

Dr. Marta Pérez, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, SUPPORT THE RESEARCH DRIVEN POLICIES SET FORTH BY THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The urgency to reform American high schools has been at the forefront of public educational discussions in recent years. For years, business and education leaders have known that our high schools were failing to produce a comprehensively educated workforce that could compete in the world market.

In January, 2005 President George Bush offered a bold plan to address the need to reform high schools throughout the United States. School districts, including Miami-Dade County, have begun to participate in the High School Reform efforts.

The largest foundation for philanthropy, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has acknowledged the urgency to address the inadequacies of how our high schools are structured. In a keynote address this past year, Mr. Gates declared our high schools “obsolete” even when they achieve their stated missions.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as other institutions, has hired researchers and educators to explore what can be done to improve American high schools. Many in the field of education have lauded the efforts of the Gates Foundation and have strongly supported their findings and policies.

Four of the educational reforms proposed by the Foundation are:

1. smaller high schools that allows students and staff a more personalized experience. Most researchers find that the best size for high schools is between 300-600 students.
2. more choice, charter and competition for schools to increase accountability of outcomes.
3. management and labor organizations working collectively to maximize our educational goals.
4. working with institutes of higher education to update the development of a marketable workforce.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTA PÉREZ:**

1. That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, support the research driven policies set forth by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and
2. Direct the Superintendent to provide a report to the School Board by the March 15th, 2006 Board Meeting outlining how these policies have been applied to the Secondary School Reform.