

Office of the School Board Members  
Board Meeting of December 15, 2010

December 9, 2010

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT:                    MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN**

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

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

Throughout the country, public school districts are entering an unprecedented era of competition created through the availability of expanded educational options to parents and consumers. Educational choice has created an entrepreneurial condition under which the role of marketing and public relations in driving greater community awareness of programmatic offerings, specialized educational opportunities, enriched curriculum and student achievement becomes more vital to maintaining and/or increasing student enrollment. Along with the sun-setting of Federal Stimulus funds, the 2011-12 State Budget is projected to offer decreased education funding and a less than adequate and inequitable base student allocation for Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). Student enrollment, in this financial climate, can make a significant impact on budgetary, personnel, and curricular decisions.

In 2010-11 alone, just over 44,000 students in Miami-Dade County opted out of the traditional public school offerings. This resulted in the loss of over \$146.3 Million to the District. As large urban districts in San Antonio, St. Louis, Detroit and Washington D.C. experience steep declining enrollment figures over the last several years, it is important to note M-DCPS has contained enrollment losses to under 13%. The fact that our losses reflect a smaller percentage of students seeking educational options than in other urban districts speaks to the efforts and dedication made by this board and our employees to offer diverse programs and opportunities to all students. However, the opportunity exists for a clear and proactive marketing strategy that seeks to promote M-DCPS as a viable, high-quality educational product and, as a direct outcome of this positioning, secures funding through student retention as we compete for dwindling funds.

Former Executive Director of the National School Public Relations Association, Dr. John Wherry has perhaps the best definition of school public relations: "Public relations is first doing a good job—and then making sure people know about it." Particularly over the past two years, M-DCPS has garnered national attention for its student achievement and consistently met accolades from its performance on nationally administered and ranked assessments, visual and performing arts productions, transparent and

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accountable business processes, streamlined systemic operations and successful endeavors in athletic arenas.

We are, by so many accounts, "doing a good job" and the time has come to ensure that people know about it. It is the intent of this item that direction be given to the Superintendent and the Office of Public Relations to provide the board with a review of current marketing efforts, and policy and bring forth detailed recommendations to the board that are guided by the notion that we are, as The MacKinac Center for Public Policy asserts, in an era of expanded educational freedom, where families must now be treated as customers with choices and not as captive audiences.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY VICE CHAIR**

**Dr. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida direct the Superintendent to provide the School Board with a review of current marketing efforts and policies and bring forth recommendations related to the creation of a marketing and public relations campaign and policy with the objective of:

1. Driving greater community awareness of Miami-Dade County Public Schools programs, offerings and student/school achievements; and
2. Increasing and/or maintaining student enrollment.

Review and recommendations to be brought to the Board before the first budget workshop, but no later than the March 2011 School Board Meeting.