

Mr. Renier Diaz de la Portilla, Board Member

**SUBJECT: SCIENCE EDUCATION REFORM**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY, & GOV'T RELATIONS**

**LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: INCREASE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ALL STUDENTS**

The ability for America and our community to compete globally has become dependent on the ability to develop a strong educated workforce that is literate in the field of science. The latest FCAT assessment that included the area of science for the first time assessed 27 schools in Miami-Dade Public Schools as F schools.

The ability for the community to achieve Miami-Dade County's "One Community One Goal Plan" of economic development in various scientific fields by gaining a competitive advantage as outlined in Harvard Economist Michael Porter's Competitive Advantage study of Miami highly depends upon a strong science educational foundation in our public schools. If Miami-Dade County is to develop into a world class community and economy, we need to develop a world-class science education.

In the August 1, 2007 School Board Meeting, a comprehensive science plan was brought forward that would lay the roadmap in developing strong science education, about which the board expressed concerns, both with the late hour in which the plan was given to the board as well as with the content of the plan. These concerns have continued to be unaddressed. In fact, the plan re-submitted by the administration is identical to the one submitted in the August board meeting. This item has been brought forward to focus the discussion on the following inadequacies of the plan:

1. The lack of Identification of a clear vision, and mission statement separate from the overview.
2. The absence of measurable goals. What are the goals of the Comprehensive science plan?
3. The lack of inclusion of various instructional models for first-time teachers to serve as a road map.
4. The need for independent evaluation of performance measurement of goals, and plan implementation
5. The inadequacy of the summer reading list and its relevance. Will students be quizzed on summer reading?
6. The poor timing of science field trips that could encroach upon FCAT prep. time

In my mind there is no more important issue facing our children both in the immediate challenge of improving the District's Science FCAT scores, and in the long-term challenge of preparing our children for long-term success.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**MR. RENIER DIAZ DE LA PORTILLA:** The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, directs the Superintendent to enter into discussions with the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida to reach a consensus regarding the comprehensive science plan.