

Dear Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners,

I am Beth Edwards, speaking to you all today as QEC Chair of the City of Miami Beach. It is to my understanding we are discussing some specific identified enhancements that the City Commission must vote on today. As QEC chair the members made it clear that they of course do not want to see any currently City funded enhancements go away. We encourage you to continually fund current enhancements here at our feeder pattern schools.

On another note, the members felt it was important to understand how we got to this point today. The members of the QEC put forth a motion last November encouraging the City to look at how to create a sustainable funding model for education for our Miami Beach Feeder Pattern Schools. I first want to say thank you for allowing this dialogue around creating a sustainable funding model to enhance our public schools to occur. This is truly visionary, and we at the QEC applaud your support to the children here on Miami Beach so they may have access to the best educational experience.

I stand here before you today as we believe that every child in our community deserves the right to an amazing education regardless of their socio-economic means or the zip code they live in here in Miami Beach. I will show you today that is exactly what is happening. We need to put a stop to this and I truly believe by working together, we can do this together. Let's call this initiative, "Together we Rise!"

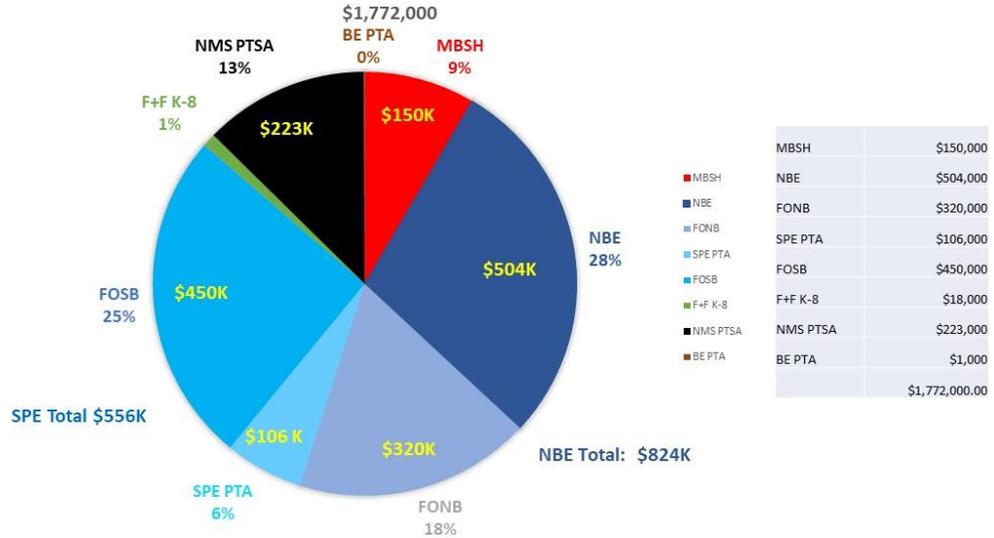
I also stand before you all today as we must come together and take action and align on how we will create a sustainable funding model. We know from the previous meeting that the QEC put forth a motion for Option 3, which is to use the millage differential as the means to creating the sustainable funding model. It is important to note that this is not a tax, this is something currently coming into the City and the City has the legal right to use the .02 differential as they see fit. I believe we can agree and find common ground that investing in our children today and over the foreseeable future is only a plus. For those in the business community or those that may not have children, we need to share our message. Great schools means higher property value. Great Schools mean a better, more educated work force. Again, Together we Rise.

The other option that came up at the last Finance meeting was Option 6. Creating a 501 © 3 and have parents fundraise for the enhancements the City pays for currently. This went to consent as the QEC members learned and was not the outcome that the QEC was looking for. For those that were not at the Neighborhoods meeting regarding this topic, I had brought up a point that I would like to share again today. Some of the current parent groups at our school sites are essentially operating small business out of these school sites.

Let me share with you today this visual:

TOGETHER WE RISE

TOTAL PTSA/FRIENDS MONETARY OUTLAY PER ANNUM



As you can see, I was not joking. Currently on the CMB from essentially 4 of the 7 schools, we parents are raising \$1.7M dollars. Let's look at this graph. As you can see in some school sites like NBE and SPE, they in fact have 2 501 © 3s on campus. PTA and a Friends Organization. I think it is clear we do not need to start yet another 501 © 3.

Currently the City's investment per year is about 300K+/- as per the Education Compact Fund report. That is about a 6 fold differential between the two; the City's investment to the parents investment. If we are able to create a sustainable funding model based off of options 3, the City's investment to the schools has the potential to double. That is remarkable. Please understand that does not mean that we have to spend the full amount every year per se, but I do believe that we will be able to build an educational monetary arsenal. One that will have the power to implement more amazing programs that ALL Children benefit from. We may not know today what the programs are, but we are taking a stand together to say, our children here on Miami Beach deserve the best

we have to offer. We have the chance to do what no other City has done. We can be trailblazers! True Visionaries!!!!

So with that said, I hope that we can all align together, be visionary and reconsider Option 3 at some point. This is what the community has requested of the Mayor and Commission via the multiple QEC motions put forth. We all know it is the right thing to do as it has our children, our future, at the heart of it. Plus it is so easy, there are no taxes, no outside governing body that can intervene. It is just us! I humbly ask you all to reconsider Option 3 for our children!

Together We Rise!