

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Name: Mary Jo Butler
Phone: (850) 245-0479
Suncom: 205-0479
E-mail: maryjo.butler@fldoe.org
K12: 2006-144

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
FROM: Cheri Pierson Yecke, Ph.D.
DATE: September 21, 2006
SUBJECT: A BUSINESS-COMMUNITY (ABC) SCHOOL PROGRAM
2006 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The 2006 Legislature passed Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 772 to amend Section 1013.501, Florida Statutes (Florida Business and Education in School Together (BEST) Program), and create Section 1013.721, Florida Statutes (A Business-Community (ABC) School Program.--). The purpose of this amendment is to provide requirements and guidance related to the development and implementation of an ABC school.

Section 1013.721, Florida Statutes, states that in order to increase business partnerships in education, to reduce school and classroom overcrowding throughout the state, to offset the high costs of educational facilities construction, and to use due diligence and sound business practices in using available educational space, the Legislature intends to encourage the formation of partnerships between business and education by creating A Business-Community (ABC) School Program. An ABC School is a public school that offers instruction to students from kindergarten through third grade at a business site. The school may offer instruction in any single grade level or for multiple grade levels. ABC schools must comply with the constitutional class size requirements.

CHERI PIERSON YECKE, Ph.D.
CHANCELLOR, K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Each school board shall, through advertisements in local media and other means, request proposals from area businesses to allow the operation of a business and education partnership school in facilities owned or operated by the business. The Department of Education shall require each school board to submit documentation to the Department which demonstrates the board's compliance with this advertisement requirement. Each school board shall designate a school district employee as the district's ABC program liaison and shall provide the name and contact information of the liaison to the Department by September 1 of each year. In 2006, we requested this information by September 29, 2006.

Each school district must establish an ABC school evaluation committee. The committee must be appointed by the school board and be composed of one school district administrator, at least one member of the business community, and at least one member of a local chamber of commerce. The school board shall provide the Department with the names and contact information for each member of the committee and notify the Department upon any change in membership or contact information. The committee must meet at least quarterly and shall provide an annual report to the school board and the superintendent regarding its activities during the preceding school year. The committee's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to:

- Creating and implementing a strategic marketing plan to inform businesses about the benefits of the ABC school program
- Providing technical assistance to businesses seeking to implement an ABC school
- Informing the public of the benefits of business and education partnerships
- Obtaining feedback from potential business partners on how the ABC program could be improved
- Identifying local barriers that preclude this program from operating
- Developing proposal evaluation criteria and processes
- Sharing information on effective ABC school programs with the Department and local communities

The committee shall evaluate the feasibility of each proposal, including the operating cost, number of students to be served, proposed student-to-teacher ratio, proposed number of years the satellite school would operate, and any other operational or facilities considerations the school board or committee deems appropriate. The committee shall recommend to the school board those proposals for satellite schools which the committee deems viable and worthy of being established. The school board must take official action on the recommendation of the committee within 60 days after receipt of the recommendation.

First priority of admission of students to an ABC school shall be given to the children of owners and employees of the host business. If additional student capacity remains after those children are admitted, the host business may designate other neighboring businesses whose owners or employees may also participate to generate a viable number of students for the school. The school board shall make the necessary arrangements to accommodate students from other school districts whose parents are associated with the host business or business partners. Parents shall be responsible for providing transportation to and from school for the students.

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A school district and a host business may enter into a multiyear contract for operation of an ABC school. The contract must include, at a minimum, provisions relating to any cost of facilities modifications, provide for the assignment or waiver of appropriate insurance costs, specify the number of students expected to be served, provide grounds for canceling the lease, and specify the advance notice required before the school may be closed.

The school board shall be responsible for providing the appropriate instructional, support, and administrative staff and textbooks, materials, and supplies. The school district may also agree to operate or contract for the operation of a before-school and after-school program using the donated facilities.

The host business shall provide the appropriate types of space for operating the school. If special facilities such as restrooms or dining, recreational, or other areas are required, the district may contribute a part of the cost of the construction, remodeling, or renovation for such facilities from capital outlay funds of the district. A multiyear lease for operation of the facility must be agreed to if the school district contributes to the cost of such construction.

In addition, the 2006 Legislature amended Section 1013.502, Florida Statutes (A Business-Community (ABC) school facilities; standards.--), to conform to Section 1013.721, Florida Statutes. This section provides that, notwithstanding any local government ordinance or regulation, any business or corporation may expand the square footage or floor area of its current or proposed facility to accommodate an ABC school. Facilities constructed to house an ABC school must comply with the State Uniform Building Code for Public Educational Facilities Construction adopted pursuant to Section 1013.37, Florida Statutes, and must meet state and local health, environmental, and safety laws and codes.

Please complete the attached form regarding your district's ABC program liaison and return the form to the Bureau of Public School Options as soon as possible.

Department staff are developing technical assistance materials to provide additional guidance for implementing this legislation. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Bureau of Public School Options at 850.245.0479.

CPY:MJB:seo

Attachment

cc: Assistant Superintends for Curriculum and Instruction
School Choice Contacts