

Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED 2007 STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

As in previous years, the Board has actively advocated policy changes through the state and federal legislative process by formulating a legislative agenda. The proposed 2007 State and Federal Legislative Programs have been prepared by staff and are attached for the Board's review and approval. The development of both programs was initiated by the solicitation of proposals from School Board Members, the Superintendent of Schools, staff, school-site personnel, employee groups, municipal and county governments, and citizen groups. The resulting proposed 2007 State Program incorporates those items from the prior year that still need to be accomplished with new issues designated by an underscore.

The proposed program focuses on the District's strategic priorities: eliminating low-performing schools; raising academic student achievement for all students; reforming business practices to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and high ethical standards; and recruiting, developing, and retaining high-performing, diverse, and motivated faculty and staff. The program reflects a philosophy of fiscal responsibility yet insists on adequate and equitable funding, both operating and capital, to the District, as legally required by the Florida Constitution. The program also reflects academic concerns by addressing the need for reform at the secondary level.

Through self assessment, re-alignment of functions, and implementation of sound educational and business practices, the past school years have brought about significantly improved student outcomes and a brighter financial outlook. For the first time since the State of Florida began issuing school accountability grades, most schools in Miami-Dade County Public Schools have earned an A. In addition, the percentage of schools receiving the state's top two grades for at least three consecutive years rose to 50 percent for the first time. In all, 73 percent of the District's schools earned an A or B in 2006. Twenty-two of the 39 schools that have extended school days and a longer school year through the School Improvement Zone raised their letter grades.

REVISED
A-4

As a result of continued improvements in construction practices, the number of student stations increased by 20,000 for this school year. Through these actions and results, Miami-Dade legislative representatives should be empowered to support District efforts. We will continue to achieve internal economies that will ensure that the District is an efficient and effective organization that provides high-quality educational programs to all its students and a well-prepared workforce to the business community.

The state legislative session is scheduled to commence on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, with interim committee meetings scheduled to begin as soon as November 2006. The proposed state legislative program focuses on a limited number of legislative priorities: Funding for Education, Capital Funding, Secondary Education Reform, Professional Development, Legal, and Policy Statements.

At the federal level, the 110th Congress enters its first congressional session in January 2007. As we approach the upcoming session, we urge the President and Congress to reaffirm their commitment to the nation's children by investing in public education and the hope it provides our society by funding the cost of implementing No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The proposed federal legislative program is comprised of ongoing issues including: Funding; Workforce Preparation; No Child Left Behind Act Formula-based Funding; Immigration Impact; School Safety; School Construction; Technology in Schools; and Continued Support for Secondary School Reform.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. adopt the proposed 2007 State and Federal Legislative Programs; and
2. authorize the Superintendent to advocate the best interest of the District on issues at both the state and federal levels that may have impending fiscal, local control, and/or governance impact on Miami-Dade County Public Schools' District operations, but does not have major policy implications, provided such issues are reported to the Board.

AMC/IRM-C:lbd

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2007 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

MISSION/GOAL STATEMENT

Provide the highest quality education so that all of our students are empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FUNDING FOR EDUCATION (District Goal I – Ensure achievement of high academic standards by all students; District Goal II – Develop our students so that they are able to successfully compete in the global economy)

Increase educational funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) towards the national average in per pupil expenditures, taking into account: actual student enrollment, cost of living, equalizing features in the FEFP formula, inflation, increasing utility and insurance costs, the actual cost of delivering programs to special populations, and the principals of adequacy and equity. (GFCSB)

Increase Safe Schools, Supplemental Academic Instruction, ESE Guaranteed Allocation to accommodate student enrollment and inflation. (GFCSB)

Create and fund a housing supplement for teachers with five or fewer years of service whose district housing cost are above the state average. (GFCSB)

Combine the two current local discretionary millages (.51 and .25) equalized to no more than the state-wide average per student. (GFCSB)

CAPITAL FUNDING (District Goal IV – Reform business practices to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and high ethical standards)

- Amend the Classrooms for Kids (class size reduction capital outlay) allocation formula for capital outlay funding to reflect actual capital outlay need and the intent of the constitutional amendment. (GFCSB)
- Repeal statutory limitations on the use of the 2-mill capital outlay levy. (GFCSB)

SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORM (District Goal I – Ensure achievement of high academic standards by all students; District Goal II – Develop our students so that they are able to successfully compete in the global economy)

Provide formula or competitive funding for secondary education reform that supports an extended school day and year, and encourages themed, career path-based academies and smaller learning communities. (GFCSB)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (District Goal V – Recruit, develop, and retain high-performing, diverse, and motivated faculty and staff)

Modify the Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR) program to provide districts the flexibility to establish and implement differentiated pay scales that recognize teacher performance and allow for the creation of a teacher career lattice and incentive funding to lure experienced/accomplished teachers to low-performing schools.

Support the creation of an elite cadre of “turn around” school leaders enabling districts to bring back highly effective retired principals to serve as mentors in low-performing schools.

LEGAL (District Goal IV – Reform business practices to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and high ethical standards)

Support the passage of a legislative claims relief act on behalf of the Estate of Jaime Gough.

Amend state statutes making it a felony violation for applicants and teachers who knowingly attempt to fraudulently obtain and/or maintain teacher positions.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Oppose legislation that subverts local control of local school boards and superintendents. **(GFCSB)**

Fully fund the operating and capital outlay costs of implementing the class size reduction constitutional amendment. **(GFCSB)**

Support maximum flexibility in the use of categorical funds.

Provide funding through a stable, long-term revenue source for the actual capital outlay needs of districts based on existing student station deficits, projected enrollment growth, the need for replacement, remodeling and maintenance of facilities, and providing for cost enhancements associated with varying local construction costs, state-mandated requirements and adverse environmental conditions. **(GFCSB)**

Maintain the integrity of the FEFP and equity of funding among school districts.

Oppose the imposition of unfunded, state-mandated expenditures. **(GFCSB)**

Support increased accountability measures for all publicly funded school choice options.

Oppose voucher programs that lack equitable and sufficient accountability measures.

Maintain the current dual delivery system of post-secondary programs. **(GFCSB)**

Oppose the deletion of impact fees unless replaced with another revenue source. **(GFCSB)**

Oppose any attempt to equalize the 2-mill levy.

Encourage the education of parents and children regarding the dangers of sexual solicitation and abuse of youth.

Modify the Jessica Lunsford Act to require Level II background screening only for those persons who enter school grounds unsupervised and are in direct contact with Pre-K-12 students. (GFCSB)

Oppose any prescribed expenditure requirement such as the “65 percent solution” as a mandate in the Florida Constitution; further, oppose any such legislation unless established as a spending goal and unless the definition of “classroom-related” expenditures includes all “instructional support” expenditures.

} A
d
d
e
d

Repeal the Florida Schools of Excellence Commission. (GFCSB)

Support state funding for a high quality, full-day Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program under the Florida Department of Education. (GFCSB)

Support state funding for the expansion of the HealthConnect Program in our schools.

Support the modification to the current transportation funding formula to include use of the Average Bus Occupancy (ABO) formula modifier in lieu of a “per available seat” basis.

Maximize education and job-training opportunities for low-wage working parents under new federal welfare regulations.

Ensure that public workforce education programs, effective public schools, and school districts are authorized to provide SES consistent with federal regulations.

Support amending the Florida Teacher Lead Program to include full-time pre-kindergarten teachers.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2007 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

MISSION/GOAL STATEMENT

Provide the highest quality education so that all of our students are empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

As the 43rd President and the 110th Congress enter their first congressional session together, we urge the President and Congress to reaffirm their commitment to our nation's children by reinvesting in public education.

FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

Increase the federal investment in public education to fully fund the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Support adequate funding for safe and drug-free school initiatives.

Support reform of formula funding disparities as identified by the General Accounting Office report of January, 2002, which hinder funds from reaching the nation's poorest students.

Support legislative efforts to require corrective sampling of flawed 2000 Census data to account for an estimated population undercount of at least 1.9% in Miami-Dade County.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Modify the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 to:

- recognize student progress in lieu of the current all-or-nothing approach and recognize degrees of progress for schools;
- ensure fair accountability by providing flexibility for special education and limited English proficient (LEP) students and other formula adjustments, and by requiring identical tests for Title I students in non-public schools.
- ensure standards are meaningful by developing uniform benchmarks of proficiency for all states to use;
- reward and retain quality teachers by supporting measures that raise pay for teachers in fields with shortages and in high-needs communities; that create career ladder paths; and that assist with rising housing costs; and
- allow districts to pay for marketing, monitoring, and other implementation costs of the Supplemental Education Services out of the required 20% set-aside and ensure that public schools are not unfairly prevented from providing remedial services to students.

IMMIGRATION IMPACT

Address the impact of federal immigration policies on local school district funds by supporting the Entrant and Refugee Assistance Program under the Targeted Assistance and Immigrant Education appropriation serving foreign-born, limited English proficient (LEP) students and their families.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

Support long-term extension of the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) program, which provides for interest free loans to be secured by eligible school districts, and modify program to permit school construction and land acquisition.

SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM

Support continued and additional funding for secondary education reform including themed, career path-based academies and smaller learning communities.

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

Support continued annual allocations of \$2.25 billion for the Universal Service Fund Program (E-Rate) and streamline refund procedures to provide schools and libraries with affordable access to state-of-the-art networking and telecommunications technology.

WORKFORCE PREPARATION

Enhance funding and effectiveness of public vocational training, adult education, family literacy, and career academy programs through improved coordination with partner agencies under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) legislation.