

Deputy Superintendent of Schools  
Henry C. Fraind

**SUBJECT: CONTRACT WITH ECKERT SEAMANS CHERIN & MELLOTT, LLC**

The frequencies and volume of labor and arbitration litigation have impacted the ability of staff to optimally represent Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

To date, the Board has utilized such specialized legal counsel only on a case-by-case basis. Most recently, the law firm of Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC was employed to represent the Board in a complex and protracted arbitration case that included appeals before the Eleventh Circuit Court, Third District Court of Appeals, and the Florida Supreme Court.

Increased litigation is expected, given an increase in the number of bargaining units, representation proceedings, unfair labor practice charges, and more aggressive actions on the part of the employees and unions in asserting their contractual rights.

In order to insure that the Board is adequately represented in such legal matters, the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools and the Office of Legislative and Labor Relations is recommending that the Board contract with the law firm of Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC to represent the Board's interest in labor law related legal proceedings.

The firm profile will be forwarded to School Board Members under separate cover and will be placed on file in the Citizen Information Center and the Board Recording Secretary's office.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida employ the law firm of Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC to represent the Board's interests in arbitration and unfair labor practice proceedings, and in such other cases as may be assigned by the Chief Officer of Legislative and Labor Relations, with compensation not to exceed \$75,000 at an hourly rate of \$150 per hour.

GAW:jmg