



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 037-2009

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: February 5, 2009

SUBJECT: Superintendent's Business Advisory Council (SBAC)

The purpose of this LTC is to inform you that I will be serving on the Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools Business Advisory Council (SBAC).

The Superintendent's Business Advisory Council is tasked to review proposed changes to the School Board's Budget and offer advice on how best to address the fiscal challenges faced by our school system. Specifically, the members of the council will be focusing on the District's food services, transportation and facilities operations.

As you know, we as a community and an organization are committed to our children and their education. Over the years, this City has demonstrated this commitment through funding programs and dedicating resources to this end.

Most recently, the City of Miami Beach has forged an even stronger partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the School Board through the adoption of our Education Compact.

I know it is our common goal to ensure that the children of Miami Beach and those of Miami-Dade County as a whole receive the highest quality education.

It is with great honor that I have accepted the Superintendent's invitation to serve on this council, which is composed of distinguished leaders in our community, as I recognize the tremendous financial challenges the Miami-Dade County Public Schools system is facing, particularly in light of current national economic conditions.

Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

JMG/DM

Attachments

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Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 13, 2008

CONTACT: John Schuster

Miami-Dade County Public Schools
305-995-1126

SUPERINTENDENT ALBERTO CARVALHO UNVEILS PLAN TO REALIGN SCHOOLS BUDGET

Previous Budget Submitted to State Contained Serious Technical Deficiencies

MIAMI – Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho today unveiled a plan to realign the budget of Miami-Dade County Public Schools by reorganizing the District, while maximizing opportunities and reducing liabilities. Carvalho's plan comes in response to devastating economic conditions at local, state and national levels that have resulted in huge revenue losses for the District.

On September 13, three days after assuming the superintendency of the nation's fourth largest school district, Carvalho brought together a team led by Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) with years of experience in school budgets, with the purpose of identifying funds to support negotiated raises for teachers and other employees. But after a thorough review and analysis, the team identified serious technical deficiencies in the 2008-2009 budget that the school district had presented to Tallahassee that compounded revenue losses.

Among the liabilities within the budget submitted to the state was an overestimation of approximately \$43 million in "salary lapse," a change in budgeted salaries caused by the departure of high-paid senior employees and their replacement with lower-paid employees. Additionally, an over-hiring of teachers took place in recent years because adequate controls were not in place at school sites. To help identify the cause of such mistakes, Carvalho has employed the assistance of District auditors and the Office of the Inspector General.

To rectify the dire budget situation, Carvalho has proposed using a strategic approach to identify issues of concern with the budget and to hone in on economic issues affecting funding, including declining enrollment, a reduction of state revenues, and an explosive growth in charter schools. Additionally, the plan is designed to stop the hemorrhaging of funds, impose cost controls and build capacity for anticipated future cuts. The plan offers a true depiction of expenditures and liabilities, while reconciling the budget in a truthful manner.

The plan specifically addresses central office functions by identifying procedures and processes that are overlapping or redundant, and by proposing reductions to eliminate selected positions to which those functions are assigned. The plan considers the value of the contributions made by all of the professionals involved, while putting them into perspective. The proposed reductions are expected to take a toll, however. If exercised, the cuts will reduce the central office by 27.6 percent.

The plan does provide for the re-absorption of staff with teaching certificates. The District will need to hire approximately 1,500 teachers by August 2009, and many individuals from central office can be reassigned to those classroom positions.

To combat spending at school sites, Carvalho is proposing to freeze or reduce selected non-classroom expenditures. The goal, however, is to protect the classroom at all costs, to be creative and to reduce expenditures.

Carvalho also has created a Superintendent's Business Advisory Council, made up of distinguished leaders of business and industry, to review proposed changes to the budget and offer their advice. Members of the council will focus on the District's food services, transportation and facilities operations.

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Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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Superintendent of Schools
Alberto M. Carvalho

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January 28, 2009

Mr. Jorge M. Gonzalez
1700 Convention Center Drive
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Superintendent's Business Advisory Council (SBAC). As you are aware, the news from Tallahassee regarding Florida's economic condition has not been good. Education took additional cuts during the recent special session and we are expecting the upcoming regular session to be difficult as well. During the first meeting of the SBAC, the focus was on the District's current efforts to deal with the significant reductions to our budget as a result of technical errors by the previous administration, as well as the downturn in the economy.

The comments and observations made by members of the SBAC at the meeting of November 7, 2008, were very much appreciated. Now, as we prepare to address policy makers in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C., regarding the significant impact of further budget cuts to public education, I would like to share our legislative program and advocacy strategies with the members of the SBAC.

The next meeting of the SBAC has been scheduled for Friday, February 6, 2009, at 8:30 a.m., in Conference Room 916 of the School Board Administration Building, located at 1450 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132. My office will be in contact with you shortly to confirm your participation. Thank you again for your continuing commitment to Miami-Dade County Public Schools and for serving as a member of the SBAC.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 305 995-1428. Thank you for your continued commitment to Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools

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