

Martin, Rolando A.

From: Cotarelo, Antonio D.
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2010 5:40 PM
To: Calderon, Nilda; Carrillo, G I.; Masdeu, Margarita B.
Cc: Schuster, John J.; Diaz, Hilda
Subject: edited TALKING POINTS- TOWN HALL

Importance: High

For Spanish translation, per John Schuster's translation. Thanks

TALKING POINTS

2010 State Legislative Priorities

*** As we look forward to address the financial woes of our school district, we need to face up to the fact that our total revenue is down 1.2 billion dollars from three years ago.**

*** This decrease in revenue is largely due to:**

- a declining real estate industry**
- declining property values severely affecting the tax base**
- the loss of funds that derived from the District**

Cost-Differential, and

- the inequity in the distribution of class size reduction revenues**

*** Miami-Dade County Public Schools constitutes 13.1 per cent of the State, yet only received only 5.6 per cent of the Class Size Reduction Revenue Funds.**

*** This inequity has forced the District to leverage its Local Capital Tax Revenue to meet this mandate. This has been a major contributing factor to the Capital Crunch that we currently face.**

*** The State has systematically cut almost half a billion dollars from its portion of revenue support to Miami-Dade County Public Schools.**

*** In order to fill this void, the state relied heavily on local property taxes, and is currently relying on Federal Stimulus dollars provided by the national government.**

*** The financial picture does not look any brighter for the immediate future, for according to the State Ad Valorem Estimating Conference held last November; through Fiscal**

Year 2014-15 State projection estimate a 10.2 percent decrease from the Fiscal Year 2009-10 baseline property valuation.

*** To compound our financial problems, as salary and non-salary expenditures have been drastically cut, required payments to charter schools and undesignated reserves have increased.**

***All of this is occurring as our school district is experiencing the first multi-year drop in enrollment in its history.**

*** In sum, for Fiscal Year 2010-11, we can expect a net revenue decrease (estimated) anywhere from 80 million to 150 million dollars; while at the same time we can estimate a net expenditure increase anywhere between 40 million to 200 million dollars.**

*** As we engage in the legislative proceedings going on in Tallahassee, we have established a set of legislative priorities to**

improve our financial standing and stop the hemorrhaging that has impacted our school district.

*** We are asking Florida legislators to:**

- Increase total potential funding (state and local) through the Florida Education Finance Program.

- Develop and implement a plan to phase out America's Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

- Extend the voter-approved operating millage authority from four years to 10 years.

- Support the modification of the class size constitutional amendment.

- Delay the penalties associated with non-compliance with the class size amendment.

- Impose a deadline for local property appraisers to certify final valuation of the tax roll prior to June 30th of each year.**
- Conduct an impartial third-party study to develop a Cost of Education Index.**
- Restore the Local Discretionary Capital Outlay levy to 2 mills.**
- Delay the implementation of the new high school grading system.**
- Exempt specialized centers for hospital or homebound students from the state's school grading.**
- Support legislation that will require high quality training in Reading and English language development for ELL teachers.**
- Increase funding of Safe Schools Initiative, and**

- Support the enactment of a “Slowing Down Zone” as proposed in the Shaye Patrick Martin Safety Act developed by students of the Miami Lakes Middle School Project Citizen Class.

*** In spite of the challenges and hardships that we have had to endure, our students have outperformed their peers on NAEP math exams, with our Hispanic students scoring significantly higher than their national counterparts,**

***Over half of our schools have earned an “A”.**

*** 90 percent of our schools have either earned an “A”, “B” or a “C”.**

*** We have had a large improvement in closing the achievement gap in both Reading and Math at almost all grade levels.**

*** 80 schools improved by one letter grade.**

*** For the first time, over half the District's students passed the reading portion of the FCAT on their first attempt.**

*** Our School District has among the highest Hispanic passing rate on Advanced Placement exams in the nation.**

*** Challenges lie ahead that will require all of us in our communities to work together in unison in advocating our issues before state officials in Tallahassee.**

*** We are not asking for the impossible, nor are our demands unrealistic.**

*** We are merely asking them to help us in our mission with what is rightfully owed to our community.**