

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Member

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2003 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH AS A LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY FLEXIBILITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AMENDMENT 9: CLASS SIZE REDUCTION**

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

In the general election of November, 2002 the voters of Florida Approved Constitutional Amendment 9, the Class Size Reduction Amendment. The Florida House and Senate must now adopt legislation to ensure the implementation of this amendment. The legislature must now take action to define certain terms used in the amendment language and to decide upon a funding methodology.

Further, those school districts, such as Miami-Dade County, with an existing student station deficit or expecting continued population growth, will have a need for additional classroom facilities in order to meet the teacher/pupil ratios set by the amendment. Therefore, it is critical that any implementation legislation adopted by Florida's Legislature include maximum flexibility in the use of existing facilities and resources, as well as existing and future funding streams.

Several items which will provide school districts with flexibility in the methods used to meet the class cap mandates include:

- Amendment of section 1013.03 Florida Statutes - **Functions of the department** requiring that by October 1, 2003, the Department of Education must review all rules related to school construction to identify requirements that are outdated, obsolete, unnecessary, or otherwise could be amended in order to provide additional flexibility to school districts to comply with the constitutional class size maximum caps.

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- The repeal of section 1013.21, Florida Statutes - **Reduction of relocatable facilities in use**, which states,

...that all school districts shall provide a quality educational environment for their students such that, by July 1, 2003, student stations in relocatable facilities exceeding 20 years of age and in use by a district during the 1998-1999 fiscal year shall be removed and the number of all other relocatable student stations at over-capacity schools during that fiscal year shall be decreased by half.

A repeal of this legislation would allow M-DCPS to continue to utilize existing relocatable facilities.

- The repeal of section 1013.43 – **Small School Requirement** which limits the size of new school construction. A repeal of this requirement would allow the construction of larger educational facilities thus taking advantage of economies of scale by providing additional seats and minimizing the cost of additional land and duplicating core facilities.

In this time of critical economic crisis it is important that School Districts be given maximum flexibility to implement the Amendment 9 requirements. Advocating for such flexibility should therefore be added to this District's Legislative priorities as it encompasses all of our previously adopted priorities including funding, capital outlay funding, limited English proficient education and teacher recruitment/retention. Such flexibility is of paramount importance; therefore our staff in Tallahassee should be directed to concentrate their efforts in this area.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida,

1. amend the 2003 State Legislative Program to establish as a legislative priority of flexibility in the implementation of Amendment 9: Class Size Reduction; and
2. support the repeal of 1013.21, Florida Statutes which specifies that by July 1, 2003, student stations in relocatable facilities exceeding 20 years of age and in use by a district during the 1998-1999 fiscal year shall be removed.