

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is The State of Florida's Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program?

The State of Florida's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program was created by the Florida legislature to reward classroom teachers who have achieved high academic standards during their own education. Eligibility requirements for the Best and Brightest Scholarship Program are outlined in Florida Statute 1012.731 and 1012.01 and have changed each year since the program was created, so please review them carefully. Florida Department of Education (FL DOE) guidance documents outline the deadlines for submission of applications to the District and FL DOE, and state that each District is responsible for determining eligibility. District Guidelines are based on Florida Statute, FL DOE guidance documents and audit reports, the TALC Contract, and District past practices. The Best and Brightest Scholarship Program is funded by the Florida Legislature with funds disbursed to Districts by FL DOE and by Districts to eligible employees. The School District of Lee County is not responsible for funding or program parameters.

2. Who is eligible to receive the \$6,000.00 scholarship award?

(a) A **Classroom Teacher**, as defined by Florida Statute 1012.01, who received a composite score at or above the 80th percentile on either the SAT or ACT based on the National Percentile Ranks in effect at the time the test was taken at the time the assessment and meets one of the following requirements:

Has a District start date before July 1, 2018 and received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Highly Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position

OR

Has a District start date after July 1, 2018 and no Final Performance Evaluation rating for an instructional staff position

(b) A District employee who is no longer a classroom teacher, but was a classroom teacher, as defined by Florida Statute 1012.01, in FY18 (2017-2018 school year), received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Highly Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position, and meets the other requirements of Florida Statute 1012.731.

3. Who is eligible to receive the \$1,200.00 scholarship award?

A **Classroom Teacher**, as defined by Florida Statute 1012.01, who received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Highly Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position.

The District will submit the names of all classroom teachers who received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Highly Effective or Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position for all instructional staff employed by the District in FY18 (2017-2018 school year).

Classroom teachers employed by the District as instructional staff in FY18 (2017-2018 school year) are not required to submit supporting documentation, since this information is on record with the District.

SAT/ACT test scores are not required to receive this scholarship award.

4. Who is eligible to receive the up to \$800.00 scholarship award?

A **Classroom Teacher**, as defined by Florida Statute 1012.01, received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position.

The District will submit the names of all classroom teachers who received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Highly Effective or Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position for all instructional staff employed by the District in FY18 (2017-2018 school year).

Classroom teachers employed by the District as instructional staff in FY18 (2017-2018 school year) are not required to submit supporting documentation, since this information is on record with the District.

SAT/ACT test scores are not required to receive this scholarship award.

5. What documentation do I need to submit to the District?

- (a) A Best and Brightest Scholarship Application: [Application Link](#)
- (b) Evidence of SAT or ACT composite scores that includes National Percentile Rank at the time of testing; official score reports or a copy of an official transcript with SAT or ACT composite scores preferred. **NOTE: Test scores are only required for the \$6,000 scholarship award.**
- (c) Evidence of any legal change of name
- (d) A Final Performance Evaluation for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional position. **NOTE: Classroom teachers employed by the District as instructional staff in FY18 (2017-2018 school year) are not required to submit supporting documentation, since this information is on record with the District.**

6. Who qualifies as a Classroom Teacher for purposes of The State of Florida's Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program?

Classroom teacher includes only specific instructional staff as defined in Florida Statute 1012.01 (see below). Only instructional staff who qualify under Subsection A are eligible for scholarship awards.

(2) INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL.—"Instructional personnel" means any K-12 staff member whose function includes the provision of direct instructional services to students. Instructional personnel also includes K-12 personnel whose functions provide direct support in the learning process of students. Included in the classification of instructional personnel are the following K-12 personnel:

- (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, including substitute teachers.
- (b) **Student personnel services.**—Student personnel services include staff members responsible for: advising students with regard to their abilities and aptitudes, educational and occupational opportunities, and personal and social adjustments; providing placement services; performing educational evaluations; and similar functions. Included in this classification are certified school counselors, social workers, career specialists, and school psychologists.
- (c) **Librarians/media specialists.**—Librarians/media specialists are staff members responsible for providing school library media services. These employees are responsible for evaluating, selecting, organizing, and managing media and technology resources, equipment, and related systems; facilitating access to information resources beyond the school; working with teachers to make resources available in the instructional programs; assisting teachers and students in media productions; and instructing students in the location and use of information resources.
- (d) **Other instructional staff.** — Other instructional staff are staff members who are part of the instructional staff but are not classified in one of the categories specified in paragraphs (a)-(c). Included in this classification are primary

specialists, learning resource specialists, instructional trainers, adjunct educators certified pursuant to s. 1012.57, and similar positions.

- (e) **Education paraprofessionals.**—Education paraprofessionals are individuals who are under the direct supervision of an instructional staff member, aiding the instructional process. Included in this classification are classroom paraprofessionals in regular instruction, exceptional education paraprofessionals, career education paraprofessionals, adult education paraprofessionals, library paraprofessionals, physical education and playground paraprofessionals, and other school-level paraprofessionals.

7. Where can I go to access my ACT official score report?

Helpful Links: <http://www.actstudent.org/scores/>
https://services.actstudent.org/OA_HTML/actibeCAcdLogin.jsp

- Create an account, then choose the date you took the test. If you don't remember the exact date, estimate.
- If you took the test before 2007, you may not have an ACT identification number.
- You can choose to have a copy sent to your home address.
- You can choose "I don't know" if you can't remember specific information.

Telephone: (319) 337-1270

- There is a worksheet to complete before you call, and an additional charge for a phone order.

8. Where can I go to access my SAT official score report?

Helpful Links: <https://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/send-old-sat-scores>

Mail: SAT Program
P.O. Box 7503
London, KY, 40742-7503

Telephone: (866) 756-7346

- When you call, have the following information ready:
 - Current name and address
 - Test date and registration number (if available)
 - Name and address at the time you tested
 - College and scholarship program codes of score recipients
 - Credit card number and expiration date

9. Is there a cost associated with requesting official score reports?

Yes, there is a cost associated with requesting an official **ACT** score report. Please refer to <http://www.actstudent.org/scores/send/costs.html> for information on requesting ACT score reports.

Yes, there is a cost associated with requesting an official **SAT** score report. Please refer to <https://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/send-old-sat-scores> for information on requesting SAT score reports.

10. Can the District request my official SAT or ACT score reports?

No, you will need to request the official ACT or SAT score report from the applicable company.

11. Can I submit official transcripts with the SAT or ACT scores as evidence of a qualifying composite score?

Yes, the District will accept official transcripts with SAT or ACT composite score with National Percentile Ranks in effect at the time the test was taken as evidence of a qualifying composite score.

12. If I submitted an official SAT or ACT score report previously, do I need to resubmit an official score report?

If you received the Best and Brightest Scholarship in FY16 (2015-2016 school year), FY17 (2016-2017 school year), or FY18 (2017-2018 school year) documentation you previously submitted may already be on file with the District. Due to recent changes in Florida Statute, the District will need to review all documentation previously submitted in order to determine eligibility for FY19 (2018-2019 school year). In order to improve your chances of eligibility, you are encouraged to submit an application along with any appropriate documentation.

13. Does an official SAT or ACT score report need to be sent directly to the District?

No, an official score report does not need to be sent directly to the District.

14. Can I retake the ACT or SAT in order to be eligible for the scholarship?

Yes; however, the District must receive the official score report by November 1, 2018.

- Employees who take the ACT assessment, should not register to take the ACT Writing Test, since it is not included in the composite score and is not needed to qualify for the scholarship.
- The ACT Writing Test may slow down the reporting process resulting in untimely submission of evidence of qualifying scores to the District.

15. What is the deadline for submitting documentation to the District?

Applications and documentation must be submitted to Compensation & Labor Relations by 4:30 p.m. on November 1, 2018, through the [electronic application process](#). Applications not submitted through the electronic application process will not be accepted. Please be sure to submit all related documentation, as the District will not review any applications until after the submission deadline.

16. Where do I send my application for the Best and Brightest Scholarship?

All applications must be submitted through the [electronic application process](#).

17. Am I eligible to receive a Best and Brightest Scholarship if I am a former employee (retired, resigned, etc.), but received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Highly Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position?

No, to qualify for the scholarship you must be employed by the District at the time of the award and at the time of disbursement of funds by the District.

18. Am I eligible to receive a Best and Brightest Scholarship if I was a classroom teacher in FY18 (2017-2018 school year) and received a Final Performance Evaluation rating of Highly Effective for FY18 (2017-2018 school year) for an instructional staff position, but I am not currently a classroom teacher as defined by Florida Statute 1012.01?

Yes, changes in Florida Statute 1012.01 now allow classroom teachers during the FY18 (2017-2018) school year that leave the classroom during FY19 (2-18-2019) to receive the scholarship during the FY19 (2018-2019) school year.

19. If eligible, will I receive the full \$6,000.00, \$1,200.00, or up to \$800.00?

No, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) awards each qualified recipient the amount of the scholarship as a pretax bonus. All applicable taxes must be withheld.

20. How will I be informed if I am a recipient of the bonus?

You will receive an email notification from Compensation & Labor Relations after January 2, 2019 informing you of your eligibility status as determined by the District and will received an email notification on or before March 1, 2019, informing you of the disbursement of funds.

21. When will I receive the bonus?

All eligible classroom teachers will receive the bonus prior to April 1, 2019.

22. Is the bonus subject to payroll and income taxes?

Yes, the bonus is subject to payroll and income taxes.

23. I have been awarded the Best and Brightest Scholarship prior to this school year. Am I eligible again this year? Do I need to resubmit an application and score results?

Employees who received the Best and Brightest Scholarship in prior years must complete the electronic application process this year to be eligible to receive the Best and Brightest Scholarship. If you submitted SAT or ACT test scores in prior years, this information will be recorded as part of the electronic application process and you will not need to resubmit test scores unless notified.

24. Who can I contact if I still have questions or concerns?

Please contact your school administrator for additional information.