

**IMMEDIATE ACTION: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION TO
ALL PRINCIPALS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL TEACHERS**

December 2007

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Designated Low-Income Schools and Designated Subject-Matter Teacher Shortage Areas for Texas, and Student Loan Forgiveness, Deferment, and Cancellation Opportunities for Teachers with Student Loans

Every year the Texas Education Agency (TEA) produces a list of subject-matter teacher shortage areas and a list of designated low-income schools that are submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). Teachers with certain types of student loans may qualify for partial loan forgiveness, deferment, or cancellation benefits. Eligibility for these benefits depends on the type of loan the teacher has, the date of his/her first loan, whether the school where the borrower is teaching is listed as a designated low-income school, the length of teaching time, and in certain cases the subject-matter being taught. Some loans have no benefits.

Designated low-income schools are those with greater than 30% of enrolled students from low-income families in districts that are eligible for Title I funds.

The Texas Education Agency is required to inform the chief administrative officers at all elementary and secondary schools in the state of the teaching shortage area designations. The following are the Texas designated subject-matter teacher shortage areas for the 2007-2008 school year:

- Mathematics
- Special Education
- Foreign Language
(languages other than English)
- Science
- Bilingual / ESL
- Technology Applications

This letter authorizes school principals to act on behalf of the Chief State School Officer to certify that a teacher has taught full-time, and, where applicable, in a required subject or in a subject-matter shortage area, by signing a teacher's form for the benefits described in the attached documents.

Of special notice to teachers is Federal legislation effective Oct. 30, 2004 increasing Stafford forgiveness benefits from \$5,000 to \$17,500 **only** for secondary math teachers, secondary science teachers, and secondary and elementary special education teachers, who teach in eligible low-income schools and obtained their first loans on or after October 1, 1998.

Please note, there is also a state-funded *Teach for Texas Loan Repayment Assistance Program* administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. For more information about the Federal and State-funded teacher loan forgiveness programs, see the attached *Overview of*

Programs, Quick Eligibility Chart, Frequently Asked Questions and Fact Sheet. All of these important documents and related forms are available to be viewed and downloaded from the TEA website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/edex/loanforgive.html>.

Please distribute all of this information to all principals and teachers. This could be very important to both your current and future teachers. For additional information, contact Maria Huth, Manager of the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program, Division of Educator Excellence at (512) 475-2160 or directly at (512) 264-3939.

Sincerely,

Robert Scott
Commissioner of Education

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