

Financial Services
Richard H. Hinds, Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES IN TRAVEL PURCHASES

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY/STABILITY

At the School Board meeting of April 13, 2011, the School Board approved Agenda Item H-10, proffered by School Board Chair, Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman. Agenda Item H-10 directed the Superintendent to review and evaluate best practices in travel purchases and submit a report at the June 15, 2011 school board meeting. Staff requested information from The Council of the Great City Schools as well as other Florida school districts. Of the districts that responded, the use of a Purchasing Card issued to a selected group of individuals is the prevalent method utilized for travel purchases. Miami-Dade currently utilizes one credit card issued by Bank of America to purchase airline tickets through Business Travel Advisors. A review of the District's policy, contracts/agreements currently in place pertaining to out-of-county travel was conducted and provides the following information:

As a component of the Banking RFP that was approved by the School Board at the May 11, 2011 meeting, the Board selected JP Morgan Chase Bank to provide certain financial services that include the District's Purchasing Card. In addition to the Purchasing Card, this bank will issue a specific card that the District will utilize to pay for airline tickets purchased through our current vendor Business Travel Advisors, Inc., (BTA). The new card will benefit from the negotiated rebate of 1.65%. It is anticipated that the transition to the new bank will be in the fall of 2011.

The District currently contracts with Business Travel Advisors, Inc., (BTA), to provide out-of-county travel agency services to the Board. In an effort to generate additional revenues for the District, the contract included a provision for BTA through its Leisure Travel Solution website (Travel Leaders), to allow complete travel services to Miami-Dade County Public School's employees and their dependents. In this arrangement, BTA will share 10 percent of all commissions earned via the utilization of the Leisure Travel solution website. In order to increase District's awareness of travel deals, ITS developed a link to BTA's website on the District's Employee Portal. This contract does not preclude the employees from utilizing any other travel agency resources.

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Additionally, the District's Travel Policies & Procedures Manual delineates the procedures to follow when lower cost travel arrangements can be found and made from another source, such as the Internet. Employees are encouraged to diligently look for the most economical rates.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, receive and file the Follow-up Review of Best Practices in Travel Purchases.