Florida’s Best and Brightest Scholarship Program

Q & A
(updated: 9/18/15)

The State of Florida created the new Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program to attract and retain high academic achievers in the teaching profession. The following questions and answers (Q & A) are provided in sequential order to best assist you in understanding the program’s parameters and provisions. You are encouraged to read through all of the questions to facilitate your full understanding of the program. However, if your question is specific, you may click on the applicable question link below to quickly navigate to the question response.

Please note, there are questions where we are seeking clarification and further guidance from the State. As such information is received, this Q & A guidance will be updated accordingly.

1. What is the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program?

2. What is the eligibility criteria for the ‘Best and Brightest Scholarship’ award?

3. I am in my very first-year in the teaching profession so I have never received an evaluation. How may I qualify for the award?

4. I am a substitute teacher. Can I apply and qualify for the award?

5. What do I need to do before I apply for the ‘Best and Brightest Scholarship’ award?

6. I have my scores. How do I apply for the scholarship award?

7. When and how will I know if I qualify for the scholarship award?

8. What if I was a classroom teacher when I was evaluated as Highly Effective and am no longer in a classroom teacher position?

9. I am a new classroom teacher to this District for FY2016 but I taught previously and received an evaluation rating in another K12 District. How may I qualify for the scholarship award?

10. If I qualify for the award, how will I know how much I will receive? Will it be in my regular payroll check or distributed to me as a separate check?

11. If I did not take or do not have SAT or ACT scores can I take the test now in order to qualify?

12. When does my application need to be completed by?

13. I work at a Charter school. How do I apply for the scholarship award?

14. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

15. I took the ACT and received my official score documentation. Why do I not see my percentile score?

16. I took the SAT and received my official score documentation. Why do I not see my percentile score?
Florida’s Best and Brightest Scholarship Program

Q & A
(updated: 8/13/15)

1. **What is the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program?**

The State of Florida created the new Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program to attract and retain high academic achievers in the teaching profession. This is a State funded opportunity. Palm Beach County School District is not responsible for funding or program parameters.

2. **What is the eligibility criteria for the ‘Best and Brightest Scholarship’ award?**

As of August 10, 2015, the Florida Department of Education has clarified eligibility criteria such that teachers who may apply for the award are defined under F.S. 1012.01(2)(a): **Classroom teachers.** – Classroom teachers are staff members assigned the professional activity of instructing students in courses in classroom situations, including basic instruction, exceptional student education, career education, and adult education.

To be eligible:

- A classroom teacher must have scored at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT (including both critical reading and math scores) or the ACT (a composite score) based on the percentile rankings in effect at the time the classroom teacher took the assessment,

  **AND**

- Must have been evaluated as Highly Effective pursuant to section F.S. 1012.34.

  **OR**

- If the classroom teacher is a first-year teacher who has not been evaluated pursuant to section 1012.34, s/he must have scored at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT (including both critical reading and math scores) or the ACT (a composite score) based on the percentile rankings in effect at the time the classroom teacher took the assessment.

Instructional Personnel that are not included in F.S. 1012.01(2)(a), and therefore are **NOT** eligible to apply are the following:

F.S. 1012.01(2)(b): **Student personnel services.** – Included in this classification are certified school counselors, social workers, career specialists, and school psychologists.

F.S. 1012.01(2)(c): **Librarians/media specialists.**

F.S. 1012.01(2)(d): **Other instructional staff.** – These are instructional staff that are not classified in the categories specified in F.S. paragraphs (a) – (c) above. Included in this classification are primary specialists, learning resource specialists, instructional trainers, adjunct educators, and similar positions.
3. I am in my very first-year in the teaching profession so I have never received an evaluation. How may I qualify for the award?

If you are a classroom teacher that is new to the teaching profession, then you are a first-year teacher who has not been evaluated pursuant to section 1012.34. To qualify for the award, you must have scored at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT (including both critical reading and math scores) or the ACT (a composite score) based on the percentile rankings in effect at the time you took the assessment.

4. I am a substitute teacher. Can I apply and qualify for the award?

No. Substitute Teachers are not eligible to apply and cannot qualify.

5. What do I need to do before I apply for the ‘Best and Brightest Scholarship’ award?

You need to obtain an official record of your SAT or ACT scores from the testing agency. Official documentation of your SAT or ACT score(s) must be submitted as part of your application process. Applications that are submitted without official scores will not be considered as completed applications. Classroom teachers with incomplete applications will not be eligible for the award.

If you do not have an official record of your score(s) from the testing agency, you may contact the testing administrator to obtain an official copy. For SAT test scores, go to the College Board website at: https://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/send-old-sat-scores or call 866-756-7346.

For ACT test scores, complete the PDF order form online via: http://act.org/aap/pdf/asrform.pdf, or call 319-337-1270 to place an archived score report request. You can also request your ACT score online at: www.actstudent.org.

**Whether you access the SAT or ACT testing agency you must SEND THE SCORES TO YOURSELF!**

6. I have my scores. How do I apply for the scholarship award?

In order to demonstrate eligibility for an award, a classroom teacher must use the PeopleSoft online self-service system to submit an application no later than October 1, 2015. An official record of his/her SAT or ACT score(s) indicating at or above the 80th percentile, based upon the percentile rankings in effect at the time the assessment was taken, must be attached and submitted to complete the application process. Applications submitted without official score(s) documentation will not be considered complete. A classroom teacher that does not submit an official score(s) record will be notified via District email that his/her application is incomplete and may resubmit their official record up through the State’s deadline of October 1, 2015.

If you are a classroom teacher, login to PeopleSoft, and click on the Best and Brightest Scholarship link.
Complete your application by attaching a scanned copy of your official SAT or ACT score(s) and percentile ranking.

Note: You can find the “How to Apply for Best and Brightest” step-by-step instructions on the Compensation website at www.palmbeachschools.org/compensation under the CTA section.

7. When and how will I know if I qualify for the scholarship award?

Once you submit your online application, including attaching your official score(s) documentation, your online screen will show your application submittal status as “pending”. The District will then review your official documentation and you will be notified via email if your submitted test records qualify, do not qualify, or are incomplete. If your submitted documentation is approved, your online screen will reflect “approved” status. This initial approval is only for your test score documentation. Final approvals or denials for the award will not be issued until the District reviews all eligibility criteria and classroom teacher evaluation ratings for Highly Effective status. At the request of the Classroom Teachers Association (CTA), the District will be using the FY2013/2014 evaluation ratings to determine classroom teachers’ eligibility. Once the District determines a classroom teacher has a Highly Effective evaluation rating AND official score(s) documentation at or above the 80th percentile, s/he will be notified via email prior to December 1, 2015 of his/her final award status.

A first-year classroom teacher is not required to have an evaluation rating in order to qualify. First-year classroom teachers must have submitted official score(s) documentation showing his/her score(s) at the 80th percentile ranking or higher in order to be included in the application process. First-year classroom teachers will be notified of final award status prior to December 1, 2015.

8. What if I was a classroom teacher when I was evaluated as Highly Effective and am no longer in a classroom teacher position?

You must be in an active (or on an approved leave from) classroom teacher position at the time of the State’s submission deadline, which is October 1, 2015. This does not include Charter school leave. If you are on leave from the District due to working at a Charter school, please see question #13 for instruction.

9. I am a new classroom teacher to this District for FY2016 but I also taught previously and received an evaluation rating in another K12 District. How may I qualify for the scholarship award?

We are seeking clarification from the State on this question. Please scan and submit a copy of your FY2013/2014 evaluation and your official score(s) record demonstrating your score(s) at the 80th percentile or above when completing your online application in PeopleSoft self-service.

If you do not have a copy of your FY2013/2014 evaluation, apply online with your official score(s) record by the State’s deadline of October 1, 2015. You can later email a copy of your evaluation documentation to BestandBrightest@palmbeachschools.org once you have received your copy from your previous K12 employer. We will update your online application with your evaluation documentation once it is received by the District. When we receive further information on this question from the State we will also update our guidance.
10. If I qualify for the award, how will I know how much I will receive? Will it be in my regular payroll check or distributed to me as a separate check?

The State has appropriated a little over $44 million dollars for these awards this year. If more than 4,400 classroom teachers qualify for the award, the amount of the individual awards will be less than $10,000 per classroom teacher. When the final number of recipients is determined State-wide, we anticipate the State will announce the individual award amount. By April 1, 2016, pending receipt of the funds from the State, your regular paycheck will list this award amount as a separate pay line item. All payments from this program will be subject to payroll and income tax withholdings.

11. If I did not take or do not have SAT or ACT scores can I take the test now in order to qualify?

Yes. According to the Florida Department of Education, classroom teachers rated Highly Effective may take the ACT or SAT in order to earn the scholarship. The official score(s) documentation, however, demonstrating the classroom teacher has met the current 80th percentile ranking or higher must be submitted in your online PeopleSoft self-service application by the State’s October 1, 2015 deadline.

The SAT is currently not offered before October 1st. The ACT test is being held September 12th. The deadline to register to take the ACT was August 8th. However, there is a late registration deadline of August 21st. There is a $25 additional fee for ACT late registration.

Teachers should have their ACT results in two (2) weeks if they take the September 12th test. Do NOT register to take the Writing Test as it can slow down score reporting and it is NOT needed to qualify for the scholarship award (not included in the composite score).

12. When does my application need to be completed by?

District classroom teachers need to submit their online application to the District, including the attachment of their scanned test score records, no later than the State’s October 1, 2015 deadline.

13. I work at a Charter school. How do I apply for the scholarship award?

The language in the State Appropriations Bill that speaks to this scholarship notes that “Charter School Governing Boards” must submit data for their Charter School to the State for the Best and Brightest Scholarship Program by the State’s deadline. Therefore, please contact your Charter School Administration for further information.

14. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please email your question to BestandBrightest@palmbeachschools.org. We expect a high volume of inquiries regarding this program so we appreciate your patience as we respond to information requests.
15. I took the ACT and received my official score documentation. Why do I not see my percentile score?

In light of the recent Florida legislation related to Florida classroom teacher scores on the ACT, in order to determine whether a Florida classroom teacher scored “at or above the 80th percentile on the ACT based upon the percentile ranks in effect when the teacher took the assessment”, ACT, Inc. has provided the following guidance based upon the best available historical norm information from the testing administrator’s archives.

1. The best evidence is the original score report received by the classroom teacher.

2. If a classroom teacher needs a replacement score report,
   a. These can be ordered either by contacting ACT Student Services at 319.337.1270 or via the 2014-2015 ACT Additional Score Report (ASR) at: [http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/asrform.pdf](http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/asrform.pdf)

   Reports for testing that occurred prior to September 2012 have a fee of $34.00 for normal processing and can be requested back to 1966.

   b. The percentile ranks provided on ASRs reflect current year norms, **NOT** the norms in effect at the time the classroom teacher took the test.

   c. The following are the minimum composite scores that were “at or above the 80th percentile” **at the time of testing**. Find your testing date range below to view the minimum composite score you need to be at or above the 80th percentile is:

   - September, 2011 through August, 2015 : 26
   - September, 1993 through August, 2011 : 25
   - September, 1991 through August, 1993 : 24
   - September, 1990 through August, 1991 : 25
   - September, 1989 through August, 1990 : 24
   - September, 1985 through August, 1989 : 25
   - September, 1976 through August, 1985 : 24
   - September, 1973 through August, 1976 : 25
   - September, 1971 through August, 1973 : 24
   - September, 1970 through August, 1971 : 25
   - September, 1969 through August, 1970 : 24
   - September, 1968 through August, 1969 : *
   - September, 1966 through August, 1968 : 25

* ACT, Inc. cannot verify the composite score which corresponds to the 80th percentile for this period from archive materials. If a three-year norm were used for 1968 – 1969 an ACT composite score of 24 could be applied.
16. I took the SAT and received my official scores documentation. Why do I not see my percentile score?

As requested by the State, the following information can be used to determine the SAT scores that were at or above the 80th percentile based on the rank in effect at the time the assessment was taken.¹

- Teachers can order archived score reports by calling (866) 756-7346 or by filling out and mailing the form found at https://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/send-old-sat-scores. Archived score reports cost $31.

- Teachers who took the SAT more than once will receive all of the available score reports as part of their order.

- Archived score report requests take up to 5 weeks to process. Rush orders may be placed for additional fees.

- Teachers who tested prior to October 1973 should review FLDOE guidelines.

- Questions? Please call (866) 756-7346 Monday - Friday from 8am to 9pm EST, or visit https://sat.collegeboard.org/contact to send an email.

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¹ Based on available SAT archives.