

Manty Sabatés Morse, Member

SUBJECT: CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO ASSESS THE BENEFITS OF HAVING SELF-CONTAINED SIXTH GRADE CLASSES AND/OR OF CHANGING THE TIMES THAT SIXTH, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADERS CHANGE CLASSROOMS

An analysis of the results of the Stanford Achievement Test -Eighth Edition (SAT-8) district scores reflect a drop as students move from the self-contained environment of the elementary school in the fifth grade to the current middle school configuration in the sixth grade. In 1997-98, students at the fifth grade had a median percentile of 40 in reading comprehension in the SAT. In 1998-99, students at the sixth grade had a median percentile score in reading comprehension of 36, for a reduction of 4 points. In addition, ever since the configuration of middle schools was changed to include sixth graders, parents have complained of the treatment their young ones have been receiving from the older students at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Acts of violence, improper behavior, excessive pressure, and unequal physical strength are some of the complaints often heard from parents of sixth graders.

Two changes have been mentioned as possible solutions to this problem. The first one would entail encouraging self-contained classes for sixth graders and the second would require a time schedule which allows sixth graders to change classrooms at times different from the seventh and eighth graders, thus keeping the different grade levels separate during passing time between class periods.

These two options are currently under study and will be implemented during the upcoming school year in middle schools in Boca Raton, Florida.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MRS. MANTY SABATÉS MORSE: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to study the feasibility of separating sixth graders from seventh and eighth graders within middle schools by having self-contained classes for the sixth graders and changing the times that the different grade levels change classrooms, or some combination thereof.