**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

**As amended by**

**No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB) [P.L. 107-110]**

**Title II, Part A, Subpart 3**

**BACKGROUND ON THE FEDERAL LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING**

**THE TITLE II, PART A STATE GRANT PROGRAM**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB Act) amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) by making significant changes in the major Federal programs that support schools’ efforts to educate the Nation’s students. The goal of the state grant program is to improve teaching in order to raise student achievement in core academic subjects. Guidance under the program allows for state flexibility in order to fulfill state priorities for increasing teacher content knowledge and all issues affecting teacher quality.

Because the focus of NCLB is on scientifically-based methods in increasing teacher quality, school accountability, and core content knowledge leading to student academic achievement, Arkansas’ higher education state grant program will meet these priorities through two foci:

1. Increasing teacher content knowledge through content institutes, particularly in high school Algebra 1, Geometry, and the sciences. Mathematics remains the content area in which the state experiences the highest level of college remediation. Higher-level mathematics skills, particularly at the secondary level, are of interest to the Higher Education Coordinating Board. Improving mathematics content is of utmost importance to economic growth and development in Arkansas.
2. Increasing teacher knowledge about data-driven decision-making in the classroom with relevant criterion-referenced and standardized assessments used in the state. Teacher knowledge in this area is aimed at not only improving individual student achievement, but also at making changes in curriculum and instruction based on student achievement data. Equally important is the inclusion of this knowledge about data in the context of professional development as part of the teacher preparation knowledge base.

#### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Authority for the administration of the Improving Teacher Quality State Grant, Title II, Part A, as well as the identification and evaluation of grant proposals, resides with each state. In Arkansas, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) has been authorized to receive and distribute the federal funds appropriated for this program to be utilized by higher education institutions. The Director of Arkansas Department of Higher Education acts on behalf of the AHECB for the solicitation and selection of grant proposals. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Arkansas Department of Education collaborate on the review and funding of grant proposals.

**The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) administers competitive grants authorized by the NCLB legislation to eligible partnerships. The intent of the legislation is to support projects that:**

**1) Provide long-term, sustained, high-quality professional development for Arkansas K-12 teachers;**

**2) Provide access to teachers statewide, including teachers in high-need local school districts; and**

**3) Result in change of teacher practice in the classroom that increases student performance in Science and Mathematics.**

No maximum number of awards or range of funding limits for awards has been established for the program. Applicants are advised, however, that funding is limited, and interest in the program may be high. Extended funding from this source should not be an­ticipated. ADHE is committed to assuring the equitable participa­tion of faculty and students who attend independent institutions and are especially interested in proposals that will address the needs of the historically underserved and under-­represented as well as the gifted and talented.

**Priority funding will focus on the following category:**

1. Collaborative professional learning communities that support common content and assessment activities in **K-12 Mathematics and Science** that improve teacher quality and student achievement; Technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and their teachers and staff for sustained, intensive high-quality professional development activities in **Mathematics and Science**. Refer to the Arkansas Mathematics Standards and the new Arkansas K-12 Science Standards.