

By Senator Montford

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Teacher Scholarship Program;
3 creating s. 1009.897, F.S.; establishing the Teacher
4 Scholarship Program within the Department of
5 Education; providing a purpose of the scholarship
6 program; specifying student eligibility requirements
7 for undergraduate and graduate scholarships under the
8 program; requiring each postsecondary institution to
9 annually certify to the department by a specified date
10 the names of students who are eligible for the
11 program; requiring each postsecondary institution to
12 notify the department throughout the academic year of
13 whose scholarship should be rescinded due to
14 disenrollment from an eligible teacher program;
15 providing for disbursement of the scholarship awards;
16 providing for stipends; specifying funding and the
17 department's authority to prorate awards under a
18 certain circumstance; providing for rulemaking;
19 providing an effective date.
20

21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
22

23 Section 1. Section 1009.897, Florida Statutes, is created
24 to read:

25 1009.897 The Teacher Scholarship Program.—

26 (1) The Teacher Scholarship Program is established within
27 the Department of Education to encourage students who exhibit
28 academic excellence to pursue a career in education. The program
29 shall provide scholarships to eligible students for upper-
30 division undergraduate and graduate study. The program shall
31 also provide a one-time stipend to students who complete their
32 program of study and their first year of employment as a

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33 classroom teacher at a public school in this state.

34 (2) To be eligible for an undergraduate scholarship under
35 this program, a student must meet all of the following
36 requirements:

37 (a) Be a full-time, upper-division undergraduate student in
38 a teacher preparation program approved by the department
39 pursuant to s. 1004.04.

40 (b) The general student eligibility requirements for state
41 financial aid as specified in s. 1009.40, except as otherwise
42 provided in this section.

43 (c) The following academic requirements:

44 1. Earn an SAT score that corresponds to the 80th SAT
45 percentile rank or a concordant ACT score; and

46 2. Maintain a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade point
47 average of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale.

48 (3) To be eligible for a graduate scholarship under this
49 program, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

50 (a) The criteria specified in paragraphs (2) (b) and (c).

51 (b) Hold a bachelor's degree from any college or university
52 accredited by a regional accrediting association as defined by
53 State Board of Education rule.

54 (c) Be a full-time graduate student in an eligible
55 postsecondary graduate teacher education program leading to a
56 master's, specialist, or doctoral degree.

57 (d) Not have already received a teaching certificate
58 resulting from an undergraduate degree in education.

59 (e) Not have received an undergraduate scholarship pursuant
60 to this section.

61 (4) Each postsecondary institution shall do all of the

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62 following:

63 (a) Annually certify to the department by September 1 the
64 names of students eligible for the program.

65 (b) Throughout the academic year, notify the department of
66 any scholarship recipient whose scholarship should be rescinded
67 due to disenrollment from the teacher education program.

68 (5) (a) An eligible undergraduate student may be awarded a
69 scholarship of up to \$5,000 per semester, not to exceed \$10,000
70 per year, for 2 undergraduate years or for a maximum of 3 years
71 for programs that require a 5th year of instruction to obtain an
72 initial teaching certification.

73 (b) An eligible graduate student may be awarded a
74 scholarship of up to \$5,000 per semester, not to exceed \$10,000
75 per year, for up to 2 years.

76 (6) (a) A scholarship recipient may receive a one-time
77 stipend of \$10,000 after:

78 1. Completing the teacher education program required under
79 this section and earning a bachelor's or graduate degree, as
80 applicable;

81 2. Notifying the department, in a manner prescribed by
82 department rule, that he or she has been employed by a school
83 district in this state as a classroom teacher as defined in s.
84 1012.01(2)(a); and

85 3. Completing his or her first year of employment as a
86 classroom teacher at a public school in this state.

87 (b) No later than June 1 of each year, the department shall
88 disburse the stipend to each school district for an eligible
89 candidate whose employment is confirmed as of May 1. A candidate
90 who is hired after the first quarter of the academic year is

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91 eligible for a prorated stipend as determined by the department.
92 A candidate may not receive the stipend and an award under s.
93 1012.731.

94 (7) This section shall be implemented only to the extent
95 specifically funded and authorized by law. The department may
96 prorate the scholarships and stipends authorized by this section
97 if the appropriation is insufficient to fully fund each eligible
98 student.

99 (8) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to
100 administer this program.

101 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.