

Education
Joseph H. Mathos, Deputy Superintendent

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO FULFILL THE INTENT OF SECTION 229.05371, FLORIDA STATUTES

The Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities is an extension of a school choice program created by the Legislature in the 1999 session. During the 1999-2000 school year, Sarasota County piloted the program authorized by Section 229.05371, Florida Statutes. During the final days of the 2000 legislative session, the program was extended statewide beginning with the 2000-01 school year through CS/HB 701.

In accordance with the terms of Section 229.05371, Florida Statutes, as amended, this program will provide scholarships to a public or private school of choice for students with disabilities whose academic progress in at least two areas has not met expected levels for the previous year, as determined by the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Student participation in the program is limited to 5 percent of the students with disabilities in the school district during the first year, 10 percent of the students with disabilities during the second year, and 20 percent of the students with disabilities during the third year, and no limit in subsequent years.

This program is separate and distinct from the Opportunity Scholarship Program; however, many of the procedures established by the district to implement the provisions of Section 229.0537, F.S., Opportunity Scholarship Program will be used to implement this program. Since this program is scheduled to begin in the 2000-01 school year, the district has developed an implementation plan to supplement the existing Opportunity Scholarship Implementation Plan in order to address procedures specific to this program.

Copies of the district's Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities 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 Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities Implementation Plan to fulfill the intent of Section 229.05371, Florida Statutes; and
2. authorize the Superintendent to amend the plan, as necessary, to conform to changes in the legislation, State Board of Education Rules, or as required by Court or other legal rulings.

RKF:trg