

Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO REINSTATE THE DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

In July 2002, the Driver Education Program was reduced by half as a result of severe budget cuts. The impact of this reduction in funding was the virtual elimination of the driving range component of the course at most senior high schools and a reduction of 20 instructional positions. Subsequent to this reduction, Commissioner Natacha Seijas submitted an item for the Miami-Dade County Commission's September 2002 meeting to request that a three-dollar surcharge be applied to all moving and non-moving traffic citations, other than parking tickets. 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 the Driver Education Program. This amount would more than cover the restoration of the full Driver Education Program for the first semester; however, the district would be one million dollars short for the second semester.

At its meeting of August 21, 2002, the School Board authorized the Superintendent to form a task force to reassess the district's ability to offer driver education and to develop a plan to reinstate the Driver Education Program in full. As a result, the following proposal was developed to restore the program for the current year:

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	COST TO THE DISTRICT	COST TO THE SCHOOL
All range costs related to cars, gas, and maintenance would be paid by the district.	\$600,000	N/A
A matching fund program would be instituted by the district to allow senior high school principals to purchase the second driver education teacher at one-half the new teacher hire rate (approximately \$25,000)	\$1 million	\$1 million
TOTAL COST:	\$1.6 million	\$1 million

A survey outlining the proposal was conducted with all senior high school principals. The following chart illustrates the positive impact of the proposal on the program for 2002-2003:

SURVEY	2001-2002	2002-2003 (Current)	2002-2003 (Proposed)
Number of schools without a Driver Education Program	3	3	3
Number of schools with classroom instruction only	5	26 (+21)	11 (+6)
Number of schools with both classrooms and range instruction	27	6 (-21)	21 (-6)
TOTAL:	35	35	35

Based on the survey, the majority of senior high school principals intend to reinstate a complete program, thereby restoring 15 instructional positions. Only six principals who formerly offered a full program indicated that they would not be able to continue the range component. Two of these principals, from Homestead and Miami Central senior high schools, cited budgetary constraints, while the others from Coral Gables, Miami Jackson, Miami Coral Park, and Miami Beach senior high schools, have capital construction projects that may utilize the existing range space. For these schools, the Driver Education Task Force recommended possible partnerships with contiguous schools and/or community venues for range instruction. Students may also be encouraged to enroll in Driver Education at another school during the summer or through the Adult Education Program.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, accept the proposal of the Driver Education Task Force designed to restore the Driver Education Program.

MRS/GMK/lou