

Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF THE 108<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS TO SUPPORT CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS CONSISTENT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE ASSOCIATION, AND AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS CERTAIN FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES WITH IMMEDIATE FISCAL IMPACT UPON THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**COMMITTEE: LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PERSONNEL SERVICES**

The Federal Legislative Program for the first year of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress was adopted by the School Board on December 11, 2002, and amended on January 15 and February 12, 2003. The Program is based upon recommendations forwarded to Federal Legislative staff by School Board Members, the Superintendent, staff, interested citizen groups, community agencies, and employee organizations.

As noted in the Board item of December 11, 2002, the Board may be asked to consider additional recommendations as the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress progresses. Staff are periodically alerted to legislative issues that may have policy implications or fiscal impact on school District operations.

An issue that has emerged since the last solicitation of recommendations is the 2004 reauthorization of Child Nutrition Programs (Women, Infants, and Children, Commodity Distribution, State Administrative Expense, The National Food Service Management Institute, and Summer Food Service Program), which may impact the operation of District food service programs.

The American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) has adopted a legislative program that would ensure that all children have access to nutritious meals; that high standards and integrity are maintained in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs; and that schools are able to help address the challenges of obesity, and establish lifelong, healthy habits.

As a result, it is recommended that the School Board amend the current Federal Legislative Program to address federal support for child nutrition programs consistent with the recommendations of the ASFSA.

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Furthermore, in order to expedite urgent additions to the Federal Legislative Program and avoid opportunity costs due to a delayed Board approval, it is recommended that the Board authorize the Superintendent of Schools to approve those additions to the Program that have an imminent fiscal impact on school District operations and do not have major policy implications.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. amend the Federal Legislative Program for the first year of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress in order to support child nutrition programs consistent with recommendations of the American School Food Service Association; and
2. authorize the Superintendent of Schools to address those additions to the Federal Legislative Program that have an imminent fiscal impact on school District operations and do not have major policy implications.

MRS/AMC:nt

Associate Superintendent for Education  
Additional Back-up Information on Board Agenda Items

Board Meeting: March 12, 2003    Item # A-4    Originator: Department of Food and Nutrition  
Subject:        2004 Reauthorization of Child Nutrition Programs; Superintendent's Authority to  
                      Address Issues with Imminent Fiscal Impact

Directions: Answer each section in bullet form (short, clear, and precise).	
I.	Historical information (e.g., number of years of implementation, schools involved). <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 1946, Congress passed the National School Lunch Act as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children.</li><li>• School breakfast and lunch are permanently authorized by the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.</li><li>• The Commodity Distribution Program, State Administrative Expense and Summer Food Service Programs must be reauthorized.</li></ul>
II.	Major characteristics of project/program/contract. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access – The programs ensure that all children have access to nutritious meals.</li><li>• Program Integrity - Maintaining high standards and integrity in the federal nutrition programs is critical to their success.</li><li>• Healthy Children - Schools have an important role to play in the development of healthy children. The program addresses the challenges of obesity and aims to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits in children.</li></ul>
III.	Importance of item to the District. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is important for the Board to endorse a legislative agenda that calls upon Congress to 1) enact a reauthorization bill that updates, expands participation, and enhances nutrition quality in the child nutrition programs; and 2) allocates in the budget sufficient new funds to achieve these goals.</li><li>• Other issues with fiscal impact to the District may arise prior to the annual revision of the Federal Legislative Program. Authority for the Superintendent to address imminent, non-controversial issues in a timely manner will protect the fiscal interests of the School Board as relevant legislative issues emerge.</li></ul>
IV.	Timeliness - why this Board meeting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The new or modified items in this Federal Legislative agenda are expected to be considered by Congress during the current legislative session.</li><li>• As the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress is now in session, new issues may arise at any time that may impact District operations with either direct or indirect fiscal impact.</li></ul>

- V. Controversial or negative issues of importance to the Board.
- United States Department of Agriculture is considering proposals to require either that:
    - 1) families of all children applying for free or reduced-price school meals provide documentation of their income when submitting the meal applications, or
    - 2) that families of all children who have been certified for free or reduced-price meals be required to submit verification of income after the application is approved, with the children's benefits being terminated if the verification is not submitted.
  - Both approaches would represent a radical change in the school meal programs. The existing research strongly indicates that either policy change would likely cause large numbers of *eligible* low-income children to lose meal benefits.
  - In the judgment of the Superintendent of Schools, new federal issues that are controversial or have major policy implications will first be brought to the School Board for formal amendment of the Federal Legislative Program.

- VI. Is it supportive of major District initiative(s)? Please specify.
- Yes, nutrition programs play a large role in helping children achieve access to quality child care, to educational and recreational programs, and in improving children's development, health, and achievement. Funding for these programs, however, has not kept pace with these additional demands.

- VII. Reasonableness of cost.
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