

Office of School Board Members  
Board Meeting of August 3, 2011

August 3, 2011

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.

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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 more participation from the community to increase the probability of success in reaching goals. To achieve that objective the role and activity of the ETO Task Force should be reviewed and recommendations made based thereon. Specifically, the mechanisms for communication and problem solving need to be assessed so that we ensure proliferation of the ETO's efforts.

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The expected result of the communications assessment is a plan of action that will increase the task force's visibility and the community's awareness of their role in the school improvement process. We also need to review the task force's 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. Task force meetings need to be publicized to ensure greater participation. The three-year goals required of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) need to be shared in a "user-friendly" design and discussed at regular intervals.

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**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. Format the SIG three-year plan into a 'user-friendly' design and inform stakeholders of said plan.
2. Expand the awareness of the task force meetings to increase more community and parent participation.
3. Provide monthly reports on the progress of improvement plans at School Board meetings.

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