

Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: EQUITY, EFFICIENCY, AND TRANSPARENCY

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Equity, efficiency, and transparency are hallmarks of responsive government and have been the benchmarks by which this administration has measured each of its endeavors. As we move forward to place the question of *Bonds for Schools* before the voters of Miami-Dade County, it is important to reaffirm our commitment to these principles and identify how they will be applied to each aspect of the General Obligation Bond Program. The funds which will be generated from the Bond will be used to enhance the safety of our schools, improve access to technology, provide a dignified teaching and learning environment for school-site employees and students, and deliver an economic boost to our local economy by creating jobs and business opportunities in construction and related industries. Through careful stewardship we will be able to achieve all of these goals while minimizing the burden to the taxpayer.

Equity

Equity is a fundamental principle that this District strives to achieve both in the delivery of programs and services to students as well as in our business practices.

Where students are concerned, we believe that one's zip code must not be an obstacle to accessing high quality, academically rigorous educational programs. Our singular goal is improving student achievement and our highest priority is to provide an education to the students of this community that fully prepares them to compete on the world stage on equal footing with their peers from across the globe. Therefore, over the last four years Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has created, franchised, or expanded over 55 magnet and choice programs to schools in every corner of Miami-Dade County. We have provided new and improved educational programs and created new learning opportunities. However, our buildings, in many cases cannot support the technology that our students need. Through the proceeds generated by the Bond Program the physical infrastructure at schools across our community will be improved, providing equity of environment for all students. Necessary technology upgrades and improvements to the physical plant of all schools will support the kind of learning environment that can literally propel our students into a successful future.

As one of the largest enterprises in the county, we recognize that we have a responsibility to ensure equity in our procurement and contracting practices, thus providing opportunities for all vendors to compete for our business. M-DCPS is committed to developing and strengthening local, small, and minority and women-owned businesses, as they are an integral component of the economic stability and long term prosperity of the community we serve. As such, we have implemented a number of policies and initiatives designed to promote greater participation in procurement of goods and services in support of Miami-Dade's overall economic development.

In October 2011, the Board adopted a Local Vendor Preference Policy, followed by a school-site procurement policy requiring solicitation of quotes from minority and women owned business for all purchases over \$1,000. In addition, the Office of Economic Opportunity was established to assist and educate local Minority/Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) firms regarding the process to become a certified vendor and to do business with the District.

Most recently, on September 5, 2012, the Board authorized the initiation of a disparity study to support an updated M/WBE program. A request for proposals for a firm to conduct the disparity study is being released this week.

A Small Business Enterprise Program is in the final stages of development and will provide tiered participation levels establishing set-aside opportunities for small and micro firms.

The following additional measures will be undertaken to maximize opportunities for small, local, and minority and women owned businesses:

- Expand recruitment efforts aimed at identifying and retaining small, local, and minority-owned firms to compete for business opportunities and at promoting local employment and economic development;
- Promote greater diversity and equity in areas of construction and general procurement practices by implementing legally-supported practices to increase participation by minority-owned business entities;
- Eliminate the bonding requirement for certain projects under \$200,000;
- Partner with community-based organizations to empower small and minority business owners through training regarding vendor registration and procurement procedures;
- Expand outreach methods to communicate business opportunities including requests for bids, qualifications, information and proposals to registered firms;
- Report on progress regarding local, small and minority business participation in an open and transparent manner;
- Assist with job placement for local residents in construction apprenticeship programs; and

- Strengthen relationships with the small and minority business community through internships, mentorships, educational opportunities and training programs.

These measures emphasize our commitment to small, local, and minority and women owned businesses and are intended to foster an organization-wide culture promoting diversity, equity and transparency regarding business practices. This commitment will also carry through to those projects which are funded with proceeds from the Bond Program. We are committed to investing 100 percent of these funds back into our local economy to create jobs, stimulate economic development, and boost the recovery of construction and related industries.

Efficiency

Over the last four years we have transformed our business practices, cut administrative expenditures in half, reduced administrative positions by 52 percent, delivered a balanced budget each year, reduced taxes that the Board controls, steadily increased reserves, and realigned resources in support of a single strategic goal of improving student achievement. With a commitment to efficiency through innovation, M-DCPS has risen to become one of the highest performing urban school systems in the nation. Through attention to detail, data-driven decision making, and a laser-like focus on performance improvement, we have successfully navigated extremely turbulent economic waters and rapidly changing academic accountability standards.

This same commitment to efficiency and excellence will be brought to the administration of the Bond Program. A detailed listing of projects has been developed and is available at bondsfor-schools.dadeschools.net, which includes improvements for every school in the District. The roll out of these projects will not take ten years or even five years, but improvements will begin being delivered within the first year. These projects will be delivered on time and on budget, and strict accountability will be applied to each and every contract issued through this Bond.

Transparency

Over the last four years this Board and this administration have taken steps to restore transparency to our school system. We have unprecedented stakeholder engagement in the decision-making processes of almost every function of this District, from budget development, facilities planning, and allocation through entities such as the Budget Priorities Parent Advisory Subcommittee, School Site Planning and Construction Committee, and the Superintendent's Business Advisory Council, to curriculum development and school improvement through the Parent Leadership Council and the Education Transformation Office (ETO) Task Force. Community involvement and District openness have been the cornerstones of restoring our credibility with the public

and the confidence of the media, the business community, and state and federal legislators.

Continuing this tradition of open access and public accountability, we are establishing a 21st Century Schools' Bond Advisory Committee composed of citizens representing each Board Member district, the PTA/PTSA, other governmental entities, business organizations, community organizations such as the NAACP/NAN and SALAD, and others to provide transparency and instill confidence in the taxpayers of Miami-Dade County that the proceeds of the Bond Program are being used according to the published plan, that projects are being delivered in a timely manner, are equitably distributed across the community, and that the investments made are supporting the local economy. This panel will monitor, review, make recommendations, and inform the public on the planning, progress and implementation of the Bond Program. To ensure that no member of this panel will have any vested interest in how the Bond monies are spent beyond what is in the best interest of the community; appointees shall not have any direct or indirect interest in any contracts with M-DCPS or any financial interest in any of the projects to be funded through the bond referendum.

M-DCPS is a school system which has shown significant improvement in student achievement, boasting some of the nation's most remarkable gains by minority and economically disadvantaged students. It is an organization which has a proven record of financial and management success. It is an organization which will build upon this investment by the community to yield dividends that will be seen in the success of each student who has the opportunity to learn in a state of the art educational environment made possible by the proceeds of the General Obligation Bonds.

RECOMMENDED:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida endorse the Superintendent's commitment to the public that the General Obligation Bond Program will be implemented in accordance with the principles of efficiency, equity, and transparency.