

By Representative Mack

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 funding requirements;
 7 providing for a review panel; providing for the
 8 adoption of criteria for reviewing grant
 9 applications; requiring the Commissioner of
 10 Education to include funding for the grants in
 11 the department's legislative budget request;
 12 providing requirements for grant recipients;
 13 requiring compliance with certain statutes;
 14 requiring the adoption of rules; providing an
 15 effective date.

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

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 19 Section 1. Section 228.507, Florida Statutes, is
 20 created to read:

21 228.507 Off-site learning grants.--
 22 (1)(a) The Commissioner of Education shall annually
 23 make recommendations to the Legislature for funding off-site
 24 learning grants to nonprofit and community-based
 25 organizations, including mathematics, science, and
 26 environmental facilities that provide educational programs and
 27 learning opportunities for elementary and secondary public
 28 school students in nontraditional settings. The commissioner
 29 shall adopt required eligibility criteria for types of
 30 organizations that may be considered to receive such grants,
 31 including a requirement that the program demonstrates the

1 educational components required to receive a grant. Funding
2 from the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service
3 Trust Fund as authorized in s. 235.42, the Classrooms First
4 Program as authorized in s. 235.187, the effort index grants
5 as authorized in s. 235.186, the School Infrastructure Thrift
6 Program as authorized in ss. 235.2155 and 235.216, and the
7 Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund as
8 authorized in s. 9, Art. XII of the State Constitution may not
9 be used for off-site learning grants.

10 (b) In making recommendations, the commissioner shall
11 annually appoint a review panel to assist in the grant review
12 process. Review panel members shall be appointed to serve for
13 1-year terms. The panel shall review grant applications and
14 make recommendations to the commissioner concerning the
15 relative merits of the applications. The department shall, by
16 rule, establish criteria for reviewing grant applications to
17 ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws
18 relating to discrimination and conflicts of interest.

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

21 (2) The commissioner shall annually include in the
22 department's legislative budget request a recommendation for
23 funding off-site learning grants. The recommendation must
24 include the panel's ranking of applicants and recommended
25 funding levels for each grant.

26 (3)(a) Funding for the off-site learning grants shall
27 be subject to legislative appropriation in the General
28 Appropriations Act. Upon appropriation by the Legislature of
29 funding for these grants, the department shall execute a
30 project grant award to each organization. The grant must
31 contain information relating to the program, the projected

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

4 (b) Each recipient organization must submit an annual
5 report to the department detailing the expenditure of the
6 funds, data on the impact of the project on student
7 achievement, and other information as required by the
8 department. The annual report is subject to the auditing
9 provisions and rules of the department.

10 (c) Each grant recipient shall comply with all
11 provisions of statute and rule as outlined in the grant.

12 (d) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to ss.
13 120.536(1) and 120.54 necessary to administer this section.

14 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
15 law.

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18 HOUSE SUMMARY

19
20 Creates the Florida Offsite Learning Grant Program to
21 provide funding to enable nonprofit and community-based
22 organizations to provide learning opportunities for
23 public school students in nontraditional settings.
24 Provides a grant application and review process. Requires
25 the Commissioner of Education to annually appoint a
26 review panel to review and rank grant applications.
27 Provides for the review panel to be reimbursed for travel
28 and expenses. Provides for the award of grants. Provides
29 for funding of the program. Requires an annual report and
30 postaudit of each grant recipient. Provides for the
31 adoption of rules.