

Frank J. Bolaños, School Board Member

SUBJECT: DISCUSS MIAMI-DADE SCHOOLS ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The citizens and parents of our community deserve that our School Board adopt measures that offer parents choices and opportunities for educating children to their maximum potential. In addition to developing strategies for school improvement and eliminating chronically failing schools, the School Board should also establish policies directed at ensuring that every child is afforded the opportunity to be educated to his or her maximum potential.

A demanding consumer is an essential market force for improving the competitive quality of any industry. Our parents are education consumers and the competitive market force of informed parental choice can drive public schools to improve.

Florida's A+ plan is helping educate parents to become knowledgeable education consumers by providing them with academic performance information on their children and their public schools. As education consumers armed with information and meaningful educational choices, parents can become powerful agents of change for improving public education.

This proposal envisions the creation of the Miami-Dade Schools Achievement Scholarship Program to provide the parents of students with choices and resources for the education of students struggling with reading or math proficiency as measured by the FCAT. Such a program would be distinct from our ongoing Title 1 and SES offerings because it would be available to individual students who need the support, whether or not their school is eligible for other services.

Parents would be eligible to elect a qualified after school tutoring program if their child in grades 5 through 10 has scored a Level 1 in either math or reading FCAT for any 2 years of a 3 year period. Parents would be eligible to elect either: 1) an after school tutoring scholarship, or 2) an entire year full immersion scholarship if their child in grades 5 through 10 has scored a Level 1 in BOTH math and reading FCAT for any 2 years of a 3 year period. Entire year programs may be offered by Providers eligible to provide comprehensive educational programs such as existing private or religious schools or colleges and universities.

The goal of the program would be for the child to reach proficiency in both math and reading (Level 3 or more on the FCAT in both math and reading). At the time a child reaches proficiency, they would be eligible for one additional year of service.

Tutoring providers may be individuals or companies and may be public or private entities with the goal being to provide parents with as broad and convenient an array of potential providers as possible. Providers may also include existing private or religious schools. Providers will be required to register with the School District. To ensure quality and prevent fraud, the District shall establish basic proficiency standards for individuals that may wish to become eligible as providers such as current valid teaching certificates or a college degree. The intent is to allow any qualified provider to participate.

The level of assistance provided for an individual student would be a straight forward, results-driven award structure incorporating a base level award and rewarding student learning gains with additional bonuses in subsequent years based on demonstrable student growth on the FCAT. The purpose of the bonus structure is to incorporate market-type incentives that reward outcomes. The incentive bonus will be payable directly to the Provider.