

Mercedes Toural, Chief Education Officer
and Deputy Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, APPROVE THE CONVERSION OF EMERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO A BILINGUAL SCHOOL ORGANIZATION (BISO) MODEL

COMMITTEE: EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

One of the objectives under Goal I of the District Strategic Plan, School-to-Career, is to increase the number of students and adults who are bilingual and biliterate. In 1963, Coral Way Elementary became the first bilingual public school in the nation. It has served as a pioneer and model for dual language schools and programs throughout the world. Today, based on the enormous success of Coral Way Elementary, six elementary schools are implementing the Bilingual School Organization (BISO) model and 59 schools are implementing the Extended Foreign Language (EFL) program. The schools implementing the BISO model deliver 60% of instruction in English and 40% in Spanish to all students in the school. The EFL program follows a school-within-a-school model, which is open to all students within the school, and provides anywhere from one to two hours of daily instructional time in Spanish.

In today's global economy, the need for a multilingual workforce is an ever-increasing demand. We live in an interconnected society where we are constantly communicating with people from all over the world. In response to parent requests, Emerson Elementary School, currently implementing the EFL program for several years, is seeking to expand the dual language program by converting to the BISO model. This conversion will afford dual language education for all students attending the school by providing additional instructional time in and through Spanish.

The conversion will begin during the 2003-2004 school year when the in-coming Kindergarten class will participate in the BISO program. The program will continue to expand as the students progress to each subsequent grade level. Those students whose parents choose not to participate in the BISO model have the option of transferring to another school within ACCESS Center 5. Conversely, requests for curriculum transfers to Emerson Elementary School's BISO program will be approved by ACCESS Center 5 based on availability of space.

This item does not appear in the published agenda. There is good cause to vary from the agenda in order for the school to have sufficient time to plan and implement the program for the 2003-2004 school year.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve:

1. the conversion of Emerson Elementary School to a Bilingual School Organization (BISO) model, to begin implementation with the 2003-2004 Kindergarten class; and
2. expand the BISO model by an additional grade level each subsequent year.

GOOD CAUSE
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