Florida’s Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program

Q & A (updated: 8/17)

The State has appropriated funding for FY18 for the ‘Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program’. This State program aims to attract and retain individuals with high aptitudes in the teaching profession.

The following questions and answers (Q & A) are provided in sequential order to best assist you in understanding the program. You are encouraged to read through all of the questions to facilitate your full understanding. If your question is specific, you may click on the applicable question to quickly navigate to the response. Please note there may be questions where we are seeking further clarification and guidance from the State. As such information becomes available, 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. If I was previously approved for the scholarship award, or if my previously submitted official scores were approved in FY17, do I need to reapply for the scholarship award for FY18?

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?

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

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

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

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

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

10. I am a new classroom teacher to this District for FY17 but I previously taught and received a ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation in another K-12 District. Do I qualify for the scholarship award?

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?

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

13. By when does my application need to be completed?

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

15. I understand the State has allocated additional funding for FY18 for classroom teachers that were ‘Highly Effective’ or ‘Effective’ on their prior year’s evaluation. If I am eligible, what do I need to do?

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

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

18. I took the SAT and received my official score documentation. Why do I not see my percentile score?
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 individuals with high aptitudes in the teaching profession. This is a State of Florida 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 80th percentile on either the SAT or the ACT based on the National 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.

  **UNLESS**

- The classroom teacher is newly hired by the District and has not been evaluated pursuant to F.S. 1012.34, and has achieved a composite score at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT or the ACT based on the National Percentile Rankings in effect at the time the classroom teacher took the assessment. (These classroom teachers are determined qualified based solely on their SAT or ACT documentation.)

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 a prior year, do I need to reapply for the scholarship award for FY18?

If you received the scholarship award for FY17, or if you previously submitted official scores that were approved, you do not need to reapply as long as you meet the following criteria:

- Must have received a ‘Highly Effective’ performance evaluation rating; **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 F.S. 1012.34. To qualify for the award, you must have achieved a composite score at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT or the ACT based on the National Percentile Rankings 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, 2017.

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 Teacher 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: [http://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/send-old-sat-scores](http://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](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 PeopleSoft self-service to submit an application. The application screen is available beginning August 2017 and will remain available through November 1, 2017. An official record of SAT or ACT composite score(s) at or above the 80th percentile, based upon the National Percentile Rankings 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, 2017.
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. Once the District determines a classroom teacher has a ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation rating AND official composite score(s) documentation at or above the 80th percentile, s/he will be notified via email prior to December 1, 2017 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 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, 2017.

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, 2017, and at the time of the scholarship award distribution (such distributions are anticipated no earlier the April 2018). 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 FY18 but I previously taught and received a ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation in another K-12 district. Do I qualify for the scholarship award?**

If your ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation is from another FLORIDA K-12 district, then you may qualify.

To qualify, your application must meet the following requirements by the November 1, 2017, deadline:

- Obtain your official score(s) showing at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT or ACT;
- Obtain a copy of your ‘Highly Effective’ final evaluation from your previous employer; and
- 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 $6,000 per qualified Best and Brightest Teacher for FY18. By April 1, 2018, contingent on funds having been received from the State, your regular paycheck will list this award amount as a separate pay line item. All payments from this program are 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. However, the official score(s) record demonstrating the classroom teacher has met the current 80th percentile ranking or higher requirement must be submitted in your online self-service application by the State’s deadline of November 1, 2017.

The SAT test is being offered October 7th. The registration deadline is September 8th. Scores will be available by October 27th, just prior to the State’s deadline of November 1st.

The ACT test is being offered September 9th. The registration deadline is August 4th. Teachers that take the ACT should receive their official score results within two weeks if they take the September 9th 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. By when does my application need to be completed?

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, 2017.

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. Please contact your Charter School Administration for further information.

15. I understand the State has allocated additional funding for FY18 for classroom teachers that were ‘Highly Effective’ or ‘Effective’ on their prior year’s evaluation. If I am eligible, what do I need to do?

Yes, the State has allocated scholarship awards for classroom teachers with prior year’s evaluation ratings of ‘Highly Effective’ or ‘Effective’. These awards are not contingent on college assessment scores; therefore, no SAT or ACT official score(s) documentation is required to qualify. For ‘Highly Effective’ classroom teachers the scholarship award is $1,200. For ‘Effective’ classroom teachers the scholarship award may be up to $800. (If the number of eligible ‘Effective’ classroom teachers state-wide exceeds the State’s total allocation, the State shall prorate the per-teacher scholarship amount.)

To receive the award no action is required on the part of classroom teachers with prior year’s evaluation ratings in Palm Beach County. Information is already on file and will be used to process awards. For classroom teachers new to Palm Beach County with the prior year’s performance evaluation rating on file in another Florida K-12 district, obtain a copy of your final evaluation from your prior employer. Scan and email to BestandBrightest@palmbeachschools.org.
16. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please email your questions to 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.

17. 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 80th percentile on the ACT based upon the National Percentile Rankings 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 for normal processing and can be requested back to 1966.
   b. The percentile rankings 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:

     - 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 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.
18. 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 can be used to determine the SAT scores that were at or above the 80th percentile based on the rankings in effect at the time the assessment was taken.

Teachers can order archived score reports by calling 866-756-7346, or by completing and mailing the order form found at [http://sat.collegeboard.org/scores](http://sat.collegeboard.org/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.

For questions, please call 866-756-7346 Monday – Friday 8 AM to 9 PM EST, or visit [http://sat.collegeboard.org/contact](http://sat.collegeboard.org/contact).

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**NEW SAT**

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1 Based on available SAT archives.
SAT Test Dates 2017-18 (U.S.)

[https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines)

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ACT Test Dates 2017-2018


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