The 2018 Legislature reestablished and amended Florida’s Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program. It is the intent of the Legislature to designate teachers who have achieved high academic standards during their own education as Florida’s best and brightest teacher scholars.

This scholarship is to be awarded to classroom teachers as defined under Florida Statue 1012.01(2)(a) who have demonstrated a high level of academic achievement. Florida Statue 1012.01(2)(a) defines classroom teachers as, “staff members assigned the professional activity of instructing students in courses in classroom situations, including basic instruction, exceptional student education, career education, and adult education, including substitute teachers.” This definition excludes guidance counselors, media specialists, school psychologists and others. Should you need clarification as to whether your position affords you this opportunity, please email bestandbrightest@manateeschools.net

The amended statute indicates that a school district or charter school employee who is eligible for the $6,000 scholarship and who is no longer a classroom teacher may receive a Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship award if: (a) the employee was a classroom teacher in the prior school year and (b) was rated highly effective.

Attached is the application which you need to complete in its entirety, providing the documents requested. If you were previously deemed eligible for the Best and Brightest scholarship, you remain eligible as long as you remain employed by the School District as a classroom teacher at the time of the award and received an annual performance rating of highly effective for the 2017/2018 school year. You will still need to complete and return the application, providing a copy of your 2017/2018 final evaluation, which includes VAM scores, to Personnel, Attention: Best and Brightest. No application will be approved without the documentation required.

Teachers who are deemed eligible will receive their scholarship on or before April 1, 2019. Payments through the Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program are subject to payroll and income tax withholdings. Also, should the number of eligible statewide teachers exceed legislative appropriation, the Florida Department of Education shall prorate the per teacher scholarship amount.

All applications must be submitted to Personnel, Attention: Best and Brightest at or before 5:00 p.m., Thursday, November 1, 2018. Applications can be hand delivered or sent through the District’s courier service. Any questions should be submitted via email to bestandbrightest@manateeschools.net.