

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2015 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

MISSION/GOAL STATEMENT

Provide the highest quality education so that all of our students are empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

As the first session of the 114th Congress convenes, we urge the President and Congress to reaffirm their commitment to our nation's children by reinvesting in public education.

FEDERAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

Increase the federal investment in public education to fully fund the implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Increase federal entitlement funding to school districts such as Title I appropriations for disadvantaged students, Title II for improving teacher and principal training and recruiting, or Title III for English Language Learners (ELLs).

Support reform of formula funding disparities which hinder resources from reaching the nation's poorest students.

Support the reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) ensuring that the federal government would share some of the losses with the insurance market should a significant event occur ensuring insurance coverage affordable and available to local governments.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND)

Reauthorize and modify the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind Act 2001) to:

- recognize student progress in lieu of the current all-or-nothing approach and recognize degrees of progress for schools;
- allow state flexibility to provide two years of language acquisition, prior to ELL students' performance be included in the state accountability results;
- eliminate sanctions associated with not meeting adequate yearly progress;
- ensure fair accountability by providing flexibility for special education and ELLs and other formula adjustments and by requiring identical tests for Title I and Title III students in non-public schools;

- include other indicators for accountability such as dual enrollment industry certification and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, graduation rates, and dropout attendance suspensions in determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and align accountability standards with those in the School Improvement grant;
- reward and retain quality teachers by supporting measures that raise pay for teachers in fields with shortages and/or in high-need communities; that create career ladder paths; and that assist with rising housing costs;
- establish new qualification requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals to ensure that teachers be highly skilled in content areas, as well as in pedagogy;
- allow districts to use Supplemental Education Services (SES) funds to provide tutoring to eligible students, as well as pay for monitoring and other implementation costs out of the required 20% set-aside, and ensure that public schools not be unfairly prevented from providing remedial services to students;
- require that funding to SES private providers be contingent on outcomes on norm-referenced assessments developed and administered by the state and/or the district; and
- allocate immigrant funds under Title III based on the number of recently arrived foreign-born students.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Support increased funding for the Head Start Program and appropriate early education standards for Head Start that are aligned with state academic content standards designed to ensure school readiness.

Support federal funding to develop, expand, and enhance quality voluntary preschool programs while ensuring the adoption of developmentally appropriate early education standards that are aligned with state K-12 academic content standards.

Support the Early Learning Challenge Fund or similar legislation that encourages states to develop effective, innovative child care delivery models that promote high quality childhood education programs and ensure school readiness.

IMMIGRATION IMPACT

Address the financial impact of federal immigration policies on local school districts for increased demand for immigrant education and integration programs by supporting the Refugee and Entrant Assistance Program's under the Targeted Assistance and Immigrant Education allocation serving foreign-born students and their families.

Support federal funding directly to school districts to address the burdensome costs of serving the needs of unaccompanied children arriving at our schools to ensure districts operational readiness.

Support provisions of a comprehensive immigration bill that supports English language literacy, and technical training as well as the DREAM Act or similar legislation that would provide immigration relief to a select group of students who grew up in the United States, who have good moral character, and who are pursuing a college education or have enlisted in the military.

SCHOOL NUTRITION

Support increased federal reimbursement rates to more accurately reflect the cost of producing a healthy school meal, including making the six cent certification permanent.

Provide program funds to support the costs of food service employees receiving training and professional development to adhere to and enhance the effective implementation of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act and Nutrition Education and Wellness Plans.

Support a tiered system of income eligibility guidelines and reimbursement rates by taking into account the varying costs of living in communities throughout the nation.

MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT

Oppose any policy revisions to restrict school-based reimbursement for administration expenditures and certain transportation costs for services provided to low-income children with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION

Support supplemental allocations for large school districts with high levels of free and reduced-price lunch participants to implement “green” sustainable projects, including upgrading technology infrastructure, replacing school buses or maintenance vehicles to improve operational efficiency and to reduce the carbon footprint, and extending the useful life of existing school buildings by eliminating adverse indoor environmental conditions that are not conducive to learning.

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

Support increased resources with local flexibility and expand eligible expenditures to include educational linkage beyond the school for the Universal Service Fund Program (E-Rate) and streamline refund procedures to provide schools and libraries with affordable access to state-of-the-art networking and telecommunications technology.

Increase E-Rate funding to help school districts and libraries achieve and maintain universal broadband service.

WORKFORCE PREPARATION

Support increased funding to meet the demands for workforce skills development under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), — the Carl T. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act, and new federal workforce initiatives that minimize barriers to service coordination, and safeguard the needs of all US workers, including low-literacy and disadvantaged populations.

Preserve the role of district-operated adult education and job training programs.

HEALTH CARE

Retain tax-advantaged status of employee and employer contributions for healthcare premiums and costs including Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRA) as well as Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA).

PERSONNEL

Enhance resources to recruit, develop, and retain highly qualified teachers in fragile or low-performing schools.

STUDENT SAFETY

Support legislation that provides supplemental resources to assist school districts in deferring internet crime and cybercrime through awareness and promotion prevention to our students, teachers, and parents.

Support federal funding to local law enforcement and school districts to ensure that schools have well-trained and equipped police personnel to protect children while in schools.

Increase funding for safe and drug-free school initiatives to implement and expand interventions that focus on reducing disruptive and aggressive behaviors and strengthen students' emotional and behavioral competencies.