

Q & A SCHOOL RECOGNITION PROGRAM (A+ Funds)

Following are answers to commonly asked questions about the School Recognition Program (A+ Funds):

FLORIDA STATUTE

1. What statute governs the Florida School Recognition Program?

Florida Statute 1008.36.

2. What exactly does the statute say?

The 1008.36 Florida School Recognition Program states:

- “(1) The Legislature finds that there is a need for a performance incentive program for outstanding faculty and staff in highly productive schools. The Legislature further finds that performance-based incentives are commonplace in the private sector and should be infused into the public sector as a reward for productivity.
- (2) The Florida School Recognition Program is created to provide financial awards to public schools that:
- (a) Sustain high performance by receiving a school grade of “A,” making excellent progress; or
 - (b) Demonstrate exemplary improvement due to innovation and effort by improving a letter grade.
- (3) All public schools, including charter schools, that receive a school grade pursuant to s. 1008.34 are eligible to participate in the program.
- (4) All selected schools shall receive financial awards depending on the availability of funds appropriated and the number and size of schools selected to receive an award. Funds must be distributed to the school's fiscal agent and placed in the school's account and must be used for purposes listed in subsection (5) as determined jointly by the school's staff and school advisory council. If school staff and the school advisory council cannot reach agreement by February 1, the awards must be equally distributed to all classroom teachers currently teaching in the school.
- (5) School recognition awards must be used for the following:
- (a) Nonrecurring bonuses to the faculty and staff;
 - (b) Nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials to assist in maintaining and improving student performance; or
 - (c) Temporary personnel for the school to assist in maintaining and improving student performance.

Notwithstanding statutory provisions to the contrary, incentive awards are not subject to collective bargaining.”

3. What does nonrecurring mean?

Nonrecurring means one time only.

PROPOSALS

1. Who makes proposals on how to spend the money?

The School Advisory Council (SAC) creates proposals, but the faculty and staff must approve by secret ballot.

2. What if individuals don't like the SAC proposals?

They can cast their vote for “None of the Above”.

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3. ***If all SAC proposals fail, what happens?***
SAC develops more proposals and presents it/them for another vote.
4. ***Can we elect to do a combination of things with the money, or must it be spent for one purpose?***
The money may be divided among several projects, i.e., bonus plus equipment/material or bonus plus temporary staff, etc.
5. ***Can the principal add his/her proposal(s) to the ballot?***
No, all proposals must be developed through SAC.
6. ***Can the school share money with other district schools?***
Yes, if it is a SAC proposal and a majority of the staff vote to approve it.
7. ***How many proposals does the SAC need to give to the employees?***
The SAC may create several proposals, although the final vote may be a choice of one (1) or two (2) proposal(s) and a choice of none of the above.
8. ***How are the SAC proposals communicated to the faculty and staff at the school?***
They are posted a minimum of three days in prominent locations so that all faculty and staff have the opportunity to view them.

VOTE

1. ***Who votes?***
All school employees currently on staff.
2. ***Can past employees who transferred to another location vote?***
No.
3. ***What is a majority vote?***
One more than half of the total school employees voting.
4. ***Can parents vote?***
No. But if they are voting members of SAC, they can help develop proposals for use of funds.
5. ***Can a faculty or staff member who is absent on the day of voting vote?***
Employees absent on the day of the voting should be allowed to vote by secret ballot upon the day of their return or prior to their absence as long as it is within a 24 hour period of the actual voting.

BONUS

1. ***Who is eligible for a bonus?***
Current and past employees of the school, including those on leave, as well as temporary and substitute personnel, if they are included in the SAC proposal and it passes with a majority vote.
2. ***Can staff who transferred (voluntary or involuntary) to another school get the bonus?***
Yes, if it is in the SAC proposal and it passes with a majority vote.

Note: *Staff should consider those employees who were transferred and make a conscious choice if they will be included.*

3. ***Can retirees receive the bonus?***

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Yes, if it is in the SAC proposal and it passes with a majority vote. This bonus will not affect their retirement benefits.

4. Are administrators, non-instructional, part-time, temps and subs eligible?

Yes, if that is in the SAC proposal and it passes with a majority vote.

5. Does everyone get the same amount?

It is up to SAC and the vote. They can choose to give different amounts to different classifications.

PURCHASING

1. Must the school follow district procedures?

Yes.

2. Can we use vendors that are not on the School Board list?

No. All purchases must be in accordance to School Board Policy #3320.

TEMPORARY STAFF

1. Can we hire new employees?

Yes, but only for this school year. Please follow the hiring procedures detailed in the appropriate contract.

2. Can we hire teachers?

Yes. A teacher recommended for employment for more than six months may be hired for this year only. The advertisement must state "School Recognition Temporary Teacher". The teacher must sign a form agreeing to work only for this school year. When hiring for six months or less, recommend the individual as an interim substitute and indicate on the Interim Substitute Recommendation Form that the 'reason' is for using School Recognition Funds. Please follow the hiring procedures detailed in the appropriate contract. Please note that if there are certified teachers on the layoff list for the position, they must be recalled to the position before a temporary person can be hired.

3. Can we hire other personnel?

You may hire paraprofessionals and any other non-instructional personnel. Please contact Non-Instructional staffing regarding hiring. If laid off non-instructional personnel remain on the layoff list in the classification for which you are hiring, they will be recalled before any new hires are allowed.

4. Are these full-time or part-time employees?

They may be either.

5. Can the principal hire without SAC approval?

No. Hiring of temporary staff must be a SAC proposal, which is approved by faculty and staff. Once the proposal is approved, the hiring decision is the principal's decision.