

Business Operations
Joe Arriola, Chief Business Officer

SUBJECT: SCHOOL SIZE

Beginning July 1, 2003, Florida Statute Chapter 235.2157 will require that all plans for new educational facilities to be constructed shall be for small schools.

A "small school" is defined as:

An elementary school with a student population of not more than 500 students, a K-8 school of not more than 700 students, a middle school of not more than 700 students, and a high school of not more than 900 students.

A school on a single campus, which operates as a "school within a school", as defined by s. 230.23 (20), shall be considered a small school if each smaller unit located on the single campus meets the requirements of this subsection.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) present Board approved facilities lists are sized as follows:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Student Stations</u>	<u>Small School Requirement (Maximum Size)</u>
Primary Learning Center	280	500
Elementary	1,045	500
K-8 School	1,593	700
Middle Learning Center	483	700
Middle School	1,495	700
Senior High School	2,858	900

The elementary, K-8, middle, and senior high school Board approved facilities lists far exceed the "small school requirement". Since it would not be cost-effective to reduce the size of the schools to the "small school requirement", it is recommended that the school district pursue the "school within a school" option.

To properly plan for a school within a school building concept the Board approved facilities lists will require modifications. This effort would be coordinated with School Operations, Curriculum, and other District staff.

The new size of schools recommended below are maximums and would not prevent the Board from building smaller schools due to project specific circumstances such as site size availability, satellite school, special magnet school, etc. It is proposed that the new size of schools utilizing the school within a school concept would be approximately as follows:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Total Student Stations</u>	<u>Number and Size of Schools within a School</u>
Primary Learning Center	280	One (1) school @ 280
Elementary	1,500	Three (3) schools @ 500 each
K-8 School	2,100	Three (3) schools @ 700 each
Middle Learning Center	700	One (1) school @ 700
Middle School	2,100	Three (3) schools @ 700 each
Senior High School	3,600	Four (4) schools @ 900 each

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida approve the use of the school within a school concept and direct staff to develop new facilities lists for Board approval based on the proposed new school sizes.

WLB:dc

235.2157 Small school requirement.--

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.--The Legislature finds that:

- (a) Florida's schools are among the largest in the nation.
- (b) Smaller schools provide benefits of reduced discipline problems and crime, reduced truancy and gang participation, reduced dropout rates, improved teacher and student attitudes, improved student self-perception, student academic achievement equal to or superior to that of students at larger schools, and increased parental involvement.
- (c) Smaller schools can provide these benefits while not increasing administrative and construction costs.

(2) DEFINITION.--As used in this section, "small school" means:

- (a) An elementary school with a student population of not more than 500 students.
- (b) A middle school with a student population of not more than 700 students.
- (c) A high school with a student population of not more than 900 students.
- (d) A school serving kindergarten through grade 8 with a student population of not more than 700 students.
- (e) A school serving kindergarten through grade 12 with a student population of not more than 900 students.

A school on a single campus which operates as a school-within-a-school, as defined by s. 230.23(20), shall be considered a small school if each smaller unit located on the single campus meets the requirements of this subsection.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.--

- (a) Beginning July 1, 2003, all plans for new educational facilities to be constructed within a school district and reflected in the 5-year school district facilities work plan shall be plans for small schools in order to promote increased learning and more effective use of school facilities.

(b) Small schools shall comply with all laws, rules, and court orders relating to racial balance.

(4) EXCEPTIONS.--This section does not apply to plans for new educational facilities already under architectural contract on July 1, 2003.

History.--s. 21, ch. 2000-235.

230.23 Powers and duties of school board.--The school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below:

(20) SCHOOL-WITHIN-A-SCHOOL.--In order to reduce the anonymity of students in large schools, the district school board shall adopt policies effective for the 2002-2003 school year, and thereafter, to encourage any school that does not meet the definition of a small school, as established by s. 235.2157(2), to subdivide into schools-within-a-school, which shall operate within existing resources. A "school-within-a-school" means an operational program that uses flexible scheduling, team planning, and curricular and instructional innovation to organize groups of students with groups of teachers as smaller units, so as to functionally operate as a smaller school. Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

(a) An organizational arrangement assigning both students and teachers to smaller units in which the students take some or all of their coursework with their fellow grouped students and from the teachers assigned to the smaller unit. A unit may be grouped together for 1 year or on a vertical, multiyear basis.

(b) An organizational arrangement similar to that described in paragraph (a) with additional variations in instruction and curriculum. The smaller unit usually seeks to maintain a program different from that of the larger school, or of other smaller units. It may be vertically organized, but is dependent upon the school principal for its existence, budget, and staff.

(c) A separate and autonomous smaller unit formally authorized by the district school board or superintendent of schools. The smaller unit plans and runs its own program, has its own staff and students, and receives its own separate budget. The smaller unit must negotiate the use of common space with the larger school and defer to the building principal on matters of safety and building operation.