

Bond Case Briefs

Municipal Finance Law Since 1971

Can Miami Both Cut the Tax Rate and Increase School Spending?

With caution, Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho laid out the framework Wednesday for a \$2.9 billion general fund budget that he says will increase schools spending by millions next year while also reducing the property tax rate.

But the district's budget crunchers also warned that what they see as overly optimistic tax-revenue projections from the property appraiser's office will force the School Board to again stash away millions in "rainy day" funds.

"It's not a budget that makes everybody happy," Carvalho said. "But what in life is?"

The spending plan presented by Carvalho and Chief Financial Officer Judith Marte is not the district's official budget. The complete document will not be established until later this month, when the state education commissioner certifies Miami-Dade's tax rolls and sets a minimum local tax rate. After that, the School Board can choose to increase the rate up to an amount capped by the state.

But even as the district waits, Carvalho said "the work is pretty much done," and he committed to taxpayers paying a lower tax rate than last year. He also wants the district to spend an extra \$43 million on schools, largely through increased spending for teachers and counselors at elementary and high schools.

[View Full Story from the Miami Herald](#)