

Antoinette Dunbar, Deputy Superintendent  
Curriculum, Instruction, and School Improvement

**SUBJECT:           REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH BEST BUDDIES INTERNATIONAL, INC., TO PROVIDE A PROGRAM WHICH INCREASES ONE-TO-ONE FRIENDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$98,600, EFFECTIVE AUGUST 3, 2006, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2007**

**COMMITTEE:       INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Authorization is requested for the Superintendent to enter into a contractual agreement with Best Buddies International, Inc., to provide opportunities to promote friendships between students with intellectual disabilities (buddies) and students without disabilities (peer buddies) at 17 middle schools, in an amount not to exceed \$98,600, effective August 3, 2006, through June 30, 2007. There were 340 student participants during the 2005-2006 school year. The peer buddies volunteer to participate in the program; they are not assigned. Staff from the Division of Special Education monitors the activities of the Best Buddies chapters to ensure that the program is run with fidelity. Program initiation strategies, training, and support will be provided by Best Buddies International, Inc., to teachers, school personnel, and student leaders. During the first year of the contractual agreement, staff from the participating schools submitted mid and end-year evaluation reports to the Best Buddies organization. These evaluations were compiled to monitor the program's effectiveness and, based on the positive results, a decision was made to renew the contractual agreement with Best Buddies, International, Inc. This contractual agreement has been in effect since 2005.

In the fall of 2004, all middle schools received a memorandum from the Division of Special Education inviting them to participate in the Best Buddies program; 12 middle schools responded and had individual contracts with Best Buddies during the 2004-2005 school year. In the fall of 2005, the Division of Special Education contracted with Best Buddies to provide the program in 17 middle schools that elected to participate. The following schools signed commitment letters to participate in the Best Buddies program that would be supported by this item during the 2006-2007 school year: Allapattah Middle, Brownsville Middle, Campbell Drive Middle, Citrus Grove Middle, Charles Drew Middle, Cutler Ridge Middle, Glades Middle, Henry Filer Middle, Hialeah Middle, Horace Mann Middle, H.D. McMillan Middle, Milam K-8 Center, North Miami Middle, Redland Middle, Riviera Middle, Rockway Middle, and Thomas Jefferson Middle.

Best Buddies International, Inc., is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. Its headquarters are located at 100 SE Second Street, #2200, Miami, FL 33131.

The Professional Services Contract Committee established by School Board Rule 6Gx13- 3F-1.021 reviewed this Board item on July 13, 2006, and recommended that an exception to the rule regarding bids or Request for Proposals be granted as the contractor has specific expertise in this field, as demonstrated by its recognized international programs.

The Vice President for Administration for Best Buddies International, Inc., is Ms. Lisa M. Plante.

The appropriation for this item will be included in the Other Federal Programs Fund (Contracted Programs Fund) under Fund 0420, Function 5200, Program 3420, Object 5310, Location 9615.

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

1. enter into a contractual agreement with Best Buddies International, Inc., to provide a program which increases one-to-one friendship opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities in 17 middle schools, in an amount not to exceed \$98,600, effective August 3, 2006, through June 30, 2007; and
2. grant an exception to Board Rule 6Gx13- 3F-1.021.

The appropriation for this item will be included in the Other Federal Programs Fund (Contracted Programs Fund) of the 2006-2007 Tentative Budget to be recommended for adoption in August 2006.

AD/BB:las