

Ms. Betsy H. Kaplan, Member

**SUBJECT:            PROPOSED 2005 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM OF THE SOUTH  
                         FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

**COMMITTEE:        LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND  
                         PERSONNEL SERVICES**

The South Florida Consortium of School Boards is a coalition of seven school boards which have joined to assist each other in advancing educational issues of mutual concern. The members include: Broward, Collier, Indian River, Lee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach.

On September 1, 2004, representatives of the Consortium met in Boca Raton, Florida, to finalize the draft of their proposed 2005 Legislative Program. The draft program includes only those items which were approved by the School Board representatives in attendance. Further, it adheres to the Consortium's policy of including only a select number of issues in order to ensure maximum cohesiveness in the program and concentration of Consortium resources on its priorities.

All seven Consortium school boards are being asked to review the draft program and to take official action on it. Each issue must be supported by all Consortium members to be included in the final adopted program. If a member district votes to remove an issue from the proposed program, the issue is removed from the program. Once all seven boards have officially adopted the 2005 Legislative Program, the Consortium will print and distribute the document to the Governor, State Cabinet, all legislators, and interested citizen groups.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MS. BETSY H. KAPLAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, adopt the proposed draft 2005 Legislative Program of the South Florida Consortium of School Boards or modify it as deemed appropriate.

## SOUTH FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS'

### DRAFT 2005 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

#### FUNDING ISSUES

##### Adequate Funding

The South Florida Consortium of School Boards calls upon the 2005 Legislature to allocate sufficient state dollars to enable school districts to support continuation budgets that provide for enrollment growth, inflationary increases and salary increases for teachers and other personnel. New state revenue should be used to provide for this continuation budget and locally determined programmatic enhancements as opposed to the state using increases in local property tax revenues as the primary source of additional funds.

##### Performance-Based Funding

Insure that performance-based funding is not a program that takes critically needed funds away from school districts, but rather is an incentive-based program that provides additional funds above and beyond that required for the basic program, class size reduction, growth and cost-of-living adjustments.

Consolidate all existing state performance requirements into a single seamless set of criteria to eliminate confusion and conflict among their different layers.

##### Class Size Reduction

Continue to fully fund Class Size Reduction, **but not** at the expense of the basic Florida Education Finance Program.

### Additional Programs

Increase funding for:

**Exceptional Education Student (ESE)** through expansion of the ESE guarantee so that it supports increased enrollment and costs and by lifting the caps on the two ESE weighted programs (Levels 254 and 255).

**English-for-Speakers-of-Other-Languages (ESOL)** by including all the students who require this federally mandated program.

**Safe Schools and Supplemental Academic Instruction** to accommodate higher enrollment and higher costs.

**Workforce Development**, including adult vocational programs, and continue to allow the governance of the Workforce programs to be determined at the local level.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### Constitutional Authority

Oppose legislation that subverts or bypasses the constitutional authority of school boards and superintendents.

### Charter Schools

Establish a proper balance between elected school boards and their charter schools regarding the latter's applications, contracts, operations and funding. This shared governance requires:

- eliminating the authority of the State Board of Education to grant binding rulings when overturning local boards' decisions regarding charter school applications, contracts and terminations;
- authorizing school boards to collect administrative fees for all students served by the charter school; and

- including the school board in the decision regarding a charter school's entitlement to impact fees.

## **CAPITAL OUTLAY**

### *School Construction Funds*

Provide adequate school construction funds to support: new facilities, school maintenance, mandated class size reduction and pre-kindergarten programs housed in public schools.

### *Portable Space*

Oppose counting portables as permanent capacity, which artificially reduces the projected need and costs for the additional classrooms necessary to meet the class size reduction mandate.

### *Optional Capital Outlay Levy*

Give school boards total flexibility in the use of funds generated from the 2-mill optional local capital outlay millage.

Give school boards the option of increasing the local 2-mill capital outlay levy by up to one-half mill to a maximum of 2.5 mills.

## **HURRICANE RELIEF**

### *Permanent Measures*

Establish permanent provisions to assist school districts with severe hurricane damage without negatively affecting resources for other districts including:

- automatically creating a special trust fund to assist school districts with hurricane recovery;

- holding districts harmless for all losses of funding resulting from a hurricane; and
- providing an avenue for school boards to seek necessary waivers of state law for up to a year, such as shortening the school year, in order to resolve some of the immediate impact of hurricane damage.

## **REVENUE SOURCES**

### *Construction Materials*

Exempt construction materials purchased by a contractor to be used for school construction from the state sales tax.

### *Additional Discretionary Millage*

Increase the current \$50 per student limit that can be raised by the .25 Additional Discretionary Millage to \$100 per student.

## UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Establish a universal pre-kindergarten program based on the recommendations of the 2003 Governor's Task Force to offer a high quality program that includes:

- programs offered by public and private providers using a single state set of readiness standards;
- a 180-day year that operates for six hours a day, including at least four hours of instruction provided by certified teachers and child development associates;
- authorization to use dollars generated by local agencies, such as Children Services Councils, to supplement the state program without losing state funds;
- specific guidelines to facilitate articulation among all state agencies involved in pre-kindergarten programs; and
- accountability provisions to eliminate providers who fail to provide a high quality program.

### Facility Needs

Recognize pre-kindergarten space needs in the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) by including them in the School Plant Survey, which is used as the basis for boards to draw down state school construction dollars, if the state provides capital outlay funding for this program.