Office of School Board Members
Board Meeting of November 24, 2010

November 3, 2010

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR INSTALLATION OF SOLAR SYSTEMS AT BOARD-OWNED SITES AS A MEANS OF REDUCING ENERGY COSTS AND IMPROVING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY**

COMMITTEE: **INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: **FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY/STABILITY**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (District) owns and operates approximately forty three million square feet of educational and ancillary space, in over 330 campuses and more than 3,100 buildings. As the fourth largest district in the nation, the District has taken the lead in the areas of financial and environmental sustainability, both of which are closely interrelated and when tightly integrated can yield significant benefits. District activities under the Superintendent's Eco-Awareness initiative, have included an Energy Reduction Incentive Program for all school sites in FY 09-10, which has produced positive kilowatt hour reductions, cost savings and a reduction to the District's overall carbon footprint. These results notwithstanding, as one of the largest property/building owners in the state, and certainly in the county, as well as a leader in the delivery of cutting edge public education, the District is uniquely positioned to explore other cost savings measures, particularly in the area of alternative energy applications.

One such area still largely unexplored in the District at this time is the use of solar technology and how, through possible public/private partnerships, it could be used to 'power' District schools and perhaps potentially generate additional energy 'capacity'; a small scale solar installation at Mandarin Lakes K-8, which is being used to partially power the energy needs of approximately five classrooms, is a successful microcosm of what is perhaps achievable on a more systemic basis.

Recent instances where these types of public/private partnerships have been approved and/or implemented by school districts with seemingly positive results include: 1) the San Diego Unified School District Board's approval of the construction and operation of 4.5 megawatts of distributed solar photovoltaic systems at 36 school district sites; 2) the recent completion of the first phase of a 1.8 megawatt solar photovoltaic system to power the Denver Public School District, with the first phase consisting of 16 schools; and 3) solar photovoltaic

installations in four of Arizona's public school districts, which collectively are expected to generate approximately 2.5 megawatts of capacity. In all three cases, these installations have been closely tied to science curriculum enhancements and have created additional professional development opportunities for teachers.

While there may be specific challenges locally that may not have been present in these other three states, specifically as it relates to implementation of public/private partnerships, opportunities for such should nevertheless still be researched, and then further pursued if found to be viable. It is in that spirit that I ask for my colleagues' support of this Agenda Item.

ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve this request for a feasibility study to be conducted by the District, focusing on opportunities for installation of solar systems at Board-owned sites, as a means of reducing energy costs and improving long-term sustainability, and report back to the Board as soon as practicable.