COLUMBIA, S.C. — A scholarship program designed to draw South Carolina's top high school students into teaching is the first winner of a new award recognizing effective Education programs.

Organizers announced Wednesday that South Carolina Teaching Fellows won the first WhatWorksSC Award for Excellence and its $10,000 prize from BB&T.

The other two finalists received $1,000 each Furman University's Riley Institute. They are a reading program at Clinton Elementary in Lancaster and a Clemson University program that trains elementary teachers to help struggling readers.

The Legislature created the Teaching Fellows program in 1999 to address teacher shortfalls. Up to 175 students are chosen annually for scholarships of up to $6,000 a year for four years. Fellows undergo training beyond that of other Education majors and volunteer in the community.