

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

**SUBJECT: INTERVENE SCHOOLS**

**COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The philosophy that "it takes a village to raise a child" must serve as the foundation for any efforts for educational improvement. The involvement of communities in schools creates a 'buy-in' for citizens who do not have a direct connection to schools and indicates to students that the community is interested in their success. This applies doubly for schools categorized as intervene schools by the Florida Department of Education.

The possible closure of Miami Central and Miami Edison Senior High Schools due to their inability to meet prescribed goals as intervene schools incited a broad cross-section of community members to unite in support of keeping the schools open. They are owed our commendation for their efforts. It is important that we take advantage of the momentum created by the attention given to this issue.

Many community members lamented that they only became aware of the status of the schools because of the imminence of their closure, and they received much of that information through media outlets. The district has a responsibility to keep the community informed about educational developments. We are in the business of education and at that mission should apply to educating stakeholders as well as students. Sustained community involvement will help avoid a disquieting situation that we can avert through public input.

The School Board and community are greatly disadvantaged when we are reactive to decisions made outside of the school district. Broader review and monitoring, and regular reporting of school progress to the Board and community will foster a proactive environment and thereby create a hedge against exigencies. Reporting school progress at School Board meetings is a very effective way of keeping stakeholders informed.

Each school has an EESAC and the stipulations of the approved appeals require increased monitoring, but we must also elicit the participation of any person or group that is willing to invest in our students due to the critical status of intervene schools. The establishment of the School Improvement Stakeholder Alliance will be a boon to that effort. The alliance will operate as a task force to create a facility to promote increased involvement and distribution of information.

However, the alliance is not envisioned to have the power to recommend or make changes to operations. The optimal role of the alliance is to monitor progress, report to the community, and identify resources to supplement areas of deficiency, as indicated by data. Intervene status is similar to 'Educational Intensive Care' and heightened vigilance is necessary for sustained improvement.

The alliance can also assist with the organization of regularly scheduled workshops and meetings to inform the community about the interpretation of data related to school progress, give a deeper overview of the FCAT and school grades, and provide updates on school progress. Ideal membership of the alliance will include parents, members of the business and faith-based community, retired educators, alumni, state and local elected official appointees, and school board member appointees.

A part of the approval of the appeal is the development of a School Improvement Plan (SIP) to address deficiencies and identify the planned goals and strategies to improve performance. The SIP is a one-year plan; however, research from the Mass Insight's Turnaround Challenge on school improvement, turnaround, and transformation clearly indicates that successful and sustainable efforts usually take between three and five years. To that end, the district should review how we develop improvement strategies for intervene schools to ensure that they are sustainable instead of being in response to outside stimuli or meeting requirements.

The school district is very interested in the long-term health and well-being of our students. Our planning should indicate the same. Moreover, the SIP or any plan related to school improvement should be translated into a "user-friendly" format that is easy to read and understood by the public.

There is a good cause for this item due to the completion of the SIP prior to the start of the new school year. The August 3 meeting of the School Board is the last regular meeting prior to the start of the school year and implementation of the SIP, also.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to do the following, as it relates to each intervene school:

1. develop a 3-year improvement plan to reflect model medium-term performance goals.
2. establish a School Improvement Stakeholder Alliance.
3. provide monthly reports on the progress of improvement plans at School Board meetings.