300-4-12-.01 Organization

(1) It is the responsibility of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) to establish rules and regulations for the administration and implementation of the Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP). The program will be administered in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(2) The Alabama Commission on Higher Education appoints such staff as are necessary to ensure efficient operation of the program and is the final authority in determining eligible program applicants.

Author: Tim Vick


300-4-12-.02 Definition Of Terms.

(1) Eligible Institution - Institutions must meet both of the following criteria in order to participate in the program:

(a) The institution must be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC);

(b) The institution must have programs approved by the Alabama State Board of Education (ALSBE)/Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) to prepare teachers in math or science.

(2) Eligible Student – In order to participate in the program, recipients must:

(a) be an Alabama resident;

(b) attend an eligible participating institution of higher education;

(c) be unconditionally admitted to an ALSBE approved program in math or science based on that institution’s admission criteria (to include the PRAXIS Core Test or any other such test subsequently approved to take its place by the ALSBE);

(d) be one of the following:

1. undergraduate junior or senior enrolled in a secondary education program in math or science and taking 12 ≥ semester hours, with preference given to students classified as seniors,

2. currently certified teacher enrolled in courses to earn certification in math or science,

3. a graduate student enrolled in a secondary math or science Alternative Class A program approved by the ALSBE;

(e) maintain the required College/School/Division/Department of Education GPA (cumulative). Note: If the student fails to meet GPA requirements at the end of a semester, the student’s remaining award balance must be given to another eligible student;
(f) sign a letter of acceptance for the award;

(g) sign a statement that they intend to:

1. finish the program in which they are enrolled,

2. meet all testing requirements,

3. apply for an Alabama Educational Certificate.

Author: Tim Vick
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-10(10), et seq.
Alabama Act 2017-335.

300-4-12-.03 Disbursement Of Funds.

(1) Institutions will be required to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) to participate in the program. The RFP will be developed by the staff of the Commission on Higher Education and is subject to change each year.

(2) The staff of the Commission on Higher Education will select the participating institutions based on the following criteria:

(a) Previous experience in credentialing persons in math and science (30%);

(b) Design/Plan for increasing students credentialing in math and science education (50%),

(c) Ability to credential persons to teach in communities where shortages in math and science teachers is acute. (20%),

(3) Each selected institution will receive a percentage of the total funds available to be used to provide scholarships based on their response to the RFP.

(4) No indirect /administrative cost can be charged to the scholarship by the institution.

(5) Once each institution’s overall percentage of the total awards has been determined, each institution will receive its designated percentage of the funds available for each quarter. In FY 2017-18, the first increment will be available on
January 1, 2018. In subsequent fiscal years, these increments will be available on October 1, January 1, April 1 and July 1 of any given fiscal year.

(6) Funds awarded in any given award year can be used for a period of two years.

(7) Institutions will have the flexibility to determine the number of awards distributed and the amounts to be received; however, awards cannot exceed the tuition and cost of instruction fees of the institution per semester.

(8) Participating institutions must:

(a) sign a Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with ACHE each fiscal year;

(b) identify recipients based on ACHE established student eligibility criteria;

(c) certify to ACHE that recipients meet all the eligibility requirements;

(d) submit vouchers to ACHE at the end of each quarter of the fiscal year for payment. ACHE will not disburse checks to students;

(e) meet the following reporting requirements (Data will be reported to ACHE. Failure to meet all reporting requirements will jeopardize an institutions eligibility to participate in the program):

1. percent of recipients that graduate,

2. percent of recipients who pass the PRAXIS math and/or science test, depending on their field(s) of study,

3. the number of recipients that are teaching in Alabama public schools.

4. the number of recipients that are teaching in designated high demand areas.

(9) If a student whose eligibility for a grant has been certified by an approved institution becomes ineligible for a grant before the expiration of the institutional tuition refund period, the grant funds, the student’s remaining award balance must be given to another eligible student.

Author: Tim Vick
300-4-12-.04 Maintenance Of Records.

(1) An annual report regarding the success of scholarship students will be required. The report will include the data described in 300-4-12-.03 (e).

(2) Each approved institution shall establish and maintain on a current basis adequate records which reflect all transactions with respect to program and fiscal activity as they relate to the administration of the Math and Science Education Program. The records must be maintained in such a manner as to identify all program and fiscal transactions separately from other institutional activities and funds.

(3) The records for any award period shall be retained for a period of five (5) years following the date of submission of the institutional award list, unless a longer retention period is necessitated because of program review or audit resolution problems. In the event an approved institution closes or otherwise ceases operation and fails to matriculate students, institutional program records of the approved institution shall be forwarded to ACHE for retention.

(4) Forms must be used to gather data in a uniform manner from each applicant; such forms shall contain information relative to all eligibility criteria for an award. Fiscal records pertaining to the operation of the program at an approved institution must be maintained in a manner which provides a clear audit trail.

(5) The Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, or any of the Director's duly authorized representatives, will have access, for the purpose of review and examination, to program records and supporting documents maintained by the approved institution.

(6) The records involved in any claim or expenditure which has been questioned by program review or by state audit must be retained until resolution of any such review or audit questions.

Author: Tim Vick
Chapter 300-4-12

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-10(10), et seq. 
Alabama Act 2017-335.


300-4-12-.05 Appeals.

(1) Any person or institution aggrieved by the actions of the Commission in its administration of this rule may, by written petition filed with the Commission within thirty (30) days after notice of the action complained of, request a rehearing by the Commission. The Commission shall schedule the requested rehearing no less than twenty (20) days, nor more than thirty (30) days after receipt of the petition. The aggrieved party may present written and oral evidence supporting its petition and may be represented by counsel, if desired. The decision of the Commission following the rehearing shall be final.

Author: Tim Vick
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-10(10), et seq. 
Alabama Act 2017-335.


300-4-12-.06 Reporting.

(1) ACHE shall submit a report to the Governor and to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Finance and Taxation-Education and the House Ways and Means Education Committee and the Legislative Fiscal Officer within 60 days after October 1, 2017 regarding the steps being taken to implement this program.

(2) ACHE shall submit an annual report with 30 days after September 30, 2018 including updates on all aspects of the program.

Author: Tim Vick
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-10(10), et seq. 
Alabama Act 2017-335.


300-4-12-.07 Organization For Loan Repayment Program.

Supp. 3/31/20 4-12-6
(1) It is the responsibility of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) to establish rules and regulations for the administration and implementation of the Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP) Loan Repayment Program. The program will be administered in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(2) The Alabama Commission on Higher Education appoints such staff as are necessary to ensure efficient operation of the program and is the final authority in determining eligible program applicants.

Author: Tim Vick
Statutory Authority: Alabama Act 2018-504

300-4-12-.08 Purpose Of Loan Repayment Program.

(1) To encourage individuals to enroll in and complete programs leading to Alabama certification in mathematics or science or computer science.

(2) To improve the educational system in Alabama by encouraging those who complete the program to accept math or science or computer science teaching positions in Alabama public schools, preferably in public school systems where the shortage of math or science teachers, or both, is most acute.

Author: Tim Vick

300-4-12-.09 Definitions For Loan Repayment Program.

(1) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A state-supported institution of higher education or a private nonprofit institution of higher education that satisfies all of the following:

(a) Is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.
(b) Is approved by the Alabama State Board of Education (ALSBE) to prepare teachers of secondary math or science or computer science, or all three.

(c) Is eligible to receive Title IV federal student aid program funds.

(d) Maintains its primary headquarters in Alabama.

(2) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(3) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT. A person who satisfies the criteria set out in this act and is found to be eligible by rules adopted by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(4) PROGRAM. The Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program created by this act and administered by the commission that provides loan repayments to a teacher with a valid Alabama professional educator certificate endorsed in math or science or computer science, who teaches math or science or computer science full-time in the Alabama public school system.

(5) SCIENCE. Biology, chemistry, physics, and general science. The ALSBE approved general science certificate includes all sciences with the exception of computer science.

(6) YEAR. A school year that shall be divided into fall and spring semesters. The term does not mean calendar, fiscal, or scholastic year.

Author: Tim Vick

300-4-12-.10 Rule Making Authority For Loan Repayment Program.

(1) The Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program shall be administered by the commission, which may adopt any rules necessary for the administration of the program.

Author: Tim Vick
Statutory Authority: Alabama Act 2018-504
300-4-12-.11 **Eligible Applicants And Award Amounts For Loan Repayment Program.**

(1) Base Program: To be eligible for the base loan repayment program for math and science teachers of two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500) per semester worked or $5,000 per year, for a maximum of four consecutive years, or to be eligible for the base loan repayment program for computer science teachers of one thousand five hundred dollars ($1,500) per semester worked or $3,000 per year, for a maximum of four consecutive years an applicant shall satisfy all of the following:

(a) Be a graduate of an ALSBE approved program in math or science or computer science beginning with the Spring term of 2018, at the baccalaureate or master's level, from an approved institution leading to an initial secondary professional educator certificate endorsed in math or science or computer science. A teacher who only earns a passing score on the Praxis test in math or science or computer science to add a certificate endorsement for math or science or computer science, and who has not completed an entire approved program, does not satisfy this requirement.

(b) Holds a valid Alabama professional educator certificate endorsed in secondary math or science or computer science, or all three.

(c) Is teaching math or science or computer science full-time in an Alabama public school district or at an Alabama Public Charter School Commission approved charter school.

(d) Is a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the United States.

(e) Has been a resident of Alabama for at least 12 months before the application deadline and provides documentation proving a permanent connection to the State of Alabama. The commission shall accept any one of the following as proof of residency:

1. A current valid Alabama driver's license.
2. A current valid Alabama vehicle registration.
3. A current valid Alabama voter registration card.

(f) Has outstanding federal student loans, subsidized or unsubsidized.
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(2) Supplemental Program: In order to receive a supplement pursuant to this act, in addition to all of the criteria listed above, a recipient shall also teach math or science, or both, in a geographic area within the state with an acute teacher shortage in math or science, or both. The supplement is an additional two thousand five hundred dollars ($2,500) per year, or one thousand two hundred fifty dollars ($1,250) per semester worked, for a maximum of four consecutive years. Computer Science teachers will not be eligible to receive the acute shortage area supplement, until such time as the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education concur that there is sufficient need or resources, or both, available to allow its inclusion.

(a) Geographic areas with acute shortages in math or science or both will be identified by the Commission in consultation with the State Department of Education.

(b) The Commission will approve the geographic areas in which teachers will be eligible for the supplement.

(c) The list of eligible geographic areas will be published on the Commission’s website.

Author: Tim Vick

300-4-12-.12 Application Procedures For Loan Repayment Program.

(1) Information concerning the Loan Repayment Program shall be:

(a) Sent to the Alabama State Department of Education for distribution to the local school districts;

(b) Sent to the Alabama Education Association for distribution to its members;

(c) Sent to the Schools/Colleges of Education at all Alabama State Board of Education approved institutions;

(d) Posted on the ACHE website.
(2) Applications shall be made to the Commission on Higher Education. Applications shall be posted on the Commission’s website.

(3) Applications must be received by ACHE by August 1 of each year.

(4) Loan repayment award recipients must reapply for the program annually.

(5) In addition to the application, each applicant must submit the following:

(a) Documentation that they are a graduate of an approved institution offering ALSBE approved certification programs in math or science or computer science. Submitted one time.

(b) Documentation that they hold a valid Alabama professional educator certificate endorsed in secondary math or science or computer science, or all three. Submitted one time and then again when renewed.

(c) Documentation from the employing school district or at an Alabama Public Charter School Commission approved charter school that they taught the previous semester. This may be a letter from either their superintendent’s office or their supervising principal. Submitted prior to each requested payment.

(d) Documentation that they hold a federal student loan. Documentation must include the amount owed. If the award amount is larger than the outstanding loan balance, the award amount shall be reduced to the amount of the loan balance. Submitted prior to each requested payment.

Author: Tim Vick

300-4-12-.13 Procedures For Loan Repayment Program.

(1) The requirements of this program are contingent upon available funding for the program. If funding is not adequate to cover the cost of all applicants, funds will be distributed based on a first come first serve basis.
(2) Loan repayment awards shall be distributed directly to the recipient teacher in two disbursements during the applicable year: One disbursement after January 1 and the second disbursement after June 1.

(3) Payments will not be distributed for partial completion of a semester of work.

(4) The recipient shall notify the commission in writing of any change in status within 30 days after the change. Failure to notify the commission of a change in status shall affect future eligibility. All of the following constitute a change in status:

(a) A change in name.

(b) A change in residence.

(c) A change in employment status.

(5) To receive a loan repayment check pursuant to this act, an approved applicant must register online with the State of Alabama’s Comptroller Office. It is the responsibility of the individual to register, the Commission cannot register someone on the Vender Services System (VSS).

(6) A loan repayment check is considered income by the United States Internal Revenue Service and must be reported as such. Recipients shall be made aware of that fact.

(7) Any funds appropriated to the program are considered non-reverting.

Author: Tim Vick
Statutory Authority: Alabama Act 2018-504

300-4-12-.14 Appeal For Loan Repayment Program. Any person aggrieved by the actions of the Commission in its administration of this rule may, by written petition filed with the Commission within thirty (30) days after notice of the action complained of, request a rehearing by the Commission. The Commission shall schedule the requested rehearing no less than twenty (20) days, nor more than thirty (30) days after receipt of the petition. The aggrieved party may present written and oral evidence supporting its petition and may be represented by counsel, if desired. The
decision of the Commission following the rehearing shall be final.

Author: Tim Vick

Statutory Authority: Alabama Act 2018-504