

Beacon Hill Byline by Mary Rogeness

Thursday, April 29, 1999

Last Minute Scholarship Opportunity

A scholarship application just came across my desk for the Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program. The application must be filed by tomorrow, April 30, so this is a real last-minute announcement. I hope that interested students are already in the process of applying, but the state Board of Higher Education issued a new press release about the scholarships, so I assume that it is seeking additional response. That is why I am devoting a Byline to the topic and offering to fax the appropriate forms to students.

Tomorrow's Teachers will award scholarships to students who attend any public college or university in the Commonwealth and pursue a Department of Education-certified teacher preparation program. Scholarship winners must commit to teaching public school in the state for four years, and the program gives priority to students who commit to teach in a subject area of geographic region having documented teacher shortage.

The program is conceived as a method of attracting top-notch students to the teaching profession. The low percentage of teacher candidates who passed the first year's teacher certification test caused concern in all of us, and Tomorrow's Teachers is a response to that concern. The hope of the legislature in authorizing this \$3 million program is that well-qualified high school students will enter the field of education - and enter our Massachusetts public schools as teachers in four years.

These are the requirements for candidates: Students must be in the top twenty-five percent of their high school graduating class. They must be permanent legal residents of Massachusetts and commit to teaching in Massachusetts public schools for four years.

These are the benefits of the scholarships: Awards cover tuition and fees at any public college or university in the Commonwealth. They are renewable annually.

How can you apply for the program? If you have an application, be sure to file it by the April 30th deadline. If you would like to download information, it is available on the website of the Office of Student Financial Assistance: www.osfa.mass.edu/teach. My office will fax an application if you call 567-1661, or you can ask your high school guidance office.

College costs can be a heavy burden for any family, and the state's new scholarship program provides substantial relief from that burden. Winners will be named late next month for the 1999-2000 academic year. Please let me know if you receive a Tomorrow's Teacher Scholarship, whether you are completing a last minute application or are waiting to hear about one you have already submitted. I would like to tell the town about Longmeadow's teachers of tomorrow.