

MEMORANDUM

November 22, 2011

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools *AMC*

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – COMMITTEE MEETINGS WEEK 14-18, 2011

The Florida Legislature held interim committee meetings last week. Committees in both chambers continued to meet on various issues, however, no significant work has been done with just one more committee week remaining prior to the commencement of the 2012 legislative session. In preparation for the upcoming session, I have been meeting with key members of the Florida Legislature to discuss the Board's legislative priorities and budgetary concerns. Our meetings this week included: Senator Simmons, Chair of Senate Budget Subcommittee on Education PreK-12; Senator Diaz de la Portilla; Senator Stephen R. Wise, Chair of Senate Education PreK-12; Representative Lopez-Cantera, Majority Leader; Representative Fresen, Chair of House K-20 Competitiveness; and Representative Coley, Chair of House PreK-12 Appropriations. Both Chairman Simmons and Chairman Coley expressed a desire to mitigate public school budget reductions to the extent possible.

Nevertheless, the State continues to be dogged by tough economic conditions for 2012-2013, with a potential budget gap of up to \$2 billion. Education K-12 funding has a \$1.2 billion shortfall as a result of: \$224 million to replace nonrecurring trust funding; increased student enrollment of approximately 38,000 students at a cost of \$234 million; replace declining property values, \$239 million; and replace federal stimulus monies that are sunsetting June 2012, \$554 million. The Governor will be submitting his recommended budget to the Florida Legislature shortly, as he is required to submit a recommended budget 45 days prior to the commencement of the legislative session (November 26). However, rumors are circulating that his budget will be released the week of December 5, 2011.

The Board's legislative team has worked diligently to meet the filing deadline of November 22, 2011, for its priorities for the upcoming legislative session. At this point all issues requiring bill filing have been filed and either have a bill number or are pending in bill drafting in both chambers. Below is the summary of these issues and the status:

- Elimination or modification of the class size reduction penalties has been sponsored by Representative Baxley HB 383 and SB 512 by Senator Bogdanoff.
- Flexibility related to the compliance threshold for class size, flexibility from having to build to State Required Educational Facilities (SREF), and other flexibility provisions will be also included into HB 383 and Senator Simmons had committed to filing the senate companion.

- Expanding the allowable uses for the current one-half penny sales surtax has been filed, SB 980, by Senator Margolis, and Representative Bileca will be the House sponsor.
- Extending the lifespan of the General Obligation Bond (GOB) to 30 years has been filed by Representative Diaz, HB 465, and Senator Flores, SB 750.
- Continuation of the co-enrollment policy has been filed by Representative Logan, HB 407, and Senator Braynon, SB 662.

Two community meetings have been held, led by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), to inform the community of our bleak financial outlook, with another one scheduled for December 1, 2011, at Palmetto Middle. Additionally, a series of budget town hall meetings will be held by the District to ensure stakeholders are informed.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ms. Iraida R. Mendez-Cartaya, Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration, and Community Engagement, at 305-995-1497.

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cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet
Ms. Carolyn Nelson-Goedert
Ms. Darla March