

Dr. Martin Karp, Vice-Chair

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DIRECTS THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ENSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN APPROPRIATE K-5 READING SERIES THAT ADDRESSES THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF GIFTED STUDENTS }

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COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN: INCREASE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ALL STUDENTS

The following citation appears in the District's February 2006 Research Capsule titled Gifted Education: Equity, Assessment, and Curriculum: Developing a sufficiently rigorous curriculum for gifted students is a challenging task. A uniform curriculum delivery option will probably not meet the needs of all gifted students. It is difficult to make generalizations about gifted students because their characteristics and needs are unique; however, as a group, they comprehend complex ideas quickly, learn more rapidly and in greater depth than their peers, and make connections between seemingly unrelated concepts (Center for Talent Development, 2002; Berger, 1991).

The reading series Houghton Mifflin was adopted as a single text core adoption for the 2005-2006 school year for grades K-5. In each high school, in any particular subject, at every grade level, there are typically three different textbook series for Advanced Placement, Honors and Gifted, and Regular and ESE classes. At the elementary level, however, only one reading series is fully implemented for Gifted, Regular and ESE classes.

In January 2007, the Office of Program Evaluation released the report Evaluation of the Gifted Program. A number of pages at the end of the report included unsolicited comments regarding the Houghton Mifflin basal reading series yet these comments were not incorporated into the recommendations. Some of the teachers who commented on the reading series had serious concerns regarding the use of the basal series for gifted students describing the series as "not challenging," "extremely limiting," and "not appropriate." Additional interviews conducted with teachers after the release of the Evaluation of the Gifted Program reveal similar concerns about the basal reading series for gifted students. Comments included "vocabulary not challenging," "too easy reading," "very simple words," and "not challenging for gifted students."

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Since 2004, Curriculum and Instruction through Division of Advanced Academic Programs has purchased the Junior Great Books (JGB) reading series for all elementary Fulltime and Language Arts/Social Studies content models to provide acceleration and enrichment in Reading/Language Arts instruction. The purpose of the JGB program is to instill in students the habits of mind that characterize a self-reliant thinker, reader, and learner. The JGB reading series develops essential literacy skills using the Shared Inquiry approach. Shared inquiry is a distinctive method of learning in which participants search for answers to fundamental questions raised by the text.

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The collaboration between Curriculum and Instruction, School Operations, and Professional Development is essential in ensuring that teachers of the gifted utilize and implement the JGB reading series consistently and with fidelity to make certain that gifted students are taught at a pace, depth, and complexity appropriate to meet their instructional needs.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN KARP:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, directs the Superintendent to ensure the implementation of an appropriate K-5 reading series that addresses the special needs of gifted students.

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