

Dr. Marta Pérez, Board Member

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT - MIAMI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

At the May 20, 2009 Board meeting I proffered and the Board approved Agenda Item H-25 requesting a status report on the construction/renovation at Miami Senior High School. At that meeting, the community expressed its frustrations with the numerous delays with this project and requested monthly updates be provided so that the public be kept apprised of the progress taking place. The Board agreed and consequently also voted in favor of my Agenda Item H-13 at the June 17, 2009 meeting that requested that updates be presented at every monthly School Board meeting until the project was completed.

For the next two months, a status report was presented to the Board, but under different agenda items to some extent related to Miami Senior High School, which were not clearly noticed to the public. Finally, at the September 9, 2009 meeting the first and clearly noticed status report on this project was presented by the Superintendent under Agenda Item F-10. For the next five months, the status report was consistently provided to the Board during our monthly Board meeting under F-10 and served us well to keep the public informed and more importantly, to keep our promise to the community of providing this information.

At last month's Board meeting, a Board Member moved to discontinue this recurring Superintendent's item without the courtesy of even asking the author of the item if he welcomed an amendment. The end result of this motion was that the monthly status report will now be provided to the Board at committee meetings instead of the monthly Board meetings. The public's perception of this unexpected amendment is that community input is neither sought nor valued. To make matters worse, many of my colleagues justified their votes by insisting that the public interested in addressing this matter could still speak during the public hearing or could attend committee meetings. The public was not fooled by these disingenuous explanations as many speakers that have come before the Board have negatively commented that there is scant discussion, not to mention diminished participation, from many of the Board Members during the public hearing and that there is no opportunity for the public to speak during the committee meetings.

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It is an insult to this community and to the constituencies we serve to (1) renege on our promise to provide this information at the monthly Board meeting until the project is completed; (2) trample over the public's right to democratically participate in the discussion of this tax-funded project by providing duplicitous excuses; and (3) violate previously established Board Rule. It is well known that in the past, when the previous Superintendent or the majority of the Board wanted to diminish public participation, this Board simply voted to discuss issues at committee meetings and then used all kinds of strong-arm tactics, such as limiting seating or sending the public to WLRN to view the meeting on a television, to limit community input. I hope this was not the intention with last month's vote because if this Board wants to improve credibility and public perception, we must keep our promises and not curtail public participation.

Therefore, I am once again bringing this item forward to correct the misguided vote taken during last month's meeting and in hopes of restoring the confidence the Miami Senior High community, as well as all other interested parties, have placed on this Board. This item proposes that the Superintendent's recurring F-10 Agenda Item, providing a construction/renovation status report on Miami Senior High School, be reinstated at the monthly Board meetings until the project is completed.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to reinstate at the monthly Board meetings the recurring F-10 Agenda Item, providing a construction/renovation status report on Miami Senior High School, until the project is completed.