

Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:       REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT TO  
IMPLEMENT THE DISTRICT'S PROJECT 4 HIGH – HIGH  
STANDARDS, HIGH EXPECTATIONS, HIGH ACHIEVEMENT, HIGH  
GRADUATION RATE**

**COMMITTEE:   EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

During the 2001-2002 school year, five senior high schools in Miami-Dade County Public Schools were graded "F" based on student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Of these five schools, only one, Miami Norland Senior High School, scoring 309 points and earning a "D" rating, made significant gains during the 2002-2003 school year. Of the four remaining "F" high schools, only one, Booker T. Washington Senior High School, made significant gains in student achievement. The only "Triple F" school, Miami Edison Senior High School, had significant losses in student achievement, while the other two, Miami Northwestern Senior High School and Miami Jackson Senior High School, remained relatively unchanged.

Each of these schools has received support from various offices at the district and from their ACCESS Centers. The results, however, are discouraging. They are even more disappointing given the additional resources and support provided to these schools during the 2002-2003 school year.

The limited success of previous initiatives suggests the need for more systemic change to reconstitute and reinvigorate these schools. There is a need to coordinate and streamline curriculum and services in low performing high schools. To achieve this goal authorization is requested to implement Project 4 HIGH – High Standards, High Expectations, High Achievement, High Graduation Rate.

This new model will coordinate all the curriculum support services to these schools directly from Instructional Operations. Specific elements of the new model include the following:

- augment school site leadership by clearly delineating duties and responsibilities;
- implement an integrated curriculum based on state standards and focused on student achievement;
- supplement instruction to comply with the *No Child Left Behind Act* and ensure successful skills acquisition;
- focus staff development on curriculum development and instructional technique;
- identify experienced and qualified personnel and provide them with clearly delineated roles and responsibilities;

- increase student attendance; and
- coordinate a comprehensive, collaborative effort between the school and the community.

Each of the low performing high schools faces significant challenges that impede efforts to improve student achievement. Project 4 HIGH offers both research-based and local solutions to address these challenges. This intervention provides a sustained, systematic, collaborative initiative to positively impact these low performing schools.

The model for Project 4 HIGH includes two new positions at each of the four senior high schools: a vice principal and a business manager. In addition, an appropriation of \$500,000 will be utilized for professional development, tutorial services, and supplies. The appropriation for this program was included in the Tentative Budget approved by the School Board under Fund 0100, Program 8947, various objects and various functions.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to implement the district's Project 4 HIGH – High Standards, High Expectations, High Achievement, High Graduation Rate, as part of its commitment to the Assistance and Intervention Plan.

The appropriation for this item is included in the Tentative Budget approved by the School Board at the July 23, 2003 meeting.