

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Conforming Bill
Relating to the Teacher of the Year and Ambassador for Education
Program

BILL

2025

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Teacher of the Year and Ambassador
3 for Education Program; amending s. 1012.77, F.S.;
4 authorizing certain charter school consortiums to submit
5 nominees for the Teacher of the Year and Ambassador for
6 Education; providing an effective date.

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8 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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10 Section 1. Section 1012.77, Florida Statutes, is amended
11 to read:

12 1012.77 Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education
13 Program.-

14 (1) ~~The Legislature recognizes that Florida continues to~~
15 ~~face teacher shortages and that fewer young people consider~~
16 ~~teaching as a career.~~ It is the intent of the Legislature to
17 promote the positive and rewarding aspects of being a teacher,
18 to encourage more individuals to become teachers, and to provide
19 annual sabbatical support for outstanding Florida teachers to
20 serve as goodwill ambassadors for education. The Legislature
21 further wishes to honor the memory of Christa McAuliffe, who
22 epitomized the challenge and inspiration that teaching can be.

23 (2) The Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education Program
24 is established to provide salary, travel, and other related
25 expenses annually for an outstanding Florida teacher to promote
26 the positive aspects of teaching as a career. The goals of the
27 program are to:

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- 28 (a) Enhance the stature of teachers and the teaching
29 profession.
- 30 (b) Promote the importance of quality education and
31 teaching for our future.
- 32 (c) Inspire and attract talented people to become teachers.
- 33 (d) Provide information regarding Florida's scholarship and
34 loan programs related to teaching.
- 35 (e) Promote the teaching profession within community and
36 business groups.
- 37 (f) Provide information to retired military personnel and
38 other individuals who might consider teaching as a second
39 career.
- 40 (g) Work with and represent the Department of Education, as
41 needed.
- 42 (h) Work with and encourage the efforts of school and
43 district teachers of the year.
- 44 (i) Support the activities of the Florida Future Educator
45 of America Program.
- 46 (j) Represent Florida teachers at business, trade,
47 education, and other conferences and meetings.
- 48 (k) Promote the teaching profession in other ways related
49 to the teaching responsibilities, background experiences, and
50 aspirations of the Ambassador for Education.
- 51 (3) The Teacher of the Year shall serve as the Ambassador
52 for Education. If the Teacher of the Year is unable to serve as
53 the Ambassador for Education, the first runner-up shall serve in
54 his or her place. The Department of Education shall establish

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55 application and selection procedures for determining an annual
56 teacher of the year. Applications and selection criteria shall
57 be developed and distributed annually by the Department of
58 Education to all eligible entities identified in subsection (4)
59 ~~school districts~~. The Commissioner of Education shall establish
60 a selection committee which assures representation from teacher
61 organizations, administrators, and parents to select the Teacher
62 of the Year and Ambassador for Education from among the
63 nominated ~~district~~ teachers of the year.

64 (4) Eligible entities to submit to the Department of
65 Education a nominee for the Teacher of the Year and Ambassador
66 for Education are:

67 (a) Florida school districts, including lab schools as
68 defined in s. 1002.32.

69 (b) Charter school consortia with at least thirty member
70 schools and an approved professional learning system on file
71 with the Department.

72 (54) (a) The Commissioner of Education shall pay an annual
73 salary, fringe benefits, travel costs, and other costs
74 associated with administering the program.

75 (b) The Ambassador for Education shall serve for 1 year,
76 from July 1 to June 30, and shall be assured of returning to his
77 or her teaching position upon completion of the program. The
78 ambassador will not have a break in creditable or continuous
79 service or employment for the period of time in which he or she
80 participates in the program.

81 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.