

Dr. Robert B. Ingram, Member

SUBJECT: DIRECTION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT TO USE VOLUNTEER RESERVE OFFICERS TO ASSIST THE DIVISION OF SCHOOL POLICE

As long as crime threatens our schools, the Miami-Dade County School Board must use all reasonable and responsible means for protecting students, employees, guests and property. One effective and low-cost way is to use certified police officers as volunteers to assist the Division of School Police in routine and emergency school-related incidents. These reserve officers, many eager for an opportunity such as this to maintain their certification, would have full police powers in their volunteer work alongside the school district's police. They would supplement the existing force, replacing no paid employees. Although these certified officers are allowed under state law to patrol alone, each will be accompanied at all times by a bona fide Miami-Dade County Public Schools police officer while on patrol.

Reserve officers are used with great success in police jurisdictions around the country, and the Board's cost here would be minimal. Pursuant to Florida Statute 440.02(14)(d)6, "volunteers" are eligible for Workers' Compensation medical benefits if injured on the job (while on school grounds or approved field trips). Such benefits apply only to those volunteers who volunteer on a regular basis, one hour or more a week throughout the year. Examples include individuals who participate in the district's Intergenerational and America Reads programs.

In order for reserve police officers to receive medical benefits, they must complete the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Volunteer Registration Form, FM 1764 Rev. (03/98). An officer will not be considered a volunteer and will not be covered under Florida Workers' Compensation Law unless a fully completed application is on file in the district's Bureau of Community Services.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. ROBERT B. INGRAM:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent of Schools to:

- 1) use certified police officers as volunteers with full police powers to assist the Division of School Police in routine and emergency school-related incidents; and

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- 2) advertise, as soon as can be facilitated, for qualified volunteers to fill reserve police officer positions, which would supplement and not replace paid-staff positions; and
- 3) require that each reserve police officer be accompanied by a bona fide Miami-Dade County Public Schools police officer while on patrol, except in emergencies to be defined by the district's police chief or designee; and
- 4) ensure that this reserve police officer program is fully operational by the start of the 1999-2000 school year.

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