

February 27, 2008

Antoinette Dunbar, Deputy Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction

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 JULY 1, 2008, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2009

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS ON DISTRICT INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

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 July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009. 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 contractual year, staff from the participating schools submit mid and end-year evaluation reports to the Best Buddies organization. These evaluations are compiled and forwarded to Division of Special Education staff to review in order to monitor the program's effectiveness. This contractual agreement has been in effect since 2005.

The following schools have committed to participate in the Best Buddies program that would be supported by this item during the 2008-2009 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. Contingent on availability of funding, additional middle schools may be added.

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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 contract on February 21, 2008, and recommended that an exception to the rule regarding bids or Request for Proposals be granted as Best Buddies International, Inc., has specific expertise in this field, as demonstrated by its recognized international programs. Best Buddies International, Inc., has the staff and experience to implement the program and provide training and support.

The program is evaluated by administrative and support staff from the Division of Special Education. The evaluation includes school site visits and review of Best Buddies records and reports.

The Vice President for Administration for Best Buddies International, Inc., is Ms. Jen Miller.

The appropriation for this item will be included in the Other Federal Programs Fund (Contracted Programs Fund) of the 2008-2009 Tentative Budget to be recommended for adoption on July 2008, under Fund 0420, Function 5200, Program 4568, 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 July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009; and
2. grant an exception to Board Rule 6Gx13- 3F-1.021 based on specific expertise.

The appropriation for this item will be included in the Other Federal Programs Fund (Contracted Programs Fund) of the 2008-2009 Tentative Budget to be recommended for adoption in July 2008.

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