

Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM FUNDING THROUGH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY GRANT**

On July 19, 2002, the Board received a memorandum entitled "Transmittal of Alternative Proposal to Balance the 2002-03 Operating Budget." Included in the listing of Alternate Proposals to Policy Alternatives was a revision in the Driver Education program. A reference was made that staff would pursue funding for the Driver Education Program through a \$3 surcharge that the Miami-Dade County Commission potentially could collect. The suggestion was that the District could purchase driving simulators.

There was much discussion by both the Board and public speakers at the July 24, 2002 Budget Public Hearing regarding the reduction in the Driver Education Program. Subsequent to the Budget Public Hearing, two meetings have been held with Commissioner Natacha Seijas. She will submit an item for the Miami-Dade County Commission's September 2002 meeting to request that a \$3 surcharge be applied to all moving and non-moving traffic citations, other than parking tickets, as authorized pursuant to Section 98 of Chapter 2002-20, Laws of Florida.

It is estimated that approximately \$1.6 million would be generated from October 1 through June 30, 2003 that could be contracted with Miami-Dade County Public Schools for an educational driver education program.

The 2002-03 Tentative Budget includes 31 driver education teachers (for classroom instruction only) at a cost of \$2.22 million. The hands-on range instruction, including repairs, maintenance, gasoline, etc., was discontinued for 2002-03. If the District contracted with the County to receive \$1.6 million for this program, the first year shortfall of restoring the Driver Education Program to the 2001-02 level would be approximately \$1.0 million, including restoring the second driver education teacher and the on-range instructional phase.

The following items are options being considered for these funds:

1. The \$1.6 million would more than cover the restoration of the full driver's education program for the first semester; however, we would be \$1 million short the second semester. It is possible that additional revenues could be obtained by fees which of course must be consistent with state law and/or sponsorships from automobile dealers, tire dealers, gasoline companies, automobile insurance companies, etc. All of the above would take time and staff energy and do not guarantee a full supplement. For the next fiscal year, the \$3.00 surtax revenue would jump from \$1.6 million to \$2.2 million, which would reduce the shortfall to approximately one-half million dollars. Other suggestions include:

2. Driver Education could be offered through the community school program. Neither a partial credit nor certificate would be available through this program. This program would be provided through hourly instructors in lieu of full-time K-12 instructors.
3. Vouchers for students with private companies for actual driving experience
4. Seek donations from the private sector to sponsor the Driver Education Program with supplementary activities.

Commissioner Natacha Seijas and Representative Irving Slosberg will be at the August 21<sup>st</sup> meeting to speak on this issue. I would recommend that the Board authorize the Superintendent to form a task force to come back with a plan that could be implemented this fall and that that plan would be brought back to the Board in September for confirmation after or before implementation.

This item does not appear in the regularly published agenda. There is good cause to vary from the published agenda to expedite the outcome of the Driver Education Program prior to the opening of the 2002-03 school year.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to implement activities to supplement the classroom instruction approach to Driver Education and report back to the Board at its September 12 meeting for confirmation of the plan.