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MEMORANDUM

TO: Florida Public School Employees

FROM: Catherine Hall
Program Director, Special Interest Unit

DATE: January 6, 2009

SUBJECT: Teacher Reimbursement Programs for Recruitment and Retention
Administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)

Please share this important information with your district employees.

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), OSFA currently administers two programs to assist employees in Florida publicly-funded schools with educational funding:

- The Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness (CTSLF) program assists certified teachers who are teaching in a Florida publicly-funded school for their first year in a Critical Teacher Shortage (CTS) area with loan repayment.
- The Critical Teacher Shortage Tuition Reimbursement (CTSTR) program provides certified employees of Florida publicly-funded schools assistance to become certified or obtain an advanced degree in a CTS area.

Our Web site at www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org provides details on both programs, including a listing of current CTS areas. Select **State Grants, Scholarships & Applications**, and **Programs Offered**, and then select any of the programs listed to view the program's fact sheet. The *Publicly-Funded School Employees* brochure, available at www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/pdf/pro_brochure.pdf, provides information about Florida's CTS programs.

The United States Department of Education (ED) has a federal program for full-time teachers. This federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness program requires teaching in specified areas for five consecutive years in a designated low-income school. You may wish to visit the ED Web site at <http://StudentAid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/cancelstaff.jsp?tab=repaying> for qualifications and a listing of low-income schools.

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Following are details regarding the CTS programs administered by the FLDOE.

General Information

- The 2009-10 *Florida Financial Aid Application for Teachers* opened on January 1, 2009, for the 2008-09 academic year of teaching service. To begin the initial application process, employees may:
 - Submit our online application available on the OSFA Web site by selecting **State Grants, Scholarships & Applications**, then **Apply Here** and **Initial State Teacher Application**.
 - Review all Before You Begin page, as they contain critical deadlines, information, instructions, and an applicant checklist. All required information **must** be received by the program deadlines.
- An Initial Florida Financial Aid Application for Teachers is required for the CTSLF program for any teacher who has not received an award. Employees participating in the CTSTR program must apply each year for program funding; there is no renewal or reinstatement.

CTSLF Renewal Information

- A CTSLF renewal teacher is one who was determined eligible and received a CTSLF award during the preceding award year. Now is the time for renewal teachers to verify information on file:
 - Visit the OSFA Web site and select **State Grants, Scholarships & Applications**.
 - Use your User ID and PIN to verify demographic information and current employer by accessing **Application Status & Award History**, selecting **Renewal Teachers Update**, then **Name, Address, and Employer**.
 - Update Lender/Servicing Agent(s) by calling OSFA toll-free 1-888-827-2004.

CTSLF Reinstatement Information

- A CTSLF reinstatement applicant is one who was determined eligible for a CTSLF award, but did not receive funds during the preceding award year. The *2009-10 Reinstatement/Restoration Application for Teachers* will open February 1, 2009 for the 2008-09 academic year of teaching service. To begin the restoration application process, employees may visit the OSFA Web site and:
 - Select **State Grants, Scholarships & Applications, Apply Here**, and then **Reinstatement/Restoration Application for Teachers**.
 - Use your User ID and PIN to access, complete, and submit the application by July 15, 2009.

Award Timeline

- Award and denial notices will be distributed by November 2009; checks will follow.
 - CTSLF:
 - *2009-10 Initial Florida Financial Aid Application for Teachers* deadline - July 15, 2009.
 - Employment, lender, and postsecondary institution certification deadline - July 15, 2009.
 - Department of Education teacher certification/Department of Health licensure - July 15, 2009.
 - Participants may receive up to a maximum of \$10,000 for the duration of the program. Annual awards may not exceed \$2,500 for teachers with an undergraduate degree or \$5,000 per year for teachers with a graduate degree.
 - For the **2008-09 award year**, full-time teachers who taught at least 180 days during the 2007-08 academic year received prorated awards of \$443 with **undergraduate degrees** and \$886 with **graduate degrees** received prior to becoming a teacher in a critical teacher shortage area.
 - CTSTR:
 - *2009-10 Initial Florida Financial Aid Application for Teachers* deadline - September 15, 2009.
 - Employment and postsecondary institution certification deadline - September 15, 2009.
 - Applicants funded may receive tuition reimbursement at a rate not to exceed \$78 per semester hour, excluding special fees.
 - For the **2008-09 award year**, the maximum award was prorated to **\$14 per semester hour** to accommodate all eligible applicants.

Should you have additional questions about the Florida CTS programs, please call Customer Service toll-free at 1-888-827-2004.