

Education
Mercedes Toural, Associate Superintendent

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF A CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY MATER ACADEMY, INC. ON BEHALF OF MATER GARDENS ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL WITH RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL AND AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT TO NEGOTIATE A CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT FOR A TEN-YEAR TERM

COMMITTEE: ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

As established in School Board Rule 6Gx13- 6A-1.47, Charter Schools (K-12), Miami-Dade County Public Schools received charter school applications from individuals and/or organizations from the community.

On November 8, 2002, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Charter School District Review Committee met to review the application for Mater Gardens Academy Middle School and, by a majority vote, made a recommendation to approve the application to the Superintendent of Schools.

Mater Gardens Academy Middle School proposes to serve a maximum of 450 students enrolled in grades six through eight, commencing in its first year of operation, at a location in the Hialeah Gardens area. The governing board will operate the school through a management agreement with Academica Corporation, Fernando J. Zulueta, President.

On April 23, 2002, the State Board of Education reviewed requests from several approved charter school applicants and granted waivers for 17 additional schools, thus increasing the cap to 45 for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Notwithstanding any such limit, a charter school applicant shall have the right to request an increase of the limit on the number of charter schools authorized to be established with the district from the State Board of Education.

Criteria for Miami-Dade County Public Schools requesting a waiver for applications that exceed the cap shall be for those charter schools that specifically address how they will:

1. Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are identified as academically low achieving.
2. Improve student learning through the use of different and innovative instructional approaches.

3. Expand the capacity of the public school system by establishing charter schools in areas which the District has determined to be overcrowded and at sites which have been mutually agreed upon by both the applicant and the District.

Any pending issues identified by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Charter School District Review Committee in the recommended application, including minimizing the impact on District schools that are underenrolled, will be addressed satisfactorily in the development of the charter school contractual agreement. Final implementation of the charter school will be predicated on the successful and timely completion of the charter school contractual agreement and subsequent approval by the School Board.

The following is the Founding Board for Mater Gardens Academy Middle School: Ruth Jacoby, Educator; Rolando Llanes, Architect; Alejandro Remos, General Contractor; and Henri Pferdmenges, Banker.

Copies of the charter school application will be placed on file and will be available for inspection in the School Board Members' office, in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, and in the Citizen Information Center.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. approve the application submitted by Mater Academy, Inc. on behalf of Mater Gardens Academy Middle School; and
2. authorize the Superintendent to negotiate with the approved applicant a ten-year charter school contractual agreement, commencing with the 2003-2004 school year, which reflects the contents of the application, as approved by the School Board. Any pending issues identified by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Charter School District Review Committee in the recommended application, including minimizing the impact on District schools that are underenrolled, will be addressed satisfactorily in the development of the charter school contractual agreement. This charter school contractual agreement will be submitted for School Board consideration at a subsequent meeting at which time there will be a public hearing to provide for community input.

MB:dcr