

Office of the School Board Members
Board Meeting of October 14, 2009

October 13, 2009

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

SUBJECT: SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER ALLOCATION

COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY

LINK TO

STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE SAFETY AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The School Board of Miami-Dade County established its own police force in 1957 to minimize potential variations in Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to our 350+ schools from the various police departments and municipalities that encompass Miami-Dade County Public Schools. In the School Board's decision to initiate and support their police force, chief in their concerns was the desire to standardize the way students are treated, which differs in methodology, use of force, operational standards, and overall policing philosophy from department to department.

Consequently, while our School Police force is certified along side other police and federal agencies engaged in law enforcement, and only one of three in the State of Florida, our officers are additionally trained to work with children and young adults. Their tasks are to engage in conversation, build trust, develop rapport, and maintain a high level of visibility within the school and community. Often our officers are involved in PTSA activities, school functions, and traffic enforcement at school sites during the drop off and pick up times. At night, our officers patrol our 350+ schools and ancillary buildings to (1) respond to break-in alarms, (2) take appropriate actions if warranted, (3) ensure that our schools are immediately dealt with following any incident of intrusion or vandalism, (4) protect property from vandalism and theft.

This item speaks to the apparent need to not only assist in the realignment of the upcoming reorganization of the School Police Department, but just as important, the necessity of minimally providing a school resource office (SRO) at every traditional middle and senior high school. Moreover, this item speaks to the need to maintain the ancillary patrols currently protecting our schools in the evenings and during the weekends.

Furthermore, the possibility of hiring reserve police officers, much like the Florida Highway Patrol practice, at a minimal cost to the district, should be investigated. The utilization of these officers would guarantee that when School Board officers attend court appearances or other events during the school day, a certified, retired reserve officer, would be available for that school.

**Replacement
H-15**

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. Conduct a feasibility study and report to the board the findings, including:
 - a. The fiscal and operational ramifications, if any, associated with a reorganization of existing school board police to ensure that each high school and middle school is staffed with a resource officer during school hours.
 - b. A proposal outlining various staffing scenarios in which current night and weekend ancillary patrol services are not compromised, but ensure a school resource officer at each high and middle school during school hours.
 - c. The possible costs associated with utilizing reserve officers to provide coverage for school resource officer absences related to court appearances, events, etc.