

Education Alert

Legislation of Vital Concern to Miami-Dade County's Students

Date: January 23, 2003
To: Florida Senate Delegation
From: Merrett Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools
Re: **SUPPORT FOR RESTORED WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) FUNDING – APPROVAL OF THE CANTWELL/NELSON AMENDMENT**

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Ben Nelson (D-NE) have introduced an amendment to the Senate Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill that would restore Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding to FY02 levels. The Senate will be debating this bill and voting on it **today** – Thursday, January 23, 2003. Miami-Dade County Public Schools strongly urges the Senate to **support the Cantwell/Nelson amendment to preserve WIA training opportunities** for dislocated workers, low-income adults, and youth.

BACKGROUND: At a time of economic vulnerability, it is important to preserve training options for persons who have lost employment or are unable to find jobs with their current skills. The WIA system is now facing more than \$600 million in funding cuts if the proposed Senate Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill is passed. This represents a 20 percent funding cut.

In Miami-Dade County, WIA funds are utilized each year by thousands of unemployed or underemployed workers to complete career and technical education programs. Many of these students choose to attend public education programs such as those offered by Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Since many of the costs of the One-Stop System are fixed, the main impact of funding cuts will be to limit the number of persons who are able to access training/re-training dollars. The funding restoration proposed by the Cantwell/Nelson amendment will come in offsets for WIA Title I funding streams and Job Corps.

REQUESTED ACTION: WIA funding represents an important segment of the adult and youth population who need assistance in order to improve job skills during times of economic stress. Miami-Dade County Public Schools **respectfully requests your advocacy in support of the Cantwell/Nelson Senate amendment restoring WIA funding to FY02 levels.** If you have questions or need further clarification, please contact Mr. Alberto M. Carvalho, Administrative Director for Grants Administration and Federal Legislative Affairs, at 305-995-2532, or Mr. Carlos A. Manrique, Specialist, at 305-603-0600.

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