

August 29, 2001

Betsy H. Kaplan, Member

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED 2002 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA  
CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

The South Florida Consortium of School Boards is an informal coalition of 10 school boards which have joined to assist each other in advancing educational issues of mutual concern. The members include: Broward, Collier, Hillsborough, Indian River, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Orange, Palm Beach, and Sarasota counties.

On August 23, 2001, representatives of the Consortium met in Tampa, Florida to finalize the draft of their proposed 2002 Legislative Program. The draft program includes only those items which were approved by the School Board representatives in attendance. Further, it adheres to the Consortium's policy of including only a select number of issues in order to ensure maximum cohesiveness in the program and concentration of the Consortium resources on its priorities.

All 10 Consortium school boards are being asked to review the draft program and to take official action on it. Each issue must be supported by all Consortium members to be included in the final adopted program. Once all 10 boards have officially adopted the 2002 Legislative Program, the Consortium will print and distribute the document to the Governor, State Cabinet, all legislators, and interested citizen groups.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MS. BETSY H. KAPLAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida adopt the proposed 2002 Legislative Program of the South Florida Consortium of School Boards or modify as deemed appropriate.

BHK:jmg

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## SOUTH FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF SCHOOL BOARDS

### 2002 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

School Boards must be able to maximize their revenues and make the local district decisions necessary to focus those resources on improving student achievement, based on the Sunshine State Standards and measured by the FCAT.

The South Florida Consortium of School Boards recommends that the 2002 Legislature adopt a “**no strings attached**” policy to funding for Florida’s public schools while holding school boards accountable for outcomes.

The policy dictates funding and financial flexibility based on the following:

**Adequacy:** School Boards must be given the necessary resources to provide the full range of programs and services that can address their students’ needs. This includes removing the funding caps on Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) since all these students must be served.

**Equity:** Differences in costs of education caused by elements outside the control of the local school boards, such as the variations in costs of delivering services among districts, must continue to be addressed in the funding formula through such components as the District Cost Differential.

**Quality:** Additional state funding is needed for the recruitment and retention of personnel with the priority focus on teachers followed by administrators and necessary support personnel.

**Flexibility:** The legislative policy for funding public schools should support:

- Local budget decisions that are not constricted by non-funded mandates or state mandates such as imposing penalties for attendance rates (Average Daily Attendance) and requiring redirection of funds (Dollars to the Classroom) based on arbitrary measures.
- Local determination of the most effective way to use retention and recruitment funds, and implementing performance pay programs.
- Insuring that School Code changes focus on maximum flexibility in the allocation of resources and the operation of schools.
- Local control over such issues as the governance of Workforce Development Programs.
- Eliminating categorical funding with the exception of transportation, instructional technology, safe schools and instructional materials.

## **CAPITAL OUTLAY**

Support implementation of **Growth Management** legislation that includes a school board option to approve an additional source of school construction funds by extraordinary vote for a local sales tax in order to address school overcrowding.

Provide a long-term **stable funding source** to meet school districts' continuing need for more classroom space, school renovation including portable classrooms, school maintenance and emergency shelter requirements.

Maintain **impact fees** unless they are replaced by a revenue source of equal value.

Eliminate the contradiction between the **definition of student capacity** based on classroom space footage and educational program requirements.

**Exempt school districts from Florida school construction statutes and rules**, except for life and safety requirements, when the district has a state-approved inter-local agreement and the fund source for the construction, remodeling or renovation is local property or sales tax revenues.