

August 29, 2008

Mr. Agustin J. Barrera, Chair

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TAKE A POSITION IN OPPOSITION TO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS 5, 7, 9 ON THE NOVEMBER 2008 BALLOT AND DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO INFORM EDUCATORS AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO THE DISTRICT

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: ACTIVELY ENGAGE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO BECOME OUR PARTNERS IN RAISING AND MAINTAINING HIGH STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Florida is facing challenging issues with the competing needs of its residents such as quality public education. Florida's Taxation and Budget Revision Commission has concluded its work and several constitutional amendments are scheduled to be on the November 2008 ballot. Several of those amendments hold the potential of having a profound impact on public education. Floridians will be faced with making a decision on several constitutional amendments: Amendment 5- Repeals the Required Local Effort; (see attached) Amendment 7- Repeals the prohibition against using public funds to directly or indirectly aid any church, sect or religions denomination; and Amendment 9- Requires at least 65% of school funding received by school districts be spent on classroom expenditures and reverses the legal precedent prohibiting public funding of private schools.

Because of their potential impact, the Board should be proactive, and provide leadership for the community by advocating against those amendments that will negatively impact public education- Amendments 5, 7, and 9. The Florida School Boards Association and the Florida Association of District School Superintendents, as well as individual districts, have already voted to oppose these amendments.

WITHDRAWN

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Additionally, the Board should provide internal and external stakeholders with the necessary information to increase the awareness of impact of these constitutional amendments. Our stakeholders deserve and are entitled to know prior to the November election the impact that each constitutional proposal will have on the quality of education that this board will be able to provide. The Board must immediately provide the community with specific information on how such changes could affect everything from construction to teacher salaries to offering sports, arts and music programs to bus transportation. The District should minimally hold meetings with PTA/PTSA units, unions, and other stakeholders to inform all interested stakeholders regarding the amendments and use our established methods of communication including phone calls, town hall meetings and e-mails.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MR. AGUSTIN J. BARRERA, CHAIR: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. Oppose Constitutional Amendments 5, 7, and 9; and,
2. Direct the Superintendent to work with other major stakeholder groups so the community is informed of the impact of November's Constitutional Amendments 5, 7, and 9.