

Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:           REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, APPROVE THE TIMELINE FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF DISTRICT PERSONNEL IDENTIFIED IN THE REPORT OF THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY GRAND JURY DATED JULY 18, 2005, AS HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED THEREIN**

**COMMITTEE:       SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY**

On July 18, 2005, the Miami-Dade County Grand Jury issued a report entitled, "Teachers Who Cheat: A Few Bad Apples," which stated or implied that "nearly 100" Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (District) employees, may have obtained their teaching credentials or endorsements in a fraudulent manner. The report describes the intricate and unlawful enterprise established by Mr. William McCoggle, through his company, Moving on Toward Education and Training, Inc. (MOTET), through which employees allegedly paid to obtain academic credit from Eastern Oklahoma State College without any academic effort.

Moreover, the District is also aware that Mr. McCoggle through MOTET also may have offered academic credit through four other accredited institutions of higher education: Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio; Bethel College, McKenzie, Tennessee; Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma; and St. Gregory University, Shawnee, Oklahoma. It is possible that, as the investigation by the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office and the District's Auditor continues, current employees who obtained academic credits through MOTET from these institutions will be identified. If so, the activities of these employees will be investigated in the same manner as the activities of the individuals who have been identified to date.

In anticipation of and in response to the Grand Jury's report, the Administration requested information detailing the conduct of the current employees of the District. Specifically, on June 22, July 21, and July 26, 2005, the Administration wrote to the former Inspector General requesting detailed information regarding employees that would permit the Administration to promptly begin a personnel investigation into the conduct of specific employees. No useful information was provided by the former Inspector General. On July 20 and July 22, 2005, the Miami-Dade County State Attorney authorized the District's former Inspector General to release the names of 106 current employees of the District who may have improperly obtained academic credits through MOTET from Eastern Oklahoma State College.

On August 11, 2005, the Administration wrote to the former Inspector General instructing him to provide the information previously requested and, in the alternative, made a public records request for the information. On August 16, 2005, the former Inspector General responded that he would make the relevant records available for review and copying. On August 24, 2005, at a scheduled meeting, the former Inspector General declined to permit the review and copying of records by representatives of the Administration.

On August 29, 2005, representatives of the Administration met with the members of the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office and were provided with a summary of its investigation of the District's current employees who may have improperly received academic credit through MOTET from Eastern Oklahoma State College. The summary included a detailed explanation of the evidence gathered against MOTET's principal, Mr. William McCogle, and a review of five boxes of evidence gathered during the investigation. Arrangements have been made for the copying of the evidence and its delivery to the District.

The task of investigating the activities of each of the 106 current employees identified and others that may be identified at a later date, has been assigned to the Miami-Dade County Schools Police (Schools Police). School Police has assigned six (6) detectives to work on this priority investigation. Additionally, the Administration has requested from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), via communication to Commissioner John Winn on August 24, 2005, six investigators to partner with the District. No response from FLDOE has been received to date.

In order to insure fairness and an unbiased investigatory process, all documents from the State's Attorney's Office will be delivered directly to Schools Police. In addition, copies of records obtained from the Florida Department of Education also are being delivered directly to Schools Police by the Administration.

The Administration intends to meet with each union that represents the identified employees before the investigation proceeds beyond the first phase. Moreover, the Administration is mindful of the possibility that a few employees may have been identified in error, and it will design a process that will bring these errors to the surface as quickly as possible.

The investigation will have the following phases:

- Phase One:** Review of documents and materials provided by the State Attorney's Office, Florida Department of Education, and other available and lawful sources.
- Phase Two:** Schools Police to conduct individual interviews with each employee identified.
- Phase Three:** Preparation by Schools Police of reports detailing the activities of each identified employee and providing a conclusion as to whether the allegation has been substantiated or unsubstantiated.
- Phase Four:** Review of Schools Police reports by the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) and recommendations to the Superintendent as to appropriate personnel action.

***Phase Five:*** Recommendation by the Superintendent to the School Board of appropriate personnel action.

In the event that Mr. McCogle enters a guilty plea to the indictment brought against him and his testimony becomes available, the Administration will consider offering the identified individuals the opportunity to resign their employment and permanently surrender their teaching certification. This will allow for an expedited resolution to personnel matters.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve the timeline for the investigation of District personnel alleged to have taken part in the activities disclosed in the report of the Miami-Dade County Grand Jury dated July 18, 2005.