

Debt Management Guidelines

School District of Palm Beach County

April 19, 2004

1. Purpose: These Guidelines are intended to add clarity to certain debt management goals, objectives, and methods stated in Policy 6.085, "Debt Management," taking into account sound fiscal management, the District's capital needs, and evolution of the financial markets.

These Guidelines are being applied to financial products that change constantly. The Guidelines should be adjusted frequently by the District, with guidance from the Finance Committee, to reflect evolution of financial products in order to maintain a sound, prudent and cost effective debt program.

2. Method of Sale

a. In conjunction with Policy 6.085(7), the following table outlines the issues to be considered when determining the appropriate method of sale.

	<u>Competitive Sale</u>	<u>Negotiated Sale</u>
Issuer		
Type of Organization	Broad-based, general-purpose government	Special-purpose, independent authority
Frequency of Issue	Regular borrower in public market	New or infrequent issuer of debt
Market Awareness	Active secondary market with wide investor base	Little or no institutional base, but growing dealer interest
Credit Quality		
Rating	"A" or better	Below "A"
Pledged Revenues	General obligation	Project supported revenues
Security Structure	Conventional resolution and cash flow; rate covenant and coverage	Unusual or weak covenants; subordinate debt
Trend	Stable	Improving or under stress
Market Conditions		
Interest Rates	Stable, predictable market	Volatile or declining market
Demand	Strong investor demand, good liquidity, light forward calendar	Oversold market, heavy supply
Debt Structure		
Tax Status	Tax-exempt, no concerns	Taxable
Debt Instrument	Traditional serial and term, full-coupon bonds	Aggressive use of innovative bond structuring, derivative products, swaps or variable rate debt instruments
Marketing		
Use of Underwriters	Broad market participation banker and direct business to local or regional firm	Ability to select "best qualified"
Investors	Process blind to ultimate investors	Sale can be managed to achieve wide distribution or targeted allotments
Pre-Marketing	Limited needs for pre-marketing	Specific pre-sale activity to generate demand
Flexibility in Timing	Limited flexibility	Greatest flexibility in timing
Fine Tuning Structure	Limited options given to bidders	Unlimited ability to fine tune
Cost		
Gross Spread	Historically, spreads have been lower	Recent data shows comparable spreads

Interest Rates	Highest market price for commodity offered on day of sale	Best match of product with specific investor demand
Preparation		
Resolution/Structure	Issuer determines own preference for managing	Professional banking support and more direct marketing input in balancing security for investors vs. flexibility for issuer
Disclosure	Issuer relies on own program disclosure	Underwriter's counsel assists in the preparation of Official Statement

b. Certificates of Participation (COPs) have become the primary vehicle for financing educational facilities in Florida. While COPs are common in Florida, they are still sold via negotiated sale due to the unique structure associated with each specific financing.

3. Debt Structure

a. Principal Amortization

Amortization of principal resulting in level debt service is preferred since this structure matches useful life of the asset with the financing. Accelerated structures and wrap around structures may be appropriate at certain times over the course of a 20 to 30 year capital financing cycle in order to facilitate the total plan. However, both accelerating and deferring principal can impact long-term capital plans negatively and should be used sparingly.

b. Interest Rate Mode

Fixed rate obligations are most common for municipal issuers. Tax-exemption results in relatively low interest rates when compared to corporate debt. Debt service for fixed rate obligations is defined resulting less risk when preparing budgets. At the same time, variable rate obligations have historically resulted in significantly lower interest rates. Large issuers with substantial debt and assets can take advantage of the expected lower cost of variable rate obligations with limited risk to net cash flow by issuing the proper amount of variable rate obligations.

The following guidelines are set after consultation with rating agencies and insurance companies.

- Variable rate thresholds – (1) No more than 50% of the District’s obligations may be issued in a variable rate mode. (2) At any given point in time, no more than 25% of the District’s outstanding debt will be unhedged variable rate obligations. Variable rate obligations that have been hedged by a variable to fixed rate swap for a period greater than the lesser of (i) five years or (ii) 75% of the remaining life of the obligation will not be considered variable rate obligations for this section (2).
- Budgeting debt service – The District will use the following procedures for budgeting debt service payments:
 - 1) Fixed rate debt – the actual debt service
 - 2) Variable rate obligations that have been swapped to a fixed rate
 - Bond rate swap – actual swap rate
 - Tax exempt index swap – swap rate plus 0.25% of the principal amount of the swapped debt

- Taxable index swap - swap rate plus 0.75% of the principal amount of the swapped debt
- 3) Variable rate obligations (actual variable rate or swapped to variable rate): the greater of:
- Twelve month average plus 0.50%
 - Most recent rate plus 0.50%

4. Refunding/Restructuring Savings Criteria

The Debt Management Policy provides for a 3% net present value savings threshold, with the cashflows discounted using the yield as defined in the Code. This general criterion will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis after considering option value, opportunity cost, rating agency/insurer criteria and risks associated with the proposed refunding transaction. For example, a materially higher savings threshold will generally be required for refunding transactions incorporating hedges and forward structures. Conversely, certain refundings (generally refundings with a very short duration) may be recommended that possess a lower savings threshold. The District may also refund existing debt for the purpose of revising legal covenants to meet particular organizational and/or strategic needs of the District. District staff and the Financial Advisor will make savings threshold recommendations for each transaction after evaluating market and risk factors.

5. Interest Rate Hedge Contracts

a. Procurement

The use of hedging products by Florida school districts is still in its infancy. Credit complications generally dictate that hedge contracts be negotiated. As this market becomes more mature, straightforward hedging transactions can be procured via a competitive process. In situations where the hedge is procured through a competitive process and the District desires to reward a particular firm for offering creative advice or wishes to achieve diversification of counterparty exposure, the District may allow a certain firm to be awarded up to a specified percentage of the notional amount of the hedge as long as the terms and conditions are equivalent to those of the winning bidder. The parameters for the bid and any provisions related to matching a bid must be disclosed in writing to all potential bidders prior to the bidding process.

The District may procure hedges by negotiated methods in the following situations:

- Due to size or complexity of a particular swap, a negotiated transaction would result in the most favorable pricing.
- A hedge is embedded within a proposed bond issue.
- Market entry/timing constraints suggest a negotiated sale.
- A negotiated transaction will promote the District's interests by encouraging and rewarding innovation.

b. Form and Content of Hedge Contract

In preparing the agreement, the District should generally provide for:

- Termination of the agreement at the market value of the agreement at any time. Generally, the counterparty shall **not** have the right to optionally terminate an agreement.
- Events of default of counterparty shall include:
 1. Failure to make payments when due
 2. Breach of representations and warranties
 3. Illegality
 4. Failure to comply with downgrade provisions
 5. Failure to comply with any other provisions of the agreement after a specified notice period.
- Posting of collateral by the counterparty or insurance

c. Counterparty exposure

No more than the greater of (1) \$50,000,000 or (2) 35% of the total principal amount of obligations outstanding can be hedged by a single counterparty (treating each separately capitalized entity with a separate rating as a single counterparty).

6. Reporting

In accordance with Policy 6.085(16)(e), the annual report submitted to the School Board, covering the previous fiscal year, will include a summary of outstanding obligations and any associated hedges. At a minimum, the report will include the information included in Exhibit A of these Guidelines, as may be amended from time to time by the District with the guidance of the Finance Committee.

