

By Representative Sanderson

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to offsite learning grants;  
 3           creating s. 229.604, F.S.; establishing the  
 4           Florida Offsite Learning Grant Program to  
 5           provide funding to enable nonprofit and  
 6           community-based organizations to provide  
 7           learning opportunities for public school  
 8           students in nontraditional settings; providing  
 9           a grant application and review process;  
 10          requiring the Commissioner of Education to  
 11          annually appoint a review panel to review and  
 12          rank grant applications; providing for the  
 13          review panel to be reimbursed for travel and  
 14          expenses; providing for the award of grants;  
 15          providing for funding of the program; requiring  
 16          an annual report and postaudit of each grant  
 17          recipient; providing for the adoption of rules;  
 18          providing an effective date.

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

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 22           Section 1. Section 229.604, Florida Statutes, is  
 23          created to read:  
 24           229.604 Florida Offsite Learning Grants.--There is  
 25          created the Florida Offsite Learning Grant Program to be  
 26          administered by the Department of Education to provide funds  
 27          to enable nonprofit and community-based organizations,  
 28          including math, science, art, and environmental facilities, to  
 29          provide learning opportunities for public school students in  
 30          nontraditional settings.

31           (1) GRANT APPLICATION; REVIEW.--

1       (a) Nonprofit and community-based organizations may  
2 apply to the Commissioner of Education for a Florida Offsite  
3 Learning Grant, and shall provide such information as the  
4 commissioner requires.

5       (b) The commissioner shall annually appoint a review  
6 panel to assist in the grant application review process by  
7 reviewing grant applications, ranking applicants, and  
8 providing to the commissioner information regarding the  
9 relative merits of the applicants and recommended funding  
10 levels of each applicant. The department shall, by rule,  
11 establish criteria for reviewing grant applications to ensure  
12 compliance with applicable federal and state laws relating to  
13 discrimination and conflicts of interest. The panel shall  
14 provide a forum for public comment prior to making a  
15 recommendation regarding the award of any grant. Members of  
16 the panel shall serve for 1-year terms and shall not receive  
17 any compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed  
18 for travel and expenses incurred in the performance of their  
19 duties as provided in s. 112.061.

20       (2) AWARD OF GRANTS; FUNDING.--

21       (a) Based on the recommendations of the review panel,  
22 the commissioner shall annually include in the department's  
23 legislative budget request a recommendation for funding for  
24 the Florida Offsite Learning Grant Program. The recommendation  
25 shall include the panel's ranking of applicants and  
26 recommended funding levels for each.

27       (b) Upon appropriation by the Legislature of funds for  
28 the Florida Offsite Learning Grant Program, the department  
29 shall execute a contract with each organization for which  
30 funding is included in the General Appropriations Act which  
31 contains requirements relative to the program, the projected

1 operating income and expenses, and other provisions deemed  
2 necessary by the department for the administration of the  
3 program.

4 (c) An organization that is awarded a Florida Offsite  
5 Learning Grant may not receive any funding through the Public  
6 Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund, the  
7 School Infrastructure Thrift (SIT) Program funds, or any other  
8 source of public capital outlay funding for public schools.

9 (3) ANNUAL REPORT.--Each recipient organization must  
10 submit an annual report to the department detailing the  
11 expenditure of the funds and the educational components of the  
12 program, and such other information as the department  
13 requires, according to rules of the department.

14 (4) AUDITS.--Each organization shall cause an annual  
15 postaudit or independent attestation of its financial  
16 accounts, as specified in s. 216.349, conducted by an  
17 independent certified public accountant. The annual audit  
18 report must be submitted to the department for review. The  
19 department may require and receive from the recipient  
20 institution, or from its independent auditor, any detail or  
21 supplemental data relative to the operation of such  
22 institution.

23 (5) RULES.--The Department of Education shall adopt  
24 rules necessary to implement the provisions of this section  
25 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54.

26 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
27 law.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

Creates the Florida Offsite Learning Grant Program to provide funding to enable nonprofit and community-based organizations to provide learning opportunities for public school students in nontraditional settings. Provides a grant application and review process. Requires the Commissioner of Education to annually appoint a review panel to review and rank grant applications. Provides for the review panel to be reimbursed for travel and expenses. Provides for the award of grants. Provides for funding of the program. Requires an annual report and postaudit of each grant recipient. Provides for the adoption of rules.