

## ACCORDING TO PEA:

### Distribution of School Recognition Money



School Recognitions Awards are funded separately in the state budget and are determined by the Department of Education. Our local District is notified of the Awards and acts as the fiscal agent to distribute the money. Neither the District nor PEA are allowed to have any intervention in the process other than to ensure the rules are followed at those schools awarded the money from the state. Due to the fact that high schools do not receive their 'grades' until December, the amount of money for each school will not be known until January.

PEA encourages the **Staff** at schools receiving school recognition money to meet and develop a plan for spending this money. In order for any plan to be implemented it must be approved by both the **Staff** and the **School Advisory Council**. If an agreement is not reached by February 1<sup>st</sup>, the money must be distributed equally to all classroom teachers currently at the school. Below are points for consideration:

- Paraeducators, Secretaries, the Principal, and others assigned to the school are all part of the Staff. While everyone has an equal voice and vote, principals may have added influence.
- Because the amount will not be known until January, the DOE has encouraged School Advisory Councils to prepare a plan to use the money by percentage.
- Money left at the school to purchase supplies and/or equipment is not taxed.
- Money used for bonuses has both the District's and the employee's FICA contribution withheld, as well as a higher rate for Federal Income taxes.
- How bonuses are allocated has the potential to create hard feelings among both current and former staff members and with parent leaders within the school.
- While there is no requirement to include or exclude any employee when discussing and determining bonuses, PEA does encourage you to recognize the contributions of all staff to a school's success, including paraeducators and secretaries. Everybody needs to have a voice in deciding what is "**fair.**"

**Florida Statute**

**1008.36 Florida School Recognition Program.—**

(1) The Legislature finds that there is a need for a performance incentive program for outstanding faculty and staff in highly productive schools. The Legislature further finds that performance-based incentives are commonplace in the private sector and should be infused into the public sector as a reward for productivity.

(2) The Florida School Recognition Program is created to provide financial awards to public schools that:

(a) Sustain high performance by receiving a school grade of "A," making excellent progress; or

(b) Demonstrate exemplary improvement due to innovation and effort by improving at least one letter grade or by improving more than one letter grade and sustaining the improvement the following school year.

(3) All public schools, including charter schools, that receive a school grade pursuant to s. 1008.34 are eligible to participate in the program.

(4) All selected schools shall receive financial awards depending on the availability of funds appropriated and the number and size of schools selected to receive an award. Funds must be distributed to the school's fiscal agent and placed in the school's account and must be used for purposes listed in subsection (5) as determined jointly by the school's staff and school advisory council. **If school staff and the school advisory council cannot reach agreement by February 1, the awards must be equally distributed to all classroom teachers currently teaching in the school.** If a school selected to receive a school recognition award is no longer in existence at the time the award is paid, the district school superintendent shall distribute the funds to teachers who taught at the school in the previous year in the form of a bonus.

(5) School recognition awards must be used for the following:

(a) Nonrecurring bonuses to the faculty and staff;

(b) Nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials to assist in maintaining and improving student performance; or

(c) Temporary personnel for the school to assist in maintaining and improving student performance.

Notwithstanding statutory provisions to the contrary, incentive awards are not subject to collective bargaining.

**History** — s. 381, ch. 2002-387; s. 24, ch. 2008-235; s. 13, ch. 2010-22.