



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

Superintendent of Schools

Alberto M. Carvalho

Miami-Dade County School Board

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September 12, 2019

Dear Commissioner:

Despite Florida's economic challenges during the last several years, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has delivered compelling student achievement results that are nationally recognized. The District has earned an "A" rating for two consecutive years and has had no "F"-rated traditional schools for three consecutive years. However, we need your ongoing advocacy to continue our progress and success, and we request your support of the Miami-Dade School Board's legislative platform. The enclosed platform was adopted at the September 4, 2019, regular School Board meeting for the upcoming 2020 legislative session. This platform reflects the legislative needs identified by the School Board and District staff, as well as interested citizens, PTA/PTSA groups, employee groups, administrators, and other community stakeholders.

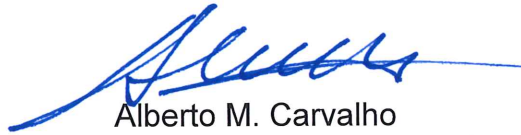
We respectfully request your support of The School Board's top priorities for the upcoming legislative session. These include:

- Increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by five percent, which can be achieved by discontinuing the policy of rolling back the Required Local Effort rate;
- Implementing a revised District Cost Differential that takes into account cost differences integral to educational institutions' operations reflecting such costs as average teacher salaries, health insurance for employees, property insurance per FTE, as well housing and transportation costs per FTE;
- Extending the authorization of the locally-voted levy for operating purposes from four years to 10 years;
- Funding select student programs beyond the 1.0 FTE cap or 25 hours a week, such as dual enrollment or virtual classes outside the traditional school day and year; and
- Amending the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Safety Act to expand the pool of allowable options and the pool of candidates that can serve as school safety security officers at public schools.

On behalf of the students of Miami-Dade County, thank you for your continued support. I look forward to working with you again.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ms. Iraida R. Mendez-Cartaya, Associate Superintendent, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration, and Community Engagement, at 305 995-2532.

Sincerely,



Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools

AMC:ajo
L303

Attachment

cc: School Board Members
School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2020 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

MISSION/GOAL STATEMENT

The Florida Legislature should establish a five-year strategic plan to restore, stabilize, and increase funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) to achieve at least the national average in per pupil expenditures to provide the highest quality education and to enable all of our students to be empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FUNDING:

Increase the state's investment in K-12 education by increasing the **Base Student Allocation (BSA)** by five percent and discontinue the policy of rolling back the Required Local Effort rate.

Ensure the Funding Compression established during the 2018 legislative session sunsets on June 30, 2020.

Ensure that any changes to the District Cost Differential take into account cost differences integral to educational institutions' operations reflecting such costs as average teacher salaries, health insurance for employees, property insurance per FTE, housing, and transportation costs per FTE.

Provide school districts with greater flexibility of its use of Title I funds by separating the indirect cost from the 10 percent allowable administrative set-aside and increasing the allowable educational services set-aside to 10 percent.

Fund programs taken by students beyond the 1.0 FTE cap or 25 hours a week such as dual enrollment or virtual classes outside the traditional school day and year.

Extend the authorization of the locally-voted levy for operating purposes from four years to 10 years.

SCHOOL SECURITY

Fully fund the cost of the requirement of a School Resource Officer (SRO) or School Safety Officer (SSO) at each public school.

Significantly increase funding for mental health services for students to facilitate the hiring additional school counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

Provide funding for safety infrastructure needs.

Amend the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Safety Act to:

- Mandate the use of a uniform emergency communication system across all public schools and all law enforcement agencies within each county for the purpose of critical incident response;
- Ensure alignment of the coding of incidents between Florida Department of Education's School Environment Safety Incident Report (SESIR) and Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) systems;
- Facilitate the requirement of charter schools reporting their SESIR incident data independently of school districts;
- Require law enforcement agencies to engage with and/or cooperate with school districts and charters seeking to secure SRO/SSO coverage.
- Expand the pool of allowable options to meet the requirement of a safe schools officer at every school by adding certified law enforcement officers as qualifying under the guardian program;

allowing school districts to re-employ retired police officers after one month of retirement without penalty to their pension; extending the DROP period to eight years for law enforcement officers serving as a school resource officers; and

- Expand the entities that offer and certify guardian program to include accredited law enforcement agencies.

Support legislation that ensures school districts are notified when a student is released from any statewide Baker Act receiving facility and of any felony arrest or formal charges of adult students.

GOVERNANCE:

Oppose legislation that subverts district governance of constitutionally-elected local school boards and elected or appointed superintendents to supervise all public schools.

Require all publicly funded educational delivery methods to adhere to the same regulatory and funding standards.

CAPITAL FUNDING:

Support the state fully funding charter school capital outlay.

Ensure that sharing school board's Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy revenue with charter schools is permissible and not required for school districts.

SCHOOL READINESS:

Support state funding for a high-quality, full-day Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program that provides a minimum of 990 hours for all eligible students.

Replace the current VPK assessment with a developmentally appropriate on-going assessment tool to timely measure children's progress and development, to inform the teachers and parents, and to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

TEACHER/PERSONNEL SHORTAGE:

Implement and fund strategies such as teacher fellowships and loan forgiveness programs to encourage and attract talented students to enter the field of education.

Allow school districts to re-employ teachers, other instructional personnel, and substitute teachers after one month of retirement without penalty to the employee's pension.

Include Pre-K teachers in the list of instructional personnel eligible to extend the Deferred Retirement Option Program to 96 months.

Amend F.S. 1012.22 to stipulate that performance-based salary adjustments are annual and not recurring.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

FUNDING

Require advertising a tax increase only when the cumulative tax millage is greater than the prior levy and not simply because the ad valorem tax basis generates more proceeds.

Increase the ESE Guarantee Allocation to account for student growth and inflationary costs.

Eliminate the arbitrary cap on the number of gifted high school students funded.

Provide supplemental funding to create community-based networks that develop, coordinate and provide quality education, parental training, accessible health care, housing, youth development programs, and employment opportunities to ensure safe neighborhoods for children and their families.

Restore school districts discretionary lottery to pre-recessionary levels.

Preserve funding that allows M-DCPS to assist refugee and immigrant students and their families or that negatively impacts our students' ability to obtain an education in Florida.

Allocate funds directed to provide supplemental services and support to at-risk students.

Restore funding for the Digital Classroom Allocation to address new secondary school computer science requirement and other school technology needs.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT REFORM:

Revise the current accountability assessment system to:

- Provide a waiver from the passage of the English Language Arts (ELA) requirement for ELL students who have passed all other high school graduation requirements and have been enrolled in school less than two consecutive years;
- Include the performance of ELL students enrolled in school for more than two years for accountability on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA); and
- Define goals for ELL and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) subgroups based on achieving learning gains on state assessments as opposed to achieving proficiency.

Revise the definition of low-performing schools by eliminating the criteria of earning a "B" or higher in the most recent two years.

Establish required credentials and regulations for Education Advocates who charge fees for their service.

Ensure that the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) test is offered in Haitian Creole.

CHARTER SCHOOLS:

Allow school districts with at least 15 percent of total student enrollment in charter schools to analyze the need for additional charter schools and/or require new charters to locate in areas to address overcrowding, provide choice opportunities to students/parents zoned to failing schools, or meet a specific academic need the school district is not addressing.

Require charter schools to submit facility occupancy and use documentation by the 30th day prior to the first day of the school year. If unable to meet the deadline, the school may default to an automatic deferral and planning year.

Support legislation that:

- prohibits applicants with existing schools under academic or financial corrective action plans, investigation, or some other kind of sanction to apply for an additional charter schools;
- strengthens accountability, protects taxpayers' investment and ensures compliance with charter school fiduciary responsibilities;
- requires charter schools that have been in operation for less than five years and/or in financial distress to place funds in an escrow account to cover expenditures associated with closure such as final audits, legal fees, corporate dissolution, asset retrieve, bankruptcy fines, and the value of at least one payroll payment.

Protect taxpayers' interest by attaching a proprietary interest equal to the value of the allocation from the local discretionary capital outlay levy revenue provided to charter schools, and prohibit charter operators from personal enrichment from public funds.

SAFETY:

Support legislation that Increased penalties for firing a gun within 1,000 feet of a school and that establishes penalties for the unsupervised possession of a firearm by a minor.

Support legislation that prohibits the sale of e-cigarettes in misleading forms such as pens and USBs.

Support legislation and state funding to increase awareness of opioid drug use and its impact.

FACILITIES:

Modify the utilization factor for K-8 centers as follows: 100% of Florida Inventory of School Houses for elementary school student stations, and 95% for middle school student stations.

Exempt school districts from paying ad valorem tax for leased properties similar to charter schools' exemption.

Secure funding from Section 16 lands sale/exchange for the purchase of the Young Women's Preparatory Academy.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Restore performance-based incentive funding for postsecondary CAPE Industry Credentials.

VIRTUAL EDUCATION:

Eliminate the "written" notification requirement to parents regarding open enrollment in virtual programs allowing for electronic notification to parents.

CHOICE:

Amend the Hope Scholarships to apply only to "substantiated" incidents of harassment, bullying, battery, etc.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Funding

Fully fund the class size reduction requirement while providing increases to the BSA and other components of the FEFP.

Examine Florida's tax structure and phase out sales tax exemptions for non-essential goods and services; ensure that internet sales remit necessary sales tax to Florida.

Oppose the imposition of unfunded, state-mandated expenditures.

Support maximum flexibility in the use of categorical funds and all funds appropriated.

Maintain the integrity of the FEFP and equity of funding among school districts.

Oppose any prescribed expenditure such as the "65 percent solution" as a mandate in the Florida Constitution and further oppose any such legislation, unless established as a spending goal with the definition of expenditures, to include all instructional support expenditures.

Support equivalent supplemental funding for the participation and the attainment of a diploma for Advanced Placement, Cambridge (AICE), and International Baccalaureate programs.

Oppose legislation that increases the sovereign immunity liability limits on governmental agencies.

Commit to long-term funding stability for teacher performance pay and teacher evaluation systems.

Allow school districts to locally establish contract provisions inclusive of cost structures with postsecondary institutions related to the delivery of dual enrollment.

Increase ESE per-pupil funding to account for both student growth and inflationary cost particularly in level 254 and 255 to provide early identification and intervention services for students with autism.

Support grant funding to create new and innovative programs and academies.

Fully fund the extension of the school year by 25 instructional days for the lowest-performing elementary schools in lieu of extending the school day.

Support funding to offer an extended school year beyond 180 days for all students.

Maintain the current required employers' contribution rate to the Florida Retirement System by absorbing any planned increase in local employers' contribution.

Support state funding for the administration of college entrance exams, SAT or ACT, during school days.

Oppose any further compression of the Discretionary Millage.

Ensure that required sharing of referenda monies with charter schools remains prospective for any referendum passed after July 1, 2019.

Support funding for Adults with Disabilities.

Restore funding for New World School of the Arts.

Fully fund school districts' instructional materials needs.

Support increased funding to meet the demands for workforce skills development programs.

Establish that performance-based salary adjustments are annual and not recurring.

Capital Funding

Provide adequate school construction funding to support new and existing facilities, technology, maintenance, land acquisition and class size reduction needs through the establishment of long-term, stable and recurring revenue sources to fulfill the state's educational facility needs.

Fully fund the Public Education Capital Outlay Program that involves construction and maintenance programs for public school districts and ensures that school districts receive their fair share.

Oppose any further reduction in capital millage available to school districts for the purpose of balancing the operating budget.

Oppose any attempt to equalize the capital outlay levy.

Oppose the deletion of impact fees unless replaced with another revenue source.

Expand the allowable use of a locally voted upon sales tax to include operating expenses that maintain, renovate, or repair existing school facilities or maintain, secure, or upgrade school technology equipment.

Governance

Oppose legislation that subverts district governance of constitutionally elected local school boards and elected or appointed superintendents.

Oppose legislation that modifies the governance structure of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Oppose legislation that breaks up large school districts.

Oppose term limits for school board members.

Restore school board authority over travel providing greater flexibility to carry out its duties.

Charter Schools

Oppose any changes to current requirements regarding charter conversion of traditional public schools that dilute the role of parents, teachers, and community stakeholders.

Establish a level playing field for traditional public schools by extending the current statutory flexibility such as the exemption from State Education Required Facilities (SREF), categorical funding, accountability, class size reduction compliance and related penalties assessed on charter schools.

Support capital funding for charter schools that:

- Creates neither a reduction of funding to traditional public schools in operating or capital funding nor a requirement for additional taxing mandate on the local school district;
- Requires public input; and
- Protects taxpayers' investment ensuring that capital funding be spent only on assets that can be returned to the public school district.

Require charter schools that receive capital outlay funding to serve as hurricane evacuation shelters.

Oppose any legislation that reduces school board authority over charter schools, such as alternate authorizers or the establishment of charter school systems to serve as Local Educational Agencies.

Support legislation that promotes transparent student recruitment strategies, application processes and enrollment lotteries, and supports enrollment equity of educationally disadvantaged students and underserved/underrepresented students.

Choice

Support increased accountability measures for all publicly-funded school choice options.

Oppose all publicly funded programs that lack equitable and sufficient accountability measures.

Oppose implementation of additional or any increases in funding of choice programs while requiring more accountability from schools receiving Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTCS) funding.

Academics

Oppose legislation that would limit offering gifted programs to eligible high school students.

Require the state to provide a minimum of one-year lead time on new state requirements for school districts.

Maintain the current dual delivery system of post-secondary programs.

Support adding the attainment of the Advanced Placement Capstone diploma as one of the eligibility requirements for Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

Ensure charter and private schools receiving public monies adhere to the same teacher certification, student placement, and progression policies to ensure compliance with federal and state accountability requirements.

Support requiring health education to include human trafficking.

Student Safety/Wellness

Support legislation that proposes a “slowing down zone” within an area prior to entering a school zone.

Support funding to provide training for students, parents, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and volunteers to learn how to recognize behaviors that lead to bullying and harassment.

Ensure any casino authorized in Florida is at least 1,000 feet from a school or land designated for school purpose.

Ensure that the sale of low-THC edibles is precluded within 1,000 feet of a school.

Support legislation that precludes a child victim or witness to a crime be subjected to a discovery deposition in any criminal court proceeding.

Support telemedicine legislation that facilitates effective and efficient use of technology to provide health services to schools minimizing the length of time students are out of school due to illness.

Support efforts to limit navigation apps from directing traffic to neighborhoods away from major highways or streets.

Support legislation that incorporates the instruction of the dangers and signs of human trafficking as part of health education and funding for the development of an awareness campaign to educate students and parents on the dangers and signs of human trafficking providing information concerning approaches used by traffickers, and behavior that should be reported to authorities.

Cybersecurity

Establish a statewide taskforce to share best practices and guidelines to protect student, parent, and employee information.

Public Meetings

Amend state statutes to clarify that meeting with legislators to advocate for the Board’s legislative priorities is not a violation of the Sunshine.

Support the elimination of the requirement for a school boards to hold a separate public hearing meeting prior to adopting its instructional materials.