1   A bill to be entitled
2   An act relating to the Florida Best and Brightest
3   Teacher Scholarship Program; creating s. 1012.731,
4   F.S.; providing legislative intent; establishing the
5   Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship
6   Program; providing eligibility criteria; requiring a
7   school district to annually submit the number of
8   eligible teachers to the department; providing for
9   funding and the disbursement of funds; defining the
10   term "school district" for purposes of the act;
11   providing an effective date.
12
13   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
14
15   Section 1. Section 1012.731, Florida Statutes, is created
16   to read:
17   1012.731 The Florida Best and Brightest Teacher
18   Scholarship Program.—
19   (1) The Legislature recognizes that, second only to
20   parents, teachers play the most critical role within schools in
21   preparing students to achieve a high level of academic
22   performance. The Legislature further recognizes that research
23   has linked student outcomes to a teacher's own academic
24   achievement. Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to
25   designate teachers who have achieved high academic standards
26   during their own education as Florida's best and brightest

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27 teacher scholars.
28   (2)   There is created the Florida Best and Brightest
29 Teacher Scholarship Program to be administered by the Department
30 of Education. Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, the
31 scholarship program shall provide categorical funding for
32 scholarships to be awarded to teachers who have demonstrated a
33 high level of academic achievement.
34   (3)(a) To be eligible for a scholarship, a teacher:
35   1. Must have scored at or above the 80th percentile on
36 either the SAT or the ACT based upon the percentile ranks in
37 effect when the teacher took the assessment and have been
38 evaluated as highly effective pursuant to s. 1012.34; or
39   2. If the teacher is a first-year teacher who has not been
40 evaluated pursuant to s. 1012.34, must have scored at or above
41 the 80th percentile on either the SAT or the ACT based upon the
42 percentile ranks in effect when the teacher took the assessment.
43   (b)   In order to demonstrate eligibility for an award, an
44 eligible teacher must submit to the school district, no later
45 than October 1, an official record of his or her SAT or ACT
46 score demonstrating that the teacher scored at or above the 80th
47 percentile based upon the percentile ranks in effect when the
48 teacher took the assessment. Once a teacher is deemed eligible
49 by the school district, the teacher shall remain eligible as
50 long as he or she is employed by the school district and
51 maintains or, if the teacher is a first-year teacher, earns the
52 evaluation designation of highly effective pursuant to s.

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53 | 1012.34.
54 | (4) Annually, by December 1, each school district shall
55 | submit to the department the number of eligible teachers who
56 | qualify for the scholarship.
57 | (5) Annually, by February 1, the department shall disburse
58 | scholarship funds, in an amount prescribed annually by the
59 | Legislature in the General Appropriations Act, to each school
60 | district for each eligible teacher to receive a scholarship. If
61 | the number of eligible teachers exceeds the total appropriation
62 | authorized in the General Appropriation Act, the department
63 | shall prorate the per teacher scholarship amount.
64 | (6) Annually, by April 1, each school district shall
65 | provide payment of the scholarship to each eligible teacher.
66 | (7) For purposes of this section, the term "school
67 | district" includes the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
68 | and charter school governing boards.
69 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.

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