

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, and the criteria
6 for, student eligibility for the program; specifying
7 duties of each postsecondary institution for the
8 program; providing for disbursement of the scholarship
9 awards; providing for stipends; specifying funding and
10 the department's authority to prorate awards under a
11 certain circumstance; providing for rulemaking;
12 providing an effective date.

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

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16 Section 1. Section 1009.897, Florida Statutes, is created
17 to read:

18 1009.897 The Teacher Scholarship Program.—

19 (1) The Teacher Scholarship Program is established within
20 the department to encourage students who exhibit academic
21 excellence to pursue a career in education. The program shall
22 provide scholarships to eligible students for upper-division
23 undergraduate and graduate study. The program shall also provide
24 a one-time stipend to students who complete their program of
25 study and their first year of employment as a classroom teacher
26 at a public school in this state.

27 (2) To be eligible for an undergraduate scholarship under
28 the program, a student must meet all of the following
29 requirements:

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

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

36 (c) The following academic requirements:

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

39 2. Maintain a minimum cumulative undergraduate grade point
40 average of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale.

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

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

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

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

50 (d) Not have previously received a teaching certificate
51 resulting from an undergraduate degree in education.

52 (e) Not have received an undergraduate scholarship pursuant
53 to this section.

54 (4) Each postsecondary institution shall do all of the
55 following:

56 (a) By each September 1, certify to the department the
57 names of students eligible for the program.

58 (b) Throughout the academic year, notify the department of

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59 any scholarship recipient whose scholarship should be rescinded
60 due to disenrollment from the teacher education program.

61 (5) (a) An eligible undergraduate student may be awarded a
62 scholarship of up to \$5,000 per semester, not to exceed \$10,000
63 per year, for 2 undergraduate years or for a maximum of 3 years
64 for a program that requires a fifth year of instruction to
65 obtain an initial teaching certification.

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

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

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

74 2. Notifying the department, in a manner prescribed by
75 department rule, that he or she has been employed by a school
76 district in this state as a classroom teacher as defined in s.
77 1012.01(2); and

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

80 (b) No later than each June 1, the department shall
81 disburse the stipend to each school district for an eligible
82 candidate whose employment is confirmed as of May 1. A candidate
83 who is hired after the first quarter of the academic year is
84 eligible for a prorated stipend as determined by the department.
85 A candidate may not receive both the stipend and an award under
86 s. 1012.731.

87 (7) This section shall be implemented only to the extent

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88 specifically funded and authorized by law. The department may
89 prorate the scholarships and stipends authorized by this section
90 if the appropriation is insufficient to fully fund each eligible
91 student.

92 (8) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to
93 administer the program.

94 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.