

Office of School Board Members
Board Meeting of December 11, 2002

December 10, 2002

Dr. Robert B. Ingram, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO AMEND THE BUDGET TO SALVAGE THE PARAPROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

At its November 20, 2002 meeting, the School Board postponed discussion of this item to allow staff to research potential funding alternatives that would salvage the paraprofessional program. As we grow closer to the end of the first semester, it is imperative that the Board discuss this issue.

The 2002-03 Adopted Budget included phasing out paraprofessionals in elementary schools previously in the In-School Alternative Education Program and K-1 Systems Management Program.

Positions were budgeted for the first semester only. A freeze was initiated on filling all paraprofessional positions with outside or persons transferring from part-time positions. Efforts have been made to transfer incumbents from program 8948 to open positions in Title I and Exceptional Student Education. Positions are eliminated as they become open. In addition, positions were not permitted to be converted to hourly funds.

As of December 6, 2002, 280 full-time paraprofessionals positions are being funded through Program 8948. It is estimated that the costs of salvaging the remaining paraprofessionals is \$3,818,315 through the end of Fiscal Year 2002-03. Funding the program from Contingency would result in a Contingency balance of \$16,181,685.

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

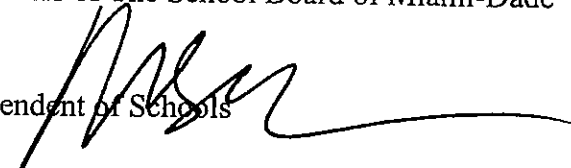
That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, conduct a discussion on the possibility of salvaging the paraprofessional program.

**REPLACEMENT
D-3**

MEMORANDUM

December 10, 2002

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

FROM: Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION - AGENDA ITEM D-3 - SCHOOL BOARD MEETING OF DECEMBER 11, 2002: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO AMEND THE BUDGET TO SALVAGE THE PARAPROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

I appreciate Vice Chair, Dr. Robert B. Ingram's willingness to defer a decision on the status of paraprofessionals for the second semester in 2003 to allow my staff and I time to examine all available options.

The Board will recall that paraprofessionals were budgeted only through the end of the first semester but not for the second semester. Due to the hiring freeze, the number of paraprofessionals in Program 8948 that would have been terminated at the end of the first semester has decreased from 423 to 280 as of November 27, 2002. This was accomplished by moving many paraprofessionals from Program 8948 positions to other open positions or by school principals purchasing them for the second semester. On November 27, 2002, the District had 113 unfilled paraprofessional positions. After a survey of all principals, it was determined that 82.5 existing paraprofessionals could not be funded by the school site. In order that no paraprofessional be laid off for the remainder of the school year including the second semester, the following actions are recommended:

1. The 82.5 paraprofessionals who cannot be funded by specific school sites will be placed in open paraprofessional positions to insure that no paraprofessional will become unemployed during the second semester.
2. The hiring freeze for all paraprofessionals be extended indefinitely or until all affected paraprofessionals are placed in permanent positions.
3. The approval of these recommendations will not only avoid lay offs of paraprofessionals but will also reduce the financial impact on our already depleted contingency reserves. This will also allow both the Board and staff time to review the paraprofessional issue during our 2003-04 budget deliberations when we will have better financial projections from the forthcoming State Legislative Session.

Supplemental Information – Agenda Item D-3
School Board Meeting of December 11, 2002
Page 2

I am attaching a memorandum from Dr. George M. Koonce, Jr., on this subject which was prepared after collaboration with Region Superintendents.

MRS/pf
M1358

Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Executive Staff
School Board Attorney

MEMORANDUM

December 9, 2002

TO: Mr. Merrett R. Stierheim, Superintendent of Schools

FROM: George M. Koonce, Jr., Associate Superintendent
School Operations

SUBJECT: PLAN FOR PLACING PROGRAM 8948 PARAPROFESSIONALS

As per your request, the following draft plan for placing Program 8948 paraprofessionals into alternate positions is submitted for your review:

- 82.5 Program 8948 paraprofessionals cannot be funded by schools.
- 113 open paraprofessional positions appear to exist as of November 27, 2002.
- Program 8948 paraprofessionals should be eliminated from budget as of second semester.
- Hiring freeze for all paraprofessionals through December 31, 2003, or until all paraprofessionals are placed in a full time position.
- Unfunded paraprofessionals will be placed into open paraprofessional positions in the district.
- The district will continue to fund these positions until unfunded paraprofessionals are placed during the second semester.
- 165 school-funded paraprofessionals will be placed into open paraprofessional positions as they become available during the second semester.
- Remaining school-funded paraprofessionals will be placed into open positions for the 2003-2004 school year.

George M. Koonce, Jr. (GK) GMK

GMK/lou
M402
Attachment

cc: Region Superintendents