

Ms. Ana Rivas Logan, Board Member

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED 2007 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM OF THE GREATER
FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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

In developing the Consortium's legislative platform member districts were requested to submit legislative proposals for consideration and inclusion in its 2007 legislative platform. On August 23-24, 2006, representatives of the Consortium met in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to finalize the draft of their proposed 2007 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 nine Consortium school boards are being asked to review the draft program attached, 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 nine boards have officially adopted the 2007 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. ANA RIVAS LOGAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, adopt the proposed draft 2007 Legislative Program of the Greater Florida consortium of School Boards or modify it as deemed appropriate.

PROPOSED

GREATER FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS'

2007 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

PRIORITY ISSUES

FUNDING

GOAL: INCREASE PER STUDENT FUNDING TO INSURE THAT FLORIDA IS IN THE TOP HALF OF THE STATES AND CAN PROVIDE A WORLD CLASS EDUCATION TO ENABLE ITS STUDENTS TO COMPETE AND EXCEL IN THE GLOBAL MARKET PLACE.

Adequate Funding

In order to accomplish this goal:

Allocate sufficient state dollars with flexibility to enable school districts to support guaranteed continuation budgets that provide for enrollment growth, inflationary increases and competitive salaries and benefits for teachers and other personnel. Use new state revenue to provide for this continuation budget as opposed to the state using increases in local property tax revenues as the source of additional funds.

- Increase funding for Safe Schools, Transportation, Instructional Materials, and Supplemental Academic Instruction to accommodate higher enrollment and higher costs.
- Increase funding for Workforce Development, including adult vocational programs, and restore the program weights to fund Middle School Career Education and the 1.5 weight factor for high school vocational programs.

- Restore seventh period funding for high schools and fund courses from the Florida Virtual School that are offered beyond the regular school day.
- Reduce the ceiling cap that school districts pay in Required Local Effort (RLE) from 90 percent to 80 percent.

Class Size Reduction (CSR)

Continue to fully fund Class Size Reduction, but not at the expense of the basic Florida Education Funding Program (FEFP).

Provide full state funding for the cost of additional schools and classrooms to meet the state's responsibility under the current class size reduction amendment and distribute the funds on a per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) basis.

Fully fund the High Growth Districts construction program for the benefit of all counties experiencing enrollment growth.

Local Discretionary Millage (LDM)

- Oppose further equalization of the .51 Local Discretionary Millage until the basic program is adequately funded.
- Extend the voter-approved operating millage authority from four (4) years to ten (10) years.
- Increase the per student funding from the .25 LDM from \$100 to \$200 or support any other similar proposal that will benefit all Consortium school districts.

HURRICANE RELIEF

Establish permanent provisions to assist school districts with 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;

- 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;
- funding all operational costs associated with shelter operations; and
- including shelters in concurrency requirements.

GOVERNANCE

Charter Schools

Return the final decision and authority regarding granting a charter to the local school boards and more clearly define the responsibilities of the charter school and of the school board. In addition:

- repeal the Charter Schools of Excellence;
- maintain school boards' authority regarding the disposition of local capital outlay funds and impact fees; and
- authorize school boards to collect administrative fees for all students served by the charter school.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

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

UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Provide a flexible model universal voluntary pre-kindergarten program of up to six hours a day that can address the needs of the local community and fund on an FTE basis.

REVENUE SOURCES

Conduct a comprehensive review of all current sales tax exemptions, except on food and medicine.

Provide school districts additional funds by using some of the revenue generated by casino gambling and other gambling establishments (card rooms) and distribute the funds through the FEFP formula based on a district's FTE.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

School Construction

Provide adequate school construction funds to support: new facilities, renovations, replacement schools, school maintenance, land acquisition, mandated class size reduction, hurricane shelter retrofitting and pre-kindergarten programs housed in public schools.

Student Station Costs

Abolish the 1997 per-student-station cost cap which does not keep pace with changing market place increases for labor and materials.

Pre-kindergarten Classrooms

Add pre-kindergarten space needs in the Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) by including them in the School Plant Survey.

Construction Materials

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

Optional Capital Outlay Levy

Restore school boards' flexibility in the use of funds generated from the 2-mill optional capital outlay levy.

Impact Fees

Oppose the elimination of impact fees

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Workforce Housing

Enable school boards to recruit and retain high quality teachers by providing state funding for housing supplements to be used to assist teachers, who make a five-year commitment to the school system, to rent or purchase housing.

Continue and expand the initiative of HB 1363, passed by the 2006 Legislature, which provides incentives for affordable housing for essential service workers, particularly teachers and other school personnel.

Cost-of-Living Adjustments

Revise the formula that adjusts for differences in costs-of-living among districts to give additional emphasis to the higher housing costs in some areas compared to others.

Unfunded Mandates

Oppose any new state mandated programs that are not accompanied by an identified specific source of state funds sufficient to cover the full program costs.

FCAT

Administer the FCAT towards the end of the school year and insure that it is graded by qualified personnel.

Background Screening

Require Level II screening only for contracted persons who come on school campuses unsupervised and have direct contact with pre-K-12 students.