

Sonia E. Díaz, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction

SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF SCHOOL BOARD RULE: INITIAL READING 6Gx13- 6A-1.48, K-8 CENTERS

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

K-8 Centers are one part of a coherent District effort to provide consistent, high-quality educational experiences for students by combining elementary and middle grades in a seamless articulation path. There are currently seven K-8 Centers operating in Miami-Dade County, and there are an additional seven approved for construction or conversion.

Although research regarding the superiority of the K-8 configuration over the traditional middle school is not definitive, it is no longer clear that middle grade students should be segregated from primary and intermediate students in separate schools. In addition, there is research indicating that a configuration that allows students to experience high-quality instruction consistently over at least a 3-year period promotes higher academic achievement at every level of schooling, including the early adolescent years. Nevertheless, a K-8 Center middle grade experience is not meant to be the equivalent of a traditional middle school environment. The K-8 Center offers a streamlined curriculum for grades six through eight that emphasizes the core academic subjects, but limits the possible range of electives, honors, and high school level courses available at the traditional middle school. The rule provides that parents of all students enrolled in grade five at an established K-8 Center shall choose to allow their children to continue at the K-8 Center for grades six through eight or to enroll them in the traditional middle school to which they would otherwise have been assigned.

At the School Board Meeting of February 16, 2005, the Superintendent committed to present a revised procedure for considering conversions of schools to K-8 Centers to the School Board. The proposed revisions alter the basis for considering conversion by stating that the process may be initiated by District staff, as well as Educational Excellence School Advisory Councils (EESACs), Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Student Association (PTA/PTSA), or Region Center staff. In addition, the rationale for conversion } must be based on the following underlying principles:

- a sound curricular basis, such as the extension of a unique academic program being successfully implemented at the elementary level;
- the provision of equitable access to K-8 Centers in underserved communities;
- meeting the demands of anticipated population growth;
- providing equitable access to suitable facilities; and
- a Region Center proposal with community and school level support

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Attached are the Notice of Intended Action and the proposed amended Board rule. Changes of the current rule are indicated by underscoring words to be added and ~~striking through~~ words to be deleted.

Authorization of the Board is requested for the Superintendent to initiate rulemaking proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act for the amendment of School Board Rule 6Gx13- 6A-1.48, K-8 Centers.

RECOMMENDED:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to initiate rulemaking proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to amend School Board Rule 6Gx13- 6A-1.48, K-8 Centers.

RKF/MB:msm