

Office of School Board Attorney  
Johnny Brown, Board Attorney

**SUBJECT: THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA AUTHORIZE THE SCHOOL BOARD ATTORNEY TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR PARALEGAL RELATED DUTIES ASSOCIATED WITH GARNISHMENT PROCEEDINGS FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**COMMITTEE: BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Over the years, the School Board Attorney's Office has provided legal guidance and court representation associated with school district employee garnished wages and salaries. Chapter 77 of the Florida Statutes sets forth the legal requirements associated with the garnishment of salary or wages recoverable by law from district employees. This statute imposes considerable legal obligations on the district that require, in addition to legal counsel provided by the Board Attorney's Office, the efforts of a trained, experienced paralegal with a detailed understanding of the law, the nuances of the school system and its payroll functions.

The paralegal duties associated with representing the District in its garnishment proceedings include maintaining the files, interfacing with garnisher and garnishee including the attorneys and legal representatives, assisting in the day to day functions of the garnishment attorney through court appearances, trial preparation, assisting with legal research, drafting of and responses to discovery and other pleadings, the tracking of garnished wages, interfacing with administration in payroll and such other duties as directed by the Board Attorney in this area. Accordingly, in order to assist the Office of the School Board Attorney in its handling of all school district employee garnished wages and salaries, we are requesting approval of a contract of employment with an experienced paralegal. The individual who has that specific expertise is Ms. Paula Richardson. Ms. Richardson provided the above assistance in this area prior to her retirement and is uniquely qualified to provide all ongoing services.

This year, the Board Attorney's Office has received a record number of garnishments, totaling over two hundred (200) to date. To ensure continuity, we are recommending that the School Board authorize the Board Attorney to contract with Ms. Richardson for \$54,000 to perform paralegal related duties associated with the garnishment proceedings for the school district.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida authorize the School Board Attorney to enter into a contract with Ms. Paula Richardson in the amount of \$54,000 for the period September 11, 2003 through June 30, 2004 for paralegal related duties associated with garnishment proceedings for the school district.