

Financial Affairs
Dr. Richard H. Hinds, Chief Financial Officer

**SUBJECT: STATEWIDE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF
FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

COMMITTEE: FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is in the process of formalizing a statewide mutual aid agreement to offer assistance for all local governments, including school districts, in the event the Governor declares a state of emergency which could trigger implementation of mutual aid. Part of the reason for this is that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is reluctant to reimburse individual governments/districts (sub-grantees) for incurred expenses when assisting with emergency work without having an agreement in place prior to the disaster declaration.

The Governor has the authority to declare a State of Emergency which could trigger implementation of mutual aid, as was the case with the wild fires which occurred in North Florida. In some instances, A State of Emergency is followed by a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This agreement, once signed, would allow Miami-Dade County Public Schools to obtain assistance from other participants with a reasonable certainty of having FEMA reimburse costs incurred by the assisting party. Conversely, were the district to assist another entity, as was the case following Hurricane Georges, which hit the Florida Keys, there would be a reasonable expectation that the Board could be reimbursed for costs incurred while helping another local government.

Mutual aid is limited to emergency work, therefore, the departments most likely to be affected would be Transportation, Maintenance, School Police, Office of Information Technology, or Office of Risk and Benefits Management. Transportation might lend buses and/or drivers; maintenance might assist with temporary repairs; OIT might lend support to re-build a network; or Risk Management might lend technical support for insurance adjusting and/or work with FEMA. Once enrolled in this agreement, the Board has no obligation to participate even if a request is made. However, if the Board does not enroll, and later requests assistance from another local government, its is unlikely FEMA will reimburse any incurred costs.

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Eligible costs include regular and overtime salary, including benefits, travel costs, and any costs for use of equipment such as chain saws, consumables, or vehicles. These costs would be captured on the same summary sheets that are part of the Board's new Disaster Recovery Manual. The local government which is providing assistance tracks expenditures and bills the local government seeking assistance. The requesting party then reimburses the government who provided assistance and completes a Project Worksheet for submission to FEMA for reimbursement. Each participating party assumes its own liability for assistance provided under this agreement.

A copy of the agreement has been provided as back-up information to this item, and is on file in Citizens Information.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida enter into the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement with the Division of Emergency Management, Department of Community Affairs, State of Florida, in conjunction with The Emergency Management Act, to provide the ability to seek and receive assistance from other participating local governments, and seek financial recovery from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Division of Emergency Management, Department of Community Affairs, for incurred expenses, in the event of a disaster or threatened disaster.

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