

Office of School Board Attorney
Johnny Brown, Board Attorney

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE THE LAW FIRM REPRESENTING THE BOARD WITH REFERENCE TO LEGAL MATTERS BEFORE THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL SERVICES, MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

The administrative staff of WLRN Public Television and Radio would like to engage new legal counsel with a local office to represent the station and School Board in its media properties (WLRN-TV Channel 17, WLRN-DT Channel 20, WLRN-FM 91.3, 16 ITFS Channels) in all legal matters before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The current firm representing the Board, Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP, located in Washington, D.C., has been representing the station for several years, but does not have a local office to provide the direct services staff believes are needed in the changing South Florida telecommunications market.

Qualifications were requested of three local firms that specialize in broadcasting issues with complete knowledge of FCC regulatory matters. The law firm of Leibowitz and Associates, P.A., a Miami-based law firm with extensive experience in communications law was selected and is being recommended to the Board for approval. The fees for their legal services have been structured as follows:

Matthew L. Leibowitz	\$425/hr.	Sr. Paralegal	125/hr.
Joseph A. Belisle	325/hr.	Paralegal	85/hr.
Ila L. Feld	300/hr.		
Nicki J. Fernandez	150/hr.		

The cost of these services is estimated at \$50,000 per year.

The appropriations for these services are included in the 2002-03 General Fund Budget under Fund 0100, Object 5390, Location 9606, Program 7010, Function 6240.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida contract with the law firm of Leibowitz and Associates, P.A. to represent the Board in all legal matters before the Federal Communications Commission, as follows:

The Board will pay Leibowitz and Associates, P.A., \$425 per hour for work done by Mr. Leibowitz, rates of \$325, \$300, and \$150 per hour for associates Belisle, Feld and Fernandez, respectively, and \$85 and \$125 per hour for paralegal and senior paralegal work, respectively, not to exceed a total of \$50,000 without additional approval by the Board.