

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Consent Item**  
October 20, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Designation of Schools of Excellence

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**PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

For Approval

**AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION**

Section 1003.631, F.S.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Section 1003.631, Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to designate a school as a School of Excellence if the school's percentage of possible points earned in its school grade calculation is in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher for schools comprised of the same grade groupings (elementary, middle, high and combination) for at least two of the last three school years.

This agenda item will approve the list of Schools of Excellence and grant the Commissioner of Education the authority to designate a school, at any point during the year, as a School of Excellence if that school meets the criteria subsequent to the approval of the initial list of Schools of Excellence designated by the SBE for that school year.

Due to the cancellation of assessments and school grades for the 2019-20 school year, this is the first year that schools initially designated in 2017 needed to qualify again to renew their designation. Pursuant to Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Emergency Order No. 2021-EO-02, schools were not issued grades for the 2020-21 school year unless they opted in to receive their grade for all statutory purposes. Schools that did not opt in retained their existing designations. Therefore, schools already designated as a School of Excellence maintained that designation if they did not opt in for a school grade, even if the school was in year three of its designation and subject to the renewal requirement. Only schools for which an approved opt-in request was submitted by the school district superintendent or charter school governing board have a letter grade assigned for the 2020-21 school year and could be added to, or removed from, the list of schools designated as Schools of Excellence. For schools that did opt in, instead of ranking the final percent of points, as is normally done, we compared the final percent of points to the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile rank from 2018-19. If they met this threshold they are considered to be in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile for the 2020-21 school year.

In 2020-21, 767 schools were designated as a School of Excellence. Of these schools, 578 maintained their designation from 2018-19, 181 renewed their designation, and 8 were newly designated by opting in to their 2020-21 school grade and meeting the requirements for the first time.

A School of Excellence will have the following administrative flexibilities outlined in the law:

- exemption from any law or rule that requires a minimum period of daily or weekly instruction in reading;
- principal autonomy as provided under s. 1012.28(8), F.S.;

- instructional personnel may substitute one year of employment at the school for 20 inservice points, up to 60 points total in a five-year cycle, toward the renewal of a professional certificate;
- exemption from compliance with school district policies establishing times for the start and end of the school day; and
- calculation of class size compliance based on the average number of students at the school level.

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**Supporting Documentation Included:** Schools of Excellence: Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools, and Combination Schools

**Facilitator/Presenter:** Jacob Oliva, Senior Chancellor