

Dr. Robert B. Ingram, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO DETERMINE THE STRATEGY FOR COLLABORATING WITH THE FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA TOWARDS ESTABLISHING SISTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS AND STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH SCHOOLS IN AFRICA

As Miami-Dade County Public Schools moves into the twenty-first century, there is a growing need to help students develop an appreciation for people and cultures from around the world. In addition, students must develop the skills needed to compete in an increasingly complex and interdependent global economy. Furthermore, considering the historical ties that bind the America's with the African continent, and Miami-Dade County serving as "Africa's Gateway to the Hemisphere," we must explore new and exciting ways to expose students to the social, cultural, and economic diversity of the nations of Africa.

As the United States progresses in establishing ties with African nations, I believe now is the time for the District to take a leadership role in facilitating the establishment of sister school partnerships with African schools, and ultimately, the development of a student exchange program between Miami-Dade County Public Schools and schools in Africa. To this end, I am requesting that District staff determine the feasibility of collaborating with the Foundation for Democracy in Africa in an effort to develop such programs. Sister school partnerships and exchange programs would not only expose our students to the cultural dynamism of the African continent, but also allow students from Africa to develop a deeper appreciation of American democracy and society.

The Foundation for Democracy in Africa, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed in 1994 with the sole mission "to help integrate the African countries into the mainstream of the global economy." The Foundation for Democracy provides training and technical support for new generations of African leaders who embrace democratic values and free market concepts. In 1996, the Foundation was granted consultation status as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Foundation has chapters in African nations and the United States. The President of the South Florida Chapter is Mr. Anthony Okonmah.

The Foundation for Democracy has also formed the Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDA) as a "think tank." The IDA is seated in the Department of Continuing Education at St. Thomas University, Miami, Florida. Efforts are also underway with Nova Southeastern University to provide training in business, information sciences, international trade and politics. It is through the work of the Institute for Democracy in Africa that the sister school partnerships and student exchange programs will be explored.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. ROBERT B. INGRAM:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to determine the strategy for collaborating with the Foundation for Democracy in Africa towards establishing sister school partnerships and student exchange programs with schools in Africa.