

Dr. Marta Pérez, Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO (1) CONVENE AN AD HOC COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NINE BOARD-ADOPTED CORE CHARACTER EDUCATION VALUES, AND (2) STUDY AND REPORT ON THE FEASIBILITY OF INCLUDING MOMENTS OF REFLECTION BEFORE LUNCH AND BEFORE SCHOOL DISMISSAL**

In the wake of the Columbine School tragedy, we seek methods to ensure student safety in our own schools. A reoccurring theme expressed by experts, parents, teachers, and students is the absence of ethical values in the students capable of undertaking heinous crimes.

Beyond physical safety, child development experts emphasize the importance of ethical, moral, civic, and spiritual values education in student formation. National and local authorities on student behavior advocate this need. Among other prestigious publications, the entire December 1998 issue of *Educational Leadership* reported on methods to increase such values in public school programs. Such noted education writers as Parker Palmer, Charles Suhor, Rabbi Harold Kushner, Rushworth Kidder, Patricia Born, and others addressed the importance and feasibility of these values being included in public school education. Dr. Manuel Gomez made similar assertions to this Board on May 12, 1999. The internationally-acclaimed child violence expert, Dr. James Garbarino, in *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* (February 1999), again, stresses the need for character, ethical, moral and spiritual values as essential to avoid violence in schools.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools includes character education in its K-12 Social Sciences program. The nine core values adopted by the School Board in 1995 for this curriculum are **citizenship, cooperation, fairness, honesty, integrity, kindness, pursuit of excellence, respect and responsibility**. These values are included in the Social Sciences curriculum.

Closely linked to the strengthening of the nine core character education values, as suggested by Professor Garbarino, is the addition to the student's school day of moments of meditation: one before lunch and another before the child leaves at the end of his/her school day. Such possibilities deserve consideration by the School Board.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
DR. MARTA PÉREZ:**

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

1. convene an Ad Hoc Committee to review and report within three (3) months on the implementation status of the nine board-adopted core character education values; and
2. study and report within three (3) months on the feasibility of including moments of reflection before lunch and before school dismissal.