

Education
Joseph H. Mathos, Deputy Superintendent

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT'S OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO FULFILL THE INTENT OF SECTION 229.0537, FLORIDA STATUTES

On June 21, 1999, the *A+ Education Plan to Improve Public Schools*, commonly referred to as the *A+ Plan*, was signed into law. In accordance with the terms of the *A+ Plan*, students enrolled in or assigned to a school designated as grade category "F" (Level I) for any two school years in a four-year period are eligible to participate in the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), Section 229.0537, Florida Statutes.

Twenty-six Miami-Dade County public schools were designated as grade category "F" (Level I) for the 1998-99 school year. Although every effort is underway to eliminate or mitigate the number of schools designated as grade category "F" (Level I) this year, it is nonetheless possible that some of the district's schools will again receive the same designation, thereby resulting in OSP eligibility for selected students. In light of potential OSP eligibility beginning in the 2000-01 school year, the district has developed an Opportunity Scholarship Program Implementation Plan to address all procedural aspects of the legislation. In consideration of the fact that the private school choice option (vouchers) under OSP has been declared by the state court to be unconstitutional and is currently on appeal, the district's implementation plan has been developed addressing only the public school choice program option.

Copies of the district's Opportunity Scholarship Program Implementation Plan will be provided to School Board Members under separate cover, and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, and the Citizen Information Center.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. approve the district's Opportunity Scholarship Program Implementation Plan to fulfill the intent of Section 229.0537, Florida Statutes; and
2. authorize the Superintendent to amend the plan, as necessary, to conform to changes in the legislation or as required by Court ruling.

JHM:mf