

By Senators Scott, Diaz-Balart, King, Sullivan, Casas, Latvala, Campbell and Horne

31-806-00

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to education; creating s.  
3           228.507, F.S.; directing the Commissioner of  
4           Education to make recommendations to the  
5           Legislature for funding off-site learning  
6           grants; providing for a review panel; providing  
7           requirements for grant recipients; authorizing  
8           rulemaking; providing an effective date.

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10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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12           Section 1. Section 228.507, Florida Statutes, is  
13 created to read:

14           228.507 Off-site learning grants.--  
15           (1)(a) The Commissioner of Education shall annually  
16 make recommendations to the Legislature for funding off-site  
17 learning grants to nonprofit and community-based  
18 organizations, including mathematics, science, art, and  
19 environmental facilities that provide learning opportunities  
20 for public school students in nontraditional settings.  
21 Organizations must demonstrate the educational components of  
22 their program. Funding from the Public Education Capital  
23 Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund as authorized in s. 235.42,  
24 the Florida School Improvement and Academic Achievement Trust  
25 Fund as authorized by s. 236.12295, the Classrooms First  
26 Program as authorized in s. 235.187, the effort index grants  
27 as authorized in s. 235.186, and the Public Education Capital  
28 Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund as authorized in s. 9, Art.  
29 XII of the State Constitution may not be used for off-site  
30 learning grants.

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1           (b) In making recommendations, the commissioner shall  
2 annually appoint a review panel to assist in the grant-review  
3 process. Review panel members shall be appointed to serve for  
4 1-year terms. The panel shall review grant applications and  
5 make recommendations to the commissioner concerning the  
6 relative merits of the applicants. The department shall by  
7 rule establish criteria for reviewing grant applications to  
8 ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws  
9 relating to discrimination and conflicts of interest.

10           (c) The review panel shall provide a forum for public  
11 comment before voting on any grant application.

12           (2) The commissioner shall annually include in the  
13 department's legislative budget request a recommendation for  
14 funding off-site learning grants. The recommendation must  
15 include the panel's ranking of applicants and recommended  
16 funding levels for each grant.

17           (3)(a) Upon appropriation by the Legislature of  
18 funding for these grants, the department shall execute a  
19 contract with each organization which must contain information  
20 relating to the program, the projected operating income and  
21 expenses, and other provisions considered necessary by the  
22 department for the administration of the program.

23           (b) Each recipient organization must submit an annual  
24 report to the department detailing the expenditure of the  
25 funds and is subject to the auditing provisions and rules of  
26 the department.

27           (c) Each organization shall have an annual postaudit  
28 or independent attestation of its financial accounts as  
29 specified in s. 216.349 conducted by an independent certified  
30 public accountant. The annual audit report must be submitted  
31 to the department for review. The department may require and

1 receive from the recipient institution or from its independent  
2 auditor any detail or supplemental data relating to the  
3 operation of the institution.

4 (d) The department shall adopt rules necessary to  
5 administer this section.

6 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
7 law.

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SENATE SUMMARY

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Requires the Commissioner of Education to request funding for off-site learning grants. Establishes a review panel to assist in the grant-making process. Provides requirements for the nonprofit and community-based organization grant recipients.