

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO REVIEW AND STRENGTHEN CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

One of the primary missions of the nation's public schools is to prepare students to be knowledgeable and responsible citizens whose words and actions at school, at home, and in the community reflect a commitment to the fundamental values and principles of the American constitutional democracy. In order to maintain our nation's "civic health," students must receive instruction leading to an understanding of the meaning of freedom and democracy, including the structure and function of our government. Students must also possess the critical thinking skills necessary to understand, analyze, and evaluate public issues, learning to take and defend positions regarding those issues. Most importantly, students must develop a sense of civic virtue, including the commitment to vote and actively participate in the community.

For more than 250 years, Americans have shared a vision of democracy in which citizens understand and appreciate its inherent rights and responsibilities, and engage in civic life. However, in recent years, reports such as *The Civic Mission of Schools* (Carnegie Corporation, 2003), note the declining emphasis on civic education in our nation's schools.

To keep our democracy strong, we must ensure that formal civic learning is an essential part of our school's instructional program. It is critical that Miami-Dade County Public Schools continually evaluate the progress being made in providing a comprehensive, formal civic education program for all students in the District. To this end, the quality and content of the District's civics curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other civic education initiatives should be reviewed and strengthened, as necessary, to include appropriate civics instruction at all grade levels. The results of this review and any subsequent recommendations to strengthen civics curriculum for Kindergarten to 12th grade should be submitted to the School Board at its August 2, 2006 School Board meeting.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

VICE CHAIR PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent:

- 1) to review the District's formal civic education curriculum from Kindergarten to 12th grade, and
- 2) submit a report and any recommendations to strengthen the civics curriculum to the Board at the August 2, 2006 meeting.