


MEMORANDUM

January 26, 2016

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

FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION – WEEK #2 JANUARY 18, 2016 - JANUARY 22, 2016

The Florida Legislature has completed its second week of 60-day 2016 regular legislative session that began on Tuesday, January 12, 2016.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

The Appropriations committees will be busy during week three of the legislative session having scheduled several days of hearings signaling the beginning of the budgetary process. The House has released its proposed General Appropriations and related bills schedule. We anticipate having the proposed General Appropriations bill and related implementing and conforming bills to be released by Friday, January 29, 2016, and to be considered in their related subcommittee on Wednesday, February 3, 2016. The House of Representatives has scheduled second and third reading of their respective budget proposal on February 10-11, 2016.

CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING

The House Appropriations Committee was provided with a report on school district capital outlay funding. School construction was summarized for the 2006 through the 2014 fiscal years. The analysis compared the actual cost school districts incurred on per student station to the statutory limitation of cost per student station. Pursuant to current statutes, certain costs such as the cost of land, site preparation, as well as others, are specifically excluded from the calculation because those costs can vary widely among the 67 school districts and even within a district due to site variations and other reasons. It is evident by the discussion that proposed legislation will be filed to modify the statutory definition of the cost per station and what is included in that calculation.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS DISCUSSED

As relayed in previous legislative updates, several revisions to the Florida Constitution have been proposed. Some specifically impacting school districts include:

- SB 942 sponsored by Senator Garcia and HB 767 sponsored by Representative Mayfield related to the composition of the State Board of Education and providing that the Commissioner of Education shall be an elected official beginning January 8, 2019;

- SB 908 sponsored by Senator Garcia and HB 711 sponsored by Representative Pafford related to increasing the term limits for elected state senators and state representatives from 8 years to 12 years;
- HB 759 sponsored by Representative Manny Diaz and SB 976 sponsored by Senator Stargel to establish a statewide system of approval for charter schools in lieu of the local school board; and,
- SB 734 sponsored by Senator Brandes and HB 539 sponsored by Representative Caldwell proposes that a school district may be established or abolished as provided by law.

Currently, school boards are the only entity that can sponsor a charter school in the state of Florida. HB 759 proposes to change the Florida Constitution so that there could be alternative sponsors of charter schools in the state. The bill was heard in committee and passed.

Additionally, HB 539 that would allow municipal school districts was discussed in committee. The proposed State Constitutional amendment would authorize, as provided by general or special law, any contiguous area of the state, whether a county or a municipality, to constitute a school district. Each district is governed by a school board unless, by general or special law, the governing body of a county or municipality constitutes the school board. The proposal provides that general or special law may abolish a school district. Currently, school board member elections are now nonpartisan, but the proposal requires that these seats be elected in a partisan election. No action was taken on the bill. Constitutional Amendments require a three-fifths vote of each of the chambers to get on the ballot and then requires 60 percent approval from the voters to take effect.

BOARD'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

HB 693 sponsored by Representative Fresen related to the creation of a seal of biliteracy was heard in the House Education K-12 subcommittee. The bill requires the Department of Education to establish a biliteracy seal to be affixed to a student's diploma to recognize a student who has attained proficiency in a foreign language. The bill also establishes a tiered system to demonstrate the level of competency in the foreign language. Foreign language is defined to include world languages, American Sign Language and indigenous languages.

During week three, SB 442 related to providing school districts some flexibility on the construction and maintenance of its facilities will be heard. The companion bill, HB 119, is on the calendar in the House.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Florida School Boards Association is holding its legislative days February 3-4, 2016. The Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards will have its business meeting the evening of Wednesday, February 3, 2016 and its legislative visits on Thursday, February 4, 2016. Miami-Dade Days take place on February 9-10, 2016, and the Board's advocacy trip is scheduled for February 16, 2016.

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 305 995-1497.

AMC:ajo
M674

cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet