

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice-Chair

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY OF DECISION-MAKING THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

In any organization, the stability of its leadership is directly linked to the morale and productivity of its employees; therefore, the orderly succession of a chief executive officer is critical to the stability of an organization. Other public and private entities routinely implement programs of planned succession at the top tiers of management and pre-select the successor to their chief executive in order to ensure a smooth transition. Such succession plans provide for stability and a sense of certainty within an organization. This is especially important for an organization that provides essential public programs and services like M-DCPS, particularly when it is being challenged by major internal and external issues that require strong uninterrupted executive leadership.

It is my belief however, that the circumstances and financial challenges that currently face this school system are serious and require the Board to act with all deliberate speed to stabilize the District's executive management. Such action is required now in order to provide for the stability of the District and to facilitate the transition of leadership at a time when M-DCPS can ill afford any period of indecision. I believe that providing for the succession of the Superintendent, without delay, will have the effect of providing a stabilizing influence and will serve to ease some of the tensions that always exist when there is uncertainty. It is my intent with this item to ensure an executive management leadership transition that will protect the best interests of our students, employees and community.

If the Board agrees with this policy goal, it would be my intent to place a name in nomination for the position of successor to the Superintendent immediately. Obviously other names could also be placed into nomination by other Members and the majority of the Board would be the ultimate determiner of the individual selected to fill the role of successor to the Superintendent.

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This unprecedented action is essential at this particular time, because of the unique circumstances which may threaten the District's very financial viability. I believe this action will secure the operations of the nation's fourth largest school district and the one that we, as the School Board, have a moral and Constitutional responsibility to protect.

The stability of the executive leadership of Miami-Dade County Public Schools is in question with the separation of the current Superintendent from the Board's employ. The deadline to submit a balanced budget to Tallahassee is upon us. Further exacerbating the precarious condition of the school system's administration is the preponderance of executive positions filled on a temporary basis.

Currently the District has an Acting School Board Attorney, an Interim Deputy Superintendent of School Operations who was appointed on Thursday, September 4, 2008; an Interim Chief of Police; and an Interim Region Superintendent for the South Central Region. These positions are critical to the efficient operations of a District the size of Miami-Dade. While each of the individuals serving in these interim positions is a seasoned professional, we must recognize that, in the face of financial uncertainty, there must be a permanent sitting Superintendent in place who enjoys the full weight and support of the Board in order to ensure that the District's assets are protected, essential operations are maintained, a financial recovery plan is developed and the functions of teaching and learning in the classroom are shielded from the impacts of additional anticipated funding cuts. To move forward under these circumstances with any uncertainty about the future of the Superintendent would be irresponsible.

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Action proposed by

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. receive a succession plan for the executive management leadership of Miami-Dade County Public Schools;
2. place immediately into nomination the name or names of a successor Superintendent and select by a majority vote of the Board the successor Superintendent; and
3. authorize the Chairperson of the School Board and the Special Counsel to negotiate the terms of a contract with the successor Superintendent, subject to the approval of the School Board.

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