

Dr. Solomon C. Stinson, Chair

**SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING EFFORT
INDEX GRANTS**

During the November 1997 special school construction session the Legislature established an Effort Index grant program appropriated at \$400 million to provide funds to school districts which satisfied a defined local effort requirement and which could not meet student station needs from available revenues over the next five years.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools applied for these grants at the first opportunity in August 1998 and would use the grants solely to provide additional student stations, and not for remodeling of existing schools or portable replacement. Ten other school districts also applied, including Broward and Hillsborough Counties. Only four school district applications were approved by the Clearinghouse (Miami-Dade, Clay, Hendry, and Madison) with Miami-Dade slated to receive \$375 million of the \$400 million appropriated in 1997.

This action has generated significant opposition throughout the state and has allegedly lead to a suspension of any disbursements under this program.

It is in the best interests of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools as well as the state to achieve a fair and equitable resolution to this problem; therefore, I recommend that the following position statement be adopted by the School Board:

1. The Miami-Dade County School Board applied for the Effort Index Grants in August 1998, met the statutory threshold of local effort test and identified \$521.4 million (after a subjective desk audit by the Smart Schools Clearinghouse) of unmet plant-survey-approved needs. The Smart Schools Clearinghouse in its February meeting in Orlando voted to award Miami-Dade County its proportional share of \$400 million appropriated or \$375 million.
2. Legislation pertaining to Effort Index Grants was drawn up in too narrow a fashion in 1997. Miami-Dade County Public Schools should cooperate with other Florida districts to broaden the local effort test so that more districts are eligible and to broaden the authorized use of the grants to include remodeling projects and portable replacement.

3. Nonetheless, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools legitimately applied for funds under this program pursuant to law and were approved by the Smart Schools Clearinghouse under existing law. Miami-Dade should receive its first year installment of these grants or \$45 million as estimated by the Smart Schools Clearinghouse. Future years' installments would be governed by the statute as amended.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. SOLOMON C. STINSON:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida adopt the position statement regarding Effort Index Grants as described in items 1-3 above.