

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

SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL DEBATE PROJECT TO DEVELOP THE MIAMI URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE (UDL), A PROGRAM THAT WILL COMPLEMENT THE DISTRICT'S DEBATE CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The National Debate Project (NDP) is requesting to implement the Miami Urban Debate League (UDL), a program developed by the NDP, to complement the District's debate curriculum and program. UDLs have been successfully implemented in Atlanta, New York City, and Baltimore for the past four years. The NDP is a consortium of Emory, Georgia State, Clark Atlanta, Tennessee State, and New York Universities and is designed to assist students in socio-economically challenged populations. Many schools receive Title I funds, serve large immigrant populations for whom English is a second language, and/or have difficulty meeting requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The NDP has served in a consultant capacity to ten (10) additional large urban districts in developing UDLs through identifying student populations, training teachers, and providing assessment.

The UDL emphasizes the development of policy debate skills. The skills necessary for learning and executing policy debate include: critical and analytical thinking, written and oral communication, collection and application of research, confidence and public speaking, as well as the ability to present views effectively, to acquire good citizenship awareness, and to resolve conflict with intellect rather than with physical aggression.

Funding for the Miami UDL will be headed by Ms. Barbara Garrett, who first brought this program to the attention of Ms. Evelyn Langlieb Greer, School Board Member, and District administrators. Funding will be secured through donations from former debate students who are now practicing law in South Florida, and civic-minded companies and organizations such as Greenberg Traurig, The Knight Foundation, the Debate Institute at the University of Miami, and Miami Dade College.

The initial year of the three year initiative will include, but is not limited to:

- selecting 8-12 urban schools as the anchor core population for the Miami UDL;

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- engaging a consultant team from NDP to assist with meetings with selected schools' principals and teachers from each core school, as well as representatives from Miami Dade College, the University of Miami, and a funding representative;
- selected schools will send a core of identified students to either Emory University, the University of Miami, or Miami-Dade College for training;
- teachers from each of the core 8-12 schools will receive professional development that focuses on program building and implementation;
- an administrator from the Division of Life Skills and Special Projects will serve as the lead administrator for the UDL in Miami;
- beginning in September 2005, a one-day UDL tournament will be held each month (in addition to either one-day, per week after school, or a daily class in school for debate training) with two NDP consultants in attendance for each tournament for assessment and assistance;
- assistants from Miami Dade College and the University of Miami will supplement coach/teacher training in addition to that which is a part of the District's provided inservice; and
- a banquet for all participants will include motivational speakers and student scholarship awards to national debate institutes with reputable records in training UDL students (Emory University, University of Vermont, New York University, Towson University, Wake Forest University, and Stanford University).

The criteria for consideration for the first year of implementation focused on schools that:

- have socio-economically challenged populations;
- receive Title I funds;
- serve large immigrant populations for whom English is a second language;
- have difficulty meeting requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation;
- have low achievement ratings within the State of Florida grading system; and/or
- have current speech and debate programs, or have had a speech and debate program within the last few years.

This last criterion was heavily weighted due to the value of implementing this project quickly; it was deemed crucial to build upon an already established foundation of teacher experience and program history.

The twelve (12) recommended schools are:

1. Homestead Senior High*
2. Miami Senior High*
3. Miami Beach Senior High*
4. Miami Carol City Senior High*
5. Miami Edison Senior High

6. Miami Jackson Senior High*
7. Miami Norland Senior High
8. Miami Northwestern Senior High
9. Miami Southridge Senior High*
10. North Miami Senior High*
11. North Miami Beach Senior High*
12. Booker T. Washington Senior High

*Currently have programs either after school or through a course offering during the school day.

In years two and three of the UDL implementation, additional schools and expanded training will become part of the program development. Once fully implemented, all Miami-Dade County Public Schools' senior high schools will have the opportunity to participate in the Urban Debate League.

No local funds are required.

RECOMMENDED: That the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to enter into a cooperative agreement with the National Debate Project (NDL) to develop the Miami Urban Debate League (UDL), a program that will complement the District's debate curriculum and program.

No local funds are required.

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