

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

SUBJECT: HEAD START

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY, AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY/STABILITY

The benefits of early childhood education on child development are well-documented. The fragility of the young mind and body magnifies the importance of creating strong programs to foster healthy growth. Head Start is one such program and it provides services that are indicative of its name.

At present, the government of Miami-Dade County is the grantee and manager for the program within the county. The county has explored several options to divulge the program, one of which was to enlist M-DCPS as a delegate agency. A factor in seeking a partnership with the school district is that several M-DCPS facilities accommodate Head Start centers.

Staff has since recommended that the district not take on any responsibility to provide services through Head Start due to the prohibitive requirements of managing the program, district budgetary concerns, and 'stringent requirements regarding staff'. One of the issues was the absorption of Head Start staff employed by the county at present staffing levels.

Options outside of M-DCPS becoming a delegate of Head Start include expanding the number of private providers that are involved. Private agencies, while many are effective, do not maintain the same level of transparency or responsibility to the community as M-DCPS. The school district also has the advantage of continuity as children transition into elementary school.

Present fiscal conditions make program acquisitions less desirable; however, a new funding cycle for Head Start begins in 2012 – 2013. It is incumbent upon M-DCPS to review the feasibility of becoming the grantee of the program because of the importance of the wrap-around services provided by Head Start.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to review the feasibility of managing the Head Start program as grantee starting in 2012 – 2013, and providing a report of the findings to the School Board on or before the October 2011 School Board meeting.