses for our teachers than just being able to offer one or two courses. Courses are offered during the fall, spring, and summer sessions. Online courses through Coastal are appealing to our teachers. Teachers like the different courses to select from.”

“Teachers have benefited from the technology courses that have been offered through CTN funding. They are better able to use technology in the classroom as a result of participation in the Integrating Technology in the Classroom course.”

“Teachers have used courses for certificate renewal and graduate credit. Teachers are able to take courses online.”

“Funds to pay for teacher courses to be certified in other fields.”

“Filling teacher vacancies in a hard to hire district located in the Pee Dee.”

“Professional development.”

“I have not had any bad experience with the program and I would not change a thing.”

“We’ve been able to use CTN funds in conjunction with Professional Development funds to provide stipends for our teacher leaders to teach recertification courses in our Professional Growth Institute. We set up the courses to being in the summer and go through the entire school year so that teachers have contact with the teacher leader(s) throughout the school year. We’ve been able to offer courses in integrating technology, standards-based unit planning, using district-adopted materials to support standards-based instruction, and working with limited-English speakers, among others.”

“The course has always been filled; it’s very popular and the teachers find the information they have learned most useful. The CTN program also gives us a little bit of money in which we can offer such a course. Other grants limit you as to what courses you could find through them. Finally, the reporting for this program is not so overwhelming and full of red tape as some programs can be.”

“Technology courses funded building district capacity in technology.”

“The CTN program funds up to two of our professional development courses each year.”

“Pooling of resources with other districts has enabled us to offer a wider range of courses than our money alone would have provided. The amount received wouldn’t cover the cost of one course offering at the graduate level.”

“CTN funds have helped to enable our district to offer more courses to more teachers, especially through our consortium.”

“This program enabled the district to help teachers pay for the course they need for early childhood certification.”

“Improvement in math scores.”

“Having the capacity to offer these courses as graduate credit to our employees in the district to enhance instruction.”

“Providing PACE teachers with opportunities to gain background knowledge related to teaching that was not part of their life experience prior to their employment. The program has also created smaller learning communities, in which teachers have become active participants and leaders within the district.”

“This funding has been beneficial and the collaborating Spartanburg Districts along with the Upstate Regional Center for Educational Support to provide quality staff development that supports ‘Best Practices’ that has proven effective in improving the academic achievement of students.”

“Teachers become more expert in their subject areas.”

“Targeted professional development; convenience and value for teachers.”

“We have offered courses otherwise not affordable to just our district.”

“Funding for courses needed by PACE teachers and teachers needing courses to become highly qualified according to NCLB guidelines.”

“Benefits include additional funds to offer a course for educators in our school district to assist them in their professional growth.”

“CTN funds have made it possible to offer courses that would not have been available in district otherwise.”

“Offering courses that we would not have had the funding for if CTN funds were not available.”

“The courses offered for best practices in literacy have made the greatest impact upon classroom practice and student learning.”

“The consortium allows us to offer courses that are needed by one or two teachers in our district but not by a large number. It is especially helpful for special ed.”

“In this state-wide program, the benefit most often mentioned is course evaluations and follow-up surveys is the confidence that course participants gain in implementing hands-on science approaches in their classrooms. This is achieved by actually doing the activities themselves in Science P.L.U.S. classes and having the materials provided by the institute to take back to their classrooms. A contributing factor is also the significant level of content presented in institute course. Many elementary teachers, in particular, have little science background and are afraid of teaching certain topics—especially in physical science. They leave the institute with a ‘can-do’ attitude and are excited about returning to the science classroom. The Science P.L.U.S. Institute provides an opportunity for participants to develop a broader perspective about teaching science because of their contact with peers from very diverse backgrounds throughout the state.”

► **What are some of the challenges your district/agency has faced in implementing the CTN program?**

The following are unedited written responses made by CTN program coordinators to the above question.

“Actually, I am unaware of any challenges with implementing the CTN program. It has been very beneficial to assist with our teachers’ technology and instructional needs.”

“While the contracted price for a graduate course has increased, the CTN funds have not. We have had to use other funds to fully fund two courses.”

“Scheduling course to fit the needs of teachers.”

“None.”

“We really do not get enough money to pay all of the costs associated with a course.”

“In the last couple of years, just finding the time to provide courses. With NCLB and other state accountability requirements, teachers rarely have any additional time to devote to professional development.”

“The biggest challenge we have encountered is that of finding universities with faculty willing to come to the area and teach the class.”

“The program is useful but the paperwork is timely and cumbersome for the amount of funds received. We are only able to pay for 15 teachers from CTN funds to take the Pee Dee Center courses that are offered. We use other funds to pay for additional teachers to take the course.”

“Lack of adequate funding. We are a small district and receive limited funding. We used multiple sources to fully fund the course.”

“Sometimes it’s difficult to get enough teachers to offer a course.”

“Paperwork and sharing courses with the consortium.”

“It’s still hard to find individuals who are good for children and most have no classroom management skills that should be offered immediately and is not. The two year work requirement is sometimes a challenge and is sometimes waived for some districts and not for others and I cannot figure what this criteria is.”

“No money

“We’ve not had any difficulty using the money in the way that it is intended to be used. Occasionally meeting paperwork deadlines is a challenge when quick deadlines are given or when CTN paperwork deadlines come at the same time as deadlines from other departments at SDE.”

“I wish our allocation could be enough to fund one complete course. The cost for a course is the same for a small district as well as a large district; and while I realize larger districts get more money, the cost for one course is the same.”

“N/A.”

“While I don’t want to appear ungrateful for any pots of money offered, it is a very small amount of money for the amount of time spent creating, monitoring, and evaluating the program.”

“Fulfilling the paperwork requirements.”

“No problems . . . it is really very little funding. Our district gets the most benefit by working in a consortium.”

“None.”

“Funding was not sufficient to offer a course both semesters.”

“None that I’m aware of.”

“There have been no problems encountered in implementing the program.”

“We have faced no challenges.”

“Previously, identifying needs; recently more needs than resources available.”

“Very few.”

“Not enough funding. The State Department of Education will only count one PD course in regards to the requirement of courses for PACE teachers (an exceptional needs course, a reading course, and a Human Growth and Development course). Higher Ed now assigns a ‘PD’ label to each course contracted by a district, because the cost of a district contracted course ranges from \$3500-\$4000. A PACE teacher could take the same course initiated by the college with the same adjunct professor and the same syllabus, and pay \$800 a person and the course would not be considered a PD course. It is more cost effective for a district to contract a course and have space for 25 teachers as opposed to teachers having to pay \$800 a course.”

“Since our district’s allocation of CTN funds is limited, we have only been able to offer one CTN course per year to teachers in our school district.”

“Must make sure that we offer courses that are applicable to at least two of the three grade spans; otherwise, we have difficulty getting 15 participants.”

“Need more money for more courses.”

“The funds are very small for our district.”

“Really none thanks to the Pee Dee Consortium.”

“One challenge is created by having grade-specific science classes. Another challenge that we accept is fitting a summer program into a fiscal year routine. We are constantly looking for cost-effective ways to market this program to eligible teachers statewide. We still would like to have a better response statewide, especially from teachers in rural districts.”

- ▶ **Describe the approaches used in your district/agency to determine whether and to what degree the CTN program has had an impact on student achievement.**

The following are unedited written responses made by CTN program coordinators to the above request.

“Our district’s benchmark and PACT scores are analyzed each year in relation to the professional development that is offered. Our findings reflect growth and improvement of student achievement where targeted and sustained professional development are provided, including the course work that has been made possible through the CTN program.”

“Observations by principals of effective instructional strategies.”

“Observation, long range plans, lesson plans.”

“Throughout the district, over 6476 walkabout observations were conducted in schools by administrators and instructional facilitators. These are an indication that teachers are using technology effectively to enhance student achievement.”

“Since we can offer only one course, this is very difficult to specifically determine. However, we do data analysis each year at the classroom level. Student achievement is evaluated in relationship to the specific staff development that the teacher has participated in.”

“We conduct evaluations of every professional development activity, including the CTN program, to determine effectiveness. We look at student assessment data, as provided by state testing programs, and MAP assessment to determine program impact upon student achievement.”

“Test scores of students are analyzed.”

“CTN courses help meet the certification and highly qualified requirements for teachers who need to add special education, middle level, ESOL, or GT to their teaching certificates. These CTN courses help teachers to renew their credentials, advance or upgrade their certificates, and to add areas to their certificates. Having highly qualified teachers teaching our students and providing appropriate staff development for our teachers have helped improve student achievement. These courses have had a positive impact on student achievement.”

“The course was offered this spring and was completed last month. The skills acquired by the teachers will be used to help teachers plan lessons this summer. The newly acquired skills will be used by the teachers in their classroom next fall. A survey will be given to teachers who completed the course. Information gathered from the surveys will be used to plan additional staff development activities to build upon the skills the teachers acquired by taking the course. (This is my first year with the program. In talking with teachers that have taken the course in the past, they have found it to be very beneficial. Their ability to implement technology within the classroom to enhance learning has greatly increased as a result of taking the class.)”

“Discussions with teachers and administrators, classroom observations, grade comparisons, etc., and pass/fail rates of students.”

“The course that helped with classroom management has helped students and the computer course has help teachers in the classroom. Reading course have been beneficial.”

“Our schools that have a high concentration of CTN teachers have the lowest test scores, have not met AYP and are moving this year into corrective action. I can’t say that the quality of these teachers have helped improve the academic standards of the classroom but they are willing to learn. Without the availability of these individuals, I would have long term substitutes with a GED and not professional qualifications or college work at all so I am glad to have them just the same.”

“Test scores.”

“We analyze PACT and MAP data on a routine basis, and we conduct classroom observations. Building level administrators have a plan in place for reviewing teachers’ lesson plans.”

“Our principals have noted increase use of technology as they observe the teachers in the classroom. It has definitely provided teachers with the tools they need to offer another leaning modality for their students.”

“Percent of staff at each school that has achieved technology competency level 1. The district determines competency level in technology via a testing program.”

“We use PACT scores, MAP scores, and teacher surveys to determine if the courses we are offering are making an impact on teachers’ knowledge base and core teaching skills that will transfer into the classroom and assist in improving student achievement.”

“It is difficult to capture the extent that CTN has impacted student achievement due to the small amount of funding. However, CTN funds have supplemented staff development funds in assisting teachers to become certified in another area and to provide professional development for teachers who may need a specific course for an area of improvement or growth.”

“Teachers who take courses are more likely to improve their content knowledge and try new strategies for teaching.”

“We are currently in the process of redefining how we evaluate staff development in our district. This past year we implemented Instructional Coaches in our elementary and middle schools and we implemented EduTest (benchmark test) to help evaluate our program. This is the end of my second year in this positive, and several other changes in our district, so we started redefining staff development and its effectiveness. We began the process of using Joellen Killion’s ‘Assessing Impact Evaluating Staff Development.’ We do not currently have this process completed adjusted to meet our needs in the district, but we are very excited about being able to look at this as a process and have sources to make informed

decisions about our program and the impact it is having on student achievement. We are moving from did the training (service) effective to did the training actually increase student achievement (results). The steps we are using are:

- Step 1: Assess the ability to be evaluated
- Step 2: Formulate the questions we want to be answered
- Step 3: Construct the evaluation framework
- Step 4: Collect our data (who will collect, when and how)
- Step 5: organize and analyze our data
- Step 6: Interpret our data
- Step 7: Disseminate our results/findings
- Step 8: Evaluate the process we used.

This is the process we began implementing this year and we are excited about sitting down and looking at our outcomes when test scores come back and to fully implement this process next year.”

“Review of testing/assessment within the PACE teachers’ classroom compared to certified teachers with similar teaching experience. Review of teacher evaluations for this same group.”

“Test scores.”

“We analyze PACT data and MAP data.”

“Follow-up from needs-based courses are reflected in achievement scores of students.”

“Each year the district leads individual schools to analyze test data and develop strategies to met student needs as well as determine effectiveness of implemented strategies. Effective strategies are developed and strategies with little or no impact in regards to student achievement are modified or eliminated.”

“Through classroom observations, follow up sessions, and creation of curriculum guides in core content areas as a result of CTN courses, our district has been able to gauge the impact of the CTN program.”

“Analyze PACT and BSAP/HSAP score reports; analyze teacher and student State Report Card survey information; conduct classroom observations; and survey principals.”

“There are a number of initiatives in the district that contribute to increases in student achievement. It is impossible to attribute these gains to one program.”

“Classroom observation, PACT scores, student work samples.”

“We review data on student achievement by class and teacher and compare results of these teachers who have participated in CTN (and other professional development) with those who have not.”

“We conduct follow-up surveys for each year’s teachers in the early spring after they have had a change to implement institute activities and use materials with their classes. Every few years the institute does a broader survey of past institute participants to determine the long-range impact of the program.”

► **Identify how CTN program funds were utilized by your district.**

Figures provided by district coordinators:

Year	Salaries	Fringe Benefits	Purchased Services	Supplies Materials	Equipment
1999–2000	\$5,000	\$887.00	\$19,373	\$2,900.00	0
2000–01	\$10,000	\$1,651.20	\$23,315	\$8,037.80	0
2001–02	\$10,200	\$1,237.00	\$26,799	\$3,398.00	0
2002–03	\$13,675	\$1,894.00	\$22,807	\$2,690.75	0
2003–04	\$11,750	\$2,075.00	\$30,360	\$540.00	0

Figures provided by the Science P.L.U.S. Institute:

Year	Salaries	Fringe Benefits	Purchased Services	Supplies Materials	Equipment
1999–2000	\$67,750	\$13,570.00	\$41,550	\$127,130.00	0
2000–01	\$65,267	\$13,810.00	\$32,688	\$129,660.00	\$8,575
2001–02	\$59,229	\$13,500.00	\$23,166	\$129,105.00	0
2002–03	\$66,809	\$15,250.00	\$19,421	\$133,673.00	\$3,500
2003–04	\$73,297	\$13,425.00	\$17,754	\$134,177.00	0

The following are unedited written responses made by CTN program coordinators to the above request.

“Funding each year has been used for contracts with USC-Aiken for coursework. I do not have the specific info available.”

“All funds were for purchased services to the Pee Dee Education Center.”

“Purchased services.”

“1/3 into salaries/benefits and 2/3 into purchased services.”

“Each year the funds were used for purchased services with the exception of 03-04 when use of flexibility allowed us to fund a small portion of a teacher’s salary per EOC guidelines. This was done in order to save paperwork requirements for CTN funds.”

“100% purchased services.”

“100% purchased services for three years; 90% purchased services and 10% supplies/materials for two years.”

“100% purchased services for four years and purchased services and supplies/materials for one year.”

“100% purchased services for four years and 100% supplies/materials for one year.”

“Salaries/fringe benefits and supplies/materials.”

“100% salary for the instructor for the one graduate class each year.”

- B. College Credit Course: Any course consisting of at least 45 contact hours for which credit is issued by a South Carolina college or university with an approved teacher training program.
- C. Consortium of Districts: A group of school districts who have agreed to cooperate in the planning and implementation of staff development programs and who have identified one district to coordinate the project and serve as the fiscal agent.

III. PROGRAM DESIGN OPTIONS

A. Mathematics, Reading, and Science

1. Certificate Renewal Courses

A school district or a consortium of school districts may apply for certificate renewal course(s) for teachers within their district(s). Each certificate renewal course must be for three hours credit (at least 45 contact hours) and must comply with state certification requirements. Any courses for mathematics, reading, or science included in the State Department of Education published Guidelines and Course Descriptions will be eligible for funding. Courses in the science content areas should emphasize laboratory activities even though only three units of credit are eligible for school district offered certificate renewal courses. (This differs from college credit courses where four units of credit are recommended for a laboratory course and all units can count toward renewal of certification.)

2. College Credit Courses

- a. A school district or consortium of districts may contract with an institution of higher education to provide college credit courses. Courses offered for three to four semester hours of college credit each in mathematics, reading, or science, which include the content designated in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions, will be eligible for funding. Courses in science content areas should be laboratory courses where four hours of credit can be earned. College credit courses may be used toward new certification in mathematics, reading, or science, or for certification renewal, if the course is approved for the individual participant by the Department of Education's Office of Teacher Education and Certification.
- b. Special institutes may be offered to include up to 15 semester hours of mathematics or reading courses and 16 semester hours of science courses that will enable participants to progress toward certification in mathematics, reading, or science. Five certification program areas are eligible, leading respectively to:
 - 1. General Mathematics (7-12) Certification (11)
 - 2. middle school science certification (1C)
 - 3. secondary (9-12) mathematics certification (10)

4. secondary (9-12) science certification (any science area)
5. reading teacher certification (80)

Specific courses shall include those mathematics, reading, or science courses listed in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions. (The State Department of Education can approve other courses recommended and required for certification by the State Board of Education in the fields of mathematics, reading, and science.)

B. Computer Education

1. Certificate Renewal Courses

A three-hour introductory computer education course which includes the content listed in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions may be offered for certificate renewal credit for school district professional staff personnel.

2. College Credit Courses

A school district or consortium of districts may contract with an institution of higher education to provide college credit courses approved for this program by the State Department of Education. Teachers and other instructional professional staff are eligible to take courses listed in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions.

3. Facilities

All computer courses must be conducted in a room equipped with microcomputers or terminals, such that the ratio of participant to computer or terminal does not exceed 2 to 1.

C. Class Size

Courses shall have a minimum of fifteen (15) participants and a maximum of twenty-five (25) participants to receive funding. Exceptions for unusual circumstances in critical need areas will be considered for special approval by the State Department of Education.

IV. FUNDING

Each district in South Carolina is eligible to apply for funding for one or more courses. Funding will be granted, based on specific allocations of expenditure for each course approved by the State Board of Education, to a school district, or a district serving as fiscal agent for a consortium of districts, upon approval of appropriately submitted applications and availability of sufficient funds.

A. Funding criteria for courses will be determined by the following:

1. Annually each district will receive a tentative base allocation calculated by using a cost factor that is one-half the average per course cost statewide from the previous year.

2. All districts with a count of 88 or more classroom teachers in full time equivalency (FTE) shall be allocated a pro rata share of the remaining funds appropriated annually, based on excess FTE of teachers over 88.
3. A district may utilize all of its tentative allocation to apply for courses locally funded or combine all or any part of the funds with those of another district or districts to sponsor a course through a consortium agreement.
4. Any unencumbered monies available after February 20 will be reallocated according to requests from districts for additional funds.

For fall and spring courses, the State Department of Education will make an advance payment of 50% of the total grant amount at the end of the first week of the course upon receipt of a signed grant award document and upon verification by the fiscal agent that the course is in progress. For all courses, final payment will be made upon completion of the course and upon receipt of the final expenditure report and required evaluation forms. All expenditure documentation must be retained in the district's files for audit purposes.

B. Maximum Allowable Cost

1. For One Three-Hour Certificate Renewal Course in Mathematics, Reading, Science or Computer Education.

Maximum allowable costs for instructor fees, instructor travel, books and materials, science lab fees and/or specific science/math manipulative materials and/or reading aids, science field studies, and computer fees and software will be calculated annually by the State Department of Education based on current rates in effect at state supported institutions and published in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions.

2. For College Credit Courses in Mathematics, Reading, Science or Computer Education.

Maximum allowable costs for tuition, books and materials, lab fees and/or specific science/math manipulative materials and/or reading aids, science field studies, and computer fees and software will be calculated annually by the State Department of Education based on current rates in effect at state supported institutions and published in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions.

C. Explanation of Expenditures

1. Expenditures for "Instructor fees" provide for salary/honorarium for instructors of certificate renewal courses.
2. Expenditures for "Instructor travel" provide for travel/per diem at state rates for instructors of certificate renewal courses.
3. Tuition for college credit courses cannot exceed current rates of the institution offering the course.

4. Expenditures for "Books and materials" apply to textbooks and appropriate consumable materials purchased for use by individual participants.
5. Expenditures for "Science lab fees and/or science/math manipulative materials and/or reading aids" apply to science lab fees and science or math manipulatives and reading aids purchased for use by the individual participants as a part of the course training. Equipment purchases are excluded.
6. Expenditures for "Science field studies" provide for van or bus transportation of the class to study sites (e.g. quarries, special ecosystems, rock outcrops, industrial sites, etc.).
7. Expenditures for "Computer fees and software" apply to rental fees, software, and other materials specifically related to teaching the computer education course.

V. PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

A. Mathematics, Reading, and Science Courses

1. A teacher is eligible to take a course
 - a. if the teacher is employed by a South Carolina school district, or under contract to be employed,
 - b. if the teacher is appropriately certified, and
 - c. if the course is appropriate for the subject area(s) and grades level(s) to which the teacher is assigned.

The following are considered appropriate certifications:

<u>Teacher Categories</u>	<u>Certification Codes</u>
Elementary teachers	01, 85, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G
Middle school mathematics teachers	01, 1B, 10, 11
Middle school science teachers	01, 1C, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Middle school reading teachers	01, 1A, 80, 81, 82, 83
High school mathematics teachers	10
High school science teachers	12, 13, 14, 15, 16
High school reading teachers	01, 1A, 04, 80, 81, 82, 83

2. Principals, curriculum coordinators, and directors of instruction are eligible to take approved mathematics, reading, and science course. However, teachers shall be given enrollment preference.
3. A certified teacher employed by a South Carolina school district and working toward certification in mathematics, reading, or science is eligible to take appropriate college credit courses listed in this program provided he/she is recommended by the school district where the participant will be employed.

B. Computer Education Courses

All certified district professional staff are eligible to take approved computer courses.

C. Assurance of Participation

To be eligible for any course funded under this program, each participant shall provide to the district in which the teacher is employed, or under contract to be employed, written assurance of his/her intent to participate in specific course unless extreme circumstances prohibit that participation.

VI. INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

A. Certificate Renewal Course

The course instructor shall have at least a master's degree in the area of specialization, three years of teaching experience, and formal training and experience in the specific content of the course which exceeds the course content as outlined in the course syllabus. For instructors of reading courses, "a master's degree in the area of specialization" shall mean a master's degree in reading or education and certification in any of the reading areas 80, 81, 82, or 83.

B. College Credit Course

The course instructor shall:

1. hold the rank of Assistant Professor or above at a South Carolina college or university whose teacher education program in mathematics, reading, and/or science is approved by the State Department of Education, or
2. be employed by a district and be recommended to teach the course by the college or university offering credit and have at least a master's degree in the area of specialization, three years of teaching experience and formal training and experience in the specific content of the course which exceeds the course content as outlined in the course syllabus, or
3. be a recognized professor from outside the state whose credentials are comparable to those of a South Carolina professor qualified for this program.

C. Computer Courses Only

The school district must secure an instructor qualified to teach the prescribed course content. Selection shall be based on academic achievement and teaching experience in computer education.

D. Change of Instructor

If the substitution of an instructor is necessary, the newly chosen instructor must comply with the criteria listed above and be approved by the State Department of Education. Failure to obtain prior written approval of any substitution can result in withholding of funds.

E. Where more than one instructor is assigned to instruct in the same course, each instructor shall meet the established criteria as cited in items A and B above.

VII. EVALUATION

A. Evaluation of Participants

To receive credit for courses funded under this program, participants shall demonstrate mastery of course objectives. This mastery shall be determined by an objective assessment process to include an examination administered at the conclusion of the course.

B. Evaluation of Courses

Each participant will complete a course evaluation form supplied by the State Department of Education at the conclusion of the course. The project director must complete course evaluation summary reports and submit them to the Department of Education within two weeks of the completion of the course.

VIII. GUIDELINES FOR MAKING APPLICATION

A. Course Scheduling

1. College credit courses may be scheduled during fall, spring, or summer terms.
2. Certificate renewal courses may be scheduled during fall, spring, or summer terms and must concur with all regulations set forth by the State Board of Education.
3. All courses must be completed by June 30 unless a time extension is granted by the General Assembly.
4. The course schedule with details concerning days, times, and locations of class meetings must be submitted to the State Department of Education with the application.

B. Application Submission Dates

1. Applications for fall, spring, and summer courses must be received in the State Department of Education by dates as outlined annually in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions.

C. Application Components

The applicant shall include with the application:

1. A list of student performance objectives which will be evaluated at the conclusion of the course. These objectives shall conform to the course content developed by the State Department of Education and listed in the Guidelines and Course Descriptions.
2. A description of the objectives assessment process used to evaluate the participant to include minimum standards for course credit. These minimum standards must include a final examination on course content. (A copy of the evaluative instrument should be included when feasible.)
3. The title, author, publisher, copyright date, and a brief description of the required text or a description of student instructional materials.
4. A list of participants to include each participant's name, certificate number, the district in which employed, and the school, subject(s), and grade(s) to which assigned.
5. The vita(e) for the course instructor(s) to include educational background and teaching experience.
6. A complete "Application for Approval of Inservice Course for Certificate Renewal" with each certificate renewal course application.
7. A statement of assurances that:
 - a. The school district will be responsible for handling all payments, keeping records, and submitting all required reports to the State Department of Education in accordance with State Board of Education regulations.
 - b. The participants will not be billed for any costs for the course. (Individual entrance fees to graduate schools are not considered to be "costs for the course.")
 - c. Courses will include the content described in Guidelines and Course Descriptions provided by the State Department of Education or will be courses approved by the Department for a special institute.
 - d. The district will enroll participants who are eligible for participation as set forth in these regulations and will obtain from each participant a signed statement of intent to complete the course.

- e. The district or college will provide suitable facilities, equipment, and materials for classroom, laboratory, and field studies as necessary for the individual course.
- f. The school district will be responsible for providing prospective participants with detailed advance information about the course.

D. Submission Requirement and Address

- 1. Two (2) copies of all required forms shall be submitted with each application.
- 2. Applications shall be addressed to:

Critical Teaching Needs
Office of General Education
State Department of Education
801 Rutledge Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201.

E. Application Review Criteria

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the State Department of Education, and those applications consistent with regulations will be eligible for consideration for funding.

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