

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE 2015-2016

Since September 2008, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has worked collaboratively to ensure that the goal of student achievement is the center of the decisions we proffer as budget recommendations. Our successful navigation of the most difficult economic times the District has experienced in our lifetimes serves as a roadmap to future success and expanded opportunities as the financial burdens of the last eight years begin to retreat into important memories and lessons that guide our future financial decisions.

In spite of our success we still face two significant financial challenges that I have declared as the greatest liabilities we will face over the next several budget cycles. Those liabilities are the on-going property tax collection shortfall and the continued pressure on our self-insured health fund due to rising medical costs across the nation but particularly in South Florida.

We are grateful to the Florida legislature and especially the Dade Delegation for their efforts as it relates to legislative fixes for the local tax collection shortfall issues and are hopeful that the next legislative session brings additional solutions to the problem. However, much of the solution to the problem lies within the border of Miami-Dade County, and under the direction of the School Board staff will continue to work for solutions to the issue with those at the County who have the ability to make the necessary changes.

New strategies in the area of health care cost containment and support from our unions for plan redesign over the last several years have kept the fund sound and viable. We are thankful for the support and look forward to additional cost containment strategies as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) provisions continue to be implemented over the next few years. Failure to implement, in a collaborative manner, the mandates of ACA will have significant financial implications for the district.

Once again, we are very proud of the budget presented to you, the School Board. It holds true to our values, it protects the classroom, continues to reduce the tax rate, expands choice and innovation, and protects jobs. The budget continues to fund key commitments to classroom support, ESE services, expands funding to EFL programs and continues to fund school safety at a level that exceeds the amount of state funding by 400%. It holds the line of Central Office spending and continues to support an unassigned fund balance in excess of the State required minimum of 3%.

The budget presented herein is, as required by state law, balanced. A small change in one area of the budget could result in unintended consequences elsewhere in the budget that would impact other programs or jobs. The budget reflects the input of a broad range of stakeholders across the community and the work of a financial team that is the best in the nation. The FY 2015-2016 budget is one that I am proud of. It represents the beginning of the next leg of a journey away from the "financial cliff" of years past to a road to expanded financial stability and success.



Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools