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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

August 6, 2002
Revised

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

SUBJECT: Approval of Criteria for the Learning Without Limits Grant Program

Learning Without Limits is a new program to develop, research, and demonstrate innovative and powerful models of virtual teaching and learning in Michigan. The Michigan Legislature designated Michigan Virtual University (MVU) as the coordinating agency to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). MVU and the MDE have finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as required by the Michigan Legislature, to implement Section 98 of PA 191 of 2002. As part of the MOU, MDE will distribute more than \$6,000,000 in federal grant funds to school districts based on established criteria. MVU will design and implement the student wireless technology program as described in Section 98. This is a competitive grant program.

As a result of the work done by the Embracing the Information Age Task Force, the State Board of Education recently approved several policy recommendations dealing with the use of technology to improve teaching and learning. MDE has released new guidelines designed to encourage the increased development and use of long distance and virtual learning in Michigan's public schools. These new guidelines encourage Michigan's educators and students to tap more fully into the opportunities that virtual and distance learning provide. The Learning Without Limits program will make use of new technologies to expand educational opportunities for K-12 students.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the criteria for the Learning Without Limits grant program as attached to the Superintendent's memorandum dated August 6, 2002.

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MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Criteria for Learning Without Limits (Section 98 of PA 191 of 2002)
A K-12 student wireless computing demonstration grant program

The State Board of Education has adopted as its Strategic Goal "Attain substantial and meaningful improvement in academic achievement for all students, with primary emphasis on chronically underperforming schools." In addition, the State Board has adopted the following five Strategic Initiatives to implement the goal:

- Ensuring Excellent Educators
- Elevating Educational Leadership
- Embracing the Information Age
- Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy
- Integrating Communities and Schools

To the extent possible, all grant criteria and grant awards will include priority consideration of the Strategic Goal and the Strategic Initiatives.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE OF GRANT

Competitive Formula New Continuation

In 2000, Governor Engler and the Michigan Legislature appropriated more than \$100 million as part of the Teacher Technology Initiative (TTI) to equip Michigan's K-12 public school teachers with a laptop computer, software and remote Internet access. Building on the success of TTI, the Learning Without Limits (LWL) project will use K-12 demonstration sites to analyze different wireless computing solutions for Michigan students. Learning Without Limits is a new program to develop, research and demonstrate new and powerful models of virtual teaching and learning.

LEGISLATION

In 2002, the Michigan Legislature appropriated approximately \$6 million in federal ESEA funds for the 2002-03 school year to support the LWL program. The Legislature designated Michigan Virtual University (MVU) as the coordinating agency to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). MVU and the MDE have finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as required by the Michigan Legislature to implement Section 98 of PA 191 of 2002. As part of the MOU, MDE will distribute more than \$6 million in grant funds to school districts based on established criteria. MVU will design and implement the student wireless technology program as described in Section 98.

RATIONALE FOR CRITERIA

As a result of the work done by the Embracing the Information Age Task Force, the State Board of Education recently approved several policy recommendations dealing with the use of technology to improve teaching and learning. The Department of Education has released new guidelines designed to encourage the increased development and use of long distance and virtual learning in Michigan's public schools. These new guidelines encourage Michigan's educators and students to more fully tap into the exciting and innovative opportunities that virtual and distance learning provide. The LWL program will make use of new technologies to expand educational opportunities for K-12 students.

CRITERIA

Defined in Legislation Defined in Department's Grant Proposed by Staff

Criteria to be used by MVU, MDE and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to determine which applicants receive funding include:

1. **Geographic Balance:**

- In an effort to establish demonstration sites in each region of the state, grant awards will be made to achieve geographic balance.

2. **Project Objectives and Deliverables:** Districts will be required to specify the objectives, deliverables and outcomes including the implementation timeline, with major milestones and means to measure the following items:

- Overall purpose of the demonstration site
- Student learning, planning, development and achievement
- Teacher professional development
- Administrator and staff professional development
- Parent/guardian participation and support
- Content and curriculum areas, sources, attributes and quality assurance
- Technology devices, deployment, access, security, maintenance, upgrade, and service
- Partners and their roles, i.e. technology companies, higher education institutions and ISDs
- Use of online educational content

3. **Planning and Implementation:** Districts will need to document strategies that ensure planning and implementation in the following areas:

- Student orientation for wireless computing technology
- Student education and career planning services
- Administrative and staff support
- Project management
- Teacher involvement, including peer mentoring and support
- Curriculum design and integration and linkage to state standards
- Community involvement
- Roles and responsibilities of stakeholder groups
- Technology infrastructure and maintenance strategies
- Policies dealing with security, fair use, in-home and at school access, virus protection, etc.
- Total cost of ownership for all LWL components
- Budgetary detail including partner contributions, grants and other resources
- Expense saving strategies
- Project sustainability
- Project timelines
- Reflect the expectations set forth in the State Board of Education policy on Learning Expectations for Michigan Students

4. **Evaluation and Assessment:**

- Applicants will need to describe how the project will be assessed and evolved during the course of the first year, second year, and third year and document how overall project evaluation will be done, when, and how reported and information made public.
- Applicants will also need to acknowledge their willingness to fully participate in evaluation and assessment activities sponsored by MVU and/or MDE.

5. **Demonstration Role:**

- Applicants will need to describe how they plan to actively promote their use of wireless computing technology, including site visits, participation at related conferences and workshops, collateral material, Web sites, video presentations, etc.
- Applicants will need to describe how they plan to share best practices and teacher professional development approaches with policy makers and other educational groups throughout Michigan.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/TARGET POPULATION TO BE SERVED BY GRANT

Eligible applicants are those defined in legislation as (1) being among those LEAs with the highest numbers or percentages of children from families with incomes below the poverty line AND serving one or more schools identified for improvement or corrective action under section 1116 of the No Child Left Behind legislation or (2) being an eligible local partnership.

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE

A total of \$6,084,700 from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, PL 107-110 to implement Section 98 of PA 191 of 2002.

OFFICE ADMINISTERING GRANT/PROGRAM CONTACT

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NOTE: MVU will work collaboratively with the MDE to administer the LWL competitive grant program and will provide the State Superintendent with specific funding recommendations in early October so grant award announcements can be made in mid October 2002.