

Dr. Marta Pérez, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING HISPANIC
CONTRIBUTIONS WITHIN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE AND EXPAND CURRENT CURRICULUM**

Long before the United States was established, Hispanics were making their mark on this continent. Over several centuries, Hispanics have continued their contributions to our nation's social, political, economic, and cultural development. Millions of Hispanics have joined other immigrant groups to come to the United States in search of freedom of opportunity and economic prosperity. Their commitment to family and community, their strong work ethic, and their belief in the American dream have contributed much to both our American society and our South Florida community.

The positive impact of Hispanics on the development of our nation and community will undoubtedly strengthen as the Hispanic population of our nation continues to grow. Since 1990, the Hispanic population in the United States has increased by more than 50 percent. In Census 2000, of the 281.4 million United States' residents counted, 35.6 million were Hispanic. It is estimated that by the year 2050, 67 million people of Hispanic origin will be added to the nation's population, nearly doubling their share of the nation's population from 12.6 percent to 24.4 percent. Today, Hispanics are no longer merely concentrated on our borders and in our urban centers, but spread across the nation, especially in the West and South. The State of Florida is one of seven states with a population of 1.0 million or more Hispanics. Moreover, Hispanics continue to lead the immigration to this country. Florida is one of four states with the greatest variety of groups of Hispanic origin, including two-thirds of the nation's Cuban population. The largest immigrant populations from Central and South American also live in Miami.

The important role Hispanics have played in our nation's history, coupled with their growing influence in our nation today, necessitates that the contributions of Hispanics receive greater academic emphasis in the instructional program. The social, political, economic, and cultural contributions of Hispanics to the United States and to our community must be an integral part of the District's instructional program, not merely isolated topics to be studied during Hispanic Heritage Month.

Hispanic contributions should be integrated throughout the study of history, geography, political science, economics, literature, the arts, and sciences. Activities such as luncheons, assemblies, cultural fairs, dances, etc., often held during Hispanic Heritage Month, provide additional opportunities for students to develop an appreciation of Hispanic history and culture. However, these types of activities should not be the primary focus of the instructional program. Both Florida Statute 1003.42 and the District's *Student Progression Plan* support a more academic approach to the study of Hispanic contributions to the United States. Each year, staff in the Division of Social Sciences and Life Skills also develops instructional materials to support this effort.

Therefore, given the historic importance and influence of Hispanics in this country, the contributions of Hispanics to the United States should be an integral part of every child's academic instructional program throughout the entire school year. Schools and teachers should be encouraged to plan academically enriching and engaging instructional activities designed to integrate the study of Hispanic contributions throughout the curriculum.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to encourage all schools and teachers to plan academically enriching instructional activities on the contributions of Hispanics to the United States throughout the school year, including during Hispanic Heritage Month.