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**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL (FLVS) TO FRANCHISE ONLINE COURSES AND CONDUCT A PILOT PROGRAM**

**COMMITTEE: BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is a state-funded online high school that offers 65 courses for middle and senior high school students. Enrollment surpassed 8,200 students statewide in 2001-2002. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has been an affiliate member of FLVS since 1998. With the increasing popularity of FLVS, not all M-DCPS students who register for a course are able to enroll. For example, during the span of 36 hours on April 17 and 18, 2002, 10,000 students statewide attempted to register for the FLVS summer program, which was capable of accepting only 2,500. This situation will be further exacerbated with the limited offerings in the district's summer school program.

For this reason, staff is recommending that the district pilot the online delivery of two courses for the 2003-2004 school year. FLVS offers school districts the ability to franchise courses. Franchising costs cover the learning management system for teachers and 180 students; hosting, set-up, training and support of the system for teachers and district staff; and help desk services. However, there is no cost for the course content since it was developed with funds appropriated by the state legislature. The total cost for the contract with FLVS to franchise courses from May 15, 2003 to June 30, 2004 will not exceed \$30,000.

Life Management Skills and Personal Fitness are the two courses that will be offered in the pilot program and are part of the high school graduation requirement. They were selected because of the number of students who register for them on a regular basis but are unable to enroll through FLVS due to enrollment caps. The pilot program will include two teachers, hired as half-time summer school employees, each instructing thirty students. The two courses will be offered again in August 2003 and January 2004 with the same number of students in each session. The teachers will be compensated during the 2003-2004 school year, receiving a sixth-period supplement.

Pending the success of the pilot program, the district will increase the number of offerings for Life Management Skills and Personal Fitness as well as increase the number of courses offered. Based on statewide data on the popularity of courses, additional course offerings may include, but are not limited to, American Government and Economics.

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In addition to franchising, additional costs to the district include the hiring of two half-time teachers for summer school, funded through the summer school budget, and the costs of funding two sixth-period supplements for the 2003-2004 school year. Hardware and connectivity costs for teachers, laptops for check-out by students and travel expenses to training sites will not exceed \$15,000.

The Professional Services Contract Committee established by School Board Rule 6Gx-13- 3F-1.021 reviewed this contractual agreement on March 13, 2003, and recommended that an exception to the rule regarding bids or Request for Proposals be granted as the contractor has a sole source status.

The appropriations for the contract with FLVS for travel, personnel and other expenses related to the implementation of the pilot program are included in the General Fund of the 2002-2003 Adopted Budget under Fund 0100, Function 6200, Program 8600, Object 5390, Location 9629 and will be included in the General Fund of the 2003-2004 Tentative Budget to be recommended for adoption in July 2003.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

1. enter into a contractual agreement with the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) to franchise two online courses from May 15, 2003 to June 30, 2004 not to exceed \$30,000;
2. hire two teachers half-time for the summer 2003 session;
3. hire two teachers to teach online classes for the 2003-2004 school year, receiving sixth period supplements;
4. expand the number of courses offered based on the success of the pilot;
5. amend the contract with FLVS to reflect the additional courses and contract period;
6. amend the district's 2003 Legislative Program to include the provision to generate FTE funding for online course offerings; and
7. grant an exception to School Board Rule 6Gx-13- 3F-1.021.

The appropriations for this item are included in the General Fund of the 2002-2003 Adopted Budget and will be included in the General Fund of the 2003-2004 Tentative Budget to be recommended for adoption in July 2003.

MV/CM:hf