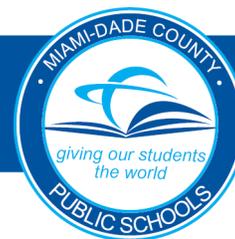


NEWS ALERT



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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Miami-Dade's Public Schools Stand to Gain with Updated Study of Costs

State Rep. Manny Diaz Jr. of Miami Lakes has proposed a bill HB 495 requiring the state to conduct a study of the District Cost Differential (DCD) every 10 years. In 2004, the School District Price Level Index funding formula within the DCD was changed. As result, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has lost nearly \$1 billion in state funding. The formula has also had big negative impacts on other high cost public school districts such as Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe.

"It's important that we take an objective look at how we fund our schools, making sure we account for the cost of living differences in our very diverse state," said Diaz, who is the Chair of the PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee in the Florida House of Representatives.

State Sen. Rene Garcia has filed the companion bill (SB 824) in the Senate. "We need to take an objective look at the data so that we are taking good care of our valuable educators and staff in Florida," said Garcia.

Speaker-Elect Jose Oliva weighed in noting, "It is our responsibility to assure a funding formula that provides proper consideration for all factors involved in the education of our students in the various regions of our state."

"I applaud Representative Diaz and Senator Garcia for addressing this critically important issue for our community. The bill is an opportunity to review the formula and ensure public education dollars are equitably distributed among the sixty-seven school districts," said Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho. "The study should take into account cost differences integral to the operations of educational institutions such as teachers' salaries, health insurance for employees, property insurance, as well as housing and transportation costs per full-time student."

In 1973, the Florida Legislature enacted the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) to implement a uniform system of free public education and to allocate funds appropriated to K-12 school districts. The system remained unchanged until 2004 when the formula was fundamentally altered by the addition of the DCD to "ensure that students in higher cost-of-living counties are not harmed by the inability to attract and retain quality teachers and maintain class sizes." A year later, the "Amenity Factor" was added to the DCD's calculation with the idea that employees would be willing to work for lower salaries in exchange for amenities a particular local area provided – such as beaches.

District	Gain / Loss after the Amenity Factor added to DCD
Miami-Dade	\$ (818,949,878)
Broward	\$ (364,025,172)
Palm Beach	\$ (232,489,408)
Monroe	\$ (25,909,543)

For further information, contact Iraida R. Mendez-Cartaya, Associate Superintendent, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration, and Community Engagement, at 305-995-1497.

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