



**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL**

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SUPERINTENDENT**

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ERICA WHITFIELD

November 11, 2015

*Sent via U.S. Mail and email to the respective board chairs and administration
of all charter schools sponsored by the School Board of Palm Beach County*

**SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR RESOLUTION OF DISPUTE
REGARDING THE FY16 IDEA FUNDING FORMULA FOR ALLOCATION TO THE CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Charter School Operators and Governing Board Chairs:

The dispute between the School District of Palm Beach County and the charter schools operating in the same district regarding the FY16 IDEA funding formula providing allocations to the charter schools has been considered through a series of Dispute Resolution Meetings conducted with District staff and representation from the various charter schools. The information gathered at the Dispute Resolution Meetings consistently identified that the charter schools had prepared budgets and services to students, especially students with disabilities, based on the formula used for several previous years for the calculation of the distribution of IDEA funding. At the Dispute Resolution Meetings, charter school representation voiced concern that charter school budgets and services had been prepared in June 2015 or before and the notification of the FY16 IDEA funding formula was not shared until well after these budgets and services had been planned for implementation. Charter school operators shared at the Dispute Resolution meetings that the FY16 IDEA funding formula would significantly impact the individual charter school budgets and could impact the level of services to the students enrolled in the charter schools.

After careful consideration of this information shared, I have determined it necessary to maintain the funding of the IDEA allocation to the charter schools using the formula of FY15 for FY16. Charter school operators and governing boards can expect that the IDEA allocations for each of the charter schools will be recalculated using the FY15 IDEA funding formula. Charter school operators and governing board members should take note that this adjustment in funding is for FY16 only.

The meetings held by the District with charter schools, Step 3 of the Dispute Resolution Process and in lieu of mediation through FLDOE, revealed the charter schools' reliance on the FY15 level of funding. This process and analysis also clearly revealed the necessity for the District to modify the future funding allocation methods in order to provide compliance, equity, and appropriate allocation. Thus, all charter schools operating in the School District of Palm Beach County should anticipate a change in the IDEA allocation beginning next school year. There are also plans forthcoming to coordinate training opportunities with FLDOE regarding utilizing and budgeting IDEA funds. The changes in funding and training dates will be communicated in the next few months, well in advance of next year's budget cycle, to provide charter school operators adequate time to develop budgets for FY17.

November 5, 2015

NOTIFICATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR RESOLUTION OF DISPUTE REGARDING THE FY16 IDEA FUNDING FORMULA FOR ALLOCATION TO THE CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter school operators have received training from the ESE Department on filing for IDEA funding reimbursements. Please follow those procedures and contact the ESE Department for any necessary clarifications in procedures.

Your professionalism in addressing this dispute has been appreciated.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Avossa, Ed.D.
Superintendent

RMA/DWC/MJB/KO/JML/KW/JTP:jw/du

cc: JulieAnn Rico, General Counsel
David W. Christiansen, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent/Chief of Schools
Michael Burke, Chief Operating Officer
Keith Oswald, Chief Academic Officer
Joseph M. Lee, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Educational Alternatives & Interventions
Karen Whetsell, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning
Kevin McCormick, Director ESE Department
James T. Pegg, Director Department of Charter Schools
Adam Miller, Executive Director, FLDOE Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice
Adam Emerson, Director, FLDOE Department of Charter Schools