

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

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED 2008 STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: ESTABLISH GREATER ALLIANCE WITH LEGISLATIVE BODIES

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 2008 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 2008 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 and the need for the state to fund a longer school day to allow for additional time to meet statutory credit requirements while providing the opportunity to experience art, music and other experiences such as foreign languages, nurturing the whole student and developing a productive workforce that is able to compete in the global economy.

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To remain competitive in today's world, it is critical to look beyond our borders to be sure that the education we are providing to our children stays competitive with what is provided to children in other countries. To support the goal of educational success for our students, we must provide our students not just with academic skills and knowledge but also provide a mechanism and the opportunity to develop critical skills that are more social and civic in nature that promote the international exchange of ideas so that we ensure our students will thrive in the global era.

To be successful, students must be able to think critically and communicate broadly while maintaining an understanding of different cultures and a respect for themselves and others. Students must possess the kind of academic competency that many national and international reports describe. Students today need a civic competency; the capacity to participate in a local and global community and a sense of responsibility to take part. Our students need an occupational competency as a way to identify what careers they want to pursue and to apply their classroom learning to those aspirations. Finally, our graduates should have a personal competency, an understanding of their own capabilities and a perception of personal value that exceeds brand names. Students who possess these four competencies will enter the world with boundless opportunities. The traditional school day and school year simply do not provide sufficient time to develop those skills.

The state legislative session is scheduled to commence on Tuesday, March 4, 2008, with interim committee meetings having started in September 2007. The proposed state legislative program focuses on a limited number of legislative priorities: Funding for Education, Capital Funding, Secondary Education Reform, Professional Development, Certification of Teachers, Supplemental Education Services, Legal, and Policy Statements.

At the federal level, the 110th Congress enters its second congressional session together in January 2008. 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 2008 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:ibd

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2008 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

MISSION 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, Transportation, and Instructional Materials to accommodate student enrollment and inflation, to more accurately reflect actual costs for school districts. (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)

Fulfill commitment made to hold school districts harmless from the impact of property tax reform.

Conduct an impartial third-party study of the Florida Price Level Index to reflect the cost of housing, insurance, and transportation costs rather than wages. (GFCSB)

Provide funding to allow school districts to have an extended school day and extended school year to ensure that students are being prepared to compete in the global economy.

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)

Provide school districts with funding to 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, and mentoring programs for new teachers and administrators.

CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS

Amend statutes to provide a waiver from certification requirements when the Florida Department of Education does not have certification testing such as foreign languages (e.g., Mandarin Chinese) or for credentialed International Studies teachers.

Oppose legislation that reduces the number of inservice hours required of teachers providing instruction to English Language Learners (ELL).

SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION SERVICES

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

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.

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.

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

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.

Oppose legislation that breaks up large school districts.

Oppose legislation that would limit offering gifted programs to eligible high school students.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2008 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 embark upon their second 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 English Language Learners (ELL's) 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.

HEAD START

Support reauthorization of Head Start which has provided comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families since 1965; more than 24 million children have been enrolled in Head Start; approximately 900,000 children are currently served by the program, with 10 percent enrolled in Early Head Start (birth to age three).

Support maintaining the Head Start program under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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.

Support the DREAM Act to provide immigration relief to a select group of students who grew up in the United States, who have good moral character, and who are pursuing a college education or have enlisted in the military; and give states the authority to determine whether to grant in-state tuition to state residents regardless of immigration status.

MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT

Oppose any policy revisions to restrict school-based reimbursement for administration expenditures and certain transportation costs for services provided to low-income children with disabilities.

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.