

Merrett Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO IMPLEMENT THE DISTRICT'S
FIRST COMMUTER SCHOOL AT ADA MERRITT ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL**

**COMMITTEE: ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SCHOOL
OPERATIONS**

Authorization is requested to implement the District's first commuter school. If approved, Ada Merritt Elementary School, scheduled to open in the 2003–2004 school year, will not be defined by traditional attendance boundaries. Rather, parents working nearby, such as in downtown Miami or in the Brickell area, will be able to enroll their children in an innovative and high quality choice school. A comprehensive fee-based before-and-after school program will provide interested parents with a safe and learning-rich environment for their children from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Students throughout the District and adjacent counties will have an opportunity to attend.

Ada Merritt Elementary School will focus on world languages and cultures to provide a strong foundation for students living in an increasingly interconnected society. The school will be designated as a Bilingual School Organization (BISO), offering students the opportunity to pursue a dual-language education in English and Spanish. The objective of such a program is to foster literacy in both languages, enabling students to become bilingual and biliterate and able to function comfortably in two cultures. The District is currently studying the feasibility of offering an English/Portuguese option for those students interested in developing proficiency in English and Portuguese.

Additionally, Miami-Dade County Public Schools will pursue the implementation of the District's second fully-authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP). The PYP focuses on the development of the whole child, not only in the classroom but also in the world outside, through other environments where children learn. It offers a framework that meets the myriad of children's needs: academic, social, physical, emotional and cultural.

The estimated annual funding costs for a lead teacher and requisite professional development for the first three years, above the allocation provided for a new school, will not exceed \$108,000. This will be reviewed by the Operating Budget Advisory Committee and, if approved, will be recommended in the 2003 - 2004 Tentative Budget.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the the implementation of the District's first commuter school at Ada Merritt Elementary School, contingent upon approved funding.

MB:dcr

**Miami-Dade County
Public Schools' first
Commuter School**

**ADA MERRITT
ELEMENTARY**

660 SW 3rd Street, Miami, FL 33130
305 648-7555 (Region IV)

**Now Accepting
Applications for
2003-2004
Grades K-3**

Ada Merritt Elementary School

The Ada Merritt Elementary School curriculum design was created to expand multilingual education and increase opportunities for students to become bilingual and biliterate. The instructional program will include the highly rated Dual Language Program and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program.

Ada Merritt Elementary School will be designated as a Bilingual School Organization (BISO), offering students the opportunity to pursue a dual language education in English and Spanish. The objective of such a program is to foster literacy in both English and Spanish enabling students to become fully bilingual and biliterate and able to function in two cultures. If there is sufficient interest from the community, an English/Portuguese component will be offered for those students interested in developing bilingual and biliterate proficiency in that language.

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program

Miami-Dade County Public Schools will seek accreditation from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) for Ada Merritt Elementary School to become the District's second fully-authorized

International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP). The PYP not only focuses on the development of the whole child in the classroom but also in the world outside, and other environments where children learn. It offers a framework that meets the myriad of children's needs: academic, social, physical, emotional and cultural.

International Studies

In addition, students pursuing English/Spanish proficiency will have the opportunity to enter the Spanish Section of the International Studies (IS) Program (1st through 5th grades). This dual recognition program is a collaborative effort of M-DCPS and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of Spain. The IS Program will function as a component of Ada Merritt's English/Spanish two way bilingual academic program with an additional hour of daily instruction in Spanish. The extended day will offer students the opportunity to explore social science and science objectives which are part of Spain's educational curriculum and not covered by Florida standards. This highly demanding academic program will enable students to receive a "bachiller" degree from Spain as well as a High School Diploma upon successful 12th grade graduation from the program and fulfillment of the educational requirements set up by each country.

EXTENDED DAY SERVICES

As a commuter school, Ada Merritt Elementary School will offer unique services and opportunities for students and parents to access beyond the traditional school day. No transportation services are provided to Ada Merritt.

Proposed extended day service hours:

Fee-Based

Before-School Care: 6:30 A.M. – 8:20 A.M.
After-School Care: After school until 7:00 P.M.