

By Senator Montford

3-00109-20

20201012__

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

13
14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

15
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 careers 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:

3-00109-20

20201012__

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) Meet the general student eligibility requirements for
34 state financial aid as specified in s. 1009.40, except as
35 otherwise provided in this section.

36 (c) Meet 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) Meet the criteria specified in paragraphs (2) (b) and
44 (c).

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

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

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

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

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

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

3-00109-20

20201012__

59 (b) Throughout the academic year, notify the department of
60 any scholarship recipient whose scholarship must be rescinded
61 due to disenrollment from the teacher education program.

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

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

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

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

75 2. Notifying the department, in a manner prescribed by
76 department rule, that he or she has been employed by a school
77 district in this state as a classroom teacher as defined in s.
78 1012.01(2) (a); and

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

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

3-00109-20

20201012__

88 (7) This section shall be implemented only to the extent
89 specifically funded and authorized by law. The department may
90 prorate the scholarships and stipends authorized by this section
91 if the appropriation is insufficient to fully fund each eligible
92 student.

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

95 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.