

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION INITIATIVES

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL SERVICES AND STUDENT/SCHOOL SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS, LEADERS, AND STAFF

As public attention continues to grow on the issue of improving teacher quality, many states, including Florida, are exploring and in some cases mandating pay-for-performance programs as possible ways to inspire and reward high-quality performing teachers. However, questions remain about the effectiveness and design of these programs, as well as the positive and negative impact on recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers and ultimately on student achievement.

Throughout the years, policy makers, including the Miami-Dade School Board, have been concerned about their ability to offer adequate teacher salaries and affordable healthcare benefits. Improved teacher compensation and improved health benefit offerings should provide for the enhancement of recruitment and retention of more highly qualified teachers. States and school districts have also provided other incentives aimed at attracting and retaining teachers. These incentives often target critical staff shortage areas and teachers in low-performing schools.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), under the leadership of the School Board and the Superintendent, has always placed teacher salaries and healthcare benefits as top priorities as additional dollars are allocated to the District. Attracting and retaining excellent teachers is one of the most important drivers of a well-functioning education system, a system that must prepare a diverse student population with complex necessities to contribute and live as citizens of the world in today's knowledge-driven economy. However, a recent surge in the demand for teachers, alongside a diminishing supply and a steady rate of teachers leaving the profession due to retirements and other job opportunities, threatens students' academic and economic welfare.

Miami-Dade Public Schools 2017 State Legislative Program outlines a number of specific priorities that, if approved, would enhance the School Board's ability to improve teacher salaries and enhanced health benefits. These include the following:

Funding:

- Increase the state's investment in K-12 education by increasing Base Student Allocation (BSA) by five percent annually to allow school district's to enhance teacher salaries (Tri-county Position)
- Conduct an impartial third-party study to develop a cost of education index which focuses on cost differences integral to educational institutions' operations reflecting such costs as average teacher salaries, health insurance for employees, property insurance per FTE, and transportation cost per FTE. (Tri-county Position) (MDC)

Teacher Shortage:

- Implement and fund strategies such as teacher fellowships and loan forgiveness programs to encourage and attract talented students to enter into the field of education (Tri-county Position)(MDC)
- Allow school districts to re-employ teachers, other instructional personnel and substitute teachers who are certified in "critical shortage" fields after one month of retirement without penalty to the employee's pension. (Tri-county Position)

Recently, Florida Governor Rick Scott, unveiled his 2017 Recommended Budget. Some of his recommendations, if approved, will have a positive impact in M-DCPS efforts to recruit and retain teachers. These include:

- An increase of 3.39% in the Base Student Allocation (BSA)
- An increase of 3% in total funds per unweighted FTE.
- A new non-FEFP program to replace the Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program named the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiative which provides \$43,000,000 for several new initiatives including programs to provide hiring bonuses, to increase diversity in teacher critical shortage areas, to provide scholarships for high school students to obtain certification and who agree to teach in a Florida public school, to allow a regional consortia to establish teacher collegiate academies, to allow school districts to establish targeted recruitment and retention programs, and to reward high-impact teachers who remain in low performing schools.

Lastly, the Superintendent's Agenda Item A-2, Board Meeting of January 25, 2017, and approved by the Board unanimously, recommends that The School Board of Miami-Dade County provide support for the Superintendent to 1) research student performance growth measure models from across the nation; 2) share research outcomes with the Greater Florida consortium of School Boards and seek joint agreement on best approach; and 3) provide recommended legislative solutions to modify or replace the current Florida's Value Added Model (VAM). If successful, these actions should improve how M-DCPS recruits and retains teachers who are being evaluated and compensated by a system most are unable to comprehend and support.

These three items, Miami-Dade Public Schools 2017 State Legislative Program, the Governor's 2017 Recommended Budget, and the Superintendent's Agenda Item A-2 of the Board meeting of January 25, 2017, together, should provide for a strong vehicle to address the funding issues which can improve teacher salaries and healthcare benefits.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. reaffirm its support of teacher recruitment and retention initiatives as outlined in the 2017 State Legislative Package, the 2017 Florida Governor's Recommended Budget, and the Superintendent's Agenda Item A-2, Board meeting of January 25, 2017; and
2. direct the Superintendent to develop and present recommendations to the Board on ways to improve teacher recruitment and retention no later than May 31, 2017.