



March 26, 2020

Ms. Marlene L. Garcia
Executive Director, California Student Aid Commission
11040 White Rock Road
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Dear Marlene:

Firstly, I hope you and your family and loved ones are safe and well. I am writing on behalf of EdVoice to express concern regarding an apparently mistaken interpretation of the Golden State Teacher Grant (GSTG) Program eligibility. Several stakeholders participating on a call last month were told that CSAC was not making GSTG eligibility available to all statutorily eligible candidates.

This is of great concern as there is nothing in statute specifically prohibiting district and university interns participating in a professional preparation program leading to a preliminary teaching credential approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing from being eligible for the grants. Subdivision (a) of Section 69617 of the Education Code is explicitly clear regarding the type of programs the candidate must be enrolled in to be eligible: *"...to each student enrolled on or after January 1, 2020, in a professional preparation program leading to a preliminary teaching credential, approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing."* Hundreds of district and university interns in California meet this standard.

In 2019, EdVoice and other organizations advocated to ensure that all new teacher candidates in approved programs can apply for GTSG funds. As you know, intern credential holders are pursuing a preliminary credential in a traditional, district, and alternative teacher preparation programs "approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and leading to a preliminary teaching credential" and are the teacher of record teaching in high-needs fields and priority schools. Their cost of preparation is significant just as candidates who pursue coursework before teaching ~ and are as likely as other candidates (in California more-so) to teach more than four years in a high-poverty school.

Denying intern credential holders GTSG funds is not consistent with the Education Code or any applicable administrative regulation. The mistaken interpretation unnecessarily denies promising candidates in high-needs districts (like Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco) from accessing funding the legislature clearly intended to recruit and retain in high-need areas and support their path to a clear credential.

We respectfully request that you carefully reconsider and clarify the eligibility criteria in Section 69617 and ensure both district and university intern candidates can access the GTSG application and funding consistent with the law. Thank you in advance for your attention to this issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly by phone at (916) 233-8508 or by email at bill@edvoice.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Lucia".

Bill Lucia
President

Cc: Jennifer Johnson, Deputy Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Office of Governor Newsom
Jeff Bell, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance