


MEMORANDUM

March 1, 2017

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

FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: 2017 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – INTERIM COMMITTEE WEEK  
FEBRUARY 20-24, 2017

The Florida Legislature met the week of February 20, 2017, for its sixth and final week of interim committee meetings leading up to the 2017 Legislative Session. The Board also participated in its annual advocacy trip to Tallahassee and met with many members of the Florida Legislature. The Board met with Senators Frank Artiles, Oscar Braynon II, Anitere Flores, Rene Garcia, Bill Montford, and Jose Javier Rodriguez. In addition, Board Members met with Representatives Daisy Baez, Michael Bileca, Jose Felix Diaz, Nicholas Duran, Kionne McGhee, Jeanette Nuñez, Jose Oliva, Sharon Pritchett, Cynthia Stafford, Carlos Trujillo, and Barbara Watson. The Board's legislative priorities were discussed during these meetings.

The Senate Education Committee met and heard several bills. **SB 376**, sponsored by Senator David Simmons, establishes eligibility requirements for charter schools to receive funding from the 1.5 mills levied by local school districts for capital outlay. Several amendments were proffered by Senator Gary Farmer, Jr., one of which would have included an increase in discretionary millage to 2.0. However, the amendments were withdrawn prior to a vote. The bill passed the committee favorably without any amendments.

**SB 604**, sponsored by Senator David Simmons, increases the discretionary millage levy from 1.5 mills to 1.7 mills. The bill was amended by Senator Gary Farmer, Jr., to increase the millage to 2.0. However, the bill was temporarily postponed after Senator David Simmons announced that language would be developed to require a supermajority vote to increase the millage to 2.0 or to require a vote by referendum. The committee must consider the bill, at its next scheduled meeting or the bill dies.

**SB 78**, sponsored by Senator Anitere Flores, requires school districts to provide at least 100 minutes of supervised, safe, and unstructured free-play recess each week for students in kindergarten through grade 5. Such recess must involve at least 20 consecutive minutes of free play per day. The bill passed the committee favorably.

**SB 148**, sponsored by Senator Rene Garcia, authorizes district school boards to adopt policies for allowing students to leave school grounds during school hours with some exceptions. It passed the committee favorably as a committee substitute. The bill:

- Clarifies that district school board procedures for granting permission for students to leave school grounds during school hours includes the school lunch period; and
- Provides that, in a district with more than 100,000 students in prekindergarten through grade 12, a school may not permit a student to leave school grounds for the lunch period unless the student's parent has provided written consent that his or her child may do so for a stated school year.

**SB 438**, sponsored by Senator Dennis Baxley, requires a district school board to review, once every three years, its rules authorizing out-of-school suspension during a district school board meeting. The bill further specifies that a school board's rules authorizing out-of-school suspension expire if the board does not conduct its review of these rules in accordance with the law. There is also language granting parents the right to give public testimony at the district school board meeting during which the board reviews its out-of-school suspension rules. The bill passed the committee favorably.

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.

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cc: School Board Attorney  
Superintendent's Cabinet