

Dr. Marta Pérez, Board Member

**SUBJECT: CHIEF BOARD ADVISOR**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO DISTRICT**

**STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT;  
IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY OF DECISION-MAKING  
THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT**

At the September 13, 2001 Budget Hearing, then State Representative Carlos Lacasa addressed the board on Board Agenda Item G-3, the adoption of changes to the 2001-02 budget. The minutes of the meeting reflect that he recommended that the School Board “establish an independent small staff to report directly to the Board. This small staff would provide advice regarding resource allocations and program decisions, as well as verify and condense information provided by the Superintendent and staff.” Representative Lacasa “reminded the Board that it was the fourth largest school district in the country, and it was time to upgrade the way it administers Board activities”.

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman proposed an amendment to the item, to establish an “Office of Planning and Budgeting and that it be directed by a Chief Board Advisor”, with the necessary funding, which was approved unanimously. A line item of \$500,000 was added to the Board’s budget for this purpose. However, the money set aside for this purpose was later reallocated.

As the District confronts the current severe financial crisis, the Board now needs such a position more than ever. It is imperative that the Board members have access to accurate information promptly, especially information that impacts the ability to make sound decisions in the areas of budget, management and district liability. Having a Chief Board Advisor would reduce the amount of Superintendent’s staff time in retrieving and providing information to the Board. The Chief Board Advisor would have unfettered access to the District’s public records and could ensure the prompt and thorough dissemination of this information to the Board members. The Board members have been asked to reduce their budgets by ten percent, which would represent a cost savings of \$300,000. This savings cost fund could fund this position along with support staff, supplies, etc. At a minimum, the Chief Board Advisor should have thorough knowledge of budgeting and be well-versed in Florida Statutes that refer to public records and government in the sunshine.

This agenda item recommends the creation and establishment of an office and position of Chief Board Advisor to the School Board for the purposes of ensuring that the Board and its members have the necessary information to fulfill their respective duties as elected officials.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
DR. MARTA PÉREZ:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida contract a Chief Board Advisor to provide advice regarding resource allocation, verify and condense information provided by the Superintendent’s staff, and offer alternative solutions in order to assist Board Members in making well-informed decisions.