

## 1012.72. Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program

(1) The Legislature recognizes that teachers play a critical role in preparing students to achieve the high levels of academic performance expected by the Sunshine State Standards. The Legislature further recognizes the importance of identifying and rewarding teaching excellence and of encouraging good teachers to become excellent teachers. The Legislature finds that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has established high and rigorous standards for accomplished teaching and has developed a national voluntary system for assessing and certifying teachers who demonstrate teaching excellence by meeting those standards. It is therefore the Legislature's intent to reward teachers who demonstrate teaching excellence by attaining NBPTS certification and sharing their expertise with other teachers.

(2) The Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program is created to provide categorical funding for bonuses for teaching excellence. The bonuses may be provided for initial certification for up to one 10-year period. The Department of Education shall distribute to each school district an amount as prescribed annually by the Legislature for the Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program. For purposes of this section, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind shall be considered a school district. Unless otherwise provided in the General Appropriations Act, each distribution shall be the sum of the amounts earned for the following:

(a) An annual bonus equal to 10 percent of the prior fiscal year's statewide average salary for classroom teachers to be distributed to the school district to be paid to each individual who holds NBPTS certification and is employed by the district school board or by a public school within the school district. The district school board shall distribute the annual bonus to each individual who meets the requirements of this paragraph and who is certified annually by the district to have demonstrated satisfactory teaching performance pursuant to s. 1012.34. The annual bonus may be paid as a single payment or divided into not more than three payments.

(b) An annual bonus equal to 10 percent of the prior fiscal year's statewide average salary for classroom teachers to be distributed to the school district to be paid to each individual who meets the requirements of paragraph (a) and agrees, in writing, to provide the equivalent of 12 workdays of mentoring and related services to public school teachers within the state who do not hold NBPTS certification. Related services must include instruction in helping teachers work more effectively with the families of their students. The district school board shall distribute the annual bonus in a single payment following the completion of all required mentoring and related services for the year. It is not the intent of the Legislature to remove excellent teachers from their assigned classrooms; therefore, credit may not be granted by a school district or public school for mentoring or related services provided during student contact time during the 196 days of required service for the school year.

(c) The employers' share of social security and Medicare taxes for those teachers who receive bonus amounts under paragraph (a) or paragraph (b).

(3) If the funds available in any fiscal year are insufficient to pay in full the annual bonuses for certification and for providing mentoring and related services, payments for providing mentoring and related services shall be prorated among the eligible recipients. If the mentoring and related services are prorated, school districts may pay a portion or all of the balance. If funds are insufficient to pay in full the annual bonuses for certification, payments of bonuses for certification shall be prorated among the eligible recipients.