

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

**SUBJECT: IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION BILL ON ABILITY OF SCHOOL
SYSTEM TO PROVIDE SERVICES**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: EDUCATION**

Earlier this month, the United States Senate Gang of Eight presented their immigration reform legislation - '*Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act*'. Since then, many have been comparing it to the White House blueprint and dissecting the legislation's priorities and applications, from border control to amnesty. Meanwhile, as a school district, we have spoken on the need for immigration reform and even requested a report from the administration on the impact that the lack of the same would have on our school district.

However, today this item requests that we consider the legislation that has been presented and the subtitles that directly impact our ability to continue providing educational services to our community. Specifically, I request that we consider subtitle E of the proposed legislation entitled Integration. This section establishes the United States Citizenship Foundation and Initial Entry Adjustment and Citizenship Assistance (IEACA) grants and delineates immigrant integration as a process wherein immigrants will:

- (a) join the mainstream of civic life by engaging and sharing ownership in their local community, the United States, and the principles of the Constitution;
- (b) attain financial self-sufficiency and upward economic mobility for themselves and their family members; and
- (c) acquire English language skills and related cultural knowledge necessary to effectively participate in their community.

Section 2501. The chapter further defines linguistic integration as the "acquisition, by limited English proficient individuals, of English language skills and related cultural knowledge necessary to meaningfully and effectively fulfill their roles as community members, family members and workers." Id. IEACA grants are pursuant to the proposed legislation available to public, private and non-profit organizations. Chapter 4 of Section 2537 states that the grants are available when the applicant is providing services relating to:

- (A) The rights and responsibilities of United States citizenship;
- (B) Civics-based English as a second language;
- (C) Civics, with a special emphasis on common values and traditions of Americans, including an understanding of the history of the United States and the principles of the Constitution; and
- (D) Applying for United States citizenship.

Furthermore, Section 2538(c) provides that priority will be given to States and local governments or other qualifying entities that - -

- (1) use matching funds from non-Federal sources, which may include in kind contributions;
- (2) demonstrate collaboration with public and private entities to achieve the goals of the comprehensive plan developed pursuant to subsection (d) (3);
- (3) are one of the 10 states with the highest rate of foreign-born residents; or
- (4) have experienced a large increase in the population of immigrants during the most recent 10-year period relative to past migration patterns, based on data compiled by the Office of Immigration Statistics or the United States Census Bureau.

Section 2538. As you know, the State of Florida and therefore Miami-Dade County is included in both subsections (3) and (4) because of our level of foreign born residents and increase in immigration in the last decade. However, at present, the adult learning programs that the district provides that teach English to non-English speakers and prepare students for the citizenship exam do not meet the requirements of subsections (1) and (2). Therefore, in light of the success that our district has had with these programs and the demand that will exist when immigration reform is accomplished, this item requests that we consider if and how our existing programs could comply with subsections (1) and/or (2). In helping with said analysis, this item recommends that we consider subsection (d) below which states in pertinent part that:

A grant awarded under this subsection may be used:

- (1) to form a New Immigrant Council, which shall - -
 - (A) consist of between 15 and 19 individuals, inclusive, from the State, local government, or qualifying organization;
 - (B) include, to the extent practicable, representatives from - -
 - (i) business;
 - (ii) faith-based organizations;
 - (iii) civic organization;
 - (iv) philanthropic organizations;

- (v) nonprofit organizations, including those with experience working with immigrant communities;
- (vi) key education stakeholders, such as State educational agencies, local educational agencies, community colleges, and teachers;
- (vii) State adult education offices;
- (viii) State or local public libraries; and
- (ix) State or local governments; and

(C) meet not less frequently than once each quarter.

Finally, the proposed legislation adds a new dynamic to adult education by establishing the desire to develop, implement, expand, or enhance a comprehensive plan to introduce and integrate new immigrants into the State by - -

- (A) improving English language skills;
- (B) engaging caretakers with limited English proficiency in their child's education through interactive parent and child literacy activities;
- (C) improving and expanding access to workforce training programs;
- (D) teaching United States history, civics education, citizenship rights, and responsibilities;
- (E) promoting an understanding of the form of government and history of the United States and the principles of the Constitution;
- (F) improving financial literacy; and
- (G) focusing on other key areas of importance to integration in our society.

Section 2538. These are all goals that are not new to our district but that may or may not be at present incorporated in our adult English language and citizenship programs. However, as a result of the legislation enacted in this legislative session (specifically SB1076), we will be enhancing our high school curriculum with a financial literacy component and a greater emphasis on workforce training. We should consider how to incorporate these goals in our existing adult education, since Section 2538 specifically states that it seeks "to engage receiving communities in the citizenship and civic integration process by increasing local service capacity."

As the fourth largest school district in the country, we have in many instances set the bar for innovation and achievement. This item asks that we consider doing the same in terms of the proposed immigration reform; that we consider if and how we can comply with it and what we believe as a district would aid and or hinder our compliance; that we consider our ability to provide the services required by this historic reform and the impact that it could have on our educational system.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. RAQUEL REGALADO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, request the Superintendent to consider how the proposed immigration bill will impact the school system's ability to continue providing services to the community and the district's ability to comply with the funding requirements set forth by the same.