

July 3, 2003

Agustin J. Barrera, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ISSUE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF \$50,000 IN ORDER TO ENGAGE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRM BY AUGUST 29, 2003 TO IDENTIFY AND SCREEN POTENTIAL NATIONAL CANDIDATES FOR THE POSITION OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS BY DECEMBER 1, 2003

COMMITTEE: BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES]

Revised

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida named former county manager Merrett R. Stierheim as interim Superintendent of Schools on October 17, 2001. Superintendent Stierheim, with over 30 years of managerial experience, was selected from among 22 candidates. Superintendent Stierheim set out to address immediate and critical issues such as the system's budget, inefficiencies in construction and business operations, and classroom overcrowding. Equally significant, Superintendent Stierheim has sought to initiate positive changes in the system and to restore community confidence in the school district while the School Board conducts a national search for a permanent superintendent.

Superintendent Stierheim has taken important steps towards achieving these goals and his leadership has earned the respect of the School Board and the public. Nonetheless, the School Board has yet to follow through on its commitment to the community, made over twenty months ago, to conduct a national search for the position of permanent Superintendent of Schools. The reform agenda embraced by this School Board is not one that can be completed in one or two years. In order to effect lasting reforms, the time has come for the School Board to fulfill its commitment to long-term leadership for the nation's fourth-largest school district, regardless of whether its choice is Superintendent Stierheim or another candidate.

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Early and deliberate planning is critical for a task of this magnitude, and accordingly the School Board should immediately authorize a national search for the position of Superintendent of Schools. The first step in this process is to issue a request for proposals leading to the hiring of a professional services firm, in order to conduct a search for potential candidates from across the nation.

Completion of this search by December 1, 2003 will enable the School Board to engage in meaningful discussions regarding future leadership of the administration that is in the best long-term interests of the students, teachers and parents in this district.

The search process will be overseen by a committee of nine (9) individuals appointed by Board members. The committee should include community leaders such as: Presidents of local Universities and Community Colleges, PTSA/PTAs, State Legislators, Mayors, and members of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. The committee will select a National Search Firm through an RFP process, interview and evaluate the candidates and recommend to the Board no less than three finalists for their consideration.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
AGUSTIN J. BARRERA:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to issue a request for proposals for a maximum amount of \$50,000 in order to engage a professional services firm by August 29, 2003 to identify and screen potential national candidates for the position of Superintendent of Schools by December 1, 2003.