

March 8, 2002

Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE SECOND YEAR OF THE 107TH CONGRESS

The Federal Legislative Program for the second year of the 107th Congress includes ongoing issues from the 2001 Federal Legislative Program as well as new issues expected to be considered during 2002. The program was compiled from responses and recommendations forwarded to federal legislative staff by School Board Members, the Superintendent and staff, interested citizen groups and community agencies, and employee organizations.

The March 13, 2002 final adoption date will enable staff to move ahead in securing legislative sponsors, if necessary, for the proposed bills or amendments so they may be filed and presented at legislative committee meetings.

It is anticipated that the Board may be asked to consider additional recommendations which may be amended into the program during the 107th Congress.

The recommended legislation includes the following issues:

- ▶ Reauthorize the INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) with the following reforms: (1) Provide mandatory full IDEA funding (40% of the national average per pupil expenditures), including preschool, early intervention, and discretionary programs, and provide greater flexibility for the use of funds. (2) Reduce paperwork for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) to permit teachers to spend more time in the classroom. (3) Modify the Social Security Act to include reimbursements for medical services to students with accommodations covered under the Rehabilitation Act. (4) Cap attorneys' fees for litigation of ESE cases. (5) Revise discipline provisions to permit a universal discipline system that can appropriately address the needs of all students including students with disabilities.
- ▶ Continue funding for SCHOOL-TO-WORK and support increased opportunities for low-income adults to participate in public workforce development education and training programs through re-authorization of the TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work programs.
- ▶ Establish and fund a UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN program for all four-year olds in the United States, at no cost to the children's parents.

- ▶ Support REFORM OF THE TITLE I ALLOCATION FORMULA to address funding disparities as identified by the General Accounting Office report of January, 2002, which hinder Title I funds from reaching the nation's poorest students, including over 101,000 eligible children in Miami-Dade County whose 1999-2000 annual allocation would increase by approximately \$9.2 million if funded at the national per-student average. Also, support legislative efforts to require CORRECTIVE SAMPLING of flawed 2000 Census data, to account for an estimated population undercount of at least 1.9% in Miami-Dade County.
- ▶ Retain TARGETED ASSISTANCE funding.
- ▶ Require CHILD-PROOF SAFETY LOCKS on all guns.
- ▶ Support any SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION INITIATIVES that would subsidize school districts for new construction, renovation or repair of the nation's schools. Implement such initiatives with maximum flexibility regarding the type of debt financing and permit the state to determine the disbursement method for non-high-priority funds. Additionally, increase funding for the QUALIFIED ZONE ACADEMY BONDS (QZAB) program, which provides for interest free loans to be secured by eligible school districts, and reallocate unused bonding authority among states.
- ▶ Support digital conversion of M-DCPS'-owned television and radio station WLRN TV/FM 91.3, and the digital conversion of M-DCPS IFS (Instructional Fixed Signal) for use in DISTANCE LEARNING services to schools, homes and business, at a cost of \$12 million.
- ▶ Support continued funding for the UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND PROGRAM (E-Rate) which is designed to provide schools and libraries with affordable access to state of the art networking and telecommunications technology.

Copies of the 2002 Federal Legislative Program will be placed on file in the Citizen Information Center and the Office of Board Recording Secretary.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve the Federal Legislative Program for the second year of the 107th Congress.

MRS:mdn