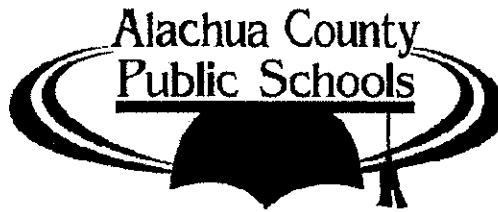


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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., Ed.D.

MEMO

DRAFT

September 11, 2007

TO: Members of the School Board
Superintendent Dan Boyd

FROM: Jackie Johnson, Public Information Officer

RE: Revised 2007-08 Legislative Program

Below is revised draft of the proposed *2007-08 Legislative Priorities for Alachua County Public Schools*. The draft incorporates input provided by the School Board during the informal meeting on September 11.

Funding and operations

- Recognizing that Florida currently ranks 41st among states in per pupil spending on education, minimize the impact of funding reductions on schools and hold districts harmless in the event the proposed constitutional provision on property tax relief is enacted.
- Waive statutory, proviso and implementing language to allow school districts total flexibility over the use of all appropriated funds—including lottery, FEFP, categorical, and 2-mill funds—to meet any revenue shortfalls, with the understanding that districts will continue to meet student and fiscal accountability requirements.
- Repeal and/or delay implementation of unfunded mandates and adequately fund any new legislative requirements. Provide appropriate lead time for the implementation of new requirements.
- Repeal or delay implementation of the Merit Award Program and redirect the funds allocated for this program and the unexpended balance from the 2006-07 STAR program to cover any education shortfalls.
- Review Florida’s existing tax structure and adopt reforms to ensure a fair and stable source of revenue to meet the needs of students.

Accountability and Academic Performance

- Apply the same accountability and financial standards currently in place for public schools to all private schools receiving funding through opportunity scholarships, corporate scholarships and other similar state programs.
- Give school boards/districts greater discretion in the approval and governance of charter schools. *Charter schools must be required to ensure that their students achieve at levels comparable to the public school students in the district, regardless of the number of students in each subgroup.* Reestablish limits on the number of charter schools in districts with declining student enrollment.
- Improve alignment of federal and state accountability systems so that they are consistent and well-integrated, accommodate individual student needs and accurately reflect student achievement and progress. Assess alternative schools and programs based upon learning gains. Assure that the FCAT is administered as late as possible in the school year and that results are provided to districts in a timely fashion.
- Given the very heavy emphasis on the FCAT scores of students in the lowest-performing quartile in the current school grading formula, consider an adjustment to the administrative rule that penalizes schools an entire letter grade if not enough of these students meet state standards for FCAT gains in reading, math or writing.
- Provide for flexibility in the implementation of middle and high school reform initiatives to allow students continued access to elective and vocational programs and fully fund such initiatives to ensure successful implementation.
- Reinststitute the grade forgiveness policy which allowed middle school students who earn a B grade or lower in a high school-level course to retake the course in high school.

Facilities

- Provide an adequate, predictable and stable funding source for new school construction and for the renovation, repair and maintenance of existing schools. Provide state and federal funding for the additional costs incurred by districts when building and operating schools that serve as emergency shelters.
- Consider the development and funding of a pilot program that would provide grants to selected districts to build new schools or retrofit existing schools to meet higher standards of energy efficiency.