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January 11, 2017

Ms. Abby M. Freedman
Chair
School Board of Broward County
600 SE Third Ave
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Dear Ms. Freedman:

Happy New Year! Because of impending changes expected in the education space in our county, I write to encourage you to remain vigilant, as I am sure you will, as we pursue enhancement of Broward County Public Schools.

For 53 years, I have supported efforts to uplift our schools. Please know that I will continue positive efforts with all of the Board and Superintendent.

I read recently (*November 16*), where Superintendent Robert W. Runcie was awarded with the *2016 Superintendent of the Year Award* from the National Alliance of Black School Educators.

Since his arrival, I have noted the positive impact he has had on Broward County Public Schools, including being nationally recognized for his work on tackling the school-to-prison pipeline that feeds the vicious cycle of mass incarceration; improving student achievement and graduation rates; providing vital leadership to secure the general obligation bond for facility improvements; and focusing on economic disparities in contracting opportunities for minority and women owned businesses.

The outcome of the recent national and state elections creates an urgent concern for the future of public K-12 schools. The combination of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), which gives states greater control, GOP dominance at the majority of state legislatures including Florida, and a Trump administration education agenda focused on the expansion of charter schools and vouchers is expected to drain resources away from district run schools. Because of this, funding to minimize the impact of poverty at schools with children from low-income families and support for immigrant children may be unfairly diverted to these new priorities.

Given the coming attacks on K-12 public education, it is prudent that this School Board do all that it can to keep Superintendent Runcie in his position to continue the progress that has been made.

Looking ahead, I encourage the School Board and Superintendent to step up your efforts to mobilize your employees, parents, and community to urge the Florida Legislature and Congress to allot adequate funding for public schools, increase compensation for teachers, and sustain resources for our most fragile students – children living in poverty, English language learners, and children with special needs.

I will continue to work in Congress to ensure that our public schools receive the resources they need to provide our children with an equitable, high quality education.

Thank you for your time and consideration. With warm personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Cc:

Ms. Nora Rupert, Vice Chair, District 7, Broward County School Board
Ms. Donna P. Korn, Countywide At-Large, Seat 8, Broward County School Board
Ms. Robin Bartleman, Countywide At-Large, Seat 9, Broward County School Board
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Ms. Laurie Rich Levinson, District 6, Broward County School Board
Superintendent Robert W. Runcie, Broward County Public Schools