

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Action Item
March 27, 2024

SUBJECT: Designation of Schools of Excellence

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

For Approval

AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION

Section 1003.631, F.S.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 1003.631(1)(a), 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 80th 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 reiterate the authority of the Commissioner of Education 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.

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 School of Excellence designations for the 2020-21 school year. Schools that chose not to opt in for the 2020-21 school year that were in year three in 2020-21 and retained their School of Excellence status, needed to qualify again in 2021-22 to renew their designation. Additionally, pursuant to section 1008.34(7), F.S., as amended by Senate Bill 1048 (2022), the 2022-23 school grades incorporate results from the new statewide assessments aligned to the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards, which include the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) and B.E.S.T.-aligned end-of-course (EOC) assessments. Given this, the school grades for 2022-23 serve as an informational baseline, and schools that were designated as a School of Excellence for the 2021-22 school year retained their status for the 2022-23 school year. Schools that were not on the list in the 2021-22 school year, but met all qualifications based on their 2022-23 informational baseline school grade, were designated as a School of Excellence for the 2022-23 school year.

In 2022-23, 783 schools were designated as a School of Excellence. Of these schools, 658 maintained their designation from 2021-22, 37 renewed their designation, and 88 were newly designated in 2022-23.

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 in-service 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.

Supporting Documentation Included: Schools of Excellence: Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools, and Combination Schools (under separate cover)

Facilitator: Adam Miller, Senior Chancellor