

## Florida's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program

### Q & A

(updated: 11/30/16)

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's response.

Please note, there may be 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.

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## Florida's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program

### Q & A

(updated: 11/30/16)

#### 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 Florida 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?

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, the job classification to which the teacher is assigned must meet the F.S. 1012.01(2)(a) Classroom teacher definition **AND**:

- ✓ Must have achieved a composite score at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on either the SAT or the ACT based on the National Percentile Ranks 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. (The District's intent is to use FY16 final evaluations, if available, pending state data and district processing. If FY16 final evaluations are not available, FY15 final evaluations will be used.)

#### **OR**

- ✓ If the classroom teacher is a first-year teacher who has not been evaluated pursuant to section 1012.34, s/he must have achieved a composite score at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on either the SAT or the ACT based on the National Percentile Ranks 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 are therefore generally **NOT** eligible to apply include 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 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. If I was previously approved for the scholarship award, or if my previously submitted official scores were approved in FY16, do I need to reapply for the scholarship award for FY17?**

If you received the scholarship award for FY16, or if you previously submitted official scores that were approved in FY16, you do not need to reapply as long as you meet the following criteria:

- Must have received a 'Highly Effective' rating for the most recent final evaluation, **AND**
- Must be in a position that meets the definition of Classroom Teacher, F.S. 1012.01(2)(a)

**4. 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 new to teaching, 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 achieved a composite score at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on either the SAT or the ACT based on the National Percentile Ranks in effect at the time you took the assessment. Apply online with your official score(s) record by the State's deadline of November 1, 2016.

**5. I am a substitute teacher. Can I apply and qualify for the award?** No. Substitute Teachers are not eligible for the scholarship program.

**6. 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](http://www.actstudent.org).

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

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

A classroom teacher must use the PeopleSoft self-service system to submit an application. The application screen is available beginning August 3, 2016 and will remain available through November 1, 2016. An official record of SAT or ACT composite score(s) at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile, based upon the National Percentile Ranks in effect at the time the assessment was taken, **must be attached and submitted**. 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 the application is not complete. The opportunity to resubmit official records (and therefore a complete application) will remain available through November 1, 2016.

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).

**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](http://www.palmbeachschools.org/compensation) under the CTA section.

**8. 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 final evaluation ratings for ‘Highly Effective’ status. The District’s intent is to use FY16 final evaluations, if available, pending state data and district processing. If FY16 final evaluations are not available, FY15 final evaluations will be used to determine classroom teachers’ eligibility. Once the District determines a classroom teacher has a ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation rating AND official composite score(s) documentation at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile, s/he will be notified via email prior to December 1, 2016 of his/her final award status.

A first-year classroom teacher is not required to have a final evaluation rating in order to qualify. First-year classroom teachers must have submitted official composite score(s) documentation showing his/her score(s) at the 80<sup>th</sup> 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, 2016.

**9. What if I was a classroom teacher when I was evaluated as ‘Highly Effective’ and now I am no longer in a classroom teacher position?**

You must be in an active (or on an approved leave from a) classroom teacher position that meets the F.S. 1012.01(2)(a) definition at the time of the State’s submission deadline, November 1, 2016, and at the time of the scholarship award distribution (such distributions are anticipated no earlier the April 2017). If you are no longer in an eligible position at either of these points in time, you will not be eligible for the award. 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 #14 for instruction.

**10. I am a new classroom teacher to this District for FY2017 but I previously taught and received a ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation in another K12 district. Do I qualify for the scholarship award?**

If your ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation is from another **FLORIDA** K12 district, then you may qualify.

To qualify, your application must meet the following requirements by the November 1, 2016, deadline:

- Obtain your official score(s) showing at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on either the SAT or ACT
- Obtain a copy of your ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation from your previous employer
- Submit **BOTH** your ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation **AND** your official score(s) record

**11. 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 49 million dollars for these awards for FY17. The amount of each individual award may be as much as \$10,000 and will be determined by the number of teachers who qualify statewide. Depending on the number of qualifying teachers, the individual award amount may be prorated and recipients may receive less than \$10,000. When the final number of recipients is determined, the State will announce the individual award amount. By April 1, 2017, 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 standard payroll and income tax withholdings.

**12. 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, 'Highly Effective' classroom teachers may take the ACT or SAT in order to earn the award. However, the official score(s) record demonstrating the classroom teacher has met the current 80<sup>th</sup> percentile ranking or higher requirement must be submitted in your online self-service application by the State's deadline of November 1, 2016.

The SAT test is being offered October 1, 2016. The registration deadline is September 1, 2016. Scores will be available by October 27, 2016, just prior to the State's deadline of November 1, 2016.

The ACT test is being offered September 10, 2016. The registration deadline is August 5, 2016. There is also a late registration option from August 6 through August 9, 2016. There is an additional \$25 fee for late registrations.

Teachers that take the ACT should receive their official score results in two (2) weeks if they take the September 10<sup>th</sup> test. Do **NOT** register to take the Writing Test as it can delay score reporting and it is **NOT** needed to qualify for the scholarship award (it is not included in the composite score).

**13. When does my application need to be completed by?**

District classroom teachers need to submit their online PeopleSoft self-service application, including the attachment of their scanned official composite test score(s) records, no later than the State's deadline of November 1, 2016.

**14. 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 of November 2, 2016. Therefore, please contact your Charter School Administration for further information.

**15. Who do I contact if I have more questions?**

Please email your question to [BestandBrightest@palmbeachschools.org](mailto:BestandBrightest@palmbeachschools.org). You may also contact our HR Customer Call Center at 561-434-8777 (PX 48777). We expect a high volume of inquiries regarding this program so we appreciate your patience as we respond to information requests.

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

In order to determine whether a Florida classroom teacher's composite score is "at or above the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on the ACT based upon the National 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 2015-2016 ACT Additional Score Report (ASR) at: <http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/asrform.pdf> . Reports for testing that occurred prior to September 2013 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 80<sup>th</sup> 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 80<sup>th</sup> percentile:

- September, 2011 through August, 2016 : 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 80<sup>th</sup> 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.

**17. 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 80<sup>th</sup> percentile based on the rank in effect at the time the assessment was taken.<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

Administration Dates	Verbal/Critical Reading	Math	Composite
October 1973 - June 1975	550	590	1140
October 1975 - June 1976	540	590	1130
October 1976 - June 1978	540	580	1120
October 1978 - June 1979	530	590	1120
October 1979 - June 1981	530	580	1110
October 1981 - June 1982	520	580	1100
October 1982 - June 1984	530	580	1110
October 1984 - June 1985	520	580	1100
October 1985 - June 1986	530	580	1110
October 1986 - June 1991	530	590	1120
October 1991 - June 1993	520	590	1110
October 1993 - June 1994	530	600	1130
October 1994 - March 1995	520	610	1130
April 1995 - June 1995	600	610	1210
October 1995 - June 1997	610	610	1220
October 1997 - June 2003	610	620	1230
October 2003 - June 2007	610	630	1240
October 2007 - June 2009	610	620	1230
October 2009 - June 2010	610	630	1240
October 2010 - June 2013	600	620	1220
October 2013 - June 2015	600	630	1230

New SAT	
Administration Dates	Total (Composite) Score
March 2016 – October 2016	1190 – Nationally Representative Sample

<sup>1</sup> Based on available SAT archives.