

Rudolph F. Crew, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO INITIATE THE
DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS OF THE PARENT
ACADEMY**

COMMITTEE: EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Ensuring that parents can play an active role in their children's education is a vital component in achieving two of Miami-Dade County Public Schools' strategic priorities – eliminating low-performing schools and raising achievement of all students in all schools, particularly in middle and high schools.

A 2002 review of research studies published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory shows a clear link between parental involvement and a number of positive student outcomes. Regardless of family income or other background factors, parental involvement has been found to result in:

- Higher grades, test scores, and enrollment in more rigorous courses;
- Higher promotion and passing rates;
- Better attendance, behavior and social skills; and
- Higher graduation and college attendance rates.

In addition, some research has shown that parents' own sense of efficacy is linked to higher achievement by their children.

With this research in mind, M-DCPS proposes to create a unique public/private partnership to offer support to parents across this county. The initiative will be called **The Parent Academy**.

The Parent Academy will focus on building parents' knowledge and skills in three ways:

- Helping parents in understanding and navigating M-DCPS' schools and programs to get the highest quality education for their children, including their transition to postsecondary education and work;
- Boosting parents' capacity to assist in their children's learning at home; and
- Raising parents' own academic and vocational skills.

Partnering with higher education academicians, K-12 practitioners, actively engaged parents, and the public and private sectors, The Parent Academy will offer M-DCPS parents the opportunity to enjoy a rich academic environment that will permit them to learn how to help their children succeed. Partnering with higher education, the goal is to have buildings, facilities, and resources harnessed to open college classrooms to parents across the county.

Within these walls of higher learning, parents will be offered a myriad of classes ranging from "The ABC's of Miami-Dade County Public Schools," to "How to Help My Child with Math." Parents will have a rich menu of opportunities, which may include classes to help their child, classes for personal growth, classes for certification and employment, and classes to help parents access resources more easily.

The faculty of The Parent Academy will truly be of the 21st century. College professors, teachers, administrators, businesspeople and other parents will all be part of this venture. With the wealth of knowledge and skills available within M-DCPS, the classes and courses can be tailored to the diverse communities which intertwine within this dynamic county.

Other plans include on-line, distance learning experiences and live "chats" with experts, demonstration teaching, parent leadership training, and a parent media center for resource building.

This request is for approval of the School Board for the Superintendent to proceed with the planning and development of the concept for The Parent Academy. Another Board Item is planned tentatively to be presented to the School Board in spring 2005 with complete details and a request for approval to open The Parent Academy in fall 2005. No additional funds are needed for the planning process.

Board Members are encouraged to forward to the Superintendent's office any suggestions of individuals who could serve on the planning committee, as well as suggestions or ideas for the academy's content, other considerations, or referrals of support.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County authorize the Superintendent of Schools to initiate the development and planning process of **The Parent Academy.**

RFC:cn