

Sonia E. Díaz, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction

SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS WITH SEVEN INTERPRETER OR CAPTION/CART PROVIDER REFERRAL SERVICE AGENCIES TO PROVIDE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION/CAPTION AND COMPUTER-ASSISTED REALTIME TRANSLATION (CART) SERVICES FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$750,000, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2005 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2006

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Authorization is requested to enter into contractual agreements with seven interpreter/caption/Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Provider referral service agencies to provide American Sign Language and/or interpretation/caption/CART provider services in programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, effective July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, at an hourly rate of \$50 to \$100, in an amount not to exceed \$750,000. The range of these hourly rates is based on competitive rates in the profession, as well as on the levels of experience of the interpreters/captionists/CART providers. Due to attrition and the critical shortage of interpreters/captionists/CART providers, a need for additional staff exists. It is anticipated that at least 13-15 interpreters will be needed for the 2005-2006 school year. These contractual agreements have been in effect since May 2003.

Interpreter referral service agencies serving South Florida are:

- Accessible Communication for the Deaf
- Accommodating Ideas, Inc.
- Adriana Schaked Translations, LLC
- CODA Link, Inc.
- Deaf Services Bureau, Inc.
- Florida Realtime Reporting Services, Inc.
- Nationwide Interpreter Resource, Inc.

A primary need of deaf and hard-of-hearing students is that communication and instruction are accessible and allow for effective and efficient social interaction and the acquisition and sharing of ideas and concepts. In recent years, both federal and state laws have recognized the unique educational needs of students with hearing loss. These unique needs include:

- accommodations, in the general education classroom, including but not limited to, quality educational interpreting services, quality educational captioning services; and
- equal access to all components of the educational process, including fieldtrips and extracurricular social and athletic activities.

These services are needed to provide deaf and hard-of-hearing students with an education rich in communication so that they may achieve their academic, social, emotional, and vocational potential in adulthood. Without communication access, deaf/hard-of-hearing students may experience limited learning opportunities and human isolation.

The Committee established by School Board Rule 6Gx13- 3F-1.021 reviewed this item on March 17, 2005, and recommended that an exception to the rule regarding bids or Request for Proposals be granted as these seven agencies constitute sole source providers to fulfill this critical need.

The President of Accessible Communication for the Deaf, Inc., is Ms. Lisa Gountlett; the Director of Accommodating Ideas, Inc., is Ms. Rebecca Kerr; the President of Adriana Schaked Translations, LLC is Ms. Adriana Schaked; the President of CODA Link, Inc., is Ms. Donna Fernandez; the Executive Director of Deaf Services Bureau, Inc., is Ms. Anita Hassell; the President of Florida Realtime Reporting Services, Inc., is Ms. Tanya English; and the President of Nationwide Interpreter Resource, Inc., is Ms. June Backer.

The appropriation for this item will be included in the Other Federal Programs Fund (Contracted Programs Fund) under Fund 0420, Function 5200, Program 3635, Object 5310, Location 9615.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

1. enter into contractual agreements with Accessible Communication for the Deaf, Inc., Accommodating Ideas, Inc., Adriana Schaked Translations LLC, CODA Link, Inc., Deaf Services Bureau, Inc., Florida Realtime Reporting Services, Inc., and Nationwide Interpreter Resource, Inc., to provide American Sign Language interpretation and caption/CART provider services in programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, in an amount not to exceed \$750,000, effective July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006; and
2. grant an exception to School Board Rule 6Gx13- 3F-1.021.

The appropriation for this item will be included in the Other Federal Programs Fund (Contracted Programs Fund).

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