

June 14, 2001

Mrs. Manty Sabates Morse, Member

**SUBJECT: TO DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO INCLUDE AS PART OF OUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY PACKAGE FOR THE 2002 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUPPORT FOR LEGISLATION BEING PROPOSED BY SENATOR RUDY GARCIA AND REPRESENTATIVE MARIO DIAZ BALART ALLOWING SCHOOL BOARDS FROM ALL ACROSS OUR STATE THE OPPORTUNITY OF CREATING THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL.**

The Miami Dade County Public School System is the fourth largest in the nation. Employing more than 35,000 teachers, with a student population of more than 350,000 in more than 300 locations, and an annual budget of more than \$3.4 billion, M-DCPS is a major public institution functioning under the greatest scrutiny of any other public or private enterprise.

M-DCPS is regulated by internal as well as external organisms which assure the public that its dollars are spent wisely and efficiently. There are existing safeguards, internally through its independent Audit Committee made up of private citizens in the accounting profession who as volunteers contribute countless hours examining our finances and offering professional advice at no cost to the taxpayers; and externally through statewide mechanisms such as the Florida School Board Association and OPAGA who conduct research auditing our practices and procedures and who offer recommendations as to which of the above need to be kept, upgraded, and which need to be discontinued.

As effective and efficient as these safeguards have proven over the years, our system as large as it is, should have the option of establishing the office of inspector general. Currently, the sixty seven county school boards in Florida do not have that option. Most federal and state agencies have inspector generals who not only complement existing auditing mechanisms, identify waste and inefficiency, but also forecast areas where problems could arise in the future. The Inspector General would be reporting directly to the Board much in the same manner as the Superintendent and Board Attorney.

State legislation is required to allow the state's school boards the option of establishing their own independent office of inspector general. I believe that whether one is in favor of an inspector general or opposed, that the local school boards be the judge of whether one is warranted.

State Senator Rudy Garcia and State Representative Mario Diaz-Balart have agreed to sponsor legislation allowing local school boards the opportunity of deciding for themselves whether creating the office of inspector general is in their best interest.

As the creation of the office of inspector general has become and will continue to be an important item of discussion for our Board, I feel that support of the above-mentioned legislation should be included in our Legislative Priority Package for the 2002 Legislative Session.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**MRS. SABATES MORSE:** That the School Superintendent include in our Legislative Priority Package for the 2002 Legislative Session support of proposed legislation by State Senator Rudy Garcia and State Representative Mario Diaz-Balart allowing local school boards the option of establishing an office of Inspector General reporting to the Board in the same manner as the Superintendent and the Board Attorney.