

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE BOARD ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY, LEGALITY AND PROCESS OF INCREASING OPERATING REVENUES WITHIN THE PROPOSED MILLAGE RATES AS TENTATIVELY APPROVED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD ON JULY 30, 2008 AND EXPEDITE AS APPROPRIATE THE PLACEMENT OF TAX NEUTRAL LANGUAGE ON THE NOVEMBER 4, 2008 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC GOAL: IMPROVE FINANCIAL SERVICES

Over the past several years, educational funding in the State of Florida has steadily declined. In the Miami-Dade County school district educational funding has declined even more. The elimination of the District Cost Differential (DCD) has cost the district tens of millions of dollars over the past few years. At the same time, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has experienced declining student enrollment in other than Charter Schools for the last several years, which also has negatively impacted district revenues.

Prior to an increased decline in student enrollment, our school district succeeded in adding new classroom spaces of approximately 20,000 student stations per year for several years to address regional overcrowding as well as comply with constitutional class size requirements. As a result, the district is able to do with less funding for facility construction in the near future. Conversely, the school district is in need of more revenue to fund operations primarily for teacher and other employee salaries.

Like most other school districts in Florida, the Miami-Dade County school district is already collecting the maximum amount of operating funds from property taxes permitted by the legislature without voter approval.

Therefore this agenda item proposes that the School Board direct the Superintendent and the School Board Attorney's Office to explore the feasibility, legality and process of increasing operating revenues within the proposed millage rates as tentatively approved by the School Board on July 30, 2008. Subsequently, the School Board may consider adopting a resolution requesting that the Miami-Dade County Commission place a referendum on the next county wide ballot.

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If feasible and appropriate, the Superintendent and the Board Attorney should take all necessary steps to insure the placement of tax neutral referendum language, as approved by Board resolution, on the November 4, 2008 general election ballot.

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The referendum shall be to authorize a county wide assessment of an amount of millage of 0.25 mills, for a term of not more than 4 years, for the purpose of providing additional operating funds to be used for teacher salaries and salaries for other vital employees. The School Board would agree to reduce the 1.75 mills as needed (formerly 2 mills) capital assessment currently authorized, by not less than the millage it assesses for this item for each year that there is an additional operating fund assessment. Therefore the total millage for public schools would not exceed the total that would have been assessed without this additional operating fund assessment.

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**ACTION PROPOSED BY VICE CHAIR
PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

1. That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida direct the Superintendent and the School Board Attorney's office to explore and verify the feasibility, legality and process of increasing operating revenues within the proposed millage rates as tentatively approved by the Board on July 30, 2008.
2. If it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, the Superintendent and Board Attorney should expedite all necessary procedures (including placement of the attached Resolution on the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners' Agenda for its meeting of September 2, 2008) to ensure the placement of the proposal's tax neutral language on the November 4, 2008 general election ballot, and make any necessary changes to the ballot language to ensure legal compliance.

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