

Frank J. Cobo, Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT TO
AMEND THE FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST YEAR
OF THE 108TH CONGRESS**

The Miami-Dade County School Board approved at its December 11, 2002 meeting the Federal Legislative Program for the first year of the 108th Congress. Ongoing issues from the 2002 Federal Legislative Program and new issues are expected to be considered during the 2003 legislative cycle. Support for building and sustaining the career academy model should be included in the Board approved Federal Legislative Program.

On October 24, 2001, The School Board of Miami-Dade County approved the District Comprehensive School-To-Career Plan 2001-2005, which includes the establishment of career academies in the senior high schools. In addition, this effort supports the District Strategic Goal I: School-To-Career.

The career academy model is a highly effective public/private partnership strategy providing a combination of academic and career training to secondary students. Career academies have proven to be especially effective in addressing the educational needs of at-risk students in increasing the graduation rate and decreasing the dropout rate. National research has proven that school reform can be accelerated by the school-within-a-school and small learning community concepts. Additionally, the support of this national school reform model will make a positive contribution in meeting the needs of preparing students for post-secondary choices and a highly skilled and educated workforce in the 21st century.

In order to build and sustain the implementation of this major School-To-Career model, funding from federal sources is required.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. FRANK J. COBO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to amend the Federal Legislative Program for the first year of the 108th Congress to include funding for building and sustaining the career academy model in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Revised

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Description of Career Academy Model

In the early 1980's the nation was shocked by the report, *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, which sounded an alarm about the generally poor academic performance of American schools in a time of a rapidly changing, highly competitive, and interdependent world. The challenges of competing in a global economy increasingly shaped by rapid technological change have created a high-performance workplace that expects workers at all levels to solve problems, create ways to improve the methods they use, and work effectively in teams.

Steps to implement the career academy model in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS):

- Restructure senior high schools to include career academies and Small Learning Communities.
- Restructure school's schedules to facilitate the formation and growth of career academies.
- Maintain rigorous academic content and performance standards that reflect School-To-Career (STC) in all schools.
- Develop instructional strategies for work-based learning which can be measured by employing authentic assessment strategies.
- Provide meaningful and challenging work-based learning experiences for all PreK-12 students.
- Establish a seamless PreK-12 curriculum that provides all students with meaningful postsecondary educational opportunities.
- Implement and sustain rigorous, standards-based instruction in all schools through site-based, ongoing, adult collaboration.
- Establish a districtwide collaborative professional development model.

The educational response to the changes of a global economy has energized educators, business representatives, community organizations, students, parents, policy-makers, and practitioners at the national, state, and local levels to improve schools through a variety of initiatives known collectively as STC so that all students can have access to the high wage/high skill jobs.

With the passing of the National School-To-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) in 1994, the State of Florida and M-DCPS initiated a series of educational programs designed to help Miami-Dade's youth understand the connection between education and success in the workplace. Currently, STC activities can be found in all schools, PreK-12. These activities include Tech Prep and *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* programs. At the middle school level STC includes career awareness, job shadowing, mentoring, career planning portfolios, and career-related electives. Elementary school students benefit from business partnerships. Additionally, the District has entered into articulation agreements with two- and four-year institutions in order that career programs beginning in senior high school will continue through postsecondary opportunities.

Sustaining successful STC activities depends upon the institutionalization throughout all schools. Moreover, schools have begun restructuring the curriculum to increase contextual learning and curriculum integration. These changes have included the adoption of block scheduling, the infusion of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) into classroom instruction, advisement activities establishing career majors, and work-based learning experiences such as internships, magnet programs, and cooperative education as well as establishing career academies.