

## Tips on Scholarship Essays and Recommendations

### Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship Re-application Essay

The Teachers of Tomorrow (TOT) Scholarship is a renewable scholarship, and as long as you continue to meet the established criteria, you may reapply. However, the essay portion of the application has a different prompt. Because you have had a year of additional course work, seminars, volunteer activities, and mentoring, you should be able to demonstrate how you connect those to your ongoing teacher preparation. Therefore, your new prompt is this:

*“Reflect upon your growth as a future teacher during this academic year. Use examples from both your course work and personal experiences to illustrate your commitment to the teaching profession.”*

As indicated for your first scholarship essay, this essay will also be evaluated on both the quality of its content as well as its mechanical accuracy.

### What Makes a Good Letter of Recommendation?

It is important that all Teachers of Tomorrow applicants have TWO letters of recommendation as part of their application file.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when asking for individuals to write these letters:

1. Do NOT ask relatives. Letters should come from persons outside of your family who can be more objective. These can be former teachers, ministers, youth leaders, or job supervisors. One letter is required to be from a GRCC faculty member.
2. These people should have known you for at least six months.
3. They should be very specific about special skills you have demonstrated in the context that they know you.
4. They should comment on your positive character traits.
5. They should address why they feel you would make a good teacher.

Strong and specific letters of recommendation are always an asset to your professional file. Those who read these letters tend to give more weight to the ones that follow these guidelines.

### Two Tips for Writing a Good Scholarship Essay

When your essay is evaluated for the TOT Scholarship, the committee expects to see a quality of writing that demonstrates commitment to a professional level of communication and thinking. After all, it is

what will be required of you as an educator.

First, this means that you should not only include specific examples to illustrate your key points, but also think beyond the usual responses to this question: yes, there are obvious qualities of effective teachers, but what are some that may NOT be so obvious? By identifying and analyzing those, you show a greater depth of thinking.

Second, be sure that your essay demonstrates mechanical accuracy with proper punctuation, capitalization, grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, because the best ideas can be undermined by a lack of attention to these details.

Acceptable essays, then, will meet the following basic standard:

The writing reflects a clear understanding of the prompt and uses lively language, details and examples to illustrate strong main ideas. The approach to the prompt is also original and demonstrates an awareness of the necessity for connecting with your audience. No more than three errors appear across the categories of mechanics as listed above.



This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Teacher Education department for more details.

# GRCC teacher EDUCATION at grcc

## It's TOT Scholarship Time Again!

**So what's in YOUR wallet? It could be a scholarship from Teachers of Tomorrow!** The time to apply is right around the corner, so if your GPA is 2.8 or better, and you have successfully completed at least 15 college credits, think about applying. Here's how:

1. Plan to be enrolled at GRCC for Fall 2014 with at least 6 credits.
2. Have an Academic Code that indicates "Education" as your career goal—120, 130, 206, 207, 420, 602, 803, or 804.
3. Submit a completed GRCC Foundation Scholarship application and unofficial copy of your transcripts to Financial Aid by **March 14**. (Applications are available from Financial Aid, 156, Main Building.)
4. Submit the following to Staci Dever, 266 Main Building, by **March 14 at 5 p.m.**

- A completed Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship application form.
- A 500-word essay, double-spaced, on the following topic: *What are three qualities of an effective teacher? Use examples from your personal experience that illustrate each of those qualities.* This essay will be

evaluated on both qualities of content and mechanical accuracy.

- Two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a GRCC faculty or staff member. Both letters must be on letterhead stationary, and include both contact information for the individual writing the letter and your relationship to that person.
- Your resume, including an indication of your specific teaching subject majors and minors, as well as the grade level you are interested in. (Examples: math and language arts, grades K-3; English and history, middle school; chemistry and physics, high school. Just indicating "elementary education" is not sufficient.)



For more information, contact Staci Dever, [sdever@grcc.edu](mailto:sdever@grcc.edu) or Carole Redwine, [credwine@grcc.edu](mailto:credwine@grcc.edu). Applications are reviewed in May. If you are selected, you will be notified shortly thereafter.

## National Scholarship Opportunity

The National Association of Community College Teacher Education Program offers \$1000 scholarships to students at NACCTEP member colleges who are studying to become teachers. The mission of NACCTEP is to promote the community college role in the recruitment, preparation, retention, and renewal of diverse early childhood and K-12 teachers, and to advance quality teacher education programs in the community college. Scholarship awards will be made available through college Financial Aid offices. An individual may receive a NACCTEP scholarship only once.

Applications are due in the NACCTEP office by **Friday, April 18, 2014 at 5 p.m. PDT**. Faxed copies will NOT be accepted. Award and regret notifications will be sent in May of 2014.

For further information and details, please see the scholarship information board outside of the Teacher Education office, 266 Main, or email Staci Dever, [sdever@grcc.edu](mailto:sdever@grcc.edu) or Teacher Education Support Services, [credwine@grcc.edu](mailto:credwine@grcc.edu).

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## GRCC Preschool Receives Grant

The U.S. Department of Education has given GRCC's Preschool a grant to support child care services to low-income parents who are enrolled in GRCC's Occupational Support program. This federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grant will provide \$99,425 each year for four years. This program services students who are economically disadvantaged, a single parent or guardian, a pregnant single woman, a displaced homemaker, or an individual with a disability or with limited English proficiency. In order to be eligible, students must be enrolled in nine or more credits, and attend class or study on-campus during the time that a child is in child care. "This grant will help break the cycle of generational poverty within our student population," said Jane Ann Benson, Director of the Laboratory Preschool. "We will be meeting the need for a stable learning environment for children while their parents are attending college and preparing to enter the workforce."

## The Gertrude Croom Scholarship (TOTS)

This scholarship was established by Gertrude Grant Croom, a now retired but long time Social Science faculty member at Grand Rapids Community College. Scholarships will be awarded to African American students who want to pursue a degree in the field of Elementary or Secondary Education. As full-time students at Grand Rapids Community College, they must have successfully completed a minimum of 12 credit hours, with no grade less than C, and an overall GPA of 2.8 or better. Students must submit an application and required essay to the Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship Program by **March 15, 2014**. Contact Carole Redwine, Teacher Education Support Services, (616) 234-4664.

## ¿Habla ud. Español?

There is a Spanish class for education majors being offered on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30-4:30 p.m. (section 4849) during the Winter semester. *Spanish 101: Education Context* is an excellent course in which to learn a language that can help you help students in your classroom who may not be native English speakers. See Staci Dever in 266 Main for more information.

## November Seminars Encourage Involvement

On November 5, 2013, Pamela Harris from Junior Achievement (JA) came to speak on the importance of becoming involved in classrooms through JA. JA is a non-profit organization that brings the real world to students through a hands-on curriculum. The aim is to empower students with financial literacy as well as college and career readiness. Approximately 10-12 students committed to teaching for JA during either the Fall or Winter semesters.

## Great Start Readiness Program

Are you interested in helping out in a preschool classroom? The Great Start Readiness Program is looking for lunch aides to assist in their preschool classrooms. The position is for 1-1/2 to 2 hours per day, Monday through Thursday, and the salary is \$10 per hour. Please contact Bonnie Peterson at (616) 447-5679 for more information.

## The Alexa and Alek Zapata Scholarship (TOTS)

Two \$780 scholarships are available to students of Hispanic descent who are enrolled on a full or part-time basis at GRCC. Recipients must have achieved a minimum 2.8 GPA and intend to secure a degree in Elementary Education. Award recipients will be evaluated by the Teachers of Tomorrow Scholarship committee.



## SEMINAR SCHEDULE for Winter 2014 Semester

As always, we invite you to attend our monthly seminars. The topics are timely and the presenters are enthusiastic and ready to share their knowledge. We hope to see you there!

**FEBRUARY 5, 2014**  
**"Classroom Management Techniques"**  
 2-3:30 p.m.; Room 120, ATC

**FEBRUARY 19, 2014**  
*(Rescheduled from November)*  
**"What Principals Want in New Teachers"**  
 3:30-4:45 p.m.; Room 168, ATC

**MARCH 18, 2014**  
**To Be Announced**  
 2-3:30 p.m.; Room 120, ATC

**APRIL 10, 2014**  
**"On Probation: Your First Years as a 'Real Teacher'."**  
**Presentation and Annual End-of-Year Ice Cream Social**  
 3:30-4:45 p.m.  
 Room 233/234, SCC

## Education is a "Hot Topic" – Let's Learn More!

*This is the second in a series of "Hot Topic" articles for your consideration and analysis. This one is from SmartBriefs of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and was written by Christine Hoff Sommers, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.*  
*ideas.time.com 2013/10/28*

### What Schools Can Do to Help Boys Succeed

Being a boy can be a serious liability in today's classroom. As a group, boys are noisy, rowdy and hard to manage. Many are messy and disorganized and won't sit still. Young male rambunctiousness, according to a recent study, leads teachers to underestimate their intellectual and academic abilities. "Girl behavior is the gold standard in schools," says psychologist Michael Thompson. "Boys are treated like defective girls."

These "defective girls" are not faring well academically. Compared with girls, boys earn lower grades, win fewer honors and are less likely to go to college. One education expert has quipped that if current trends continue, the last male will graduate from college in 2068. In today's knowledge-based economy, success in the classroom has never been more crucial to a young person's life prospects. Women are adapting; men are not.

Some may say, "Too bad for the boys." The ability to regulate one's impulses, sit still and pay attention are building blocks of success in school and in life. 5- and 6-year old children depend on us to learn how to become adults. If boys are restive and unfocused, we must look for ways to help them do better. Here are three modest proposals for reform:

#### 1. Bring Back Recess

Schools everywhere have cut back on breaks...According to a research summary by *Science Daily*, since the 1970's, school children have lost close to 50% of their unstructured outdoor playtime. Thirty-nine percent of first-graders today get 20 minutes of recess each day—or less. (By contrast, children in Japan get 10 minutes of play each hour.) Prolonged confinement in classrooms diminishes children's concentration and leads to squirming and restlessness. And boys appear to be more seriously affected by recess deprivation than girls. "Parents should be aware...that classroom organization may be responsible for their sons' inattention and fidgeting, and that breaks may be a better remedy than Ritalin."

#### 2. Turn Boys Into Readers

"Not for me," is a common male reaction to reading and it shows up in test scores. Year after year, in all age groups, across all ethnic lines, in every state in the union, boys score lower than girls on national reading tests. In a major report released last year by the *British Parliament's Boys' Reading Commission*, the authors openly acknowledge sex differences and use a color-coded chart to illustrate boys' and girls' different reading preferences: girls prefer fiction, magazines, blogs and poetry; boys like comics, nonfiction and newspapers...[I]f American parents and educators adopted the British commission's top three recommendations, it is likely we would significantly narrow the gender gap in reading:

- Every teacher should have an up-to-date knowledge of reading materials that will appeal to disengaged boys.

- Every boy should have weekly support from a male reading role model.

- Parents need access to information on how successful schools are in supporting boys' literacy. Boys will read when they find material they like.

Guysread.com is the place to go for lists of books that have proved irresistible to boys.

#### 3. Work with the Young Male Imagination

In his delightful *Boy Writers: Reclaiming their Voices*, celebrated author and writing instructor Ralph Fletcher, advises teachers to consider their assignments from the point of view of boys. Too many writing teachers...take the "confessional poet" as the classroom ideal. Personal narratives full of emotion and self-disclosure are prized; stories describing video games, skateboard competitions or a monster devouring a city are not. Teachers have to come to terms with the young male spirit...[I]f we want boys to flourish, we are going to have to encourage their distinctive reading, writing, drawing, and even joke-telling propensities. Along with personal "reflection journals," ...teachers [should] permit fantasy, horror, spoofs, humor, war, conflict, and yes even lurid sword fights. If boys are constantly subject to disapproval for their interests and enthusiasms, they are likely to become disengaged and lag further behind. Our schools need to work with, not against, the kinetic imaginations of boys to move them toward becoming educated young men.

### teacher EDUCATION

Room 266, Main Building  
 Phone: (616) 234-3380 or 234-4664  
 E-mail: TeachEd@grcc.edu  
 www.grcc.edu/tep

**Rebecca Brinks**  
 Program Director  
 Phone: (616) 234-4084  
 Office: Room 266,  
 Main Building  
 Email: bbrinks@grcc.edu

**Staci Dever**  
 Program Secretary  
 Phone: (616) 234-3380  
 Office: Room 266,  
 Main Building  
 Email: sdever@grcc.edu

**Carole Redwine**  
 Teacher Education Support Services  
 Phone: (616) 234-4664  
 Office: Room 301,  
 Main Building  
 Email: credwine@grcc.edu

**Tricia Siegel**  
 Seminar Planner  
 Phone: (616) 234-3075  
 Office: Room 266E,  
 Main Building  
 Email: tsiegel@grcc.edu