



October 02, 2017

Florida Education Commissioner Pam Stewart
Turlington Building, Suite 1514
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Commissioner Stewart:

As you know, there has been considerable devastation caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in Puerto Rico. Florida is home to many that have moved here from the island and we are anticipating a rush of families that will impact our schools and early learning facilities.

Not only must Florida be prepared for the influx of students but we must allow schools to continue to implement their plan for a successful year.

We request the following from the Department of Education for our K-12 schools:

1. Implement an extended or alternative process to guarantee students from Puerto Rico are counted and schools receive the accurate funding for the Fall FTE survey period;
2. Suspend occupancy limitations lower than the Certificate of Occupancy to accommodate increased demand for students;
3. Waive any penalties for class size infractions in districts affected by the arrival of students from Puerto Rico;
4. Review the process for students who currently don't have transcripts; and
5. Review the process for expedited temporary certification for teachers coming from Puerto Rico. This will provide our schools the flexibility of using these teachers.

We also request the following for our Early Learning and VPK providers:

1. Temporarily waive the VPK classroom size/teacher ratio requirements;
2. Temporarily waive the CDA requirement for SR classrooms set to go into effect after January 2018;
3. Temporarily waive the immunization and birth certificate requirements for enrollment into child care if relocated Americans do not have the paperwork due to the Hurricanes;
4. Provide temporary funding for relocated Americans for child care that would not be subject to local match requirements.

We believe these requests will help make the transitions of students from Puerto Rico manageable for our school districts and help ease displaced students back to their education.

Sincerely,



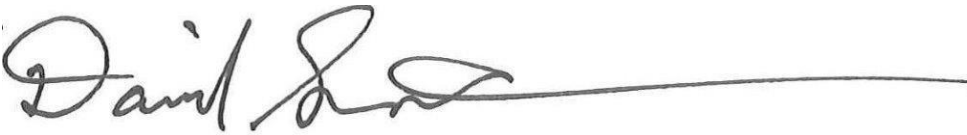
Representative Manny Diaz Jr.
District 103
Chairman of PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee



Representative Mike La Rosa
House District 42
Chairman, Tourism and Gaming Control Subcommittee



Representative Bob Cortes
House District 30



Representative David Santiago
House District 27



Representative Rene "Coach P" Plasencia
House District 50

CC: Governor Rick Scott

CC: Kevin Reilly, Executive Office of the Governor

CC: Tanya Cooper, Department of Education

CC: Robert Runcie, Superintendent of Broward County Schools

CC: Alberto M. Carvahlo, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Schools

CC: Dr. Debra Pace, Superintendent of Osceola County Schools

CC: Dr. Barbara Jenkins, Superintendent of Orange County Schools

CC: Walt Griffin, Superintendent of Seminole County Schools

CC: James T. Russell, Superintendent of Volusia County Schools