

By the Committee on Education; and Senator Simmons

581-03347-17

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Florida Best and Brightest
3 Teacher and Principal Scholar Award Program; creating
4 s. 1012.732, F.S.; creating the Florida Best and
5 Brightest Teacher and Principal Scholar Award Program
6 to be administered by the Department of Education;
7 providing the intent and purpose of the program;
8 providing eligibility requirements for classroom
9 teachers and school administrators to participate in
10 the program; providing timelines and requirements for
11 program implementation; providing funding priorities;
12 defining the term "school district"; requiring the
13 State Board of Education to adopt rules; providing an
14 effective date.

15
16 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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18 Section 1. Section 1012.732, Florida Statutes, is created
19 to read:

20 1012.732 The Florida Best and Brightest Teacher and
21 Principal Scholar Award Program.-

22 (1) INTENT.-The Legislature recognizes that, second only to
23 parents, teachers and principals play the most critical roles
24 within schools in preparing students to achieve a high level of
25 academic performance. The Legislature further recognizes that
26 research has linked student successes and performance outcomes
27 to the academic achievements and performance accomplishments of
28 the teachers and principals who most closely affect their
29 classroom and school learning environments. Therefore, it is the

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30 intent of the Legislature to designate teachers and principals
31 who have achieved high academic standards during their own
32 education as Florida's best and brightest teacher and principal
33 scholars.

34 (2) PURPOSE.—There is created the Florida Best and
35 Brightest Teacher and Principal Scholar Award Program, as a
36 performance-based scholarship award program, to be administered
37 by the Department of Education. The performance-based award
38 shall provide categorical funding for scholarships to be awarded
39 to full-time classroom teachers, as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(a),
40 and full-time school administrators, as defined in s.
41 1012.01(3)(c), excluding substitute teachers or substitute
42 school administrators, who have demonstrated a high level of
43 academic achievement and performance.

44 (3) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a scholarship, a full-
45 time classroom teacher or full-time school administrator must be
46 employed on an annual contract or probationary contract pursuant
47 to s. 1012.335, participate in the school district's performance
48 salary schedule pursuant to s. 1012.22, and meet at least one of
49 the achievement requirements under paragraph (a) and at least
50 one of the performance requirements under paragraph (b).

51 (a) Achievement requirements.—

52 1. For a classroom teacher, a score at or above the 90th
53 percentile on the Florida Teacher Certification Examination in a
54 subject that he or she is teaching;

55 2. For a school administrator, a score at or above the 90th
56 percentile on the Florida Educational Leadership Examination;

57 3. For a classroom teacher or school administrator, a
58 composite score at or above the 80th percentile on either the

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59 SAT or the ACT based on the National Percentile Ranks in effect
60 when the classroom teacher or school administrator took the
61 assessment;

62 4. For a classroom teacher or school administrator, a
63 composite score on the GRE, LSAT, GMAT, or MCAT at or above a
64 score adopted by the State Board of Education; or

65 5. For a classroom teacher or school administrator, a
66 cumulative undergraduate or graduate grade point average of at
67 least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, as verified on the teacher's or
68 administrator's official final college transcript.

69 (b) Performance requirements.—The classroom teacher or
70 school administrator:

71 1. Must have been evaluated as highly effective pursuant to
72 s. 1012.34 in the school year immediately preceding the year in
73 which the scholarship will be awarded;

74 2. If he or she works in a low-performing school or a
75 school that was designated by the department as low-performing
76 within the previous 2 years and commits, pursuant to State Board
77 of Education rule, to working at the school for at least 3
78 years, must have been evaluated as highly effective pursuant to
79 s. 1012.34 in the school year immediately preceding the first
80 year in which the scholarship will be awarded and maintain a
81 highly effective evaluation rating in at least two of every
82 three annual performance evaluations, based on a rolling 3-year
83 period; or

84 3. Must be newly hired by the district school board, must
85 not have been evaluated pursuant to s. 1012.34, and must have
86 met at least one of the following conditions:

87 a. Be a recipient of the Florida Prepaid Tuition

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88 Scholarship Program pursuant to s. 1009.984 who graduates with a
89 minimum 3.0 grade point average and commit, pursuant to State
90 Board of Education rule, to working in a Florida public school
91 for at least 3 years;

92 b. Have completed the college reach-out program pursuant to
93 s. 1007.34 and graduated with a minimum 3.0 grade point average,
94 and commit, pursuant to State Board of Education rule, to
95 working in a Florida public school for at least 3 years; or

96 c. Be a Florida college or university graduate of a Florida
97 teacher preparation program approved pursuant to s. 1004.04,
98 have graduated with a minimum 3.0 grade point average, and
99 commit, pursuant to State Board of Education rule, to working in
100 a critical teacher shortage area under s. 1012.07 at a Florida
101 public school for at least 3 years.

102 (4) IMPLEMENTATION.—In order to implement and administer
103 the program, the following timelines and requirements apply:

104 (a) To demonstrate eligibility for an award, an eligible
105 classroom teacher or school administrator, as applicable, must
106 submit to the school district, no later than November 1, an
107 official record of his or her achievement of the eligibility
108 requirements specified in paragraph (3)(a). Once a classroom
109 teacher or school administrator is deemed eligible by the school
110 district, including teachers deemed eligible for the Florida
111 Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program in the 2015-2016
112 or 2016-2017 fiscal years pursuant to s. 25 of chapter 2016-62,
113 Laws of Florida, the classroom teacher or school administrator
114 remains eligible as long as he or she remains employed by the
115 school district as a full-time classroom teacher or full-time
116 school administrator at the time of the award and continues to

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117 meet the conditions specified under this section.

118 (b) Annually, by December 1, each school district shall
119 submit to the department the number of eligible classroom
120 teachers and school administrators who qualify for the
121 scholarship.

122 (c) Annually, by February 1, the department shall disburse
123 scholarship funds to each school district for each eligible
124 classroom teacher and school administrator to receive a
125 scholarship as provided in the General Appropriations Act.

126 (d) Annually, by April 1, each school district shall award
127 the scholarship to each eligible classroom teacher and school
128 administrator.

129 (5) FUNDING.—A scholarship in the amount provided in the
130 General Appropriations Act shall be awarded to every eligible
131 classroom teacher and school administrator.

132 (a) If the number of eligible classroom teachers and school
133 administrators exceeds the total appropriation authorized in the
134 General Appropriations Act, the department shall prorate the
135 per-scholar scholarship award amount, except that prior to the
136 distribution of funds, the following priorities apply:

137 1. Classroom teachers and school administrators who commit,
138 pursuant to State Board of Education rule, to work in a low-
139 performing school and meet the performance requirements of
140 subparagraph (3) (b)2., shall receive an award equal to a full
141 scholarship award amount. Classroom teachers and school
142 administrators who do not fulfill the commitment made pursuant
143 to subparagraph (3) (b)2. may not receive this priority; and

144 2. Newly hired classroom teachers and school administrators
145 who commit, pursuant to State Board of Education rule, to work

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146 in a Florida public school and meet the performance requirements
147 under subparagraph (3)(b)3., shall receive a one-time hiring
148 bonus of up to \$10,000. Classroom teachers and school
149 administrators who do not fulfill the commitment made pursuant
150 to subparagraph (3)(b)3. may not receive this priority.

151 (b) Newly hired classroom teachers and newly hired school
152 administrators who initially participate in the program pursuant
153 to subparagraph (3)(b)3. may only receive the one-time hiring
154 bonus under subparagraph (a)2. In subsequent school years, such
155 classroom teachers and school administrators may earn a
156 scholarship award pursuant to subparagraph (3)(b)1. or
157 subparagraph (3)(b)2., if they also maintain their initial
158 commitments.

159 (6) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term
160 “school district” includes the Florida School for the Deaf and
161 the Blind and charter school governing boards.

162 (7) RULES.—The State Board of Education shall expeditiously
163 adopt rules to implement this section.

164 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.