

Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF THE  
108<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

**COMMITTEE: LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

The Federal Legislative Program for the first year of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress includes ongoing issues from the 2002 Federal Legislative Program, as well as new issues expected to be considered during 2003. 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 December 11, 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 108<sup>th</sup> 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) cap attorneys' fees for litigation of ESE cases; (4) revise discipline provisions to permit a universal discipline system that can appropriately address the needs of all students, including students with disabilities.
- Oppose provisions of the MEDICAID ADMINISTRATIVE CLAIMING (MAC) GUIDE that discriminate against school districts as legitimate providers of health services to all children, especially low-income, disabled students.
- Support increased PUBLIC TRAINING AND LITERACY OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME ADULTS through reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Welfare-to-Work (WtW) legislation.

**A-1**

Enhance FUNDING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING, ADULT EDUCATION, AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS through reauthorization of the Perkins and Adult Education/Literacy legislation and through improved coordination with partner agencies under reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Vocational Rehabilitation legislation.

- 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. 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.
- Address the impact of federal immigration policies on local school district funds by increasing TARGETED ASSISTANCE AND IMMIGRANT EDUCATION programs serving foreign-born, limited English proficient (LEP) students and their families.
- Support adequate funding for SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOL initiatives and authorize school district police forces to receive Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (LLEBG) funds, based on uniform crime reports, to enhance security measures in and around schools. Support a Homeland Security Measure that would allow mandatory FUNDING TO DISTRICTS WITH POLICE DEPARTMENTS. 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, including (1) per-student funding for new construction based on the number of new immigrant students and (2) funds for renovating buildings over 30 years of age and replacing or providing historic renovation to buildings over 50 years of age. Increase funding for the QUALIFIED ZONE ACADEMY BONDS (QZAB) program, which provides for interest free loans to be secured by eligible school districts, as per the Johnson and Rangel legislation.
- Support continued funding and streamline refund procedures for the UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND PROGRAM (E-Rate) to provide schools and libraries with affordable access to state of the art networking and telecommunications technology.
- Support creation of a protocol certifying whether nations have eliminated child slavery in the manufacturing of products that might be purchased or distributed by school districts.

Copies of the 2003 Federal Legislative Program will be placed on file in the Citizen Information Center and the Office of the Board Recording Secretary.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, establish priorities for the first year of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress and authorize the Superintendent to formulate its final 2003 Federal Legislative Program.

MRS/AMC:ccs