



Council for Lifelong Learning
School Recognition Program

**Fact
Sheet**

September 2001

<p>1. What is the Florida School Recognition Program?</p>	<p>The Florida School Recognition Program (program) was created in 1997 to provide increased autonomy and financial awards to schools that have sustained high student performance OR to schools that demonstrate substantial improvement in student performance. The A+ Legislation greatly expanded this program and standardized criteria for awards.</p>
<p>2. Which schools are eligible for recognition under this program?</p>	<p>Schools that receive an "A" OR schools that improve at least one letter grade from the previous year are eligible for recognition and financial awards. Schools that receive an "A" or schools that improve at least two letter grades are eligible for increased autonomy.</p>
<p>3. What is meant by "increased autonomy"?</p>	<p>Schools that meet the criteria for increased autonomy may be given deregulated status as outlined in s. 228.0565 (5), (7), (8), (9), and (10), F.S. They may be exempt from all statutes of the Florida School Code, except those pertaining to civil rights and student health, safety, and welfare. In addition, they have greater authority over the school's total budget, including, but not limited to, allocation of instructional staff and the acquisition of instructional materials, equipment, and technology. The total school budget includes funds generated from the FEFP, state categoricals, lottery funds, grants, and local funds.</p>
<p>4. Are schools that do not receive a letter grade eligible for school recognition?</p>	<p>No. Section 231.2905(4), F.S., specifies that the School Recognition Program use school grades to determine eligibility. In addition, the Department of Education's rules guiding the program also require schools to have a designated school grade to participate in the program.</p>
<p>5. Do schools have to apply to receive the award?</p>	<p>Award schools will be asked to provide information on successful programs and practices to share with other schools. Their eligibility for an award is based solely on the criteria specified above.</p>
<p>6. What is the award amount for each school?</p>	<p>Award amounts are equivalent to \$100 per student based on the school's prior year enrollment.</p>
<p>7. How many schools are eligible for school recognition this year?</p>	<p>The Department of Education reports that 842 schools are eligible for \$76.4 million in recognition and financial awards for the 2001 School Recognition Program. In the 1999-2000 school year, 1,015 schools received a total of \$80.7 million. This included 924 improved schools and 91 sustained "A" schools. Of the improved schools, 573 improved one</p>

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	performance grade, 312 improved two grades, 37 improved three grades, and two schools improved four grades.
8. How may the funds from this program be used?	The funds may be used for nonrecurring bonuses to the faculty and staff, nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials, or for temporary personnel to assist the school in maintaining or improving student performance.
9. Who decides how the award will be used?	The school's staff and the school advisory council (SAC) jointly decide the use of the funds within the above stated purposes. Local schools are free to develop a process for reaching a decision, bearing in mind that the school staff and SAC must approve the planned use of funds. The decision at the school level must not conflict with any state policies on expenditures of these funds.
10. May schools share their award with other school(s)?	Yes. Schools may decide to share their awards with feeder schools, low performing schools, and new schools receiving faculty and students from the award school. The decision must be approved by the school staff and the SAC. The funds should still be expended for the purposes outlined in law.
11. May faculty and staff who were at the school in 2000-2001, but who are no longer there, receive a bonus?	Yes, if the staff and SAC currently at the awarded school make that decision.
12. Are these funds subject to collective bargaining?	No. According to s. 231.2905(3) F.S., "Notwithstanding statutory provision to the contrary, incentive awards are not subject to collective bargaining."
13. Must all the funds be spent in the same fiscal year?	There is no time limit for the expenditure of funds. To maximize their benefits, it is good practice to spend performance awards in the same year they are received.
14. What are the applicable statutes and rules?	Section 231.2905, F.S. -- Florida School Recognition Program Rule 6A-1.09981(8), F.A.C. -- SBE definition on school autonomy
15. Where can I get additional information?	Florida Department of Education Division of Public Schools (850) 488-2601 www.firn.edu/doe Florida Department of Education Assessment & Evaluation Services (850) 488-0158 or 487-3940 The Florida House of Representatives

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	<p>Council for Lifelong Learning (850) 414-6694</p> <p>The Florida House of Representatives Committee on Education Innovation (850) 488-7451</p>
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