

Jacqueline V. Pepper, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO DRAFT A REVISION TO BOARD RULE 6Gx13-7A-1.011, HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OF FACILITIES, TO REQUIRE PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DESIGN WORK ON ANY PROJECT INVOLVING RENOVATION, REMODELING, OR DEMOLITION OF ANY MDCPS BUILDING ON ANY MDCPS SITE THAT IS FIFTY YEARS OLD OR OLDER TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITIES INTEREST AND TO ALLOW MDCPS TO IDENTIFY AND BETTER UNDERSTAND THE ARCHITECTURAL, CULTURAL, OR HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SAID BUILDING IN THE EARLY PLANNING STAGES WHEN ALTERATIONS OR DEMOLITION IS BEING CONSIDERED

An original building of the Mays Middle School was demolished by MDCPS over the year 2000 Christmas break. This demolition took place after an engineering analysis determined that the planned restoration was not feasible due to structural problems. A replica will be built on the site. The original building was built in approximately 1935 but was not considered to be architecturally significant in the formal sense. However, the building was extraordinarily culturally significant to the local community. The building was the first school for African-Americans in south Dade County. The local African-American community built it with their own hands and generations of African-American students were taught in that building. Many of these former students are now leaders of their community and of Miami-Dade County. Some feel strongly that their concerns were not solicited by MDCPS before the District tore down one of their few landmarks in south Dade County.

As a public school system, MDCPS should be a good citizen in the community. MDCPS did not violate any laws by demolishing the building, but MDCPS upset and disappointed many in the black community for taking away part of its history. The Board has an existing rule on preservation of historic buildings, but the rule only applies to buildings listed on a register of historic buildings. In addition, the rule does not require public notification and input prior to renovation or demolition of historic buildings.

This item is intended to direct the Superintendent to revise the Board Rule **6Gx13-7A-1.011** to require that at the commencement of planning for renovation or demolition of an MDCPS building fifty or more years old, MDCPS publicly advertise in newspapers and hold a public meeting at the building site at a time conducive to public participation, and solicit public comment regarding the significance of the building to the local community. Further, to require a second advertisement and public meeting three months prior to scheduled demolition of the building.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

JACQUELINE V. PEPPER: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida direct the Superintendent to draft a revision to Board Rule 6Gx13-7A-1.011, Historical Preservation of Facilities, to require public notification and opportunity for public comment prior to commencement of design work on any project involving renovation, remodeling, or demolition of any MDCPS fifty years or older to allow for community input as to the architectural, cultural, or historic significance of the building to the community.