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2026FL1021: Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program

2026FL1021, "Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program" is a Health and Human Services Interim Committee bill file that creates the Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program.

Key Points

- Creates a three-year pilot program to improve student physical activity and nutrition
- Defines "eligible school" to mean elementary schools (K–6) in counties of the 4th, 5th, or 6th class
- Tasks the State Board of Education with establishing physical education criteria and selecting up to 50 schools to participate in the pilot program
- Awards selected schools that meet the physical education criteria \$5,000, subject to appropriations
- Requires funds to be used for physical activity and healthy eating purposes
- Requires schools to submit an annual progress report
- Allows participation in the Presidential Fitness Test to satisfy program requirements

Policy Analysis

This draft legislation establishes a three-year pilot program, known as the Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program, to provide funding to eligible schools to promote healthy physical lifestyle choices for students. The pilot program is rural focused by defining "eligible schools" as elementary schools, K-6, in counties of the 4th, 5th, or 6th class.

Under the pilot program, the State Board of Education selects participating schools and sets physical education criteria that schools must meet to receive program funding and to earn a gold medal recognition award. The goals of the program include encouraging students to engage in regular physical activity, promoting healthy eating habits and food choices within the school, and creating school policies that support lifelong health and wellness.

Responsibilities of the State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is tasked with establishing rules to:

- Set physical education criteria for participation in the program and for earning the gold medal award
- Provide alternative criteria for students with physical limitations
- Select up to 50 schools to participate in the pilot program, while prioritizing:

- Schools with the greatest health improvement needs
 - Strong applications with measurable health goals and evidence-based strategies
 - Schools that establish local partnerships to support wellness
- Award \$5,000 to each school selected as an eligible school that meets the physical education criteria
 - Create how schools apply to participate in the pilot program
 - Set limitations on use of awarded funds
 - Allow participating schools flexibility to adapt aspects of the program to local needs
 - Establish a system to distribute program funds to participating schools, including a cap on the percentage of funds a school may use for administrative costs

Additionally, the State Board of Education may use up to 6.25% of the appropriated funds for costs related to the administration of the pilot program. At the request of the Education Interim Committee or the Health and Human Services Interim Committee the State Board of Education must report on the pilot program's implementation and the pilot program's progress and health outcomes.

Responsibilities of an Eligible School

Eligible schools may apply to participate in the pilot program. An eligible school's application to the State Board of Education must:

- Describe how the school will implement the pilot program's objectives
- Outline measurable goals aligned with the pilot program's purpose

Each participating eligible school must submit an annual report to the State Board of Education demonstrating whether the eligible school met the State Board of Education's physical education criteria. Additionally, each eligible school may only use the pilot program funds for purposes related to physical activity, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle promotion.

Presidential Fitness Test

The draft legislation allows for eligible schools that participate in the Presidential Fitness Test (as reinstated by Executive Order 14327) to automatically meet the pilot program's participation requirements.