



# Policy Brief: Adults with Disabilities

Department of Legislative Affairs

Broward County Public Schools

## **SUMMARY:**

The Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) **Adults with Disabilities** (AWD) Program works tirelessly to provide intellectual stimulation, life and job skills lessons and other services for those with a wide range of learning disabilities.

Since 2001, BCPS has provided a specialized curriculum and assessments to address skills in each area of the Adults with Disabilities grant: Quality of Life, Lifelong Learning, and Workforce Preparation. Additionally, benchmarks were established to standardize the program for purposes of collecting data and monitoring performance. The curriculum, “Striving for Success”, became a model for the state and was shared with other AWD stakeholders across Florida. The “Striving for Success” Curriculum focuses on increase independence for students through skill development in areas such as household maintenance, pre-employability skills, community inclusion, behavioral and social skills, communication skills, and functional academics.

During the 2015 Florida Legislative Session, \$10 million in funding for the statewide AWD program was omitted from the final budget passed by the Florida Legislature and presented to the Governor. AWD funding has historically been distributed to state colleges and school districts across the state, who then contract with community providers for services. BCPS uses AWD state funding to provide services to approximately 500 adult students with disabilities. The financial impact of the budget cut to the District is \$921,413.

## **2015-16 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:**

- At Rock Island Center, students have earned over \$800 through operation of a “microenterprise” that teaches them production skills, customer service skills, money and reading skills, and business decision-making skills involved in owning a small business.
- At Seagull School, students with varying disabilities utilizes the PASS Structured Teaching model, which simulated authentic home and work environment to learn hands-on work and daily living skills, such as clerical, domestic, and financial skills in order to increase student independence
- At Cypress Place, students with significant physical and intellectual impairments and autism-spectrum disorder learned the skills necessary to access the internet, utilize e-mail and social media, and also functional computer skills. Students used adaptive switches and specialized keyboards to access computers independently and without intervention.

## **FUNDING REQUEST:**

BCPS applauds the inclusion of \$800,000 in funding for the Adults with Disabilities Program, but seeks a full restoration of \$921,413 in funding in order to continue to provide this critical program to our most in-need students.