

Education Alert

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

Date: July 21, 2004
To: Florida Congressional Delegation
From: Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools 
Subject: **SUPPORT INCREASES IN EDUCATION FUNDING IN THE FY2005 LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

Floridians expect Congress to provide the highest funding levels possible for public education to achieve the goals of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Acts. As the House conference report on the FY 2005 Budget Resolution establishes the framework for the appropriations process, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) strongly urges you to **support any amendments or legislative efforts to expand educational opportunities under Title I, Pell Grants, and other essential programs. Such provisions will go a long way in support of enhanced platforms for learning for our most at-risk student population.**

BACKGROUND: Federal legislation under NCLB and IDEA requires excellence and accountability, and the Miami-Dade district has responded with demonstrable accomplishments. Since 2001, the number of district schools achieving grades A and B has more than doubled, with a corresponding drop in the number of lower-performing schools under Florida standards. Yet significant challenges continue in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for all students, and the school system remains under severe fiscal pressures following an extended period of economic vulnerability and budget reductions.

The 2005 Budget Resolution approved by the House will directly impact the schools and postsecondary opportunities for M-DCPS students. Provisions, such as those proposed by Congressman David Obey would have allowed an additional \$14 billion in discretionary spending including \$5.7 billion for critical educational needs such as Title I grants, IDEA, Pell Grants, school improvement, and after-school programs. These increases are essential to our efforts to help low-income or disabled students meet the accountability demands of NCLB, move into postsecondary training, and contribute their skills to the economy.

RECOMMENDATION: To fulfill the promise of federal legislation and meet the needs of our students, Miami-Dade County Public Schools **thanks you for your continued advocacy on behalf of the education community** and respectfully requests your staunch support of any efforts to increase funding for education programs during consideration of the **FY 2005 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill.**

If you have questions or need further clarification, please contact Mr. Alberto M. Carvalho, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Grants Administration, at (305) 995-2532, or Ms. Iraida Mendez-Cartaya, Administrative Director, at (305) 995-1497.

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