

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair

**SUBJECT: ALIGNMENT OF DISTRICT ETHICS FUNCTIONS**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: SCHOOL/DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

At the meeting of September 5, 2012, the School Board approved Agenda Item H-2 authorizing the Chair and the Superintendent to develop a plan which aligns the ethics and accountability functions of the District to provide transparency, ease of public reporting, and the coordination of ethics training, advice, and oversight. The result of this collaboration has been the development of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Internal Integrity Program.

The development of this plan has been approached in two phases, which when complete will result in a robust, yet manageable, ethics program that will provide for ease of access to the public, a better informed workforce, and additional opportunities for outside independent ethics reviews. Phase I of the Internal Integrity Program includes the alignment and coordination of existing offices and functions. Phase II will include developing a partnership with an external entity which would be available to review investigations, render recommended opinions, and/or provide access to training for employees and others.

Currently, the District has no fewer than nine entities responsible for reviewing, investigating, and rendering recommendations related to the actions and practices of employees, elected and appointed officials, and those seeking to do business with the District. These entities include the Office of Professional Standards ("OPS"), Incident Review Team ("IRT"), Civilian Investigative Unit ("CIU"), General Investigation Unit ("GIU"), the Office of Civil Rights Compliance ("CRC"), the Office of Inspector General ("OIG"), the Ethics Advisory Committee ("EAC"), the Office of Management and Compliance Audits (OMCA), and the School Board Audit and Budget Advisory Committee (ABAC). A functional description of each entity will be provided to the Board under separate cover.

While the District has developed a comprehensive system of internal checks and balances, there is always room for improvement, particularly as it relates to improving the transparency of District operations and streamlining the process for the public to voice concerns or obtain information. With the launch of a new Internal Integrity Program this Board and administration are continuing with their proactive efforts to promote honesty and ensure integrity in the exercise of our duty to protect the public's investments, while ensuring the delivery of high quality educational opportunities to students across the District.

First, to improve the public's access to information related to ethics rules, compliance, and integrity training, as well as a centralized reporting location where individuals may register a concern, the District will establish a web page which may be accessed at <http://ethics.dadeschools.net>. This will serve as a central resource for the public, employees, vendors, lobbyists, and others to access relevant Board Policies, Florida statutes, FAQs, and training tools. In addition, the public will be able to access a clearinghouse of links to publicly available financial information, audit reports, OIG reports and memorandums, as well as other resources.

While providing access to information is a key component of this plan, coordination is also critical to the efficient operation of any organizational function. Therefore, the administrators responsible for each of these offices will meet as an Internal Integrity Council to review and discuss issues associated with the District's ethical practices, policies and procedures, recommendations for improvement, and to share best practices.

In addition, the District's existing Ethical Voices, Responsible Choices initiative will be incorporated in the new Internal Integrity Program; assuring ethics training is delivered to all employees and acknowledged annually. Further, an awareness campaign will be launched reminding employees that as public servants and educators we are held to high ethical standards and that integrity is everyone's responsibility. The implementation of Phase I of this plan will commence immediately.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR  
PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, accept Phase I of the Internal Integrity Program.