

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
CUBAN/HAITIAN ENTRANT EDUCATION FUNDS  
(TARGETED ASSISTANCE)

BACKGROUND

This program was originally authorized under the Refugee Assistance Act of 1980. It was signed into law on October 10, 1980. Title II of the Act authorized a three year formula grant program to provide educational services to recently arrived Cuban and Haitian entrant children. Subsequent funding for this program has been extended through successive continuing resolutions.

Dade County Public Schools has received a total of \$31,537,497 since 1981 under this program.

CURRENT STATUS OF FUNDING FOR FY87

In the FY'87 Continuing Resolution the final conference agreement did not contain any targeted assistance funds. In an important and related matter, reported to us by Congressman Dante Fascell, on October 18, 1986, the House and Senate approved the reauthorization of the Refugee Act, H. R. 1452, but dropped the line item provision of \$50 million for Targeted Assistance. This means that as the matter now stands, Dade County Public Schools will not receive any funding for 1987-88.

NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

Dade County continues to be not only a port of entry, but also the final destination for many immigrant and refugee families. As of June 7, 1986, the total active refugee students in the Dade County Public Schools was 23,842. As of July 23, 1986, some 12,031 (51%) of these students fell under the technical classification of "entrant" (10,564 classified as Cuban entrant and 1,467 classified as Haitian entrant). These entrant students were distributed among 247 of Dade County's 259 elementary, middle/junior, senior high, and special instructional centers and locations. Thus, 95.4% of all public schools and special centers and locations are impacted to varying degrees by students in this category. Although many of these students have been academically mainstreamed, a significant number still require special instruction and other transitional services.

In addition, a relatively new phenomenon created by the increasing influx of Nicaraguan children into the Dade County schools is giving permanence to the crisis situation this school district has been confronting for a number of years. The annual rate of over 1000 Nicaraguan students registered for the past three years was doubled during 1985-86 when 2,294 were registered. As of June 7, 1986, this group represented approximately 23% of the total refugee population attending Dade County schools.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

In spite of the fact that Congress is reported to be over its budget ceiling for FY87, there is a need to generate support for a supplemental appropriation for Targeted Assistance funds for the 1987-88 fiscal year.